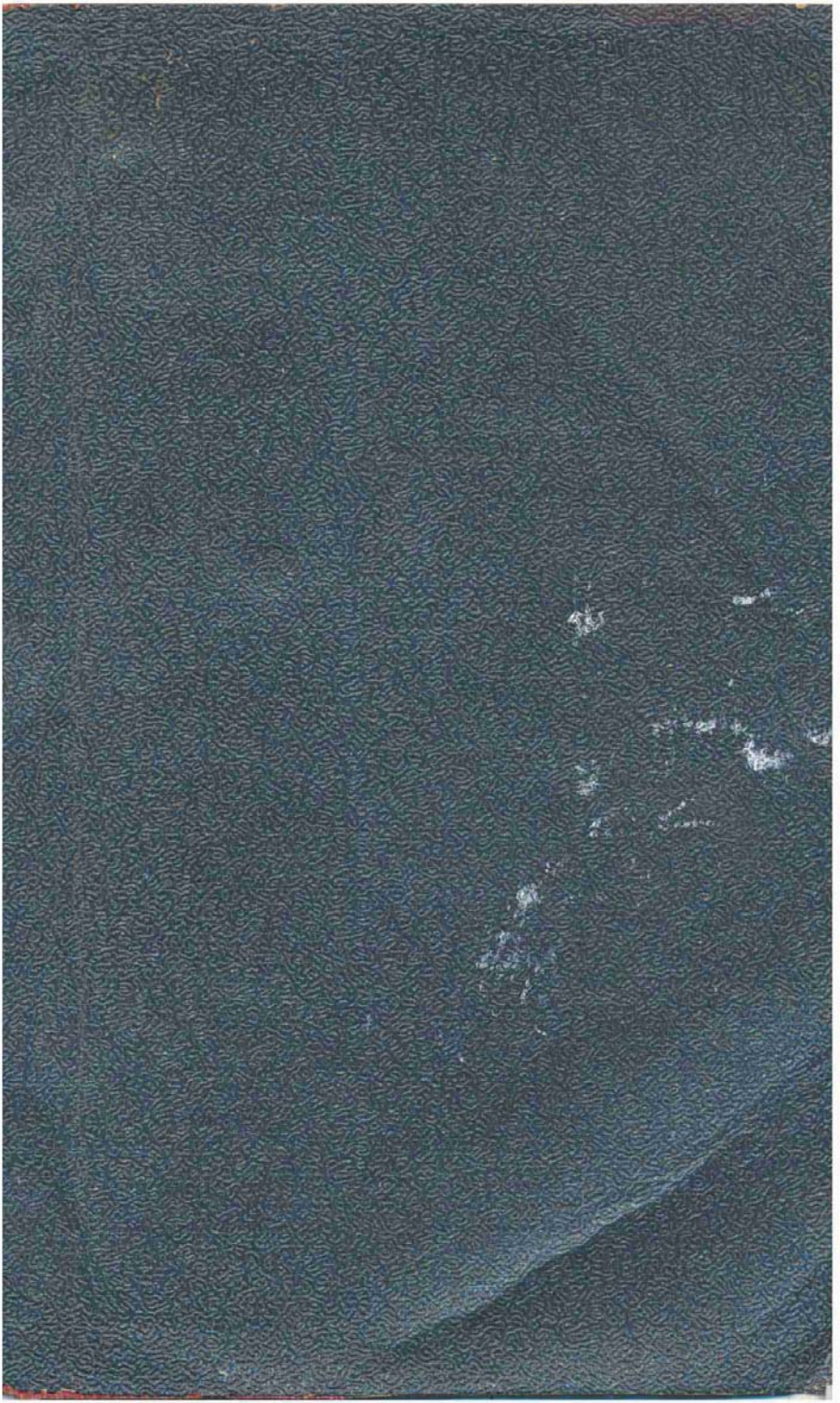

INTRODUCTION

The publication entitled *The Modern Indian Peasant* is most welcome, especially because the peasant movement has not yet been rightly understood by the public and the Government alike in this country resulting in misrepresentation regarding the same.

Andhra Country has the proud privilege of having in its midst the real author and leader of the peasant movement. Professor Ranga who requires no introduction, has contributed not a little, being the pioneer, to the building up of this movement throughout the length and breadth of this country. He gave an 'all India' aspect to the movement by organising a Peasant Group of forty-five fellow members of the Legislative Assembly representing the different provinces. Not content with that he travelled to every nook and corner of India and organised provincial branches and an 'All India Peasants' Conference' was called at Lucknow on the 11th April 1936. The organisers who helped the Professor in this matter were Swami Sahajanand Saraswathi, and Mohan Lal Gautam. An all-India Kisan Bulletin was also started with Indulal Yagnik as the editor. Thus an 'All India' shape has been given to the movement by the untiring efforts of Professor Ranga. It is indeed a matter for great pride to mention the fact that the movement has come to stay.

Mere organisation of industrial workers (however powerful they may be) who number at present only four millions will be like a drop in the ocean in contributing towards political, social and economic emancipa-

tion of the country. This great task can c.. accomplished by a well-defined organisation chiefly peasants and workers on regular lines with a defini plan and programme.

Today it is almost admitted that nearly sixty million peasants are under-employed and forty millions have no employment at all and starve for want of a morsel of food. It is also a patent fact that in this country there is neither guarantee of employment nor unemployment benefits organised by the Government. 'Right to live' and 'Right to work' have not been conceded and as such no fundamental rights to the people are assured.

This publication deals with the conditions of peasants in India and the various utterances of Professor Ranga suggest constructive remedies for the uplift of the down-trodden masses of this great but unfortunate country.

Professor Ranga has correctly stated as follows in his plea for an all India Peasants Organisation: "Nearly one third of our cultivable land is still unoccupied and in possession of the state and all this can and ought to be granted to the Co-operative organisation of such workers without the right of alienation. Indeed the success, that may be achieved by such co-operative agricultural enterprises will help us to persuade our peasants to embrace the new Russian method of agricultural organisation." My definite feeling is that the unemployment problem can only be solved by an 'All India plan' of action and the following initial measures have to be taken by the Government with the fullest co-operation of the public.

1. That collection of unemployment statistics to enable assessment of the unemployment situation be

... taken in co-operation with the local Governments, representatives of emloyees, and trade unions of workers and peasants.

2. That all uncultivated cultivable lands other than fallow, be acquired by the central Government and used under state control and ownership for the cultivation of the products with the labour of the unemployed workers, for their relief and not for commercial profit.

3. That necessary measures for technical training of the workers and equipment of plant and machinery be financed out of state funds and by starting of subsidiary industries in rural areas to provide subsidiary occupation for peasants.

Prof. Ranga has rightly pointed out in one of his speeches as follows: "It is up to us to see that the industries of our country are ruralised and socialised as soon as possible and that any further industrial development is allowed only on collective or co-operative lines so that any profits, direct or indirect, arising from such ventures will be shared by all the masses."

In his various addresses in different centres in India and in his speeches in the Assembly (which are published in this book) he dealt with various problems connected with the well-being of the peasants such as

(*a*) Objects of the Peasant movement and the technique thereof (*b*) Socialisation and Co-operative farming (*c*) Peasants and Congress (*d*) Ruralisation and Socialisation of industries (*e*) Evils of private ownership (*f*) Agricultural marketing (*g*) Solution of unemployment problem of India (*h*) The minimum demands of peasants and workers (*i*) Peasants and politics etc., etc.

Workers and peasants can never be satisfied with ... political Swaraj; that transfer of power from a white beauracracy to a brown. Workers demand full fledged economic Swaraj preceeded and followed by political Swaraj with the fullest declaration of fundamental rights to the working classes of both workers and peasants.

The present publication is an attempt to clearly state the view-point of the peasant organisation and a plea to advance their cause. It must be clearly appreciated that in the happiness and contentment of the vast millions of peasants and workers largely depends the prosperity and well-being of this great country. In it lies the solution of the great problem of Socialism which has to be ultimately established in this Country for the greatest good of the greatest number.

This publication supplies the necessary knowledge and information about the intricate subject of the peasants' movement in this country.

SIMLA,
1st Oct. 1936. V. V. GIRI

Prof. RANGA

(A Short Biographical Note by the Editor)

The author of most of the chapters of this volume is a wellknown figure among the growing ranks of Indian economists and by his researches and enquiries into the economic conditions and needs of the various classes of our countryside, he has established for himself a well merited reputation of being as great an authority on South Indian Rural Economics as Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee on North Indian Rural Economics. Though the Punjab Government has been publishing various monographs on Rural Surveys, it has not succeeded in laying a foundation for a new approach to the modern problems of the peasantry as Prof. Ranga has done. It can safely be said that Prof. Ranga has carried the enquiries initiated into rural conditions by Doctors Gilbert Slater, Harold Mann, Col. Jack and their desciples and followers, who conducted very useful enquiries in Malabar, Hyderabad and Chingleput to a further stage and evolved a new system of enquiry and approach to the rural conditions and problems by bringing into more prominence such very important aspects of the agrarian life, as the farm costs, standard of living, cattle budgets, internal emigration, intensive cultivation, subsidiary occupations, treatment of labour, relations between peasants and workers, as distinguished from and in addition to the usual study of land revenue problems, costs of cultivation on the traditional methods of the Land Revenue Departments of the Provincial Governments. We have had the good fortune to publish all

his volumes, to wit, the Economic Conditions of [illegible] Villages Vol. I (published in 1926), Vol. II (in 1928), Economics of the Handloom (1930), Labour in South India (1931), Tribes of the Nilgiris (1931), Economic Conditions of Zamindari Ryots (1933).

Prof. Ranga in the words of Mr. C. R. Reddy, Vice-chancellor of the Andhra University is "born a peasant and is himself a peasant." He went to England in 1920 for further studies soon after making arrangements with his boyhood friend Mr. P. V. K. Choudary (now a Member of the Madras Legislative Council) for the publication of the first Indian weekly for peasants, called the 'Ryot.' Like most Indian students, he also wanted to compete for the Indian Civil Service and was therefore enthusiastically taken under the guidance of Mr. V. Ramakrishna, I. C. S., the former Director of Industries of Madras Government, who secured for him a seat in the St. Catherines of Oxford. He grows eloquent whenever he refers to what he owes to the training given by his friend and guardian, who, he says, has opened his eyes to the immense possibilities for the industrial and agricultural development of India and the resultant rise of standard of living, thus helping him to shed his prejudices against the westernisation of the productive organisation of India. He was contributing to his favourite weekly the 'Ryot' during 1921-22 various articles in Telugu on the labour conditions in England and the means adopted to protect them.

Much to the disappointment of his guardian, Mr. Ranga was too much influenced and carried away by the cataclysmal Gandhian Nationalist upheaval of 1921-22 and like most people, then in England, believed that

...aj was going to come in a year and began to waver in his resolution to go for the I. C. S. But his guardian succeeded in preventing him from giving up his studies and returning to India but could not succeed in making him join the Bar. On Mr. Ramakrishna's return to India and when Mahatma Gandhi was sentenced to six years, he finally decided to throw in his lot with the National movement gave up his idea of competing for the I.C.S., and changed his course of studies from Mathematics to Economics and Political Science. But his earlier studies of Mathematics had later on stood in good stead when he began to develop the statistical side of Indian rural economics.

While in England, he came into touch with a large number of families of farmers, thanks to Mr. Ramakrishna and thus studied their economic and social conditions. It was in 1922 that he took up his studies of social science, conducted by the Barnett House at Oxford under the guidance of Dr. Carlyle, Mrs. Stock and Miss Butler and on their advice, stayed at the Toynbee Hall, London and came under the influence of the Warden Mr. J. J. Mallon, the father of the British Trade Boards movement. That Summer he came under the influence of Socialists and Communists through the Workers Educational Association's Summer School at Bangor and Labour Research Departments' Summer School at Scarborough. There he came into close contact with the Dutt brothers, Palme and Clement; G. D. H. Cole, H. N. Brailsford, Page Arnot, Hobson, Miss Wilkinson, Prof. H. Clay, Dr. Radford and through them had come to understand the main principles of Socialism. It was Mr. H. N. Brailsford who was very much impressed with the earnestness and brilliance of Mr. Ranga who advised him to visit Italy,

Germany and France to study the organisation of Peasants and the Socialistic Organisation of Co-operative movement. The whole of that 1922 summer Mr. Ranga toured through those countries, studied the organisation of the Labour and Co-operative movements and stayed for sometime at Geneva to understand the working of the League of Nations and International Labour Office and watched the methods by which the Fascists were fighting the Socialist and Communists and winning their way to power through their brutality and the internecine quarrels among the Socialists and Communists and the treachery of Liberals. It was this gruesome misfortune of the Italian Socialists and Communists and the fateful enthronement of Mussolini which has, he said so often, affected him most and made him such a strong advocate ever since, of a united front of all progressive Socialistic forces in India.

In July 1923 Mr. Ranga returned to India, after having won high laurels in his examinations at Oxford, full of Socialistic urge to organise peasants and workers. Through his participation from its very inception in the Oxford Labour Club and his Secretaryship of the Oxford International Labour Group and his studies under the guidance of Prof. Macgregor, the Advocate of Small Holdings, J. A. Todd, the Author of 'World's Cotton Crops', Prof. H. Clay, the author of "Unemployment" and G. D. H. Cole, he developed a great desire not only to organise the masses but also to build a scientific case, based upon statistics, and the results of accurate enquiries, for their legitimate demands. Soon after his return, he set about organising the peasants and workers on their class basis. To suit the imagination of the Indian public of those 100% Gandhian days, he advocated the development of

.pational Guilds for peasants and workers on the lines of the Guilds, then being organised in the West. He succeeded in organising a number of Peasants conferences and organisations, the most notable of which was that, held at Appikatla in Guntur District. It was in that conference, he formulated, in co-operation with many Congress leaders and other progressive non-Justicite friends, the Peasants Election Manifesto, in which were incorporated the Congress Constructive Programme and socialistic demands regarding taxation, land tenure and industrial development. Some of the Congress leaders had expressed, even then, their misgivings regarding this new organisation of Peasants that he was forging, on the ground that such organisations might someday fall into the hands of the moderates and anti-nationalists and thus disable the Congress in its anti-imperialist fight. But Mr. Ranga stood out for an independent class-conscious organisation of peasants and pleaded for the co-operation of all radically minded Congressmen in leading and developing such organisations.

He was not however so successful in his attempts to organise the agricultural labour. The first Guntur District Labour Conference of 1923 at Nidubrole over which he presided and which was the first of its kind in the whole of India did not result in any fruitful results, because of the active opposition of the Justice Party and Government on the one hand, and on the other of the distrustful peasantry who had already been upset by Mr. Ranga's rebellion against caste system, removal of the untouchability of Harijans (then known as Panchamas) and disregard of social conventions prohibiting inter-dining with Harijans etc., the cold indifference and non-co-operation of the local Congress and the pro-

British and job-hunting Christian teachers and pas... Mr. Unnava Lakshminarayana, the author of the first Socialist novel in India written in the Telugu language of the masses, advised him to wait for a while before he proceeded further in the direction of organising the Agricultural Labour, since the forces opposed to him were too many and too strong, but to forge ahead with the peasants organisations, since the peasants were on their way to develop their political consciousness. He took then his decision and chose his main line of activity, which he has ever since pursued with highly commendable results. The All India Kisan (Peasants) Committee, the Andhra Peasants Association, the radical Andhra Peasants Protection Committee, the South Indian Federation of Agricultural Labour and Peasants, the Andhra and Punjab Peasants Institutes, the Peasants Group of M. L. A's., the All India Kisan Bulletin bear eloquent testimony to his creative genius, organising capacity, consistent loyalty to the Socialist cause and extraordinary hold on the masses of the countryside, won by persistent, continuous, almost superhuman and self-denying services and sacrifices in their cause.

Between 1923—27, Mr. Ranga again visited Europe on three occasions, on the last of which he was accompanied by his wife, Srimati Bharati Devi the first Kisan lady to go abroad for studies, and took his B.Litt (Oxon) for his excellent thesis on "The Economic Organisation of the Cotton Industry of Southern India" a part of which was subsequently published as "The Economics of the Handloom." He resigned from the Congress in 1926 as he was dissatisfied with its economic programme but refused to join any other party until later on, in 1931, he again

graced the Congress during that first great Satyagrahic Period. He was busy during that period 1923—1927 mostly with ministering to the local needs of the peasants of Guntur and Kistna Districts, organising Taluk Ryots Associations, publishing a number of articles, on the lines of the Fabian Essays, on different problems of Peasants and Workers, in addition to carrying on his detailed and systematic enquiries into the economic conditions of Peasants and Workers, some of the results of which were embodied in his publications.

It was at the end of 1927 that he joined the Pachaiyappa's College, Madras, the premier non-official college of the South as the chief Professor of Economics and Political Science, on the understanding that he would be allowed to play his part in politics and during his term of office, *i.e.* 1927-1930, he succeeded in training successive batches of Honours students in carrying on enquiries into the conditions of the masses and one of his students, Mr. K. Gopala Rao was recently the recepient of the Curzon Medal for his enquiries carried on along the lines initiated by Prof. Ranga.

In 1928-29, Prof. Ranga was appointed the Special Officer for Economic Survey by Madras Government and he conducted the surveys on behalf of Government, without accepting any remuneration, in Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Salem and Guntur Districts but the results of his measurement of the poverty of the various classes of rural masses were so unpalatable and frightening that Government abolished the office and refused to publish his reports. In 1929-30, he was appointed the Secretary of the Godavari-Kistna Resettlement Economic Enquiry Committee of which the late Diwan Bahadur R. N. Arogyaswami Mudaliar was the President and in that capacity, had organised the

economic survey of 100 villages, and the investiga into the indebtedness of peasants of 100 villages those three Districts. The report of the Commi tee bears the marks of the experience, commonsense and wisdom of the President and the other members who were all elected members of the Madras Legislative Council and also the scientific acumen, originality, ability and experience of the Secretary. If it is a very valuable contribution to our knowledge of economic conditions of our peasantry, it is largely due to Prof. Ranga and his able band of investigators who co-operated with him.

During this period of his connections with the college and Government, he had continued to take an increasing interest in the development of the peasants movement. He co-operated with Mr. M. B Needu, M.Sc. (California) in the founding of the Andhra Provincial Ryots Association in 1928 and became its president in 1929. He helped the peasants residing by the forests ides to get the Standing Orders for the 1100 Forest Panchayats codified and liberalised by the Madras Government during his Secretaryship of the Madras Presidency Forest Panchayats Association in 1929–30, of which the late B. Muniswami Naidu, Ex-Chief Minister was the President. As President of the District Village Panchayats' Association, he has succeeded with the able, persevering and zealous assistance of his secretary Mr. P. V. Narasimharao in organising Village Panchayats for 700 villages out of the 960 villages of Guntur District and in co-operation with several advocates of rural reconstruction in raising the contribution from land revenue for Panchayats from one quarter anna (3 pies) to half-an-anna (6 pies) in every rupee of land revenue collected from the lands within the

ıayat. He was the elected President during 1929–31 of the Irrigation Advisory Board, constituted by Madras Government, for assisting the deltaic ryots of Kistna Delta. In his capacity as the Joint Secretary of the Famine Relief Committee of Ongole, he rendered invaluable help to the famine ridden peasants during 1926-27 and in 1935 when Royalaseema (Ceded Districts) was caught in the claws of a terrible famine, he rushed to the scene, studied the conditions and awakened the Government and the public to the need for offering relief to the distressed. He made representations to the Congress and Government and got a relief fund organised by the public and famine relief measures carried on by Government. For the first time the Legislative Assembly came to seriously concern itself with its responsibilities towards the famine-stricken peasants much to the surprise of Government. As the President of the Guntur District Ryots Association during 1926-31 he has succeeded in obliging Madras Government to extend irrigation facilities for sixty-five thousand acres of land. He has helped to found many village libraries and Co-operative Credit Societies. He was the President of a Primary Land Mortgage Bank and a Director of the Madras Presidency Central Land Mortgage Bank and one of the ten Honorary Members of the Provincial Co-operative Union. These unadorned details regarding his activities during the last twelve years are enough to show at how many points and in how many ways Mr. Ranga has tried with such remarkable success to help the peasants of the Andhra and win thier well-merited love and affection. No wonder when the Swarajists resigned from the Assembly in 1930 and went to jail, Professor Ranga who did not

favour the boycott of that Legislature went to a short session, with the only intention of keeping up the national fight within the Assembly. He was much criticised at the time but the Andhra Peasants knew from their experience of him that national interests were safe in his keeping. His uncompromising speeches in the Assembly, his courageous insistence upon wearing the Gandhi Cap in the Country, Assembly and Viceregal Lodge and his well known sympathies with the Civil Resisters and his brave lead given to the peasants not to co-operate with the Government as against the Congress made his College Trustees to issue an ultimatum that 'no member of the staff shall be a member of any legislature.' His answer, on relinquishing his office "if I have to choose between my position in the college and my responsibilities to the public, I have no hesitation to choose the latter" is quite characteristic of this worthy son of a peasant.

He went again to England in 1930 at the time of the First Round Table Conference India's participation in which he so vehemently opposed in the Assembly and carried on a vigorous propaganda all over England and Wales against that conference, and in favour of the Congress demand for the grant of immediate independence for India and performed his function as the unofficial spokesman of the awakened India. He toiled day and night in Europe, lecturing frequently under the auspices of the I. L. P., W. E. A. and Friends' Society, touring incessantly, meeting innumerable groups of Englishmen and Europeans to explain the ideals of the Nationalist India and writing not only to the Bombay Chronicle, and Andhra Patrika as their Hon. Special Correspondent but also to the English Press, to quote his own words "to make retribution for my

.e to go to jail and to serve my apprenticeship to qualify myself for rejoining the noble Congress."

From the moment of his return to India to this day, Prof. Ranga has been ceaselessly exerting himself, as the whole time and unpaid servant of the masses, in creating, spreading, developing and revivifying peasants organisations all over the Andhra and latterly in other parts of India. During the whole of 1931, he was busy, organising the Zamindari Ryots of Venkatagiri, whose brave stand against the zamindari system led the way to the Indian peasants' general demand for its abolition. The Andhra Zamindari Ryots Association, which was founded in 1928 by Mr. R. M. Sarma with the co-operation of the Professor and M. B. Needu came to adopt, what has also come to be adopted by the All-India Peasants Movement, its creed in favour of the abolition of the Zamindari system, thanks to the radical leadership of Prof. Ranga. Ever since the Professor has come to influence the policy of the Andhra Zamindari Ryots Movement, it has become more and more Socialistic.

During the same year Prof. Ranga toiled hard, in co-operation with a number of devoted servants of the peasants like Messrs. M. B. Needu, D. N. Raju, V. Satyanarayana, to agitate against the decision of Madras Government to impose 18¾% enhancement of land revenue, in spite of the recommendation of the Economic Enquiry Committee. In Kistna District alone, where he worked, as many as 300 Village Ryots Associations were formed, thanks to the brilliant work of Mr. D. Balarama Krishnayya and as many more organisations, in the other two Districts. The upshot of this vigorous organising work was the imprisonment of Prof. Ranga for an year and that of seven others for various

periods and the application of the No-Tax Ordinance in that danger zone.

Even while in jail, he worked hard, usually for more than eight hours a day, as if he was being driven by the hidden Roman hand of the peasants and wrote authoritative works in Telugu on the various political problems of the present day and the governments of France, U. S. A., Italy, Germany and U. S. S. R., with a view to help the Andhra peasants to educate themselves on political questions without having to go to colleges.

Since his release from jail, he has organised the Peasants Marches, Seva Dals and Peasants Schools and published Peasants Songs, his novel "Harijan leader," his book on "Modern Political Institutions," conducted the Andhra Zamindari Ryots Economic Enquiry and published its report, founded the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Agricultural Workers and took a leading part in bringing together a nucleus of socialistic minded people at Poona in 1933 July.

It was only in 1933, *i.e.* after 10 years of solid, more or less silent and sincere work in the cause of the Andhra Peasants and after experimenting with various methods of organisation and propaganda, which are all explained in his own words in this volume, that Prof. Ranga had thought it fit to enter the All-India Political arena. It is true that he fought very hard, at the Bombay A.I.C.C. in 1931 September even going to the extent of joining issue with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, for the liberalising the Congress Chart of Fundamental Rights, framed at the Karachi Congress and also that he was one of the founder members of the Congress Socialist Group, formed at Poona in 1933. But it was in 1933 that he had begun his campaign for the recognition, by the

..ess, of the right of peasants to develop their classwise organisation and to insist upon the proper modification of the Congress Economic Programme to safeguard the interests of the peasants. With the publication of the Report of the Zamindari Ryots Enquiry Committee, the Indian Peasants world was awakened into the realisation of the real nature of their grievances, needs and minimum demands. He took a prominent part in the Patna Conference of Congress Socialists but could not agree with the majority in advocating the boycott of the Assembly elections. He was elected the President of the Andhra Congress Socialist Party in 1934 July. He began to advocate since then, the urgent need for the formation of the All India Peasants Congress.

The Assembly elections came and peasants rose to a man to support their leader in the election with the result that he was elected to the Assembly with a thumping majority of nearly ten thousands. We need not say much about his distinguished career in the Assembly since his speeches themselves bear such an eloquent proof. He himself does not go in for any oratorical flourishes. All that he cares is to fight relentlessly and vigilently for the peasants and he has succeeded in this to a remarkable degree. The Peasants Group of M. L. A's consisting of as many as fifty members is enough testimony to the success of his work in the Assembly. Critics as different in their outlook as Dr. K. T. Shah and F. E. James have borne proof for the Professor's sincere, eloquent and powerful advocacy of Socialist and peasants' view-point.

There were no bounds to his joy when, after much struggle, the first All India Kisan Congress had

assembled under the presidency of Swami Sahaja Saraswati of Bihar in Lucknow in April 1936. He issued in August 1935 his first appeal for co-operation for the organisation of the A. I. K. Congress but it was only in October 1935 that the All India Peasants' Workers' Conference was held under his Presidentship at Madras. Owing to some misapprehensions felt by some Bihar and U. P. Kisan leaders, the Organising Committee formed at Madras had to be reconstituted at Meerut on the 15th of December; this time with greater co-operation from the Kisan leaders of the Congress Socialist persuasion; the result of these activities was the Lucknow A. I. K. Congress and its upshot, the present A. I. K. Committee, the A. I. Kisan Bulletin and the present day organising activities evidenced in almost every province and as related in the A. I. K. Bulletin, so ably edited by Mr. Indulal Yagnik of Bombay.

In addition to what he has himself said in regard to the scarcity of funds for the Peasants Movement, we have to add that Prof. Ranga has tried to finance the movement, to the best of his abilities, mostly from his own slender but fast dwindling resources and it speaks volumes for his sacrifices that so far he has not tried to raise any funds from general subscriptions; the income from membership fees being so small and undependable. A few devoted friends, including his own brothers and wife have helped him in everyway and a large number of well-to-do peasants contributed handsomely to the Peasants Election Fund, from which his last election campaign was financed. The sacrifices, both financial and social that his devoted wife who was herself sent to jail for an year in 1932-33 for leading a large number

omen in the Satyagraha struggle has rendered are commensurate and in keeping with the selfless and unsparing services of the Professor himself to the peasants.

We have thought it fit to furnish the above bare account of the varied activities of the Professor during the last 14 years in order to enable our readers to properly assess the speeches, writings, suggestions and thoughts of the Professor, presented through this volume. It is perfectly true to say that Mr. Ranga is the architect, life, spirit and thinker of the Modern Indian Peasants' Movement, though, as he himself enthusiastically says, Mahatma Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad, Sirdar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru, had laid its foundations and created the favourable atmosphere, only in the wake of which people like him have tried to create this movement. He has been ably assisted, in his work, by many great and good men and particularly by the epoch making national struggles of 1930-31, 1932-34, led by the Congress. In conclusion, we are glad to say in the words of Mr. V. V. Giri, the well-known Labour Leader that Prof. Ranga is "the Peasant of Peasants."

Andhra Peasants Movement

(Impressions of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru)

Here is the latest tribute paid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress after his tour from the 18th to the 20th October 1936 through the Andhra. He said in his press interview on the 20-10-36 "I was glad to notice Peasants Organisations in Andhra Desa, which appear to be doing good work for the peasants. Such Peasants Organisations are helpful, not only to agitate for the removal of peasants' grievances but to help the larger

cause of Swaraj." The Special Correspondent of the I. in no sense a partisan paper observed "The peasants had tried to organise themselves in an effort to present a united front. At the numerous places visited by the Pandit, mention was made of many such organisations. The President must have noted the success that had attended the efforts of some at least of these bodies from the discipline and good feeling that prevailed at the many gatherings of ryots that he addressed." The Pandit also observed that "the peasantry as well as the young people have expressed themselves very definitely in favour of these Socialist ideas."

At Nidubrole, the very seat of the Andhra Peasants Institute, Pandit J. Nehru said in reply to the Guntur District Ryots Association "In this part of the country, I have been coming across your Ryots Associations. I am glad they exist." At Masulipatam also he observed that during his tour in the Andhra, he had come across many ryots organisations. He was glad that such organisations were functioning properly and doing good work. His idea was that peasants should organise themselves into unions to safeguard their interests and rights.

At Ponnuru, he said "I know much about your problems because I know the problems of the peasantry in my own province. I know also something about your problem because I have tried to follow this movement started here by Professor Ranga."

At Venkatagiri the seat of a powerful Zamindar, the home of the first aggressive and class conscious Peasants Association, led by Prof. Ranga, the Pandit said "I have received a long statement by the Ryots Association of their troubles. I do not want to

discuss them because I know that they exist but how are we to get rid of them? There is no way of getting rid of them except by developing your own strength. You cannot improve your condition either by begging or petitioning the Government or the Zamindars or even the Congress Committee." At Kalahasti and Venkatagiri, he said "there should be a ryot association in every village in the country."

At Tanguturu he said he was glad to hear that the peasants approved of the principles of the Congress and of Socialism. At Pamarru, adverting to the remark that the Kisans were swinging about between the Congress and Socialism, he said that the Congress and Socialists were all working for India's independence. Those who were intent upon achieving India's freedom had to join hands and work in concord.

At Ponnuru, he said "you want that the peasants and workers should be given the power to send representatives to the Congress. Personally I welcome the idea of organisations representing the workers and peasants accept the Congress objective and ideal and associating themselves closely with the Congress."

"You want the Congress to adopt your demands and decide what part you can take in the elections. It is right that in these elections the programme of the ryot associations be adopted. You should like your representatives chosen as candidates. I cannot say whether this suggestion is going to be adopted by the Congress or not. But I earnesly desire and hope that those who have your confidence will be chosen by your provincial Congress Committee. I want, however, the co-operation of your associations and the Congress Committees in formulating the agrarian report."

At Bezwada, in reply to the Andhra Provincial Ryots Association, the President of the Congress said that, though it could not be insisted upon that the candidates chosen by Ryots Associations should be accepted by Congress Committees, owing to constitutional difficulties, it was certainly desirable and he hoped an earnest attempt would be made by the Congress Committees to invite and welcome the co-operation and advice of peasants associations in setting up candidates. He was also sure that the Congress cum Kisan members of the Provincial Assembly would have to be given freedom to vote differently from the other members of the Congress party, not on matters of principle affecting national politics but on the day to day detailed economic and classwise problems that affect the immediate interests of peasants.

Naturally the 'Indian Express' of Madras concluded its remarks on the Congress President's tour in the Andhra by saying that "the Panditji came more and more to put our agrarian problems in the forefront and we feel certain it is through this problem that the way of progress lies. The ending of all parasitical interests on land is the meeting point of nationalism and socialism. It is the only issue for which the masses will struggle and fight to the bitter end. Both before, during and after the elections and in the Councils and outside, the ending of exploitation of the peasants must become the sole preoccupation of the Congress. Hence, the frantic attempt to organise the vested interests on land throughout the country. The Congress has to become a counter organisation of the peasantry."

Thus the review of the Peasants Movement in the South made by the President and its effects upon the

public and the press bear eloquent testimony to the lasting effects of the fourteen years' untiring services rendered by Prof. Ranga to the Andhra Peasants.

It is with these sacrifices and scholarship, these ceaseless struggles against Zamindars and money lenders, these painstaking enquiries and researches, tested as they must have been through all the last 14 years, by the continuously widening range of public opinion, Professor Ranga is today busy, in the prime of his life, with the fashioning of the All India Peasants movement. We feel confident that the charts of Minimum Demands initiated, framed, and developed through the initiative, co-operation and encouragement of such a distinguished student of economics, experienced investigator and devoted, and successful organiser and leader of peasants as Prof. Ranga deserve the serious consideration and respectful attention of the public.

N. NARAYANAMURTI

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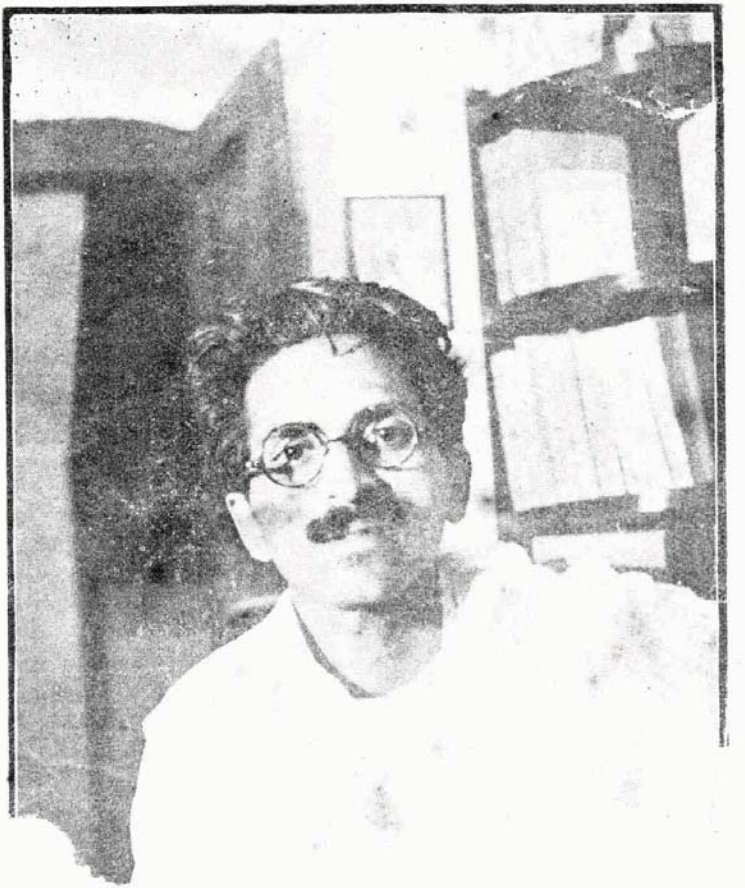
PART 1



CONGRESS AND PEASANTS

Presidential Address delivered at the Andhra Provincial Ryots' Conference held at Nidubrole on the 2nd of June 1936.

We meet now at a time when both the Congress and Government and all other political parties have seriously begun to concern themselves about their relations to our class, thanks to the forthcoming constitution, vicious and one-sided though it is. From H. H. the Aga Khan to Sir Faz-li-Hussain, from the Mass Contact Committee to the Stud Bulls' Government; all are anxious to assure us that they wish our welfare and we must adopt them as our political masters. This also is a time when we have to realise that the New Government of India Act has been specially so framed as to prevent our legitimate growth and the achievement of our birth-right, *i.e.*, the capture of complete political power and to insure the continuance, and intensification of the one-sided and age long class struggle, the chief beneficiaries of which are the few capitalists and zamindars.

Our Friends' Interested Advice

We are advised by many Congress leaders not to aim at the development of any independent class or functional organisations as the Congress has been concerning

itself most fully about all our needs and demands. They quote the examples of Bardoli and U. P. 1931 Agrarian crisis. Similarly Governors and Zamindars maintain that peasants need no special organisations as their collectors are in daily contact with the masses, ministering to their needs. The peasants need only answer that it is just because of their blind reliance upon the chance help trickling from others that they are today so helpless, without their own organisation, or class-consciousness or any ability to stand up for their rights. How can they explain away their growing poverty and crushing burdens of taxation except by the failure of all our political forces to look after them.

Andhra Peasants' Experience

Let us take our own experience. As long ago as 1923 when the first class-conscious attempts were made in this Guntur District, some Congress leaders did try to discourage them on the plea that the Congress Organisation itself is a mass organisation, daily ministering to the needs of the Peasants. But in their daily struggle with the P. W. D. and Revenue Department, our Peasants have received little or no help from the Congress Committees. The Godavari *cum* Kistna, Guntur *cum* Kurnool Resettlements, the Royalaseema, Ganjam famines had to be fought mostly by Peasants' Organisations, since the Official Congress leadership had failed to stand by the Peasants. There cannot be a more glaring failure of the Congress to lead the Peasants than its cold-shouldering of the Andhra Zamindari Ryot Movement, its studied indifference to the fate of the indebted Peasants, Inamdari Peasents and its benevolent nuetrality regarding the Peasants' Marches. Of course peasants could never trust Government to help and succour them.

Hence Our Own Organisation

No wonder, my appeal for the development of an independent, class-conscious and self-reliant All-India Organisation with a net work of organisations all over the country has found favour with our Peasants in all the provinces. The All-India Kisan Congress is well on its way to be founded and before long all this talk of our Peasants not being in need of their own organisation will be set at rest.

Andhra's Contribution

The Andhra Peasants can feel proud of the fact that their 13 year old fight for an independent organisation is now being taken up by their fellow Peasants all over India, that their slogan of 'Down with the Zamindari System, land revenue and taxation systems and the Mahajans,' their propagandistic and organisational methods of peasants' Schools, Marches, Songs, Seva Dals and Peasant Days are being adopted all over India. It will not be long before their slogans of "allaince with industrial and agricultural labour, protection of tenants of rich peasants, cent percent swadeshi and anti-industrialist fight" are also adopted elsewhere.

The Objects of the Peasants' Movement

Contrary to expectations of most Congressmen, who seem to be unable to visualise anything definite after the achievement of complete independence and who therefore complacently feel that all that our peasants and workers need have is the fulfilment of Karachi Charter, our peasants aim at the complete capture of power of the State, of course in alliance and partnership of the Workers. To achieve it, they realise that

they have to obtain either simultaneously or in advance National Independence. And for this purpose they have ever been ready to throw in all their strength on the side of the Congress, the only political entity pitching all its forces against the British Raj for fighting Britis. Imperialism.

To end class-war

But unlike many Congressmen, our Peasants know, as a fact, that British Imperialism with all its variegated facets cannot be fully overcome unless its most important Indian allies, the Mahajans and Zamindars are completely prevented from carrying on their ceaseless class-warfare against our masses. They realise that as long as they are kept down in their present abysmal position in the class-war thrust and imposed upon them there cannot be any real independence for them. Hence their resentment against the calculated blindness of politicians and intellectuals like Messrs. Satyamurty, Ramadass Pantulu and C. R. Reddy towards the fact that class-war is not their creation but that of the vested interests. Hence their surprise at the self-complacence of Mr. V. Ramadass Pantulu, their erstwhile leader that after all Socialism is unsuited for Southern India.

What is Socialism?

That movement which seeks to end this suicidal class-war is Socialism. Surely the Peasants of the South, who are today groaning under the exploitation of Mahajans, Zamindars and Government have nothing to lose by supporting such a movement.

What Does It Mean?

Socialism aims at making it possible for all to achieve a minimum standard of living. Even the most moderate labour leaders ask for a minimum wage of Rs. 30 per mensem and we ask nothing more for our peasants. In view of the fact that most of our peasants (85%) cultivate less than twelve acres of wet land or 20 acres of dry land and get therefrom much less than Rs. 20 per mensem per working adult, they have everything to gain and nothing to lose from Socialism. Hence my anxiety to recommend it to them.

Out With Private Property

Socialism seeks to abolish private property since from it arise all the evils of Capitalism and on it depend all the vested interests which create and perpetuate Class-war. But our definition of Private Property, which has to be abolished, naturally has to vary with the varying stages of economic development of a country and the differing allegiance and affection of the masses for Socialism. In Russia today certain personal belongings, houses, cattle, small gardens are allowed to be owned by even the members of a Kolkhoz. In our country, we do have to allow our Peasants to continue to own and cultivate their holdings, not exceeding 12 acres of wetland or 24 acres of dry land, until we reach a time when our peasants wish to exchange their individual holdings for their more profitable partnership in Cooperative or State Farms, as is happening in Russia. As long as the total net income from a Peasant's holding, which he himself cultivates with the aid of his family and some occasional hired labour, is not more than Rs 30/- per mensem per working adult, Socialist

Movement can afford to concentrate upon the removal of all those private properties which exceed the minimum fixed and exempted.

Slaves have nothing to lose but their Shackles

Therefore our Peasants have nothing to lose by adopting Socialism. Through the abolition of the Zamindari and Mahajan Systems and by the development of Socialised and Cooperatised industries and thus by eliminating unemployment and raising the total and per acre productivity of land, the minimum standards of living of our masses can be easily doubled in a decade.

That way lies Destruction and Deluge

If, however, our peasants follow the interested and disastrous lead of the 'black-coated' Congressites and their proto-types in the Justice, Peoples and Aman Sabhite parties they will help to perpetuate and indeed intensify the present ruinous taxation and protectionist policies which can benefit only the vested interests, while pauperising themselves every minute. What is worse, the lead of the South Indian Quartret will help to strengthen the shackles of Zamindari and Mahajan systems and enslave them inextricably to their parliamentary machinations.

The Act is our Biggest Snare

There is not even a touch of democracy in the Act or in the institutions to be established under it. Our Peasants are sought to be stifled by it. All they can do is only to struggle against it and save their very life.

We Need all The Help We Get

To prevent our Peasants from being coerced into paying land revenue and rent even when they cannot, to help them to stand up against the governmental, Zamindari and Mahajan repression in and outside the courts and law, to fit them to counteract the manovoures of future ministries and legislature to worsen their legal status and economic conditions and to save their lands. cattle and homesteads, the Peasants' workers have to get themselves ready to make much greater sacrifices. To achieve this—almost a negative object—our Peasants need all the help they can get from every progressive organisation in the country. Yet there cannot be any direct or indirect alliance with any party which seeks to shelter and bolster up the vested interests.

Politics is also one of our Means

Those who advice us not to enter politics and not to have our own line of action in politics are either deluding themselves or trying to mislead us. How can our Peasants hope to achieve any of their demands unless they learn how to play their part in political life just as expertly as the Zamindars and Mahajans. Legislatures have to be captured and the political parties, which under one guise or other, help the 'haves' have to be fought as ceaselessly and vigourously as possible. Hence the need for a batch of 100 % Peasants and Workers' representatives in the Legislatures.

In Alliance With The Congress

As things are, the Indian National Congress is our greatest asset in political life. We the Peasants have contributed much more since 1920 than any other class

towards the growth of its present enormous prestiege and halo. It is therefore as much our creation as our asset. Yet it is unfortunately not in our possession. The time has come long ago, for us to seek to make it our political party. But as things are we are not in a position to achieve that unless functional representation is permitted. We therefore welcome the move of the Congress to explore the possibilities for greater mass contact through our Peasants and Workers organisations. We cannot be content with merely hoping that the Congress may accept our suggestions. We must insist upon it, as a condition of our alliance and any further fraternisation with parliamentary aspect of the Congress.

We welcome the Socialist President

The Andhra Peasants are naturally glad that there is a Socialist at the head of the Indian National Congress.* Let us however hope that he will try and succeed in getting the Congress to accept a wholehearted Peasants and Workers progamme in the next few months. There is very little time to lose for the Congress before it metamorphoses itself into a real cent per cent mass organisation in thought word and deed, since its parliamentary leaders are rushing headlong in their importunate attempts to get into alliances with landlords on one side and capitalists on the other (not excepting European Capitallsts). If Pandit Jawaharlal and Socialists do not succeed, by the time of the Poona Congress, in imposing a clear-cut revolutionary and masswise economic policy

*But how we wish he had chosen a hundred per cent Socialist Cabinet, and given a phillip to the Socialist rank and file in the country. Surely the old Gandhian comrades could have been expected to cooperate with his Socialist Cabinet just as loyally as Socialists have served them all this time.

and a strict and effective political control upon the Congress Parliamentarians, I am afraid, the prospects for the immediate future of our Peasants will be very gloomy indeed. I therefore appeal to all our Peasants Workers and Socialists in towns to join the Congress in very large numbers and make one last desperate attempt to save the Congress and prevent Poona Congress from deluding us all into the parlour of capitalistic cum Zamindari Parliamentarians of the Congress.

Poona's Opportunity

Peasants do realise that the present policy of our Parliamentarians is anti-socialistic and non masswise. They are therefore unwilling to be made a catspaw of the vested interests even if it be through the medium of the Cromwellians. The Poona Congress must decide one way or the other whether its parliamentary party shall be so framed, instructed and guided as to win the confidence of the Peasants or not. It must so formulate its parliamentary policy as to win for it the general allegiance of our Peasants and Workers.

Peasants' Group in the Provincial Legislatures

The Government touches, through its various departments the life and activities of our masses at too many points. The result of all such contacts have uniformly been baneful to the people. The forthcoming provincial autonomy with its twin legislatures and the Ministries safeguarding the vested intersts' are likely to increase the miseries of the masses. In their anxiety to increase State expenditure on the socalled developmental and nation-building services by the only plausible and possible means of higher taxation upon the poor and

the Peasant been the best of Ministries Oan only force our peasants to lighter their belts and fleed for fattening the State. To prevent the growth of such mischief, to thwart the legislatures from further disabling the masses in their struggle against the vested interests and to promote, to whatever little extent possible, the welfare of the people, our peasants need have to create, in co-operation with Harijans and Workers, their own Parliamentary Group. This they have to establish with the co-operation of and in alliance with the Congress, so that there can be a united front of all anti-imperialist forces, the Congress Parliamentary party, the peasants and workers group to fight the entourage of the Governors. Our peasants have therefore to discuss this matter very seriously and place their scheme before the Congress President and leave the choice to the Poona Congress.

CONGRESS HAS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN US AND FASCIST INTERESTS

It may be possible for Pandit Jawaharlal to abstain from forcing his Socialist views upon the other sections of the Congress and our Industrialists. It certainly is not possible for the suffering peasants and workers to be eternally indifferent to the system of exploitation by which they are daily being ground down. Our Peasants have helped in building up this great Congress and are prepared to carry forward its great fight for complete independence with all their resources if only it chooses to champion their class-demands in an unequivocal manner and give the go-by to its present predominantly capitalistic policy. The urban classes may be interested in an eternal discussion of the pros and cons of Socialism. But our workers and peasants are daily obliged to come

to fatal grips with the vicious exploiting classes and they cannot wait until the old urban leadership of the Congress patiently feels its way towards the ultimate and inevitable parting of ways.

An alliance with the Peasants never weakens

Let it be remembered that the Indian National Congress stands to gain every thing and nothing te lose by its conscious and whole-hearted alliance with the workers and peasants. Its alliance with the high finance has only weakened it, while spelling disaster upon the masses. But the response of our peasants' appeals, thanks to their affection to Mahatmaji, has on the other hand, resulted in much of its present status and strength. Therefore let no one deceive himself with the thought that a Peasants and Workers' Congress may be weakened in its anti-imperialist struggles.

Peasants are Swadeshi and Capitalists anti-nationalist

Inspite of all their nationalist furore, Capitalists recognise no loyalty to any country. Capital has become internationalistic and a capitalist is no true patriot. On the otherhand, it is the peasants and workers who have all over the world willingly paid their all for the sake of their mother country and their national rights, though they have uniformly been defrauded by the chief beneficiaries of the wars, the bourgiousie. It is the masses who created our Swadeshi Movement and suffered heavily for it. It is the Capitalists who, inspite of it, went into the Lees-Mody pact. It is the Peasants who rushed madly to jails in 1930-32; but it is the Bombay capitalists who rushed their capital to other countries lest there might be a revolution.

It is the Peasants and workers who welcome Jawaharlalji's lead and it is the Indian Capitalist who is daily scheming against him. Hence my unbounded confidence that Congress will only be benefitting itself, the country, and the masses by boldly embracing the peasants and the workers and their organisations.

Parliamentary Party and Press

It is to stand up for the right of our organisations to exist and carry on their work and for the freedom of our workers to propagate their faith and to counteract the inevitable and intensified repressive policy of the Indian Ministers, nor can we hope for any sort of support from even most of the Nationalist Press-Capitalistic as it is. Hence the need for the development of an independent class conscious Press.

Behold! Trials are ahead of us

I am sorry to have to close my communion with you by warning you against the immensely greater trials which are ahead of us and in which we have to triumph if only to save ourselves. Our peasants, more and more of whom are becoming class conscious, will have to strive hard to break through the shackles imposed upon them. They cannot but come into an ever intensifying conflict with the powers that be. The ministry in power, completely Indian and responsible though it be, will have to rush to the rescue of vested interests and attempt to keep us down. Today under such circumstances we have the united support of all the admiring public to fall back upon and sufferers are viewed as martyrs. But tomorrow owing to the Indian Cloak of the Ministry and its following in every village,

our sufferers may be frowned at, considered a nuisance and misrepresented as mischief-mongers, interested in preventing the public from enjoying the bounties of the harvest of the Act of 1935. Then will be the time only for the stout hearted champions of the masses to carry on such a struggle against such great odds. If our Movement is to live and fight successfully for the achievement of the goal of our peasants and workers, we must set about the task of preparing our Peasants to march as demanded by their leaders, their youth to sacrifice and suffer and their workers to carry on a ceaseless, selfless and undaunted propaganda and struggle among the masses and in the countryside. Hence the urgency for forming Peasants' organisations, organising Peasant Days and Marches, Peasants' Institutes and Seva dals and carry on pamphletering and publicity work.

We have also to bear in mind that very soon the deluge of provincial elections will swallow up so many of those Congressmen who have cooperated so much with us in our organisational and propaganda work that we will be obliged to depend upon our own resources for leadership, guidance and propaganda. So many people will be so much taken up by the pomp and show of Congress Ministries and legislators that it needs much greater tenacity, faith and steadfastess in those who have to serve and guide us.

Hence the growing need for genuine Peasants' own leaders and Workers to spring up and fill in the ranks and help the movement to forge ahead.

PLEA FOR AN ALL-INDIA PEASANTS' CONGRESS

Presidential speech delivered at the All India conference of Peasants' Workers held at Madras on the 17th October 1935. It was reprinted also in the Contemporary India of Lahore.

I am grateful to you for affording me this opportunity to get into personal communion with you in our attempt to lay the foundations for the organisation of the All-India Peasants' Federation. As chance would have it, we meet at a time when the attitude of the two great protoganists in India's struggle for Swaraj, *i.e.*, the Government and Congress, towards the necessity for the development of Peasants' organisations has been made clear to the public. By his refusal to give his previous sanction for the introduction into the Legislative Assembly of my Peasants' Union Bill, the Viceroy has made it clear that this Government would not welcome the progress of any self-conscious and class-conscious Peasants' organisation. But through his reply to the deputation of the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Agricultural Workers, the President of the Congress has clearly recognised the necessity and utility of the independent development of Peasants' consciousness and organisational strength. The Viceroy seems to think that Government alone is good enough to look after Peasants' welfare while the Congress President recognises the right of Peasants' organisation to "remind" Congressmen "when they are remiss" and says to peasants "You are in a position to influence and indeed determine the views and actions of Congressmen and as days go on, your power will go on increasing."

This is therefore the fittest possible occasion when solid foundations should be laid for the formation of an All-India Federation of Peasants, among other things, incidently to give a fitting reply to Government and to completely utilise the profferred opportunity to "influence and indeed determine the views and actions of Congressmen."

Peasants, the Weakest link in our National Organisation

That our Peasants are the weakest link in our national organisation is only too well known to us to need any arguing. Both Government and Congress have realised the necessity of getting into consultation with industrialists, commercial interests and industrial workers, planters and landlords because there exist for them fairly well-organised national organisations with Provincial units. Peasants alone, if we except the agricultural workers, lack an All-India organisation supported by Provincial and District Committees to ascertain and publish their views upon the present day affairs and to take concerted action and to make their voice felt on the public life of our country.

The Time Spirit

Our whole political atmosphere is surcharged with new ideas. Sir Henry Craik warns the country against Communism, though being obliged to give it the greatest publicity and he sees little difference between Socialism and Communism. The disciples of Mahatma Gandhi state that Gandhism is the true Indian expression of Socialism. Even the Nawab of Chattrai declared that Socialist organisation of our industries is inevitable

and welcomed the progressive socialisation of our Railways. Indeed many of us claim to be Socialists and are not a little influenced by the "Commuuist Manifesto" about which the Home Member of this all knowing Government feigned ignorance. Sir Malcolm Hailey while at Lahore and Lucknow, Lord Erskin at Madras and Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy have all hastened to forewarn the landlords and to advise them to fraternise with our peasants so as to prevent them from imbibing the new thought and voicing the new demands. Even the Chief Minister of Madras, the Rajah of Bobbili has had to rush to peasants' conferences and claim to be their friend and champion. It is this extraordinarily potent new time spirit, surcharged as it is with the cataclysmic Russian achievements especially in regard to the peasantry and its problems, that we have to try to utilise for the advancement of our peasantry. The practical shape taken by our reaction to this time spirit may be found to be different from that of Europe. But with all that, we must see that our peasants are enabled to imbibe this time spirit and derive the greatest advantage from it.

Demands of our Time

If we are to help our peasants to grow to their fullest stature and gain a mastery over the politics of our country, as is justified by their numbers and revolutionary capacity, we must get busy in educating them to the realisation of their responsibilities to their twin brothers, the agricultural workers, their co-operative relations with industrial workers and their conflicting reactions to the landlords, merchants, industrialists and other great vested interests. We cannot be blind to the unfortunate

fact that the treatment, social and economic, meted out by our peasants to their workers all over India, is inhuman and unjustifiable. The sufferings of the Kammis of the Punjab are not much different from those of the Harijans all over India. If we are right in thinking, as I feel sure we are, that it is in the interests of our Peasantry and industrial workers that there must be developed the maximum amount of co-operation between peasants, agricultural workers and industrial workers, then it is our bounden duty to try to eliminate the points of friction between them and strengthen and increase the points of conciliation and harmony. We, the servants of peasants, know it only too well, that our fight against all the vested interests ranged against us in our political and economic life is so stiff and strenuous that we need all the allies we can secure. Apart from considerations of Justice and fair-play, we can ill-afford to allow in our own interests, the continuation of the present unsatisfactory relations between our peasants and workers.

Our Enemy is our own Mind

Our peasants are themselves largely to blame for their present unenviable and unprogressive position. Their partiality towards the Zamindars and moneyed classes and against the propertyless and helpless people is responsible for the degradation of not only themselves but also their co-partners, the agricultural workers. The abolition of the old system of communal ownership of land and the establishment of the individualised Ryotwari settlements have contributed their share towards the growth of the present-day capitalistic mentality of our peasants, which indeed is the greatest stumbling block in their road to progress. It is our sacred duty to make

them realise the direction in which their real class interests lie and to discover and follow up the right and effective means by which they can gain, in co-operation with their other allies, the control over our political and economic life, which is their due and which alone can assure them continuous prosperity in their collective and individual lives. We have to carry on incessant and tireless propaganda amongst our peasantry and in our country-side to make them realise their class consciousness and shoulder their historic responsibility.

Class War going on now

Government fears that Communists are interested in creating a class war and Congress is nervous of the emergence of a class war. They do not seem to realise that class war has been going on mercilessly and continuously in almost every part of our country-side between the Talukdars (Zamindars of the South) and their tenants, the Ryotwari landholders and their tenants. To dispel all doubts regarding the truth of this, all that need be done is to peruse the annual reports of Government published on the working of their Tenancy Laws. We find, therein, more than enough evidence to show how cruelly and relentlessly the landholders have been victimising and persecuting their tenants through Courts and Magistracy. The landholders are powerful in their money, influence and legal rights and their tenants are powerless and poverty-ridden. While this continues the calamitous contact between these two unequal parties results to-day in a clash which enthrones one party and degrades another.

Then again the records of Courts and the department of Civil Debtors' Jails, and the Registration Department

which keeps the records of land alienations bear their testimony only too eloquently to the unashamed and uncontrolled class war going on between the money lenders and indebted peasants. The fact that the Punjab, U. P., C. P. Governments have had to pass special legislation to partially protect the peasants shows that even Government is aware of the fact that in this clash of interests, peasants are being ground down. But this clash of interests is nothing else but a class war which is allowed to be carried on by the present legislation and to whose ravaging and ruinous existence the authorities are strangely blind. It is however our bounden duty to do all we can to strengthen our peasants and equip them in every possible way so that they can eliminate this class war which to-day eats into their very vitals.

Ruralisation and Socialisation of Industries

Our country is fortunately yet to be industrialised, in the Western sense. The Textile, Iron, Mining and other industrial interests which are growing very rapidly, thanks to the nationalist cum capitalist policy of protection, imposed upon our country by all our nationalists are already developing a Fascisti hegemony which bodies ill to our peasants and workers. The various Provincial Governments as well as the Government of India have set themselves to the costly task of subsidising, at our cost, the private entrepreneurs in order to enable them to develop their control over our economic life. It is upto us to see that the industries of our country are ruralised and socialised as soon as possible and that any further industrial development is allowed only on collective or co-operative lines so that any profits, direct or indirect, arising from such ventures will be shared in by all the masses.

Reorganisation of Agriculture

Our present methods of cultivation are most uneconomic and unprofitable, mostly because of the uneconomic holdings, fragmentation of fields, thanks to our hereditary system of distribution of property. Neither co-operative nor even compulsory consolidation of holdings nor the creation of family holdings coupled with non-alienability of lands can satisfactorily solve the problem. Co-operative or collective reorganisation of our occupied lands and their exploitation by modern methods of cultivation can alone help us. But to convert our peasants to the advantages of such a system will not be an easy task, as is shown by Russia's experience and it is our task to carry on ceaseless propaganda to win their agreement on this point.

State Lands and Workers

We must not however forget that the land hunger in our country is just as strong as in Pre-War Russia and that our landless agricultural workers are dying to secure some land. Nearly one third of our cultivable land is still unoccupied and in possession of the State and all this can and ought to be granted to the co-operative organisations of such workers, without the right of alienation. Not a cent of this land or that of the Talukdars which is to be taken for allotment to these people shall be granted to any individual, as that will only help to strengthen the present suicidal individual exploitation of land. Indeed, the success that may be achieved by such co-operative agricultural enterprises will help us to persuade our peasants to embrace the new Russian method of agricultural organisation. A perusal of the chart of Minimum Demands of our peasants, placed in your hands will indicate to you their other grievances.

All India Federation is Needed

Now to carry on our propaganda on these and other lines, to acquaint our peasants with the present day thought and to fit them to face ably and courageously the demands of the times and to enable them to triumph in the present class war, we need have to make an organised attempt. We have to-day Peasants organisations in the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar, U. P., C. P., Andhra, Tamilnaad, Malabar, Kerala. We have to bring them all together into an All India Peasants Congress, so that we can carry on our work more effectively and consciously in our respective provinces. We can pool all our varied experiences and learn from one another. This conference is convened mainly for the purpose of deliberating the need for such an organisation and taking the best measures for bringing it into existence. I am fully confident that you will all strive to co-operate with me and the organisers of the conference and enable us to bring into existence the All India Federation at least by the time the All India Peasants' Conference meets at Lucknow.

(As a result of this conference held in Madras in October 1935, an Organising Committee was formed to get into touch with the various Provincial and District Peasants Organisations and to form such Committees where they did not exist. Prof. Ranga, the President of the Committee then toured in the Punjab, Orissa, Bengal and United Provinces and in co-operation with comrade Mohanlal Gautam, convened a conference of the representatives of Peasants Organisations in Meerut, on the 15th of December. That conference recognised the need for the development of an All-India Peasants Congress and therefore decided to convene the Congress in Lucknow. Consequently the first All-India Kisan (Peasants) Congress was held on the 11th of April, 1936 at Lucknow under the presidentship of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and it has elected the All-India Kisan Committee with Prof. N. G. Ranga, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and Mohanlal Gautam as Secretaries and comrade Indulal Yagnik as the editor of the All-India Kisan Bulletin.)

Ed.

SPEECHES IN THE ASSEMBLY

To enable our readers to get a comprehensive idea of the thought that actuates Prof. Ranga in his campaign for the organisation of the peasants, the formulation of their demands and the realisation of their aims, some extracts from his speeches delivered in the Legislative Assembly during 1935-36, are being published. We may also state that through his speeches and other activities in the Assembly, the Professor has come to be recognised even by Mr. F. E. James, the Secretary of the European Group of M. L. A's as the "Representative of the Workers and Peasants of India."

EVILS OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

Speech delivered in the Legislative Assembly on the 15th of April 1936 in opposing Sir N. N. Sircar's (Law Member) Bill "to further amend the Indian Companies Act of 1913 (be referred to a select committee)....."
It may be interesting to note that while Messrs. Bhulabhai J. Desai (Leader of the Congress Party) and B. Das (Congress) supported the motion, Prof. Ranga alone opposed the Bill in toto.

Mr. President, if there is anything needed to condemn outright the capitalist claptrap with which my Honourable friend, Mr. Das, has been so much in love for a very long time, this Bill is enough. This Bill is really an eloquent condemnation of the capitalist system under which and according to which the industries of India are supposed to be progressing in this country. There are six objects to satisfy which this Bill is supposed to have been introduced in this House. They are mentioned

with a statement that there is a unanimity of opinion in regard to these six great and grave defects of the capitalist system in this country. It is necessary, we are told, to deal with mushroom and fraudulent companies, and we are asked to sing eloquent praise of the capitalist system. Next, we are asked to provide for changes in the provisions relating to the issue and contents of prospectuses. Prospectuses of companies are being issued in such a vague fashion as to deceive the prospective shareholders as well as the country at large, not to speak of the Government itself; and that is the system we are asked to prop up by this Bill. Then, again, this Bill seeks to provide for increased disclosure to shareholders of the financial position of the companies and for increased rights of shareholders in the management of the companies. We not only hand over the workers to these capitalist companies, to be exploited, we not only hand over the Government itself to be exploited in every possible way, either in the way of bounties or in the way of protective duties or in any of these directions, but also the shareholders, who are supposed to be the chief beneficiaries of the capitalist system, to those who are in charge of these capitalist concerns. And, after all these years of capitalist development in this country, even after the British Government has come, and after nearly one hundred years of development, we are now asked to come forward and make some provisions in order to protect these shareholders whose money has been placed in these capitalist concerns, on whose money for ever and ever large sums have been distributed as profits, and for modification of the present law applicable to the managing agents. Those, who are in charge of these capitalist concerns, are supposed to be the most efficient people, are supposed to be the best judges of what is

good for themselves and also for their shareholders: yet we are now asked to see that these people do not misbehave themselves, to see that these people do not continue to deceive their own clientele, do not deceive their own shareholders and to see that these people are, at least, prevented from utilising all their vicious powers that they have been enjoying for a very long time without any let or hindrance. Then, again, we are asked to provide for special provisions to govern banking companies and numerous other improvements.

These few admissions alone are enough to condemn this system of industrial development by joint stock companies. Why should we have these joint stock companies at all? If we admit that there should be joint stock companies, then there will be the need for the promulgation of this particular law. If we do not admit the necessity for the existence of these companies at all, then this law becomes thoroughly valueless. Do we have the capitalist system? We have. Do we want it? Governmant says yes: many friends say yes. And, those of us, who deny the necessity for its existence, are simply dismissed as those who are in favour of socialist claptrap, as has been put here by my friend, Mr. B. Das himself.

But I wish to maintain, that even this Government is not so completely wedded to the capitalist system, especially private ownership. The Government is without doubt one of the biggest socialist concerns in this world. This Government has under its control the management and supervision of the railways and the posts and telegraphs and the broadcasting now, and also municipalities: and nobody has come forward to say against this Government that this sort of Bill should be

passed: no one has come forward to say that Government is suffering from the same difficulties. The capitalist system is considered to be suffering from so many grave defects according to their own admission, according to the report of their Special Officer, Mr. Sen. We have had on several occasions to criticise the mismanagement that we find in the railways as well as the posts and telegraphs. Quite true: but at least we have got the right, as representatives of the people of this country, to examine, either in this House or at the bar of the Finance Committee or the Public Accounts Committee, the manner in which this Government is carrying on its own business concerns. But what chance have we got to examine how these capitalist concerns are carrying on their business, how these capitalist concerns are trying to safeguard the interest of their own clientele, their shareholders, and how much exploitation they have been carrying on not only of their shareholders but also of the general public? Absolutely none. Why then should we be asked to help them and pass this Bill and give a further lease of power and existence to these capitalist concerns? I do not know why Government is so much in love with them. Evidently, this Government being the agent of another Government, which itself is an agent of the capitalist system in England, is anxious to prop up this particular system and help this system to double the industrialisation of this country at the expense of the consumers, at the expense of the workers and peasants, at a huge annual cost, in terms of protective duties as well as excise duties and bounties and barriers.

This country is having the satisfaction of being one of the eight industrially great countries of the world. I say India must be the fourth, or third, or second, if

not the first. I want this country to be the first industrially great country, the greatest country from an industrial point of view: but Ido not want the industrial development of this country to be carried on under the ægis of the capitalist system, under the ægis of these joint stock companies; and, it is for that reason that I am completely opposed to this kind of legislation.

Minimum Wage Guarantee for Workers

Then, Sir, I make a few suggestions. There are certain stipulations made here for a minimum capital for every company that is to be floated in this country. When you are stipulating for a minimum capital for every company, why not also stipulate for a maximum rate of profit? Why not also stipulate for a minimum wage to be paid to the workers there? Why not also stipulate, if there should be any such capitalist system at all, for a partnership in those companies for the workers? I do not know why it is, that Government does not wish to make any of these proposals.

Sir, at one time there were railways which were given a guarantee of minimum interest: even today there are Central Land Mortgage Banks being floated all over India to which Government are guaranteeing a minimum rate of interest and dividend for the shareholders. This was done and is being done because at that time as well as at present, Government have felt that unless they guarantee like wise the capital would not be forthcoming to develop the railway system or the co-operative land mortgage system, in this country.

Similarly we are told by my Honourable friend, the Leader of my Party, that the managing agency system should not be abolished completely, because

without it the capitalist development of this country could not be carried on. I admit that some sort of stimulus has got to be given to this shy capitalists in this country in order to induce them to come forward and carry out these joint—stock companies and develop this industrialisation, if industrialisation there must be and it must be carried on, only under the capitalist ægis. But even according to the capitalist system, why should not this Government itself come forward and offer to do the work that these managing agents are supposed to have been doing?

Abolish Agency System

I maintain that it is necessary that Government should take the necessary steps and see that this managing agency system is completely abolished and whatever necessary and beneficial functions today that this system might discharge the Government itself should come forward and undertake to discharge those functions, so that there will always be capital enough to finance.

I want the Government to come forward and stand surety for a minimum dividend, as they have done in the case of railways in the past and as they are doing today in the case of the Central Land Mortgage Banks in this country, and thus encourage these shareholders and small people who have got small amounts of money, to come forward and place their money at the disposal of these companies which are interested in the development of the industrial system and thus help this country to escape from the evils of this managing agency system. At the same time, I do not want this Government to waste all its resources by standing surety for these companies indefinitely. I want the Government also to

stipulate, as they have done in the case of the railways, that, after a particular period, it must be open to the State to take over the management of these companies.

Sir, I want that the Government should fix a maximum period for working these companies, after which it should be open to the Government to purchase those companies for which they stand surety. Government should also have the right to stipulate, whenever it finds it necessary, to insist on the necessity of either a combination of some of these companies or on rationalisation or a trustification, so that the inefficiency which exists now can be minimised. And inefficiency there always has been,—in fact the existence of this inefficiency this Government itself has admitted, and, I want the Government to retain powers in their hands to reduce this inefficiency.

Rights of Shareholders

I also want, Sir, that the shareholders' rights should be restricted. There should be a maximum fixed for the dividends they can draw from any of these companies. The Government has stipulated a certain maximum, that is 6 per cent. of dividend to be drawn by the shareholders of various central land mortgage banks, and I do not see any reason why the Government should not similarly come forward with a proposal that there should be a certain maximum dividend that the shareholders could draw from companies, and the remaining profits should go either into the coffers of the State or to the workers themselves who are interested in all these industries or companies.

Sir, I am not one of those, who like my friend, Mr. B. Das, grow eloquent about the claims of these share-

holders. I am not very enthusiastic about these shareholders at all. Even with the present capitalistic system, our shareholders have been too ignorant, they have been too voracious and too very selfish. It is all very well for our capitalists to come forward and say that they are very enthusiastic about the development of industries in this country. What have these capitalists done to promote and advance the cause of industries in this country? They, for their own part, have done nothing to foster the industries of this country. Either Government have encouraged them at the expense of the taxpayer or because they were assured of 100 or 150 per cent. profits almost from the very beginning, and that is why, they have come forward to put small sums of money in various companies, and thus we have some sort of capitalistic system. At the same time, how much capitalistic exploitation have we in this country. Very little. When comparing the phenomenal progress marked by post-war Russia, or post-regulated Russia, the industrial progress that we have been able to make in this country is practically insignificant.

An Honourable Member: They are socialistic only in one direction.

THEY ARE PATRIOTS!

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Our own capitalists have not been patriotic; our own capitalists have not been progressive; our own capitalists have not been enthusiasts of industrialisation; our capitalists have put their money only in some small industries merely because they were assured of very high profits. Our capitalists have always been very shy; they have not grit or courage in them, nor have they any foresight; as was stated only

the other day by the Finance Member himself with a large element of truth that the European capital, Western capital have had to give a lead to Indian capital in various directions; and even then our Indian capital waited and waited for so many years until some others had shown them how to make profits. Then only our capitalists came forward and put a little bit of their money. Such capital should have no claim on our support.

I want, this Government to come forward with a proposal to incorporate in the Act, as far as it is possible for them to do so.

In conclusion, I want to oppose this Bill *in toto*. At the same time, I submit, I shall reserve my right to propose amendments when the Bill comes back from the Select Committee. I do hope that the Select Committee, at least, will bear in mind the general remarks I have made and try to amend this Bill as radically as possible so that it may, at least, go some way to meet the demands I am making, not on behalf of myself, but on behalf of the vast millions of this country who have been bled white in the interests of the present capitalistic system and in the interests of the capitalist world.

INADEQUATE TAXES ON CAPITALISTS

In opposing Babu Baijnoth Bajora's amendment to the Finance Bill for the removal of surcharges on income-tax, Prof. Ranga made a vehement attack on the present system of Taxation and speaking for the Congress made its position clear against the Reduction of the Taxes of the Rich. (Assembly speech, 20th March 1930.)

Sir, I oppose this amendment. It is not because I do not want any section of our people to get any tax relieved, but it is because, as we are situated today, we are powerless in our fight against this Government, and, therefore, we are obliged, in spite of ourselves, to pay some taxes or other in order to maintain this Government. These Governments collect these taxes, not because we pay them voluntarily, but because they have the power to collect them, and so these Governments have to be maintained and are being maintained.

An Unjust Demand

Who is to maintain this Government? Somebody or other has got to pay the taxes. If this particular tax remission were to be given to these payees of direct taxes, Government would be a loser of one crore and 34 lakhs and Government would begin to wonder wherefrom they could get it. They would cretainly think of only one section of the people, and that is the poorer classes of people in this country, as they have always done in the past whenever they wanted additional revenues: They would also hereafter try to get the major portion of it from the poorer classes of this country if they were to need any additional income. Here, especially, when rich people themselves have to be given this remission, Government cannot think of

getting any more from the rich people and so they will have to derive all this from the poor people. Is that fair? Is that just, to permit this Government to pounce upon the poor and grab these, 134 lakhs more; in addition to what the poor people are obliged to pay even at present? Sir, I think it is very unfair and very unjust on the part of the rich people of this country to come forward with a demand like this. I do not hold any brief at all for this Government; I do not wish to pay any taxes to this Government as it is today; but I am obliged to pay, as I cannot help it.

It is Fair

And, in paying these taxes, I should like the rich people to contribute very much more than they are doing today; because I know that the rich people are certainly in a better position to pay these taxes than the poor. And, what is more, they are deriving very much more benefit from this Government than the poor through the customs duties. It is the rich people really who are being benefited in this country and not the poor people, and it is only fair that, if we are to pay any taxes, they ought to bear the lion's share. But, on the other hand, the truth is that they pay very much less than what the poor people are paying. They do not even pay just as much as the additional income that the poor people have had to pay in the last 15 years even in the shape of customs duties.

A Government for the Rich

At the same time, I do want this Government to spend immense amounts of money upon the development of public utilities in this country. They have, within the last two years, given the benefit

of a recurring grant or subsidy of two crores of rupees to the rich people, whereas they have only made a non-recurring grant of two crores of rupees for the poor people. That shows how the wind blows. This Government is certainly on the side of the rich and not on the side of the poor; and if you want this relief, I can only say that you are being very unreasonable and very unfair. But I ask this Government to spend very much more upon public untilities, particularly on the rural development grant and such other public utilities. I expect this Government to get very much more money through taxation, but my rich friends here need not get themselves frightened into thinking that I am asking this Government to impose any additional taxation on them. I would certainly like this Government to impose additional taxation on them in order to make good the loss we have inflicted upon them by cutting down the Salt Duty. But, in addition to that also, I want them to raise some more money.

How can they raise it

Without raising the income-tax rates, they can raise money. There is a lot of foreign capital invested in this country which has escaped the payment of income-tax. There are many Europeans and others who keep up a show of living in this country by investing their capital in this country, but in companies, which are incorporated in England, they are escaping the payment of their proper share of income-tax. In addition to that, there are now 100 crores of rupees that Indians pay in the shape of freight charges to foreign Shipping Companies.

Therefore, if only Government would direct the Committee, which is now inquiring into the working of

the income-tax law, to suggest ways and means by which the Government of India will be able to stop all the leakages that now occur in the collection of income-tax, to enable them to collect all the income-tax that they could certainly collect, it would be possible for the Government of India to assure for themselves an additional income of at least eight crores of rupees through this means alone. And if they were to do it, they would certainly be able to spend very much more on public utilities and also help these rich people by not taxing them immediately to any greater extent than at present.

"POOR MAN'S PLEA"

For Abolition of the Salt Tax

Speech delivered on the 20th March 1936 on the Floor of the Legislative Assembly in support of Pandit Nilakanta Das's amendment to the Finance Bill for the Reduction of the Salt Tax. "A brilliant and well informed speech" Though he supports Pandit Das's Amendment he pleaded for the total abolition of the salt tax—in fact all taxes on the poor.

Sir, in rising to support this amendment, I wish to state in the very beginning that I support this amendment, not because I am opposed to taxation in every one of its forms but because I am anxious that if taxes are to be paid at all they should be paid to a Government which takes sufficient care to cut down its own expenditure upon the services, which tries to spend the maximum amount of public revenues upon public utility services and which is anxious to do all that lies in its power to develop the productive capacity and ability of the people; and also that, if taxes are to be paid, the

should be paid by different classes of people in such a manner that those who can pay are made to pay to the extent that they can pay, and those who cannot pay are not made to pay even to the slightest extent possible.

A Neglected People

I find that neither the Government nor the public in this country have yet realised the necessity for helping the masses in this country to develop their own productive capacity and for helping the poor of this country to escape from the necessity of having to pay unnecessary, unfair and unduly high taxation. It is most unfortunate that whenever any surplus has been found by the Government of India in their budgets, they have tried to give tax remission only to that class of people who have been very well organised, who have become powerful in the press and who have also become too powerful even for this Government of India which has to its credit an unenviable record of being immune to public opinion in this country and to all criticism in the press and on the platform. The remission has to be given whenever there is a surplus in the financial position of the Government of India, but, in so doing, it is the Government of India's duty, as well as of the public, to see that only those who really deserve tax remission are given such remissions. It is true that unfortunately, not only in India, but also in the rest of the world, the poor and the down-trodden, who really are not capable of bearing any further taxation at all, are today being over-burdened with taxation, and, therefore, it is necessary that they should be given the benefit of any surplus in the budget of this Government or in the budgets of any Provincial Governments. But, unfortunately, neither the Provincial Governments nor the Central Government have tried to

act up to this and to give the benefit of the surplus budget to the poor. On the other hand, they have been busy in piling up, year after year, the burdens of taxation that are inflicted upon the poor masses.

A GREAT BOON FOR THE POOR

To support my point, Sir, I would only draw the attention of this House to the fact that in customs, in salt and in every direction the burden on the poor has been increased since 1913. The revenue from the salt tax itself has increased from 6 crores 34 lakhs in 1921-22, that is, two years after the great war had ended, to 8 crores 75 lakhs by this budget. So it is 2 crores 59 lakhs more than what they had to pay before the war. It was then contended by Sir Malcolm Hailey, one of the predecessors of the present Finance Member, that, during war time, wages of the workers had gone up in towns as well as in agricultural areas and, therefore, they were in a better position to bear this tax, which, after all, came to six annas per head per annum. Even that plea cannot be brought forward today, either by the Finance Member or his Secretary, because, even according to the Budget Officer, the index figures of prices of commodities are lower than what they were in 1913. What justification can there be for this additional levy of nearly 2 crores 50 lakhs upon the poor people; and, if we come to examine the correctness of their estimate that on every poor man the *per capita* incidence of this particular tax is only six annas per annum, we realise that they are awfully mistaken. Sir, by levying this particular salt tax, we prohiblt, as my friend, Dr. Bhagavan Das, has already stated, the ordinary people, the peasants and workers, in all those areas of the country where you

have got lands, unfit for cultivation, but fit for the manufacture of salt, from manufacturing salt and thus seeking out their livelihood. We also prevent large numbers of peasants from trying to supplement their incomes by manufacturing salt either on saline lands or on the sea-shore. It is these people who will be directly benefited if we abolish the salt tax. Their numbers will certainly be very much more than one million people as was mentioned by the Finance Member yesterday, who can be expected to derive additional employment if the industrialisation of this country were to be promoted by prohibiting all imports into this country and by giving every possible assistance as was mentioned by the Deputy Leader and also by the Deputy Leader of the Independent party.

AN ALTERNATIVE

Is it not fair that the Government of India should try to attempt to provide a chance for one million and more people to get additional employment not by prohibiting all imports into this country, not by spending crores of rupees, not only from provincial coffers but also from the Central coffers, in order to stimulate the industrial development of the country, but by trying to remit the salt tax? It may be argued how then will the Central Government be able to make good this particular loss of 8 crores and 75 lakhs? Sir, I am quite prepared to show the way. Yes, some of my friends would at once think that I would suggest an income-tax upon people who get incomes from their lands.

An Honourable Member: *Why not?*

Prof. N. G. Ranga: I would certainly be justified in suggesting a thing like that. But, unfortunately, it is

no use making a suggestion like that in this House, because our Finance Member has absolutely no regard at all for history, except of course for making absurd quotations here from a book, even the name of which he could not mention here.

I am only taking it as a supposition. I am not prepared to make that suggestion, because, Sir, the Joint Parliamentary Committee has stated that it is for the future Provincial Governments to levy it, wherever the Provincial Legislatures think it possible and necessary. But incidentally I may be permitted to state that as much as 150 crores are being paid by the peasants of this country, by nearly one half of the peasantry of this country, to all these intermediaries between the State on the one side and themselves on the other. These intermediaries did come into existence because of the fiat of the British Government, and these people flourish even today in spite of the economic depression, because of the long arm of this Government standing behind them and protecting them and even encouraging them to enhance the rents and rates charging them most inhuman and unconscionable rents

What Government Should do?

In asking for the remission of Salt Tax, I wish to suggest that the Government should be quite prepared to follow up the recommendations made by the Taxation Inquiry Committee that certain rates, at certain grades of pay, should be raised, and although that Report was submitted to them more than ten years ago, Government, even today, do not propose to charge at least the same rates as were proposed ten years ago.

In the last ten years, the value of commodities raised by the peasants has gone down by nearly 50 per cent.

Because of the fall in prices, the value of agricultural produce raised by the peasants has gone down, as I have said, by 50 per cent., and yet the salt tax goes on rising. The revenue from it goes on rising. Soon after the War, it was maintained that because it was an emergent necessity for the Government of India to make good their deficit of nearly 29 crores, the peasants and workers were asked to bear their share of taxation, and, therefore, it was doubled. But what plea of emergency can the Honourable the Finance Member bring forward in order to ask this House to sanction a revenue of no less than Rs. 876 lakhs from salt alone? If this were the only tax that the peasants and workers were obliged to pay, then it might be contended, with some plausibility, by the Treasury Bench that, after all, it was not very much, that it was only six annas per head. But there is the land revenue assessment that is raised by all the Provincial Governments, and it alone comes to Rs. 1-7-0 per head per annum all over the country. Then there is the enormous income that is being derived in increasing dimensions by Local Governments from Stamps.

Mr. President (*The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim*): *The Honourable Member is really making a budget speech.*

PEASANTS' OVER BURDENED

Prof. N. G. Ranga: As much as Rs. 1-7-0 is being raised in the shape of land revenue, and nearly half as much is being raised in the shape of Stamps, and a similar amount in the shape of tax on toddy and other drinks. So, it comes to Rs. 3-9-0, *plus* six annas on salt alone. Even yesterday, the Honourable the Finance Member had estimated the whole national income of this country at Rs. 1,800 crores.

The Honourable Sir James Grigg (Finance Member): 1,600 crores.

Prof. N. G. Ranga : That serves my purpose. I do not know how he has arrived at that figure, I am sure he would not be able to substantiate it because he has no use for statistics, because he has no statistical department in this country.

I was saying before the House got up for Lunch that the masses of this country are being over-burdened by one tax or the other and that on the head of land revenue alone they were paying Rs. 1-7-0, that in the form of excise duties Rs. 1-7-0 per head and then on stamps 11 annas and on customs Rs. 1-8-0, totalling Rs. 5-1-0 per head per annum. What they have to pay in the form of salt tax is in addition to the Rs. 5-1-0 per head per annum. We have to consider this question of the abolition of the salt tax only after keeping in mind this particular great contribution that they are making towards the maintenance of the Government of this cauntry, either in the Provinces or in the Centre. The Honourable the Finance Member estimated the total annual national income of this country as 1,600 crores of rupees. That gives us nearly Rs. 44-8-0 per head per annum. As I have said, I do not know how he has arrived at this figure. I remember having come across another estimate made by an eminent economist and that was put at 1,200 crores of rupees. Even if we were to accept the Honourable the Finance Member's estimate of 1,600 crores of rupees, high though it is, in view of the enormous fall in prices during the last five years, we get only Rs. 44-8 per head per annum for the population of the whole of this country.

But, if on the other hand we were to calculate it only

for the British Indians, it is, I admit, a little more. It may come up to Rs. 50, but this salt tax is being levied not only upon the urban classes but also upon the rural classes. The rural masses alone number 75 per cent. of the total population of this country and their *per capita* income is very much lower indeed. I made an estimate only recently, with the aid of the statistics published from time to time by the Government of India, and I have arrived at the figure of Rs. 25 per head per annum for the agricultural classes, peasants and workers taken together and the other artisans dependent upon them. It is out of this Rs. 25 per annum per head that an agriculturist has to pay this Rs. 5 1-0 towards some of the taxes of the State.

In addition to the taxes that I have already enumerated, there are very many taxes, such as the cesses levied by the Local Boards, the various cesses that are being levied from time to time by the village panchayats that are being established in various parts of India and the terminal taxes, not to speak of the professional tax and various other taxes raised in the municipal areas. So, more than 20 per cent. of the total annual income of an agriculturist is being absorbed towards taxation, even according to the statistics of the Government of India. How many of the urban classes are made to pay just as much from out of their total gross income towards the maintenance of the State? Very few indeed. It is because the Taxation Committee has realised this anomaly it has suggested that other taxes should be found by the Government of India and other Provincial Governments in order to minimise, to some extent, this unequal distribution of tax burden between the rich on the one side and the poor on the other, but no action has been taken on those recommendations although it is

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stand why the Honourable the Finance Member, who has not displayed very much of respect towards the proposals of his predecessors, should be so very respectful towards this particular, partial and one sided and unjust pledge given by his predecessor. This relief to those who have to pay direct taxes, during these two years, increases the inequality that has always existed in the distribution of the burden of taxation between the rich and the poor, and yet I do not know why he was able to pride himself upon the fact that he was trying to help the poor and to help especially the agriculturists and the rural masses.

Finance Member to Visit the Villages

Then, Sir, we are met with another argument from the Treasury Benches, that, after all, it is only six annas. If it is not six annas, it may be calculated at 4½ annas and after all 4½ annas is not much. Why bother about it? If only the Honourable the Finance Member or his Secretary, Mr. Lloyd, would care to accompany me to those innumerable villages that I am busy visiting during the recess, I would be able to show to them how valuable this 4½ annas is and can be in the family economy of any poor peasant or artisan. I can take him to any shop where there are men and women giving out small quantities of grain, it may be one third of a pice, or 1/12th of an nnna to a merchant and bargaining for the supply of five or six commodities—a little bit of cocoanut oil, a little bit of castor oil, one or two drops of gingelly oil and just a little of turmeric, and, I dare say, a little bit of sweets for their children and then begin to haggle with the merchant for a little more.* You may call it

* See Prof. Ranga's Economic Organisation of Indian Villages Vols. I and II and Economics of the Handloom.

dasturi or tip or anything you may like. It is known as *kosaru* in my language. That is always being asked for and over that there are always many pleasant and unpleasant jokes at each other's expense. It is in that way that they make their purchases. I submitted a report once to the Government of Madras on the manner in which poor people make their purchases in the various shandies or markets that are held in various parts of Madras and Government were surprised out of their wits, how this sort of business could be carried on. I had to submit that report, because I was then appointed a special honorary officer for making an economic survey. I know that the Government of India have no use for economic surveys. Experts are of no use. Statistics are of no use. Even for the Madras Government it came to be of no use, because they gave up any further surveys into the economic conditions of the peasants, when they saw the results of this survey to be so heart-rending and inconvenient. Such are the people from whom Government collects this Rs. 5 per annum per head out of the Rs. 25 per head that they earn. Is that a fair thing to do?

Then the Honourable the Finance Member might say to this House: 'Here is an Honourable Member who makes an irresponsible suggestion and who asks the Government of India to lose as much as 8 crores and 75 lakhs per annum. How am I to balance my budgets? Wherefrom am I to get this revenue? If I cannot get this revenue my credit would go down and the Government's liability to pay interest periodically on their loans would become too burdensome. He would say that it would be impossible for him to get any more money from Opium on account of the convention passed at the League of Nations. It would be impossible for

him to raise any more money on land revenue because the centrally administered areas are already overburdened. Anyhow, I hope he would not think of raising land revenue in the centrally administered areas. Although the Honourable the Home Member was not prepared to accept the results published by the District Congress Committee of Delhi in regard to conditions in the rural areas, it is true that land revenue burden, even in the centrally administered areas, is too high, and, therefore, cannot be increased.

Then what is the other revenue that we can think of? He will turn round and tell me that I am speaking on behalf of consumers, and, therefore, I cannot ask him to raise the customs duty any longer. Then what is that source of income from which the Government of India can derive their income in order to make up this loss? It must be a source of revenue which will go on bringing in more and more money as the needs of the State increase, and what is that source of revenue? Now, Sir, I don't think there will be any Honourable Member in this House who will suggest that all the taxes should be paid by the poor alone or by one particular section of the people alone. If taxes are to be paid, they ought to be paid by all those who can bear them. I have looked into the past proceedings of the budget Sessions in this House. Everybody has said that certainly the poor people alone should not be made to pay the tax towards the maintenance of the State and that the rich alone should pay. That is my contention. Of course, I may be met with the argument raised by my Honourable friend, the Baronet from Bombay, and others, that the rich people have been made to pay very much more. I do not wish to go into detail. I wish only to state one particular fact for your consideration. If you

look into the reports published on the collection of income-tax by the Government of India, it would be possible for you to find out that the number of people who are able to pay income-tax has increased by leaps and bounds during recent years and especially the number of people paying income-tax on an annual income of more than Rs. 2,000 has increased to an enormous extent, by more than 60 per cent. since 1921. That naturally raises the question that if the ability of these people to pay income-tax has increased, in the last fourteen or fifteen years, how is it that they are paying less and less? What about the others?

On the Decrease

As I have already told you, Sir, at the beginning of my speech, the incomes of the poor peoples have gone down by fifty per cent. and even more in the last few years. And inspite of what my Honourable friend, Mr. Sanjiva Row,has had to say the other day, it is a fact, an unvarnished fact that the income of the poor people in this country, the income of the peasants in this country, has been going down and is going down even today. It may be due to the depression, it may be due to the incapacity of this Government to do anything, it may be due to the unwillingness of this Government to do anything to improve their productive capacity, and it is such people who are made to pay more and more,—from the Rs. 6,34 lakhs in 1921-22 they are asked to pay Rs. 8,75,00,000 now. Is that fair, I ask? Then if the Honourable the Finance Member thinks he cannot very well touch these rich men because they are so very powerful, and there are rich people in every party, I would only ask him why this Government, which has been powerful enough to put two lakhs of us

in jail, powerful enough to keep on the Statute-book so many of these unwanted laws, powerful enough to keep thousands and thousands of people in jail without any trial, powerful enough to try to destroy our Congress and then claim, "Oh, yes, the Congress is all gone, except for these Gandhi caps in this House"—why should this Government be so very much afraid of these rich people? If it is not afraid of all the millions of people in this country who call themselves peasants and workers and who constitute by far the bulk of the population of this vast country, why should it be afraid of these rich people? Sir, it is all because it is itself in alliance with the rich people. (Hear, hear.)

BASELESS ACCUSATIONS

Sir, it is all very well for the Honourable the Finance Member to say that the Congress is generally in alliance with high finance. I say, no, it is not the Congress which is in alliance, but on the contrary high finance fights shy of the Congress; it is high finance which has entered into an alliance with Lancashire by means of the Mody-Lees pact (Hear, hear), it is high finance which sees no prospect of being able honestly to compete with Japan; it is high finance which is prepared to welcome Lancashire goods but not the goods from Japan or the products of hand-loom weavers. And, Sir, it is high finance which is today ruling in the councils of the Governor General in Council,—and it is that high finance which I want the Honourable the Finance Member, if he really wishes to be fresh in his methods as he has been posing to be so here, to touch. Well, he does look fresh enough any way. Sir, he can somehow manage to raise this 8 crores 75 lakhs. For this reason, Sir, from 34 crores to 54 crores, the

customs revenue has risen in the last 14 years, that is an increase of 20 crores. That is just a little more than all that is being paid by the rich people in the shape of income-tax and super-tax. If the poor classes can be made to pay 54 crores in the shape of customs duties, 8 crores and 75 lakhs in the shape of salt tax, I do not see any reason why the rich people should not be made to pay 8 crores 75 lakhs for the relief of the poor people. That is the amount which will be involved in the abolition of this tax. But the Government is not going to do that.

Solves the Unemployment Problem

I wish to place before this House another fact; that it is not only four annas six pies which an individual will be gaining by the abolition of this tax. You would be able to provide employment, voluntarily, for more than one million people in the country side. It is true that, the rich people and the urban classes may anyhow have to pay, hereafter, for the salt that they consume. Well, Sir, they can very well afford to pay it. I might be asked what about the urban working classes? We are being asked to pay these customs duties in order to help my Honourable friend, the Baronet from Bombay, and also the industrial workers in urban areas and should they not at least make this much of contribution to relieve the poor masses? If that is justifiable, then who are to be benefited directly by this? It is the rural masses and workers and peasants and there would be no less than 50 millions of people and each one of them would be gaining Rs. 1-8-0 per annum as addition to an annual income of Rs. 25. This sum of Rs. 1-8-0 is certainly a mentionable amount. After what Government take away from the annual income of

Rs. 25—they take away to the extent of nearly Rs. 6—this additional sum of Rs. 1-8-0 is a considerable sum. Will not this Government be good enough to make that gift to the ordinary peasants.

WHAT HAS THE GOVERNMENT DONE?

I am not asking the Government to spend this money by devising ways and means by which industrialisation can be brought about in this country. I was surprised the other day when the Honourable Member for Industries and Labour got up and asked my Honourable frined, Mr. Joshi, what were his ideas of developing industry in this country? Well, Sir, it is for the Government of India to do that. It is not our business. If I were the Government of India, I would be able to produce a number of schemes from my sleeves and I would be ashamed to ask any Honourable Member of this House to produce a scheme. It is for the Government of India to produce the scheme. After 150 years of benign rule of the British Government, the Honourable the Finance Member says, there are no famines now, while there used to be famines before. I am quite prepared to believe most of the things which the Honourable the Finance Member wants us to believe. Yes, there were famines before the British Government came into this country, there was salt tax before the British Government came into this country. What is it that the British Government have done, if we are suffering today in the same way as we used to suffer before the advent of British rule? What is it that the masses have gained by British rule? Practically nothing.

An Honurable Member: There were no epidemic diseases before the advent of British rule.

GOD SAVE US FROM THIS SORT OF GOVERNMENT

Prof. N. G. Ranga : Look at any part of India you like. There is the Khulna district, there is the Gujrat where revenue officers, the *patwari* and the *chaukidar*, had to resign their jobs on account of their inability collect taxes that are cruelly raised by Government, in spite of the raging famine for the past four or five years. The neighbouring provinces and the neighbouring districts are all suffering from famine. There is the Burdwan and several other districts in that part of the country from which the Honourable the Law Member hails and I do not know whether he is just as fond of Bengal as we are all of India. There is famine in Burdwan. There is famine in the Punjab and in the Central Provinces. Peasant marches are being organized in those parts in order to ask for tax remission. The tragic part of it is that Government are not even prepared to extend the salt concessions to those parts which are badly famine stricken. Will the Government tell me whether they have extended the free salt concessions to any place in India during the whole of last year ? If that is the result of 150 years of British rule, well, I leave the Honourable the Finance Member to feel proud of it, and I can only say, "God save us from this sort of Government."

What I want is eight crores and seventy-five lakhs as tax relief. It is not a great demand. The Honourable Member gave two crores to the rich people last year and this year. He might turn round and say, "Oh! I have given one crore last year and I am giving one crore and seventy-five lakhs this year which makes a total of 2 crores and 75 lakhs for rural uplift. What more do you want?" He has himself stated that there

is no possibility of any more grant hereafter. Well, Sir, he has given 2 crores and 75 lakhs in return for how much? Fifty-four crores paid in the shape of customs duties, 8 crores 75 la khs paid in the shape of salt tax. That is for the Government of India alone. What about the Provincial Governments and the millions of money that are being paid to them? Out of Rs. 25 *per capita* head of income, nearly Rs. 6 is paid to the Government from the ordinary agriculturist. The Honourable Member ought to realise what he has done for peasants does not go anywhere and that it is not at all enough.

Every Honourable Member of this House has already made it perfectly clear that we want the total abolition of the salt tax. I know my Honourable friends are impatient about moving their own amendments on salt tax with a view to get remission. They think if we are not able to get this total abolition, let us at least get a remission of two annas or four annas or more. It may be that this question has been discussed again and again for several years past in this House as well as in its predecessors. It may be so, but I say it is on this that the British Government is going to break itself, it is on this that the people of this country have carried a national fight all along. It is for the sake of this that Mahatma Gandhi has had to march to Dandi, it is for the sake of this that people like myself have had to give up rosy chances of jobs and come down here to fight the people's cause. It was over almost a similar that the French Revolution broke out and the post-war German Revolution took place. It is over such a seemingly unimportant thing that the Russian Revolution took place.

I warn the Government that, if they do not abolish this salt tax, they are bargaining for a revolution. I am not so very keen whether you heed my warning or not, because you seem to be bent on bargaining for a revolution. But if you do not want revolution in this country, then make a beginning and get rid of 8 crores and 75 lakhs. Try to make a gesture to the masses. Otherwise the masses will be perfectly justified in going about the country rising, not only against this Government, but also against all those classes who have been co-operating with this Government in order that the masses might be exploited. It is easy to say, yes, look at these people, they have gone mad. Mahatma Gandhi was once attacked as being mad. The great Wilberforce was once attacked as being mad. It serves the interest of the rich, the Anglo-Indian and the pro-Government Press to style some of us as mad people. Yes, Sir, we are mad, mad with rage, mad against injustice, mad against this Government, mad against tyranny and mad against all repressive laws. I would rather wish that these 365 millions of people should go so mad as to get rid of this system of Government than that we should parade ourselves as sensible people as some of my Honourable friends over there say is quiet on the western front" while as a matter of fact there would be the German march into the Rhur. (Applause.)

Workers' Educational Association (England). Prof. N. G. Ranga, who was a student and also a teacher later, is seen in his characteristic Indian costume.

GANDHI-IRWIN PACT

Salt Concession

Speech delivered on the 2nd of April 1935 on Pandit Nilkantadas' amendment to the Finance Bill to incorporate the terms of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in the Finance Bill. As a result of this amendment, which was subsequently withdrawn, the Finance Member gave his categorical assurance that the Pact would be honoured both in letter and spirit.

Sir, in opposing this particular motion, the Honourable Member on the Government Benches has stated that the system of giving discretion to the local authorities of seeing and checking the free manufacture of salt by the poor people, in different areas, has worked very well and he did not see any reason why any change should be made in the present practice.

Police Zulum

Only the other day, through a supplementary question, I tried to draw the attention of the Honourable the Finance Member to what is happening in certain parts of the Madras Presidency. Sir, although this discretion has been granted to the local officers whether or not to allow the peasants and workers to manufacture salt free in their own local areas for their local and personal use, yet the police have been taking the law into their own hands and have been going about frightening the masses from exercising this particular privilege of theirs and thus preventing the ordinary people from enjoying this particular privilege.

Secondly, when we asked the Honourable the Finance Member whether, in cases where the local officers refused permission to freely manufacture salt to local people, any appeal lay to him against their decisions, he answered in the negative saying that he did not see any reason why there should be any appeal at all to him against the decisions taken by the local officers.

THE PACT TO BE A DEAD LETTER?

Sir, the effect of these two things, the *zulum* used by the local police on the one hand and the refusal of the Honourable the Finance Member on the other hand to interfere, whenever the local officers decided, against the petitioners for freely manufacturing salt,—the combination of these two circumstances will result in the actual nullification of this particular Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It will become impossible for peasants and workers anywhere in this country to try to take advantage of this particular Pact. And even where these people have been manufacturing salt for a long time freely and in an unfettered manner, it would become impossible to go on manufacturing salt because of the police *zulum*.

FAMINE STRICKEN PEASANTS

As Honourable Members are aware there is famine in five districts of the Madras Presidency, known as the Ceded Districts and I learn now that there is also famine in two other districts, Tinnevely and Nellore.

Maulvi Syed Murtuza Saheb Bahadur: (South Madras: Muhammadan): And Trichinopoly.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: My Honourable friend says, in Trichinopoly too. When famine is prevalent in eight districts of Madras Presidency, applications have been

sent by various peasants and workers to the authorities in that Presidency for permission to freely manufacture salt, and yet, except in the case of peasants and workers in the Anantapur and Bellary districts, in all other cases, these petitions were dismissed and we are told, Sir, that there should be no appeal at all against the refusal of the local authorities, to permit these hard—pressed people, to manufacture salt freely for their own use or for local sale. If this is the manner in which the Government of India wishes to implement the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, in so far as free manufacture of salt is concerned, and if this is the manner in which the Government of India wish to leave everything to the discretion of local officers and refuse to interfere even where there are flagrant instances of injustice, then it is better that this House should insist that this power of enforcing this Gandhi-Irwin Pact should not be left to the discretion of the executive authorities, but should insist on a statutory provision being made in this particular Finance Bill.

Even in the case of those two districts, where permission is supposed to have been granted to the peasants and workers, it is specifically stated that this permission is given to them only because there is supposed to be famine in those districts and not because they can possibly and easily manufacture salt in their own local areas without causing any effective loss to the Government of India in their revenues. I would like to know whether the Government of India, when they were concluding this particular pact, had in mind the granting of this particular concession only to those areas, only to those people who are supposed to be suffering from any particular calamity, like famine, or whether they really thought of permitting people to

manufacture salt freely in their own local areas and for their own local use. I am sure that at the time when this particular Pact was concluded, it was thought by those who concluded the Pact, as well as those outside in the country who accepted it, that this particular privilege will be extended to those workers and peasants and other poor people who could easily manufacture salt in their own areas and for their own local or personal use irrespective of any special or economic conditions of their particular locality. If that is so, I find now, that the present practice that is being followed by the Madras Government and according to the instructions of the Government of India and also as admitted by the Government of India in this House is a slow process of contravention of the real intentions of this Pact and also of the authors of this Pact.

Incorporate It in the Finance Bill

I, therefore, suggest to this House that it should not leave this thing entirely to the discretion of the Executive Government, but insist upon a Statutory provision being added to this particular Finance Bill, so that, hereafter, at least those millions and millions of people, who are in this country, would like to have this small privilege left in their hands and be benefited. It may be argued and I feel that my Honourable friend, Mr. Haroon, will argue. . . .

Mr. President: (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That need not trouble the Honourable Member.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Mr. Haroon is impatient about making a possible remark about the loss of revenue that may have to be incurred by the Government of India in regard to this. Even in that connection, what I would

like to state is that after all, in view of the admission made by Mr. Lloyd on the other side only yesterday that this particular tax certainly presses hard upon all these poorer classes and upon every person to the extent of six annas per annum, it is but fair that those of them who can possibly manufacture salt for their own use and who can possibly make a small living for a few days in the year by selling the salt that they manufacture in their own areas, ought not to be prevented from enjoying this particular privilege. I, therefore, sincerely hope that Honourable Members on this side will accept this particular amendment and carry it.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

Speech delivered on the 28th March, 1935 to draw the attention of the public and Government for the necessity for expediting the marketing surveys and for rendering real and adequate help to the peasants in the marketing of their goods.

Sir, to propose to pay such an enormous salary to the marketing officer and also such enormous salaries to his assistants at the very outset is nothing short of trying to rob the peasants who are supposed to be helped by this new Department of Marketing.

CART BEFORE THE HOUSE

This Department or this particular officer with his assistants is expected to collect information regarding producers and consumers both in India and abroad. It is something like putting the cart before the horse. How can they get information about the prospects for agricultural produce of India in other countries when the Government of India does not have any of their Trade Commissioners in most of the countries in the world? The other day, when I put a question to the Honourable the Commerce Member, whether he proposed to appoint any more Trade Commissioners either in the United States of America or Japan or any other country, he said that there was no such provision in this year's budget, and, therefore, he did not see any chance of appointing any more Trade Commissioners. Without having any Trade Commissioners in any of those countries, it would be impossible for this marketing officer and his assistants to get the necessary information about he conditions prevailing in other countries.

Special Committees For Staple Crops

I come next to the point that is mentioned in the items that are going to be laid stress upon, that are going to be taken up by this particular marketing officer,—the appointment of special committees for staple crops. I do not know how many committees they propose to appoint, but they state that they would like to have committees for the most important staple products in this country. If these committees are to be appointed, who are going to be represented on them? Are those committees going to be constituted in the same manner in which those other committees under the aegis of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research have been constituted or are they to be constituted in such a manner that the agriculturists, who really are to be benefited by the activities of these marketing officers and their subordinates, are going to be represented on these committees? I do not know what the Government proposes to do in this particular connection.

Then, who is to appoint these committees? The marketing officer himself or the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research? If it is the Council which is to appoint these committees, then what is the sanction behind the Council? There are a number of committees, as many as 16 committees, and on none of these committees are the peasants represented. We are now to have some more committees appointed and these are expected to help the marketing officer; and if the peasants are not going to be represented on these committees as well as on other committees, I do not know really how this marketing officer can be expected to do his job satisfactorily.

Marketing Surveys

The next question is of marketing surveys. These surveys when completed will set out in detail the present system of marketing the commodities concerned not only in each province separately but in respect of inter-provincial, inter-state and international trade, so as to provide an all-India picture of existing conditions and a common basis for future purposes. But I find that we do not at present have any useful information at all, about the inter-state as well as the inter-provincial trade that is going on in this country. This information has not been collected: they made a sort of abortive attempt to collect information about the rail-borne trade in this country, and, after that, they stopped publishing these reports in 1922: and took it up two or three years ago; but if you look into those figures, you will find that there is no general review or attempt to explain the facts that are presented in the report nor is there any account of the total amount of different agricultural commodities that are being carried by rail in this country.

Apart from that there is the river-borne trade and the coastal trade, and the trade between different towns. Even if we have, with the help of this marketing officer and his assistants, some sort of survey about these conditions for one particular year, it will not be enough. We must have annual reports* published about the inter-state and inter-provincial trade that is being carried on in agricultural commodities.

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* It is noteworthy that the first monthly report containing such information was published in June 1936.

But are these people competent to carry out this task? Are these the people really who can be expected to do this work? They themselves admit, they are not enough, they want some more assistance, and it is for that purpose that they expect and hope that the Provincial Governments will appoint their own Provincial Marketing officers; and in order to enable the Provincial Governments to appoint their own marketing officers, they propose to make certain grants to the Provincial Governments, and, in that connection, my friend, Mr. Sami Venkatachelam Chetty, has already pointed out that the Provincial Governments are just as capable of appointing people in whom they are interested as the Central Government itself has behaved in this connection. If such officers are going to be appointed, more because of favouritism on the part of Ministers than because of their real ability, then, I say, this is going to be a farce rather than a real constructive proposal.

Control of Central Government Necessary

Then, Sir, are these provincial marketing officers going to be given a free hand in making their inquiries, in carrying on their work, and are the Provincial Governments going to be given a free hand in running the whole of this department, or are they going to be subject to the direct control of the central office? I cannot very well agree with my friend, Mr. Sami Venkatachelam Chetty, when he said that all these provincial officers should be appointed by the Central Government and should be controlled and directed by the Central Government. But, at the same time, I do agree with him in this essential principle that the Provincial Governments ought not to be given complete autonomy

as to the mannar in which they are to conduct these economic surveys and these marketing arrangements and to establish other facilities for the peasants. I found the same thing had happened in connection with the handloom weaving industry. It is the Government of India which raises the money and which distributes it to the provinces, but the Government of India allow these Provincial Governments to have their own way in regard to spending that money. Sir, I do not like that the same thing should happen in regard to this matter. If the Government of India is to make any grants at all for the maintenance of these Provincial Marketing officers, then certainly the Government of India should insist upon a uniform policy being followed all over India, and they should also see that these Marketing officers carry on their work in a manner which will be satisfactory both to this House as well as to the Government of India.

Appointment of Marketing Officers

Next, Sir, I come to the question of publication work, and the order in which these officers should carry on their work. Last comes the most important thing. It is said that a marketing officer is going to be appointed by the Government of India. As has been observed by my friend, Mr. Satyamurti, already, the Government has come to this House with a supplementary demand,—in fact it is not a supplementary demand, really it is a new demand,—and yet, the Government has already appointed a marketing officer, in fact they have not only appointed a marketing officer, but they have appointed several assistant marketing officers, clerks and so on. It is a *fait accompli.* The next thing is the appointment of provincial marketing officers. I do not know if in

any of the provinces, marketing officers have been appointed so far. I have a vague idea that in Madras they have already appointed a marketing officer, but whether that appointment has been made with or without the subsidy from the Government of India, I do not know.

The Practical Side

Then the third thing is the question of the inaugura tion of marketing surveys. We are going to have a number of surveys, I do want all those surveys, but at the same time, my point is, how is it that the Government of India have taken such a long time to create this service? The only reason that I can assign for it is that the Government of India really did not wish to create these surveys at all, because the Honourable the Finance Member has already said that he has absolutely no faith in statistics, he has no use for surveys, and the Government have not had any need for statistics at all about the marketing position in this country.

And, now they propose to have all these too-highly paid officers for marketing service. But what will they do? They will work on grade standards, just the one aspect of the work on which Great Britain and Ireland have been laying much stress. In Great Britain much useful work has been done in this matter. They have stated in their reports that National Market Schemes are now in operation for beef, strawberries, apples, cucumbers, canned fruits, vegetables, cidar etc.

Government Should give an Assurance

All this work has been carried on in England, and now our marketing officers come forward and say that they are going to carry on the same kind of work here in

India, but only in regard to three or four commodities, and this programme of work comes last in their scheme. If this is the kind of work, which the newly appointed officers are going to do, then the sooner we abolish this service the better. On the other hand, if the Government of India gives us an assurance that they mean business, that they will provide for us an annual review of trade conditions for agricultural commodities in this country as well as in other countries, and, if they will assure us that they will appoint part-time correspondents in different countries with a view to supply us periodically with information about marketing facilities and conditions prevailing in other countries in regard to Indian agricultural commodities, then we can reconsider the position in respect of this particular grant and see if we cannot help the Government in passing this particular demand.

PROTECTION FOR PADDY AND WHEAT GROWERS

The following two speeches were delivered on the 6th April, 1935 and 7th April, 1936 respectively, the former on the Governments' Tariff Amendment Bill, proposing an import duty of twelve annas on broken rice and the latter in support of Mr. Nauman's resolution demanding an import duty on rice, paddy and broken rice.

Mr. President, the peasants of this country have absolutely no cause to thank the Government for this mean-minded little mercy of theirs. The producers of the two most important staple commodities have been reduced to such a pitiable and helpless state by the callousness and faithlessness of their Government that they have been obliged to ask for protection against foreign competition. The sufferings of our peasants can only be imagined when I tell you that they have received only 534 crores of rupees in 1932-33 as against 1,018 crores in 1928-29, that is, a colossal loss of 483 crores per annum (on the sale of their Produce).

Duty on Wheat

Thanks to the presence of a strong Punjabee, a real Punjabee and not a ready made one, on the Viceroy's Council, the wheat growers have received some protection in the last four years, with the result that the growth of losses had been arrested to some extent, as is evidenced by the fact that between 1928-29 and 1932-33, the fall in the value of this produce has been only about 35 per cent, against the 50 per cent. fall in the case of rice-growers. But even this protec-

tion has not resulted in any rise of prices, as the Crop Planning Conference has itself said. Yet the Government now propose to reduce even this little bit of protection to the wheat growers, thanks to the retirement of the Punjabee and the growing influence of the Finance Member in the Executive Council.

Need for more Duty on Broken Rice

As for the rice-growers, the Madras Government, the Madras Legislative Council, the public and the peasants, the rice merchats and even the importers are all unanimous in saying that this duty on broken rice is not enough and that a higher duty on whole rice and broken rice is needed. The Honourable the Commerce Member's own admission that rice imports are increasing is against this proposal. The only result of this duty will be to increase the imports of rice from Siam and other countries. This partial, inadequate and wholly unsatisfactory proposal is placed before us because the Commerce Member has yielded completely to the bullying of the Finance Member and others on the Executive Council. I wonder why the Honourable the Commerce Member does not make a clean breast of it, like Sir Fazl-i-Husain . . . .

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore (Member for Commerce and Railways): Because he has got absolutely nothing to make a clean breast of.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is getting personally offensive.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: I am referring to the Commerce Member and not to Sir Joseph Bhore, and am asking him to confess his failure to help the Indian producers, owing to the opposition of the Secretary of State and his avourite and latest agent, the Finance Member.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: I must protest against that. The Secretary of State has absolutely nothing to do with this.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: He is their senior, he is their principal (Hear, hear from Congress Party Benches.) In conclusion, I have to protest vehemently against the failure of Government to afford adequate protection to our peasants and place it on record that the peasants reserve their right to open up this question at the earliest opportunity in this House as well as in the country. I would like to congratulate the Commerce Member also, before he lays down the seals of his office, on the fortunate position in which he finds himself that he need not have to stand for any election at all in this country, because, I can assure him that if he were to stand anywhere for election in this country, he is sure to be given a sound beating and he is sure to be met with the same fate that met Sir Shanmukham Chetty, not only for Ottawa, not only for the Indo-British Pact, but also for this unsatisfactory proposal.

II

It was generally believed that what is meat for the Peasant is poison to the Industrial worker and Prof. Ranga was charged with having neglected the worker, who is the chief consumer of broken rice and viewed the problem from the point of view of the Peasant.

Prof. Ranga tackled the whole problem from Purely the consumer's point of view and this is enough to show that Prof. Ranga has the interest of the workers also at heart.

Sir, I rise to support this Resolution; and, in doing so, I wish to state that it is not because I am a whole-hearted supporter of the policy of full-fledged protection to our industries to be given indiscriminately, but because I am

perfectly convinced that this particular section of the agricultural industry needs this protection and it ought to be given. Sir, this protection ought to have been given long ago, this protection should have been given nearly five years ago as soon as the dumping of rice and broken rice and paddy began from Siam and Indo-China, but the Government were always indifferent to the plight of the agriculturists and were unwilling to do anything in time. Even last year this House passed a Resolution unanimously demanding protection for agriculturists, and it was after the Crop Planning Conference had made its recommendations and the Sub-Committee of the Imperial Agricultural Council had also supported that particular Resolution, and after the Madras Government had pressed it very hard upon the attention of the Government of India the necessity for affording this protection to the agriculturists, that the Government of India had thought fit to afford a very slight bit of protection to rice and paddy growers in this country.

Got Stone for Bread

We asked for protection for all kinds of imports of rice into this country, and we got only a very inadequate protective duty upon broken rice alone. We were told at that time that the real import which affected our rice in this country was broken rice, and, therefore, it was said then that it would be enough if protection were extended to broken rice alone and not to all kinds of rice imports. We were also assured that the particular duty would be enough to bring down the imports of rice into this country and it would help the agriculturists, but as my friend, Mr. Nauman, has shown us, we find that, during the last ten months of 1935-36, the imports of rice and rice in husk have not fallen very perceptibly

when compared to last year, and these imports are certainly a menace to the rice growers of this country.

Minimum Wage for Agriculturists

It is easy for the Government of India to say that if import duties were extended, not only to broken rice, but also to rice in husk and rice, the consumers would be affected. Sir, I am myself anxious to protect the interests of the consumers; I am myself anxious to see that whenever protection is given to any industry in this country, the interests of the consumer are protected, but at the same time it must be said in fairness that the producers must be assured of their cost of production and justice. When we ask for a minimum wage for our workers, we should also be prepared to demand a minimum wage for our agriculturists. It is not reasonable either for this Government or for the consumers or others who claim to speak for the consumers to maintain that the producers should be allowed to go to wreck and ruin in order that the consumers should be benefited and in order that this Government may be allowed to go on without doing anything for the agriculturists.

Government's Apathy

Sir, the rice industry is the biggest industry in this country. It takes the first place in the crop planning of this country. It comes first amongst our crops, and there are as much as 80 millions of acres of land under rice. The only other crop which comes anywhere near it is wheat, and its acreage is 27 millions. Sir, the rice industry has fallen on bad days. Why is it so? It is because, I maintain, of the policy of this Government to do nothing whatsoever to relieve the severity of the economic distress.

Only this morning, at question time, we asked this Government as to what they proposed to do to relieve the distress of the people. The Honourable the Finance Member was good enough to say that he was not going to adopt any of the monkeying methods that are being adopted by various Finance Members in other countries, that he was not going to adopt any suggestion made by this side of the House during the last 14 or 15 months. In fact, he was good enough to characterise all our suggestions as ridiculous. Sir, it is because the Government have been so indifferent all this time to the plight of our peasants, our rice growers we are obliged to seek protection from this Government.

ECONOMIC DISTRES AND GOVERNMENT

Sir, it is not a pleasure to me to come here and plead for protection for the biggest industry; it is not a pleasure to me to ask Honourable Members of this House to support this resolution in order to protect the growers of rice and millions of peasants. If, Sir, it has become necessary for us to ask for protection for one of the largest industries of the world, then what is the position with regard to the other industries? What would be the limit of our demands for protection? We are placed in a very unenviable position, because this Government has done nothing whatever. And what is more, it has done many things to aggravate the economic distress.

As I put it this morning, and as the Finance Member was not able to deny the fact, there has been an actual contraction of currency in this country during the last five years. Gold exports there have been, and one would have expected that, in place of

these gold exports, there would be a healthy expansion of our currency and a free flow of money from Government into the hands of the peasants. But, instead of that, we find that there has been an actual contraction of our currency, with the result that the prices have shown a progressively downward trend.

From Bad to Worse

Sir, it is easy for the Honourable the Commerce Member or for the Secretary in the Department of Education, Health and Lands to maintain that, after all, the prices of paddy even have shown a tendency to rise during the last 14 or 15 months. But, by how much, I would like to know. The price of rice in 1929-30, according to their figures, was Rs. 6-6-0 per maund of 82 2/7lbs. It came down to Rs. 3-2-0 in 1933-34, and it is not more than Rs. 3-9-0 even today in this country. It is not, therefore, easy for them to come and say that, after all, the condition of the peasants, has been improved because of this duty, this unsatisfying duty upon broken rice, and so the peasants ought to be satisfied with it. Really speaking, their condition is worsening day by day.

Mere Tall Talk

Last year there was some talk of debt relief legislation in the Madras Presidency, but nothing has come out of it. There was some legislation passed in the Central Provinces for debt conciliation boards, but nothing has come out of it, merely because the Central Provinces found it impossible to finance the debt conciliation boards. They were obliged to spare one lakh of rupees from the rural development grant for opening four debt conciliation boards. The Punjab Legislative Council

has passed some legislation, but the Governor has sent it back to the Legislative Council for further review and amendment. Even in regard to the debt relief, the Government have been failing in their duty to relieve the peasants of their burden of indebtedness.

Because of the fall in prices, the Burden of the indebtedness of the agriculturist has become too great, it has been redoubled and they have not been able to pay off their debts.

Our Demand

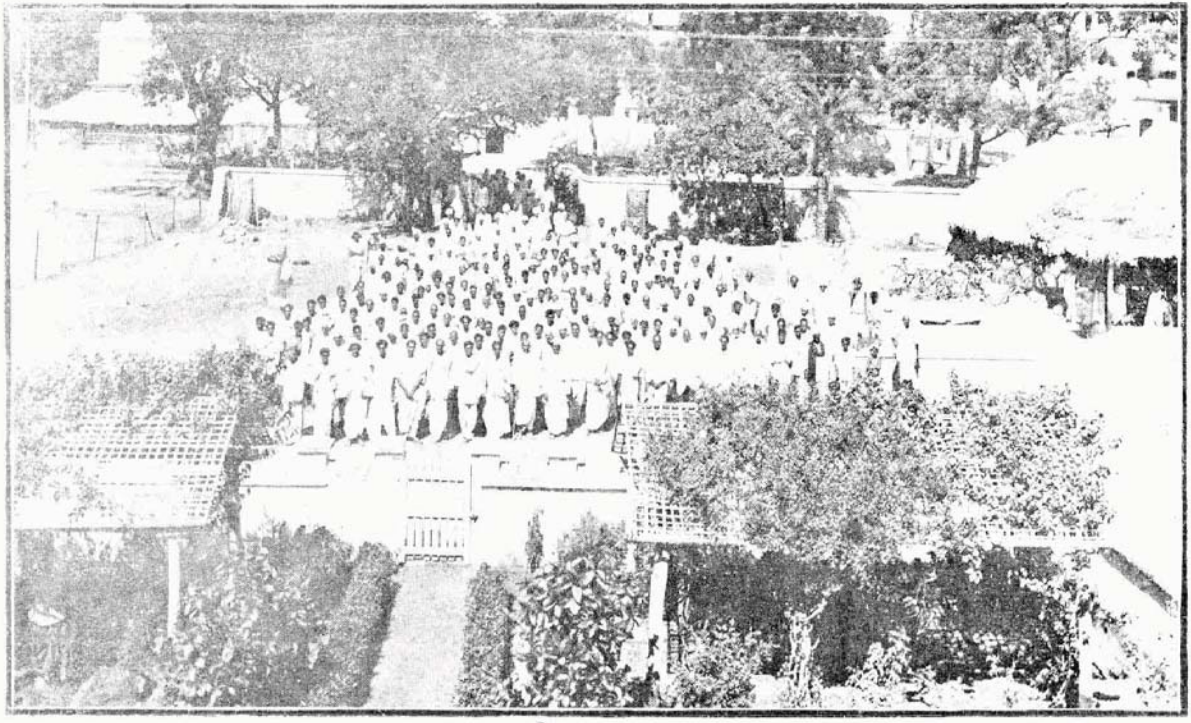
There has been an invisible drain of their resources, from them to the non-agriculturists, to the urban classes, to the salaried classes, because their grain has had to be sold at less than half the price for which it was sold in 1929-30. It is time that efforts should be made to raise the prices of the agricultural commodities. It is time that efforts should be made to improve the condition of these peasants in their bargaining capacity with non-agriculturists and manufacturers by adopting this particular resolution and the course suggested therein. We do not ask for very much; we do not ask for permanent protection. We ask for temporary protection, and this is to go on for one year. If, in the meantime, conditions were to improve, imports were to be lessened and there was no fear at all of these imports, then it would not be necessary for us to have to come here and ask this Government to continue this particular protection.

A Warning to Government

It may be said that the total amount of rice produced in this country will not be enough for all the consumers

in this country, and, therefore, it is always necessary to keep the door open for foreign imports of rice, rice unhusked and paddy in this country. I am prepared to admit this much, that, if Government were to come to the conclusion, after making a detailed survey of the total needs of the country for rice, rice unhusked and all other by-products of rice, that foreign imports were really necessary, then it was for them to follow the practice of issuing licenses so that there would never be any kind of dumping at all as there has been in the last three or four years, even as has been admitted by Government, in the case of broken rice. But I do not want the Government to trot out the argument of the insufficient supplies of rice in this country for consumers and then say that they propose to do nothing whatsoever beyond what they had done last year and what they propose to do this year by imposing a duty on broken rice. I claim, although they seem to think that as much as three million tons of imports of rice are annually necessary in order to supply our people with the necessary quantity of rice,—I think they are wrong in their estimate, and even if they were to be right, it would not be impossible for this country to allow that quantity of rice to come into this country from Burma, because Burma has always been our most important importer and we can certainly go on with Burmeese imports. In addition to that, if we need any more imports, we can allow other countries to import rice by issuing the necessary licenses as I have already suggested. If Government wish to follow their present policy of *non-possumus*, of having nothing beyond this unsatisfying import duty on broken rice, I can only say that that would intensify the dissatisfaction of the peasants.

They may snap their fingers at the dissatisfaction that prevails amongst the peasants, but as the Honourable the Home Member himself has stated today that the Government are not, after all, so unconscious of public opinion in this country when it suited them, I would like the Government also to note one particular point. All over the Madras Presidency, a Presidency which is responsible for producing nearly one-eighth of the total quantity of rice produced in this country, a Presidency which is mostly affected by these imports, there were peasants' marches. The Government were good enough to state here in this House that there were some four hundred peasants altogether in a peasants' march in which I took part. I can tell this House that there were in that particular march a thousand peasants who went along with me. That is the way they get their information. But they would not mention the other marches that had taken place all over the country, marches in which five to six thousand peasants had taken part in each, peasants not gathered from towns, but who had come from villages. And all these people had come, not to ask for the continuation of this particular import duty on broken rice, but an extension of it to rice unhusked and cleaned rice. Not only is it the case in the Madras Presidency, it is the case in the Central Provinces, in Bihar and in Orissa. Everywhere these marches are being organised. In Guzarat, only the other day, the peasants were not able to pay their *kists*, the *patwari* and others resigned, and seeing that such extreme steps had been taken by their own officers, the Government were obliged to grant some remission. This is the way in which peasants are expressing their discontent. Is this discontent to grow



1935 Peasants' march in Guntur

unabated? Will Government be prepared to exasperate the peasants by refusing to offer even this minimum bit of help to them? If they are prepared to do so, let God alone look after them. If, on the other hand, they wish to do anything at all to help the peasants, then let them adopt this particular Resolution.

TO ABOLISH IMPRISONMENT FOR CIVIL DEBTORS

The following is the speech delivered on 18 Feb. 1935 in support of the Government's Bill to amend the civil Procedure Code, Section 60, altering the provisions for detention and imprisonment for civil debtors for failure to pay off their debts.

Sir, from what the Honourable the Home Member has said in support of this Bill, I gather that the Government really are in no doubt at all about the possible support that this Bill might get for itself in this country. The Honourable Member himself has stated that he has satisfied himself that most of those people who had been committed to a civil debtors jail have been sent there because, of their genuine inability to pay. He also stated—and I am glad he has so stated—that the general principle of this Bill has already been placed before the public and the public on the platform and in the press have expressed their whole-hearted support for this Bill. He has also made it perfectly clear that the various High Courts have been complaining that the original intention of the framers of the original clause making it possible for the Courts to send the debtors to the civil debtors' jail has been frustrated, because, it has become almost a general practice that Courts send even honest debtors, civil debtors, to jails, merely because they have found themselves unable to pay their debts in time. In view of these things, I really cannot understand why the Honourable the Home Member is so very anxious to send this Bill for circulation. Whatever this Government wants to do, it seems to be anxious to

do it half-heartedly. Even when it wants to do a good thing, it does not want to do it quickly or readily or whole-heartedly.

A Great Need

This Bill has been very badly needed. This is a protection which has been clamoured for by the masses all over the country, and I must really congratulate the Honourable the Home Member for trying to be more liberal than the Labour Commission itself, in having gone to the extent of bringing the agriculturists and the agricultural workers within the ambit of this Bill. Why should he be so anxious to send this Bill, this short and sensible Bill, this very necessary Bill and a very useful Bill for circulation? Is it because, Sir, that he is anxious somehow or other that he should not be blamed by some partisans of his own Province, the Punjab, that he is trying to advocate the cause of honest debtors, or is it because that newspapers like the *Daily Herald* of Lahore go on accusing him of trying to be partial to the debtors, or is it because that he is anxious to throw the whole blame on Local Governments, on the High Court Judges and on Advocate Generals in the provinces that they themselves are in favour of it, and, therefore, he is not to blame if he is in favour of it and if it is placed on the Statute book?

Why This Circuitons Policy

I submit that the Honourable the Home Member does not do justice to himself or to this House by following this circuitous policy. I am sure, the agricultural workers will be grateful to him as well as to the Government, though for all other reasons we are out to defeat this Government if not to destroy it. I am sure, the agri-

cultural workers will show their gratitude if only the Government will take courage in both hands and ask the leave of the House to commit this Bill to a Select Committee. But the Home Member is not going to do that and that is why, I rise here to oppose this Bill *in toto*, with the hope that the Honourable the Home Member will see it fit to come forward again with his proposal that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee.

A Queer Government

In America, in Germany, and even in England, a moratorium was found necessary and it was declared in order that debtors might be helped and might be saved from ruinous actions of the creditors. In this country, we find the Government has not done anything at all. In this country several persons have been asking for timely action, yet the Government of India would not take action and the Honourable the Law Member was saying the other day, in answer to my question, that they had never given an assurance at all to agriculturists and that it was entirely a question for the Provincial Governments to be tackled with. Yet, from the information he has supplied to me in answer to a question, it is clear that two or three Provincial Governments have tried to do their best to save these debtors from utter ruin, but that other Provincial Governments are groping in the dark and that they are really unwilling to do anything to save these agriculturists from their indebtedness. The Honourable the Home Member himself has admitted that he has seen large numbers of people, I mean, civil debtors in jails who were genuinely unable to pay. I can personally testify to the accuracy of the fact that not hundreds, but

thousands of people have been committed to civil jail, not because these debtors are dishonest, not because they are unwilling to pay their debts, not because they want to defraud their creditors, but simply because they are not able to pay their debts.

Something Wrong

I have alredy quoted the example of President Roosevelt of America and I will quote his example again for the edification of the Home Member, and I will say that President Roosevelt has been able to achieve wonders in the last three years and he has worked out a wonderful programme of work in that country known as NIRA, and by his system of reconstruction he has been able to help his peasants and agricultural workers, the industrialists as well as industrial workers, from ruin and yet our Government is saying "we cannot do anything." But even when the Government of India think of doing a slight, thing, as in the present Bill—I think there must be a sort of curse on this Government—even when it intend, to do a good thing, it cannot do it wholeheartedly, merely because there is somewhere something wrong with this Government.

Mean Minded Methods

Sir, the Honourable the Home Member has made it perfectly clear that for one or the other of the three reasons which he has given, most of these creditors move the Courts to send many of these debtors to the civil debtors' jail. One of the reasons is personal spite. In ordinary circumstances it may be that quite an appreciable number of people are committed to the civil debtors' jail for this reason ; but during the last three or four years, it is not for this reason mainly, but for

the other reason that because the creditors have been anxious to collect in a frantic manner as much of their money advanced to the rural indebted peasants and others that they have resorted to these methods. And in their anxiety to realise their dues and to force the debtors to pay back their sums, they have not scrupled even to persuade the Courts to send hundreds and thousands of debtors to jail.

No Evil Intention

When peasants and workers borrow money from the creditors, it is not, I submit, with the intention of not paying these debts back and of not being honest. They borrow money with the intention of paying it back with interest and, I submit, very often at a high rate of interest, ranging up to 30 per cent. in many cases. Yet, because of the economic depression, large numbers of them, thousands and lakhs, have become absolutely unable to pay back their dues. Their lands have become unproductive, and also unsaleable, the price of their produce has gone down very seriously, and in many cases they find themselves face to face with starvation and famine; and these people have been committed to jail.

Unwise to Drive Them to Bay

When they are sent to jail what is the satisfaction, and what are the feelings of these people? When we, civil resisters go to jail, we feel the satisfaction that we are serving the country and we also have a feeling that our compatriots in the country are admiring us for our sacrifices, and therefore, we feel happy when we are in jail. But these poor workers when they go to jail have no such consolation. They feel that their creditors have

dealt with them very badly, that they are their enemies, that they and their families are being looked down upon by the creditors as well as their neighbours. Suffering as they do, they would be up to any step in order to bring themselves out of tese jails. Many of them have been obliged to present insolvency petitions in order to get out of these jails and many more of them have been obliged to persuade their families and relations to barter away their assets in order that they might come out of these jails.

Most Unfair

In these circumstances, sir, I put this question to the House: Is it fair that we should allow these thousands of people who have been put into jail unjustly and unfairly by those who have really no legitimate case at all to put them into jail, to remain in the jails? I am sure that if this Bill were to be passed into an Act, very shortly, in a month, in a few days or a few weeks, all these people will be able to come out of these jails and will be able to pay back their dues also. As the Honourable the Home Member himself admitted, most of them are really anxious to pay back their debts and yet they are unable to pay them back. Most of them have begged their money-lenders to give them some time so that they can pay back these debts but they would not give any time. They wanted time till the prices of their produce and their land rose but they were not given this time. Therefore, Sir, we should not refer this Bill to circulation and thus give these unreasonable, unjust and heartless creditors, a chance of keeping these people in jail for another five or six months.

PLANNED ECONOMY

NEED FOR STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT

Speech delivered on the 11th March 1935.

Sir, I rise to support this cut motion for this purpose, that if there were to be an Economic Advisory Council in this country—and there must be one—and if there were to be a Minister or a Member of the Council for Communications, as there must be, then I would like that every one of the Members of that Advisory Council as well as the Member for Communications should be an Indian. If, on the other hand, any foreign expert, is expected to be imported to this country in order to dole out advice to us, then I am not at all in favour of this cut motion, and, I am sure, Honourable Members on this side of the House will not be in favour of this cut motion.

For a very long time, there has been a talk of planned economy in this country. The predecessor of our present Finance Member was very often talking of planned economy and on more than one occasion he assured this House that he was going to take necessary steps to see that a regular staff was appointed in this Government of India for carrying on statistical enquiries. As long ago as 1930, he assured the House that he was going to set apart $2\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs in order to bring some expert from Europe to give us the kind of advice which he thought that we were in need of.

WHY IMPORT EXPERTS

As far as economic enquiries go, in this country, we have had a number of experts. There was Dr. Slater,

there was Dr. Mann, there was myself in Southern India and many other competent men, and all these people have been carrying on economic investigations in villages and in towns of the economic conditions of agricultural labourers, cottage workers as well as those in slum areas. Yet the Government of India did not care to take notice of any of these enquirers or inquiries made by them, but they preferred to bring two great experts, one from the City of London and the other from the City of Cambridge. They were expected to be assisted and helped by some economists of this country.

Instead of wasting lakhs of rupees on those great economists of foreign countries, the Government would have done well if they had only consulted our own Professors in this country who have great experience of this country and who would have been very glad to serve this Government, not on any pay, but freely and without any remuneration. This morning, the Honourable Sir Frank Noyce was questioning the authority of Sir M. Visveswarayya. I may point out to the Honourable Member for Industries and Labour that he is neither a labourer nor an economist, and, therefore, I can really understand his hesitation in accepting the suggestion as well as the estimates of unemployment in this country by such distinguished and eminent an economist as Sir M. Visveswarayya. I may remind the Honourable Member for Industries and Labour that Sir M. Visveswarayya was appointed by the Government of India as President of the Economic Enquiry Committee which toured the whole country and submitted a report to the Government of India.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce : I was not disputing Sir Visveswarayya's authority except in regard to one particular point, the number of unemployed people in this country, and I stated that,

in regard to that particular point, he gave no authority whatever for his figures, and that, therefore, I and the Members of this House generally were as competent judges in this matter as he was.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: In view of the fact that Sir M. Visveswarayya has been accepted by most of the people who know anything at all about economics in this country as a sound and reliable authority on that subject, I expect the Honourable Member for Industries and Labour to accept the statement of the estimate of unemployed made by him, generally, as long as he is not able to prove to the contrary. He has made that estimate himself. He is not an irresponsible person, he is not an ignorant person. Everybody knows what his previous history has been, how distinguished a position he has held in planned economy as well as in the industrial development of this country, and when such a gentleman comes forward and makes an estimate, that should be accepted without question. I know why the Honourable Sir Frank Noyce has hesitation to accept that suggestion. If the same estimate has been made by a second rate or a third rate or even a tenth rate British economist, I am sure, he would have no hesitation in accepting the same.

UNEMPLOYMENT

I come now to the question of unemployment. When we were discussing the question of unemployment insurance in this country, we thought we had no statistics of the unemployed in this country. My Honourable friend, Mr. Giri, has pointed out that there are nearly 40 millions of people who are unemployed completely or partially. Yet the Honourable Sir Frank Noyce was not prepared to accept that estimate. I submit that if we go on disputing one another's estimate

in this House in the way we are doing, we cannot do anything really good for this country. That only proves that there is very great need for really a very competent Economic Advisory Council.

Constitution of the Committee

The Economic Advisory Council should be constituted with independent Professors who have had practical experience of village, industrial and slum life and experiences of workers and peasants, and we do not want for the Economic Advisory Council Professors straight from Universities who are kept there merely as a momento or a curio in the Hamburg museum and who are being paid fat salaries merely to play to the tune of all that is being doled out here by the Commerce Member or the Finance Member or the Member for Industries andLabour or all the other Members who form the Executive Council.

Agricultural Indebtedness

Next I come to the question of agricultural indebtedness. The Honourable Member for Industries and Labour would perhaps be the first person to wonder whether really such a great problem as the agricultural indebtedness exists for the whole of India. I hope he will not dispute the fact that there is chronic agricultural indebtedness in this country under which the peasants have been groaning for several years past. This growing burden of indebtedness has become intolerable for the peasants. Ever since 1859, when there were riots in the Deccan of the Mahratta country, Commission after Commission have reported on the imperative necessity of tackling this problem of agricultural indebtedness. For years and years, again and again

suggestions were made by responsible Government officials on the floor of this House that Central Legislation should be undertaken in order to solve this problem. Sir Basil Blackett came forward with the suggestion that there should be a Banking Enquiry Committee. It was appointed with a number of provincial branch committees with the idea of gathering information in order to enable the Government of India to find a proper method of solving this particular problem of agricultural indebtedness. But everybody now is pretending his ignorance even today about agricultural indebtedness, unemployment, and about slum life, and the problem is growing worse and worse every day. The Government are continuing in this blissful ignorance, and if anybody attempts to solve the problem, there is no response from this Government. The Government are inimical to any attempts made to solve the problem. The Banking Inquiry Committee came forward with its own suggestions that an all-India legislation should be undertaken and that, wherever possible, Conciliation Boards should be established, and, Economic Enquiry Committees constituted and Economic Boards formed and that these Boards should gather the necessary information about the actual burden of agricultural indebtedness and the causes for its growth. But no central attempt has so far been made to solve this problem.

NOTHING DONE

But what is it that has been done? The Government of the Punjab propose to spend only one lakh of rupees on rural reconstruction of which a large proportion is to be swallowed up by highly paid officers; and the Government of the Central Provinces is very glad that

it has been able to get only Rs. 17,000 per annum for the next three years from the Central Government in order to help the handloom weaving industry. Then, again, the Government of Madras have appointed an Economic Inquiry Committee with many of its own officers as members and that Committee has suggested that the export duty on skins should be increased. And yet the Finance Member comes forward with this very wonderful and novel suggestion that the export duty on skins should be abolished altogether. Sir, as somebody said, and it is a well-known phrase, we asked for bread in the shape of the lowering of the revenue duties, and lowering of the burden on the agriculturists by decreasing the amount of revenue that Government are deriving from customs and salt. And what is it he gives? He gives this stone in the form of abolition of the export duty on skins. I do not know if he is conscious about it, but anyhow I can warn him that the only effect of this will be the improvement of the tanning industry in other countries to the detriment of our own industry here.

What Government Should Know

Next, I come to the question of the national income. Sir George Schuster has suggested,—now that happily he has laid down the reins of office here and is free to suggest anything,—that the standard of living of the masses should be raised. How is that to be done? It can be done only if the Government of India come to have an idea of the present national *per capita* income, the present standard of living of our people, the manner in which our people are spending their money and also how the people are suffering form poverty, and so on. But they have not got that informantion. And that is

why, when my Honourable friend, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, suggested that this Government should undertake a national reconstruction programme of 100 crores, the Finance Member simply turned it down. He seems to have had the impression that my Honourable friend, Pandit Pant, seems to be roving in a sort of dream. But I may assure the Honourable the Finance Member that he need not be afraid of going to jail. If going to jail is necessary at all, I can offer to go to jail, on his behalf in order to save this country. Now, Sir, a hundred crores is not a very big sum; it will not be more than £ 10 million, and the Government in England has been spending more than that on the relief of unemployment.

A Satisfied Finance Member!

The Honourable Sir James Grigg: A hundred crores is 75 million pounds.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: I can any how assure my Honourable friend,—and I am sure he cannot contradict me in that,—that the Government in England has been spending more than 75 million pounds per annum since 1911 on their social services. On the other hand, what is this Central Government doing? The Central Government, whose finances my Honourable friend is so proud of administering and presenting his budget upon, and who is so thoroughly satisfied that his budget has received welcome from every side of the House,—what does he propose to do? He proposes a reduction of 99 lakhs in the expenditure.

Reply to Sir Mody

Another thing to which I wish to draw the attention of my Honourable friends is this. The other day,

Mr. Mody was asking the Finance Member to be rather hesitant in thinking of lowering the revenue duties, because the revenue duties have given some sort of protection to some of the industries, and unless those industries are given a fair warning and unless they are enabled to stand on their own legs independently, he should not lower the revenue duties. In trying to accept that particular suggestion, I would request the Finance Member to keep in mind also the needs and the interests of the agriculturists and the workers, that is, the consumers. Revenue duties were raised for revenue alone.

Need for Planned Economy

Sir, there should be a planned economy and there should be a Member for Communications. This particular suggestion was made as long ago as 1921 or 1922 when the Ackworth Committee made their recommendations that there should be a special Minister separately for Communications. And yet till today that suggestion has not been accepted at all by the Government of India. Now, we have only an Honourable Member for Railways and not for Communications. You may wonder why I want a special Member for Communications. I want to end this ruinous and suicidal competition between the railways and the roads ; and, in order at present to better the interests of the railways, the Government of India as well as the Provincial Governments seem to me to be busy in trying to thwart the development and the progress of the roads in India. Even such a die-hard paper as the *Madras Mail* of Madras was suggesting the other day that the Government of India would do well to have a separate Department for

Communications and to construct bridges over the Godavari and over the Krishna in order to have a through road from Madras to Calcutta. Yet I do not know what the Government of India are going to do. Again, there is another suggestion. . . .

To Possess Knowledge is Dangerous!

At question time, the Honourable the Commerce Member said to me that he found no difference at all between the report that is submitted to the Government of India by their Trade Commissioner in London and the report which the Trade Commissioner of Great Britain stationed in this country sends to the Government. And yet if he will only take the trouble again to consult those reports, he will find that the report submitted to the Government in England is very much better, far superior, to the report that we are having from our own Trade Commissioner.

It is on those lines that improvement lies and we want more and more statistics and we want more and more enlightenment. But the Government Members declare their ignorance about every real problem, and they prefer to be ignorant, because to have a knowledge of real state of things may not be convenient to this Government or the Britishers. To possess knowledge is, I fear, considered by Government to be dangerous. And for this we have a very good example in Russia. Russia had her revolution, but, three years after the conclusion of the civil war they had their new economic policy. One year or two years after that, they had their five years budget policy.

Follow Russia

Similarly, I wish to suggest for the consideration of the Finance Member that at least next year when he is going to present another budget—luckily for him and luckily for the Government of India he is going to be here for another four years—let him take that tip from Russia of a five-year plan for his budget proposals.

He wants to give only one crore of rupees for the villages. Because Mahatma Gandhi has collected five lakhs for the uplift of the Harijans and he is raising more funds for the uplift of the villages, they want to fight Mahatma Gandhi and his Village Industries Association. Instead of doing that, instead of simply throwing away this cre of rupees on Aman Sabhas, loyalist and highly paid officers, I beg to suggest that he should accept the suggestion of my Honourable friend, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, and should raise a loan of 100 crores in this country.

It is not a novel suggestion. In America, President Roosevelt is busy today in raising a huge loan of three billion dollars in order to finance a social and national economic reconstruction policy.

Therefore, Sir, to conclude, I request the Finance Member to accept the suggestion of my Honourable friend, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, to raise a hundred crores of rupees on rupee loan in order to carry on and develop a rural national reconstructtion policy in his country, in order to help the villagers of this country in a real manner, and not for the benefit of the British officers and British capitalists, not for the benefit of a few highly paid officers, but for the benefit of the masses of this country.

THIRD-CLASS PASSENGERS

Their Grievances

Speech delivered on the 25th Feb. 1936 on the grievances of third class passengers. Prof. Ranga, who used to travel in higher classes has come to travel only in third class since 1930 and has ever since been agitating for the improvement of the conditions of third-class travelling on the railways. As a result of the incessant agitation carried on by him and other members of the Congress Assembly Party, Government have decided to introduce a new improved type of third-class carriages.

Sir, I rise to support this motion, and, in doing so, I should like to state that unlike many Honourable Members in this House I have been a habitual traveller in third class since 1930, that is, when I decided to join the band of disciples of Mahatma Gandhi. Therefore, I feel that I am rather competent more to talk about the woes, troubles and sufferings of third class passengers.

A Neglected Lot

Sir, we were told only yesterday, by the Honourable Member in charge of this Department, that the reduction in third class fares experimented on the North Western Railway has not really resulted in any increase of revenue. But in answer to that I can only say that for so many years the railways, not only the North Western Railway but also other railways, have succeeded in neglecting the convenience of third class passengers and have succeeded at the same time in forcing third class passengers to be satisfied with the carriages that they

were placing at their disposal, that there could be no revolutionary increase in the earnings just because of a small reduction in third class fares.

"Funds Wanted"

Every year we meet with the same answer, that owing to want of funds, the convenience of third class passengers could not be increased. This phrase "want of funds" has been staring us in the face all these years. Why should we be given the excuse of want of funds when really it is the third class passengers that have been responsible in providing the Government seven-eighths of the revenues derived from passenger traffic. The third class passengers ought really to be congratulated upon having shown such a tremendous amount of loyalty to the railways, in spite of the defection of the railways, in spite of the failure of the railways to look after their conveniences. What all railways really attempt to do to help the third class passengers is to allot this small additional expenditure of 20 lakhs and a little more while they are prepared to lose so much by not agreeing with the Honourable Members on this side of the House to institute a drastic cut in the salaries of those people who draw more than Rs. 500 per month.

Much Indebted

We should really be grateful to these third class passengers for having continued to provide for the railways with very much more income than they were getting in 1913-14. In 1933-34 alone the railways were able to derive as much as 28 crores 51 lakhs, whereas they were getting only 20 crores 56 lakhs in 1913-14. Look at the plight of the third class passengers them-

selves? Most of them are peasants and their income has gone down to a very low degree than it was in 1913-14 as is evidenced by the reports published by the Government of India themselves.

In spite of that, they continue to provide this Government with very much greater income than what they are really getting for themselves. Yet, Sir, the railways and the Government of India complain that the third class passengers are really not so very loyal to the railways and that they are running away to the bus and other traffic. I am not one of those who really wish to discourage the growth of the bus traffic at all. I am not afraid of this rail-road competition. If really railways are run properly and more efficiently and with a view to serve the needs of third class passengers, I am sure that they have nothing to fear from the bus competition, as far as third class passengers are concerned. As has been admitted by several Honourable Members on the other side, the competition is not so much for journeys beyond a distance of 50 miles, as it is for journeys for distances less than fifty miles. It only shows that the railways really have not paid sufficient attention to the convenience of third class passengers.

Road-Rail Competition

When it was suggested by my Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Hakim Ghuznavi, that suburban railways should be electrified, he was given the answer that it would cost 12 to 14 crores, and that this money could not be raised by Government. Sir, in South India, the Madras and Southern Maharatta Railway, in order to meet the bus competition, had to introduce more trains in their suburban service during the day and also an accelerated

train service. These things could be better done if they had electrified the line. In these days, when money is plentiful, I do not see any difficulty in Government borrowing money to any extent. Fourteen or fifteen crores can be easily raised in the market. I submit that if the trains are electrified, it will meet most of the convenience of third class passengers. Nothing but the inertia on the part of the Government stands in the way of effecting this reform; nothing but their own inability to take decisions and execute them in a courageous fashion!

Sir, in this year's Railway Administration Report there is a chapter on passenger amenities and I am glad to say in this connection that the chapter is a little more exhaustive than it used to be. But this chapter only shows that Government have been at pains to show a few things here and there that they have tried to do here and there in order to satisfy us. Really this does not go far enough at all. This is really enough to condemn this Government for its failure to cater to the convenience of third class passengers. It is well-known, Sir, that water supply is most badly needed in a hot country like India. In my part of the country through which the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway runs, it is stated that only in one station water supply amenities were provided during last year. That is really very unsatisfactory.

PASSENGER AMENITIES

I find in this connection that the State-managed Railways are a little better than Company-managed Railways. The Noth Western Railway and the East Indian Railway, which are managed by Government, propose to spend one lakh 49 thousand and 18 lakhs 50,000, respectively, whereas the Company-managed

lines propose to spend only 80 thousand and 67 thousand for the whole of next year in order to provide such amenities as latrines, water supply, lower class waiting rooms, covered platforms, refreshment rooms for third class passengers, booking facilities, raised platforms, additional carriages to reduce overcrowding, improving existing carriages and miscellanea. On all these things what do they propose to spend ? They will spend only Rs. 67,000 in the case of the Eastern Bengal Railway and Rs. 80,000 in the case of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway. If that is the way in which Government propose to minister to the needs of these third class passengers, I do not wonder that the bus traffic is growing every day, more and more dangerous, more and more troublesome and more and more prosperous. If they really wish to counteract this bus traffic at all, then, as has been suggested by several Honourable Members already, they ought to improve their own service. In trying to improve their own service for the third class passengers they ought to improve the latrines. So many people have already spoken upon this necessity, and yet such a small sum of money is proposed to be spent during the next year on this particular thing.

History Repeats Itself!

Then, again, there is the question of overcrowding. We get the *same old reply* that overcrowding does not really exist on most occasions; it is only occasionally that it does take place and necessary steps are being taken to prevent it, and so on. But this year they seem to be a little more liberal-hearted and they seem to be anxious to spend a few thousand rupees more in lessening this overcrowding in third class carriages. Sir, it is not enough. We wanted better carriages, we

wanted better lighting in the carriages, we wanted better lighting in the latrines, and more accommodation in the latrines themselves. We wanted better seats, and we were given a very reassuring answer last year by the predecessor of the present Honourable Member that a new carriage was designed and it would soon help to improve the conditions of third class travelling. And what is the answer we were able to get from the present Member for Railways? He simply said that it was still being looked into; it had still to be inspected by the members of the Central Railway Advisory Committee and he could not assure us that it would be possible for him to push into service as many carriages as possible of this type. And we are only left wondering whether, with the mentality with which they are today charged, a mentality of despondency with regard to these railways, they would be willing to push on with this particular reform and improve the third class carriages at all.

Officers' Appathy

Then, Sir, I come to the treatment that is usually meted out by the railway employees towards the third class passengers. They are often treated almost as a nuisance by the railway employees, not only by the lower paid employees but also by the higher paid ones. And more often than not, the higher paid employees do not pay any attention at all to the complaints that are brought to their notice by the third class passengers. From the sweepers right up to the station masters these railway employees have been treating the third class passengers in a most unconscionable fashion. I am glad that the Railway Member has expressed himself wholly in favour of improving the conditions of

third class passengers and he has even expressed his own personal anxiety that their conditions should be improved.

Sir, an expression of personal interest in the fate of the third class passengers really does not go far enough and cannot reassure us when we remember that he himself has given answers again and again, even during this Session, that latrines on the East Indian Railway, Bengal Nagpur Railway and the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway have been found to be quite satisfactory or at least not unsatisfactory and that the water tanks are filled properly and at all times, etc.

I can only state that the South Indian Railway mentions here that notices have been put in the latrines that passengers can ask the station masters whenever they find that the water tanks are in need of water. But, Sir, I have only recently toured very extensively in Southern India and have not found even one latrine in any third class carriage where such notices have been exhibited at all. I made one suggestion while I was on the Public Accounts Committee to the Chief Commissioner who was then in charge of railways, that complaint books should be placed in the Railway Guard's vans and in the Railway Guides a notice should be put as to the help that every passenger can expect a railway official to render to him in his relations with the Railway Department and with the other passengers also.

Abolish the 1st Class

But no action seems to have been taken till now and we only find that more and more money has been spent only recently upon improvement of the conditions of first class passengers while very little has been spent on the improvement of the conditions of third class travelling.

Even now with regard to the estimates made for the increased income from these passengers, I find that they expect to get only five lakhs more by increasing the rates for first and second class passengers whereas, they expect to get as much as 50 lakhs from the third class passengers. The third class passengers have been paying more and more even during these days of depression and yet they have not been looked after properly whereas the first and second class passengers are not even able to provide them with more income, even if their rates are raised, and yet they are being looked after properly. And still, our suggestion, that the first class should be abolished completely is not likely to be accepted by Government. The first class should be abolished and there should be only two classes in addition to the intermediate class, and the third class fares should be lowered instead of being raised, as is proposed by the Honourable Member for Railways.

As against that, the figures given in the budget papers supplied to us are as follows:

Passenger traffic earnings			Rs.
Upper class	...	...	3,11,71,879
Third class	...	...	24,43,78,000

The total thus comes to Rs. 27,55,49,879 as against Rs. 30,34,97,000 which seems to be the figure given in the Report.

Mr. P. R. Rau (Financial Commissioner, Railways): May I explain that? The figures given in the Administration Report refer to all railways in India, class I, class II, and class III, while the figures given in the Explanatory Memorandum refer only to the State-owned railways—commercial lines.

DEMANDING MORE RURAL POSTAL FACILITIES

Speech delivered on the 3rd of April 1935, laying stress upon the need for more postal facilities for rural areas. This has influenced Government to such an extent that in the next Budget for 1936—37, Government provided Rs. 2 lakhs more for developing such facilities. It is also interesting to note that the maximum loss permissible to be incurred on a rural post office has subsequently been raised upto Rs. 250/-.

Mr. President, in asking the House to support our amendment, I wish to place a few facts for the consideration of Honourable Members. It is said by the Honourable Member for Industries that in 1925 and 1926 the policy on which the postal department should be conducted was laid down. According to that he said that it should be maintained as a public utility service and also that it should be expected to pay its own way. I am certainly in agreement with the Honourable Member when he said that this department should be carried on really as a public utility service. But my complaint is that it is not being carried on adequately as a public utility service.

To be essentially a Public Utility Service

Secondly, as regards the question of its paying its own way, I would like to confess that the Government has placed us in a very paradoxical position. If this department is to be self-dependent, then it means one of these three things: that in order to enable it to pay its own way, we should either

allow it to cut down the pay and pension permissible to its employees or to raise the cost of its own service, or to cut down the total amount of the services that it renders to this country and to different sections of the people. I refuse to walk into this trap. I refuse to accept this paradoxical position. I consider that since this particular department really ought to be carried on essentially as a public utility service, it ought not to be expected to pay its own way in every direction and for the whole year.

As was admitted by the Retrenchment Committee also, that in certain aspects of its work it may be found that Government has to incur certain losses. At the same time the Retrenchment Committee also admitted that this department should be allowed to carry on those sections of its work on which the Government looses heavily or even lightly every year. But even as a whole, the whole department cannot be expected to pay its own way throughout the year if really it is to be carried on as an adequate public utility service. If you take for instance, even according to the Honourable Member in charge, press-telegrams and newspaper services and telegraphic lines cause considerable losses every year. Yet the Government of India is maintaining those sections and is incurring all those losses generously. These losses are very heavy; yet I do not grudge them: I am prepared to allow the pressmen and the newspaper-men and all those who use the telegraphs to derive this particular benefit from the losses sustained by the Government of India; but, at the same time, there is another section of this particular department on which the Government of India is very particular that it should not loose very much, that it should not spend very much, and yet that is the parti-

cular section of their department which ought to be developed to a very much greater extent than has been made possible till now by this department or by this Government.

Rural Aspect

If we come to the rural aspect of their work, we find, that whereas there are two post offices for every town served by the postal service, there is only one post office for every 30 villages in this country. Whereas there are as many as seven post boxes for every town served by this department, there is only one post box for every 16 villages; and yet we are told, and we find from the last year's annual report, that the number of village post offices has been decreasing, the number of village postal runners has been decreasing, the number of post boxes also has been decreasing.

All along the line there has been a decrease in the services rendered by the postal department to the village folk. Take, for instance, the Press telegrams: certainly the villagers in this country are not deriving one-tenth advantage from it as the townsmen. Taking all the telegraph services, it is established that it is being run more for the advantage of the towns than for the villages. Government are loosing lakhs and lakhs every year and they grudge to spend a few more lakhs per annum upon the rural aspect of their own work.

Why rob Peter and pay Paul?

Take again, the villages and the towns. You have 2,575 towns in all in this country, and for them you have nearly 5,000 post offices. On the other hand for all these villages—nearly 7,00,000 of them, you have only 18,740

post offices. Is that rendering any service at all to the villages? Is that really the way in which the money that is being derived by this Government mostly from the villagers should be spent? Is it the purpose of this Government that it should go on spending money in establishing these departments and running them more for the advantage of the towns, than for that of the villagers?

A Heartless Policy

Then, again, the extension of village postal services also has been going down. At one time a village post office was allowed to remain until the loss on it came to be a little more than Rs. 500 per annum. But somehow, in 1931, a new policy was adopted, according to which a village post office stands to be abolished if the loss on it came to be a little more than Rs. 120 per annum. It is really a heartless policy to say the least. Rs. 120 per annum on one village post office, the Government is not prepared to lose! but Government is prepared to lose lakhs and lakhs on Press telegrams, on newspapers and on telegraphic Communication and in so many other directions!

A Strange One

Coming again to the opening of experimental post offices, between 1925 and 1929, a liberal policy was followed. In 1925, as many as 692 new post offices were established, and, in 1929, 1,117 experimental post offices were opened; but, since 1930, a new policy of reducing the number of these new post offices has been followed, with the result that during the last year, 1933-34, there was actually a reduction in the total number of village post office.

Coming to the postal runners, who have to carry these postal articles from one Sub post office to Various branch offices, and from one branch office to the nearest village, the number of miles that they have covered has also come down by 2,019 during the year 1933-34 . . .

Mr. G. V. Bewoor: May I explain, Sir, that that reduction is frequently due to the introduction of motor services which replace runner-services.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: At the same time, I do not know how my Honourable friend will explain the reduction in the number of post offices by 121, the reduction of the village postmen by 453 and the reduction in letter boxes by 1,239? And, Sir, what is the service that we are getting in this country?

Want More Post Offices

I find that there is only one post office for every 75 square miles. if you exclude the post office services rendered to the towns, and if you take into account only the villages, you will find that this particular area will be doubled. Then, Sir, for over 14,225 persons you have got only one post office. Are we to be satisfied with this? No. But what are we to do? We must have more and more post offices; we must have more and more post boxes, but the answer which the Honourable Member in charge gives us is that he has not got enough money. If his department is to be self-dependent, if it is to pay its own way, then how can we expect this particular department to extend the postal facilities especially to our villagers?

Half Fed Employees

I come to the question of extra-departmental agents. After all, the department is not paying full salaries to all its employees. There are as many as 17,328 post offices managed by extra-departmental agents, who are only paid part time allowance and whose services are naturally secured at a price very much less than the market price. Therefore, the full price is paid only to those who run 6,348 post offices, and not to all the post offices, and yet the department is unable to establish more post offices, or even to instal more post boxes. The other day, I asked a question whether there was any objection at all to providing a post box to, at least, every village which is being visited by a postman, and the answer was that the cost that would be incurred was going to be so enormous that Government could not possibly consider that proposition. But, Sir, I would like to know how the Director General will explain some of these facts. Why is it, Sir, that special deliveries for distribution of foreign mails are being maintained in this country? Who are the people who are expected to be benefited by these special deliveries? Is it not a fact that Government is really losing a considerable amount of money because of these special deliveries?

Secondly, there are special trains to carry foreign mails also. I do realise the advantage of running these special trains. I was abroad several times and for several years, and I know how anxious sometimes we were to receive letters from Sweet Home, but, at the same time, the satisfaction which the people abroad get by quickening the service is nothing compared to the satisfaction which the millions and millions of people

would get if you opened more post offices and extended all kinds of postal facilities to the villages. Sir, my friends opposite may say that we are always exaggerating when we speak of millions and millions of people. But, it is a fact that millions and millions of people are still suffering for lack of postal facilities, and the satisfaction which these people would derive would certainly be much greater than the foreign traders and merchants or even our own people in this country or abroad would get.

Subsidise the Department

Sir, I would like to suggest for the consideration of Government that every year the Honourable Member in charge should do his best to pay a certain amount of subsidy to the postal department in order to enable it to open more post offices and put in more post boxes in the villages, so that the villagers in remote corners of India may derive a certain amount of benefit from this useful and necessary department.

Lastly, Sir, I should like to pay a complement to this particular department. Sir, I have derived inspiration from the activities of this department to this extent that whenever an Anglo-Indian told me in England that the habit of taking bribes is ingrained in India and that such a habit cannot be readily eradicated at all, I was always able to tell them to look at the activities of our own telegraph and postal department. I found that is the one department in which this wretched evil of bribery is least found, and, therefore, I am glad this department is being carried on very efficiently. Therefore, I want that its activities should be extended to the villagers so that they may also derive benefit from it.

Will never be a Loss

If there was to be a post office in a village even though only five or six letters are posted in a day, it will not be a loss to the Government, because the existence of a post office will first of all stimulate the commercial and social instincts of every person, and the villagers will take to letter-writing to a greater extent. Secondly, if Savings Banks are also established along with the branch post offices, the villagers will be encouraged in spending money frugally and they can keep their few rupees or their small savings in the Savings Banks. It is a common experience that every year there is a conflagration in every village, and the small sums of money, which the poor villagers have with them, either in the shape of rupees or currency notes, are practically lost, because of this conflagration. But if, on the other hand, these Savings Banks are established, if every village post office will have a Savings Bank attached to it, then certainly the villagers will put their little savings in those Savings Banks.

I would like to support this particular reduction in postal rates. The Honourable Member in charge may say—how can you ask for a reduction in postal charges when you are asking for the extension of the services of the postal department? I am perfectly consistent about this particular motion. I am asking for a subsidy of ten lakhs every year from the Finance Member. This year he has got Rs. 120 lakhs. Let him give Rs. 10 lakhs out of it. Let the postal department spend this amount on the extension of rural postal services.

JUBILEE POST OFFICES

We are nearing the Silver Jubilee. There was another Jubilee in England, and that was the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the late Queen of England and the Empress of this unhappy country. During that Jubilee, that is, about 50 years ago, a very useful policy was followed in England and I want that policy to be followed again now in this country, at least at the time of the next Jubilee, which, of course, many of us are not anxious to welcome. I want them to do this :

"As part of the postal improvements made to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 the Government to every house in the country. The extension took two years of strenuous work to complete, and at the end it was found that a free delivery had been given for the first time to some 55 million letters a year."

If that policy were followed in this country, not 55 million letters, but 5,500 million letters would certainly be given a chance of free delivery for the first time.

"The principle of the regular delivery is still maintained, though it is not of course in all cases a daily one. The rural delivery is probably one of the least remunerative parts of Post Office work—(*I want the Honourable Member to remember the words "one of the least remunerative parts of Post Office work"*)—and the cost of giving a delivery every day at isolated cottages receiving two or three letters a week would be prohibitive. Indeed, in the remote districts, it not infrequently costs the Post Office sixpence or a shilling to deliver a halfpenny circular."

It costs them six pence or a shilling to deliver a halfpenny circular, and still they carry on that particular kind of service. But here, our civilised Government pleads poverty and says it cannot extend rural postal service because it has not got money and we cannot have it because it has got to pay its own way :

"So complete, however, has the system of postal delivery now become that even the most remote farmhouse on Dartmoor or in the Highlands and every inhabited islet in the Orkneys or Shetlands is

regularly visited by the postman. The rural delivery work employs a small army of postmen on foot, on bicycles . . ."

I want our Government also to supply bicycles to our postmen.

" . . . with horses and carts, and in some districts on motor bicycles."

Unfortunately, in this country we supply motor bicycles only to those telegraph servants who are to serve the Viceregal Lodge:

"The rural postman has a special character of his own. He is not only a deliverer of letters but he is also a walking post office."

And I want our postmen to be walking post offices.

"He sells stamps, he accepts parcels or registered letters from any one on his walk; he blows his whistle."

I want our postmen also to blow their whistle whenever they come to the village.

" . . he blows his whistle to announce to the waiting village that he is ready to collect their letters, and he will obtain postal orders for anyone who cannot visit a post office. He is, in fact probably in closer contact with the public in his district than any other employee of the Post Office, and he is one of its most popular representatives."

Therefore, I expect the Government of India to pay more, and more attention to the rural aspect of post office work and to establish more and more post offices and more and more post boxes, and at the same time, reduce the rates that it charges for its own services, especially this anna for every tola of weight for envelopes.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Speech delivered on the 30th March 1935 on the proposed one crore Rural Development Grant. The Peasants' Group of M. L. A's has asked for more money and the Professor has been agitating for a recurring grant and also for the formation of an All India Central Rural Reconstruction Board or Committee to advise, encourge and stimulate Provincial Governments to push forward with their schemes of Rural Development.

It may be interesting to note in this connection that since then the Government have been considering about this and have recently decided to constitute and advisory, Committee.

Sir, I preface my remarks on this subject 'by a reference to what the Honourable the Finance Member has said in regard to the distribution of this money and the management of it. He said—he gave us an assurance—that at least the schemes that may be financed out of this money will be placed before this House. But he does not give us an assurance that this House will be given an opportunity to discuss and also to decide upon the schemes that will be eventually financed out of this particular fund.

NEED FOR A CENTRAL COMMITTEE

In this connection, I would like to suggest for the consideration of this House, that there should be a central committee to supervise and control the expenditure out of this fund and this committee should be constituted in the same manner in which the roads committee is at present constituted, and, whatever

vote may be taken, it should be taken by a majority of the non-official Members and not by all the Members of that particular committee. If such a committee is constituted and if that committee is expected to control and supervise the expenditure and also to see that the provincial schemes that are submitted to it are properly scrutinised and examined, then this House may have some confidence that, after all, this money might not go entirely into the hands of those *Aman Sabha* Members and other loyalists and also Rajahs like Bobbili and other Knights from the Punjab and other provinces who may be more interested in fighting the Congress than in really doing any good to the villagers.

I come next to the three schemes, national schemes, that have been already placed before this House for consideration by my Honourable friend, Dr. Rajan—a national campaign against malaria, a national campaign against venereal diseases and a national campaign against brothels; and I would like to add to these three, a fourth scheme, that is a national campaign to supply drinking water for all the people in our villages.

Inadequate Water Supply

I find that at least 50 per cent of our villages today are suffering for want of enough water, merely because there is not sufficient amount of rain or there are no proper irrigation facilities available in the locality. There is already a complaint before the House—from the very eloquent speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Ghanshiam Singh Gupta, we have heard about Chattisgarh. This particular case ought to be investigated. And, similarly, all over this country, there should be a real serious attempt to see that a good drinking water supply

is assured to all our people. In this connection, the *Harijan Seval: Sangh*, started and run under the supervision of Mahatma Gandhi, is doing excellent work, and Mr. Birla, who is the President of this *Sangh*, has already given grants for the sinking and construction of wells in various parts of this country, and, for each well, they have been granting about Rs. 250 on condition that locally we should be able to raise another Rs. 250 and sink a well and construct it and protect it properly. A similar scheme ought to be undertaken by the Government of India with a portion of the money they have at their disposal.

I shall enumerate certain other suggestions, without attempting to discuss every one of them particularly.

What has the Congress Done!

There is the *Harijan* uplift work. In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a speech made by the Rajah of Bobbili, the Chief Minister to the Government of Madras.

There he says that 70 lakhs of rupees have been spent in the last 12 years by the Government of Madras and he asks: "What has the Congress done?" If that is the way in which this money also is going to be spent and these questions are going to be put to the people at the time of the elections, as is being done in Madras at the time of the bye-election there, and if it is going to be put to the Congress and the people: "What has the Congress done? What has Mahatmaji done?", and so on, then this money is going to be wrongly used and is going to be used against the people who really wish to get rid of this Government and have a better form of Government.

Next comes elementary education. My Honourable friend has already mentioned it and I would like that more and more money is spent on it. Then there is housing. This may create some sort of surprise in some Members; but I would like every one of us here to realise the fact that most of the people in our villages today are suffering from defective housing in slums. Believe me, Sir, when I say that millions and millions of *Harijans* are not allowed to live in our villages but are relegated to a hopeless place outside the village to live amidst refuse, amidst jackals and asses.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): If the Honourable Member makes out an exhaustive list and hands it over to the Local Governments, it would be very useful.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: If I can only feel sure that the Local Governments will be just as responsible as this House to the cares and needs of the people, then certainly I would have followed that procedure; but, unfortunately, I do not have today even an iota of Confidence in any of the local Governments not to speak of the Central Government.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): What is the advantage of making these suggestions, then ?

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Excuse me, Sir, for trying to reply to your suggestion; Anyhow as far as houses are concerned, I do not want thousands and thousands of rupees to be wasted in constructing the kind of houses in which we are housed here in this New Delhi, so

that there may be another cemetery in this DELHI. But I would like small huts to be constructed and I do not want to waste all this money in financing the construction of houses, but to make partial grants for the construction of these huts so that the poor classes of *Harijans* as well as the agricultural workers can really hope to have, not temporary houses as they have now which look at the sun, not with one facet but with several facets—as many facets in fact as there are in a diamond—but Government should construct, small decent huts.

Is that Good Sense?

Then, I come to irrigation works. The other day, when my friend, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, suggested that these irrigation works, as well as other construction works, should be undertaken by the Government of India, the Finance Member replied by saying that those works will only be undertaken by the Government of India which will be productive. . . . .

The Honourable Sir James Grigg: Is not that good sense?

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Who will undertake the development of unproductive works? There is a great necessity for undertaking unproductive works, and it may not be such a matter for laughter on the other side and they would certainly repent for laughing when I tell them that there are today very many unproductive irrigation works, established by the Government of India in order to protect famine ridden areas and, I would like that the Tungabhadra Project, the Krishna Reservoir Project, Lower Bhavani Project, and other similar projects ought to be undertaken. They have been given up now because Government has found them to be unproductive

in their usual commercial sense. I want them to take up all these irrigation projects which have been considered by the Local Governments as well as the Central Government as famine protection works.

Protection for Cottage Industries

I want more money to be given to handloom weavers and cottage industries. Then, there are the hydro-electric schemes. I want electricity in every village. Serious attempts are made in Madras and Mysore in this direction, so that cottage industries can be undertaken with small dynamos and small power plants, and the like.

Provide Adequate Marketing Facilities

Only yesterday, the House was told that there was not enough money for agricultural marketing. The Government of India are not serious about collecting information. They gave a sort of false answer and suggested that there were Trade Commissioners in all countries. There is no Trade Commissioner in the United States of America, in Japan and other countries. I want the Trade Commissioners to be appointed in all other countries as soon as possible.

Need to get rid of this Government?

Then, I come to the question of village post offices. Only the other day, my friend told me that 1,500 village post offices were abolished and that a sort of subsidy that was being given for the maintenance of these village post offices was stopped. I would like the Government of India to consider that problem also. I want the Government of India to consider the small wants first. I do not want them to simply waste the money

on these Provincial Governments. I do not want my Honourable friend, the Member for Industries and Labour, say "I have handed over the money to the Provincial Governments. I have no control over them." You have wasted millions of money all these years in creating institutions in the shape of railways, aeroplanes and telegraphs. They have gone to waste and have not succeeded in winning the people over to your side. This one crore and 13 lakhs is not going to help you to win the people to your side, and, if this is the policy you are going to adopt, we shall make every attempt to get rid of this Government, and, I am sure, we will have the people with us.

PART II

THE INDIAN PEASANT

His Aims and Ideals

Socialism, to the Indian peasant is a red rag. Rural India is contented with the present form of government. Any change from the present order will not be well received by the masses. He is moderate in his aims and ideals :— This is the official and pro-government version, of the peasants' needs.

The Congress leaders claim to be the spokesmen of the starving millions. We have done, we have been doing and we will do every thing for the amelioration of the half-naked peasants and the underfed workers. It is an organisation of the masses and for the masses. This is the Congressman's way of doing things.

The first is a myth and the second a half truth. Congressmen have done and are doing for the betterment of the Peasantry : but it is not enough. Much more is expected of the great Indian National Congress.

The following article, reprinted from the July-Aug. 35 number of the Triveni by kind permission of the Editor, puts forth clearly the position of the Indian peasant vis-a-vis the self-seekers and government hench-men on the one hand and the Congress in the other.

In this Prof. Ranga gives in a nut-shell the present position of the peasant as also the state of things and the order of society he is aiming at.

Peasants and workers have been the main strength and inspiration of most of the radical movements aiming at greater freedom, higher status and nobler standards. From the yeoman Levellers with their Cromwellian discipline to the Pilgrim peasants with their Declaration of Independence, the history of England and of the United States of America is replete with the glorious contributions made by the peasants to the growth and modelling of the democratic struggle. It is indeed the peasant President of Czechoslovakia who has won a place for his Nation in the comity of nations. The late peasant Dictator of Poland, Marshal Pilsudski, triumphed over the strangling Corridors of Russia and Germany and regained and maintained the freedom and individuality of his country. It is hard to estimate the debt of modern Denmark to the constructive genius and creative culture of the peasantry, or to measure the democratic gifts of the Swiss peasants who have helped to create their model democracy. Such is the richness of the contribution made in world history by the peasantry of the post-Reformation age.

Peasants' Place

That even this capitalistic age has gained much from the co-operation of the peasants is amply borne out by the course of modern history. Germany of Bismarck, England of Lloyd George, France of the *Petite* peasants, Italy of Mussolini, America of the Roosevelts, Western Europe of the Great War, have all had to realise their inevitable dependence, for their continued prosperity and advancement, upon the co-operation, progress and contentment of the peasants and the beautification and enrichment of the countryside. Hence the growth of the agricultural co-operative movement, small holdings,

advancement of agricultural research (including farm costs), the protection of various agricultural commodities from pests, foreign competition and dumping, the standardisation and popularisation of national marks for agricultural commodities, holding of agricultural exhibitions, improvement of agricultural markets, manipulation of exchanges to help peasants, raising of prices, mechanisation and electrification of cultivation and collectivisation of agriculture etc. England, where the agriculturists were relegated almost to the limbo in the pre-War days, had to realise to its chagrin that it had thereby undermined its own essential defences. America which began to boast of its progressive and rapid urbanisation has had to realise dramatically, as it were, that ruralisation of industries held the key for its future safety and advancement.

Even the experience of alien or autocratic Governments which have sought to win the affections of their subjects, has also tended to give a rural bias to their policies. The Czarist Russia which scoffed at all the revolutionary movements, had to bow its head and accept Stolypin's agrarian reforms with a view to win over the land-hungry peasants. The proud British Parliament was obliged to swallow the Balfourian Irish Land Acquisition policy, which resulted eventually in making a free gift of land to Irish peasants. The Stuarts of England and the Napoleons of France were able to reign just because they accepted the revolutionary redistribution of land, achieved by their contemporary peasants and landholders. The post-War Eastern Europe still respects the morbid national demarcations made by the Versailles Treaty, not only because of its satisfaction with its nationalistic aspirations but also because of the peasantwise redistribution

of lands in all the new countries. Indeed, even Revolutionary Russia has not succeeded in ignoring the peasant-mind in its own terrific hurry to achieve Socialism in our own time. The non-co-operation of the peasant with the overbearing and theoretical Bolshevik ordinances forced Lenin, the invincible, to formulate a new economic policy to conciliate and win the co-operation of the peasants; and Stalin, his successor of steel, was obliged to order the cessation of the Trotskian coercive methods of collectivising agriculture and to introduce persuasive, propagandistic, co-operative methods of dealing with the peasants.

We have said enough to show how great has been the place won and occupied by the peasantry in the history and life of different nations of the world, and how indispensable have been the assistance and zealous co-operation and revolutionary ardour of the peasantry for the advancement of the political, economic or social life of nations.

Such are the peasants with whom the Indian National Congress has to deal, from whom it has to win enthusiastic partnership, and over whose emotions it has to gain sway in its strenuous fight for freedom and Swaraj for this great country. The recent history of the organised efforts of the peasantry to win a better, greater and nobler place for themselves in the political scheme of this country has shown beyond all doubt that they are a chip of the old block and the world of peasants can certainly feel proud of its Indian scions.

II

It was not long after the Indian Revolt of 1857 that the Mahratta peasants rose against the money-lenders

to put an end to their exploitation. Though it was a spontaneous rising like the German peasant uprisings of the age of the Reformation, it succeeded in opening the eyes of the Government to the grave danger underlying the peasants' discontent. The direct result of it, the Deccan Agriculturalists Act, was the beginning of a process of legislative interference for the regulation of agricultural conditions.

The discontent and the resulting agrarian riots in the Punjab led to the passing of the Land Alienation Act. The necessity for the passing of the Agrarian and Tenancy Laws in the North-Western Provinces and Bengal indicates that the peasants were not unready to rise against the Zamindars who were immune from any State interference, thanks to the Permanent Settlement granted to, or rather inflicted upon, one-third part of India. Isolated instances of Zamindars being murdered, or violent altercations between Zamindars and tenants, had become too many and too frequent to be continuously ignored, and the British solution was the passing of the Tenancy Legislation, recognising permanency of tenure and establishing, and in some cases even extending, though to a very small extent, the time-worn rights and privileges of peasants as against the Zamindars.

Peasants' Satyagraha Campaigns

But all these attempts made by the peasants were only isolated, spasmodic and unsystematic endeavours which resulted, fortunately for some areas, in a somewhat useful legislation. Systematic espousing of the peasants' cause, organised agitation and representation of the peasants' needs and demands, and reliable and painstaking investigation of the root-causes of the

growing ailments of the peasants, came for the first time to be called in aid of the agrarian agitation in the Champaran Satyagraha campaign. It is interesting to notice that the President of the Golden Jubilee of the Congress, Comrade Rajen Babu, happened to be one of the two great Indians who led the peasants on the Champaran front. At that time, Government was not so ready to see the point of view of the masses; so great had been the official indifference, nay, contempt towards public workers who threw in their lot with the hitherto unnoticed peasants.

Mahatmaji's Role

To Mahatma Gandhi is due the credit of having attempted and achieved the capture of the hearts of the peasants, first of Champaran and then of the rest of India, for the Congress. He it was who studied and formulated their grievances and gave them a political expression. He it was who incurred directly the wrath of Government on behalf of the peasants, and who welcomed it readily and unflinchingly. He, for the first time in this country, forced Government to yield to the masses, not as a matter of grace but as a concession of the rights of the peasants. With this campaign began the peasants' public career of the modern age, a career surcharged with undaunted courage, unbending self-respect and undiluted sacrifice, which all go under the Gandhian idea of Satyagraha. Of the twin organisers of this victory of the Indian peasant, one is spinning yet another thread of the peasants' independence from the thraldom of the industrialists, and the other is receiving the homage of the country to the Congress on its Golden Jubilee.

7

Peasants' Constructive Genius

Bardoli is the second magic area of the achievements of the peasants. Mahatma Gandhi planned to harness the peasants and people of Bardoli to the great chariot of Swaraj. But Chauri Chaura saved the Bardoli ryot from shouldering the responsibility, though it did not come soon enough to save the Indian peasantry from their Pedanandipad Panipat of 1922. There, on that extensive sea-ward plain in Andhra, was enacted an extraordinary and, in one sense, a memorable peasant drama of a No-tax campaign which, for its grim sacrifices and its yearning for freedom, has no parallel in modern Indian history. But with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi and the wise, cool-headed and courageous leadership of Sirdar Vallabhai Patel and the proverbial sacrifices of Indian womanhood, the Bardoli peasant has successfully demonstrated his Satyagraha against the unjust imposition of Re-settlement rates. Justice Bloomsfield, through his findings, vindicated the claims of the Sirdar, and the peasants themselves displayed, on behalf of their class, their constructive genius. The Bardoli Satyagraha of the peasants has won for Indian peasants an unforgettable place in the galaxy of the fighters for freedom. The Bardoli dead speak much more eloquently, persuasively and powerfully than either Prof. Laski or Bertrand Russel against the authoritarian State, and plead far more jealously than Rousseau for liberty, equality and fraternity in the Modern State. The sacrifices and sufferings of the peasants in Champaran, Pedanandipad and Bardoli are enough evidence, if any such were needed, to prove that the peasants will always be in the vanguard of Indian progress, political or economic.

III

It is largely true to say that the Congress has come to realise that Swaraj can only be achieved through its own conscious and determined struggle, after the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on our political stage. Till then, the Liberals were able to pursue their policy of pleading with the British for the grant of Colonial Self-Government, despite the warnings of Lokamanya Tilak. Naturally, it became necessary for the Congress, after 1920, to take stock of all the elements which might help it in its struggle for Swaraj. To Mahatma Gandhi goes the credit of turning the attention of the Congress towards the peasants also. His Bardoli Satyagraha preparations and the precipitated Pedanandipad No-tax campaign had brought the peasants to the forefront of our political stage as an unmistakably forward element. Ever since, neither Congress nor Government has lost sight of this discovery.

It is wrong to think that our peasants are likely to patiently wait for other political combatants to dole out to them what they think best for them. It is indeed true that they are grateful to Congress for having energetically advocated, ever since the days of R. C. Dutt, a considerable lowering of the burden of Land Revenue and other direct and indirect taxes, notably those on salt and sugar. They are also conscious of the fact that the Satyagraha campaigns, of Champaran, Kaira, Bardoli, Pedanandipad, Karnataka, and Venkatagiri have contributed not a little to awaken and energise them and to make them self-consciously organised. The Great War, followed as it was so soon after by the epoch-making Non-co-operation movement, has done much to rob them of their age-long torpor. The Salt Satyagraha, which

had touched their inmost feelings and captured their imagination, had taught them to suffer and to sacrifice. Thus their own achievements had opened their eyes to the endless vista of possibilities of their advancement. No wonder, the phenomenal successes achieved by the Russian five-year plan found them ready to absorb and react enthusiastically to the present day socialistic, intellectual atmosphere. It is to such self-conscious and impatient peasants that Mahatmaji's Khadi and Village Industries programmes were addressed. Though they have been quite willing to avail themselves of these well-meant schemes of rural betterment and unemployment relief, they have found it impossible to accept the economic theory of their founders. This is not because of any morbidity of thought on their part or of want of love for their Gandhi. It is because they have grown anxious to see India advancing, through State and co-operative effort, in her capacity to utilise power for the development of all her industries.

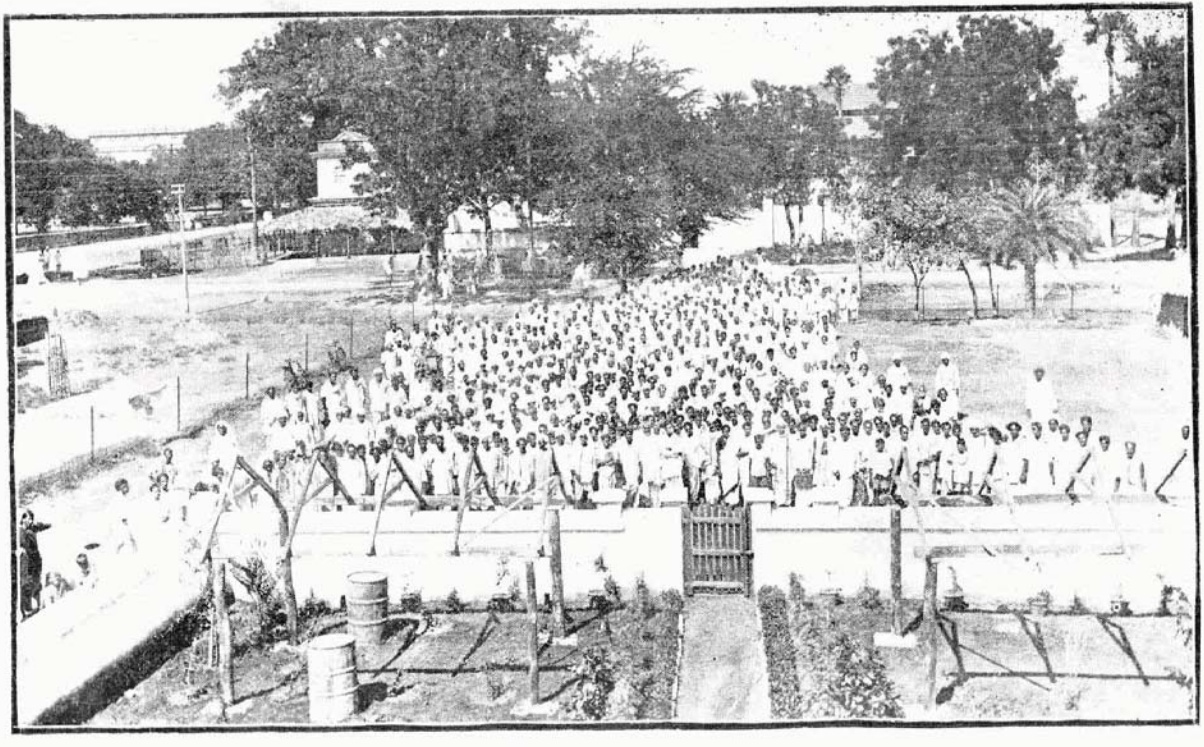
IV

It is as well to realise that a new approach to the economic needs of our country is slowly being delineated in our peasant circles. Mahatma Gandhi can claim to have laid, consciously or unconsciously, the first foundations to this new approach. Till 1920, the Dutt-Ranade economic thought held full sway in our country, and India's face was determinedly set in the direction of a rapid, capitalistic industrialisation. All that of course resulted in ignoring the peasant and his dependents, and undermining the very economic foundations of the millions of workers in cottage industries. But with Mahatma Gandhi's clarion call to Congress to embrace

his 'Back to the Village' programme, began the reaction against the nationalist-cum-capitalistic economics. It required, however, more than fifteen years of unceasing propaganda by Gandhi, and the publication of a large number of treatises and reports, official and non-official, upon rural economics, for the present day socialistic-cum-Gandhian economics to be developed into a full-fledged system of thought. It is quite possible that neither Mahatma Gandhi nor any of the numerous thinkers and practical workers have consciously contributed to the growth of this system of thought, but it is true, nevertheless, that our peasants and workers are today busy forging a political instrument with the aid of the Congress and the Congress Socialists, so as to reconstruct our economic and political life.

Peasants' Institute's Special Contribution

The Andhra Peasants' Institute's special contribution is the popularisation of that system of thought, and the Peasants' Group of M.L.A's is trying to give expression to it. To put it in a nutshell, this new system of economic thought stands for State and co-operative control of industries, which are to be so developed as to enrich and enliven the countryside, for the conservation and exploitation of our natural resources in the interests of the masses, and for the ultimate collectivisation and co-operatisation of mechanised and progressive agriculture. It further stands for a new method of distribution of wealth, collective and individualised, in which a conscious and continuous effort will be made to minimise inequalities and to prevent the growth, as at present, of enormous tumours of capitalistic accumulations. It also seeks to eliminate the present ruinous and ravaging institutions of middlemen, such as, Talukdars, stock-



Peasants' march in Guntur 1935. Prof. and Mrs. Ranga, who lead the peasants also are seen in the Photo

brokers, private banks and merchants, and get that work done either by the State or by Co-operative Institutions. This may sound dangerously like Socialism: yet it is the logical outcome of the Gandhian turn in our politics, the seemingly irremediable peasants' poverty, the socialistic propaganda, the Russian achievements, and the phenomenal and costly failure of Indian capitalistic industrialisation. This is what all the conscious and politically minded peasants wish to achieve, and they demand the willing and enthusiastic support and sympathy of the Congress to which they are till uow very much attached, thanks to the Mahatma.

MARCHING SLOWLY BUT STEADILY

That they are prepared to shoulder their responsibilities, however heavy and costly they may be, has been proved by their Satyagraha campaigns. That they are prepared to stand by and strengthen Congress to the limit of their resources, has been borne out by their covlossal contributions to the 1920-21 and 1930-34 National struggles. That they are not afraid of advanced propaganda is shown by the manner in which they have welcomed Socialists to work among them. That they are yet prepared to accord an enthusiastic and wholehearted welcome to the Gandhian attempts at alleviating the distress of the rural population through the A.I.S.A. and A.I.V.I.A., is known to all those engaged in those organisations. That they are nationalistic is demonstrated by the Rural Swadeshi exhibitions being organised in the Andhra. And that they are prepared to march with the times and follow Mahatma Gandhi in effecting a social revolution, has been amply witnessed by the triumph of the Andhra Harijan Seva Dals and the success of the Harijan Sevak Sanghs in the rural areas

of the Punjab, U. P., Bombay, Baroda and Andhra. Last but not the least evidence of their readiness to develop slowly but steadily and surely a consciousness of class-wise struggle for the attainment of not only political Swaraj but also economic Swaraj, is the celebration of the 1935 May Day in the rural areas of the Andhra and the Gujarat.

Such are the present day peasants. They find it hard to reconcile themselves to the assurance reported to have been given by Mahatma Gandhi to the Talukdars of U. P., that their properties and privileges would not be touched. Nor is it easy for them to accept Sirdar Vallabhbhai's plea that compensation has to be offered to the displaced Talukdars. They know they owe much of their present political consciousness and status to these two champions of the countryside but they cannot again become blind to their new economic consciousness. It also goes against the lessons of their own experience, not to speak of that of the world, to believe, along with Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, that India ought to recoil and retire as much as possible from world trade. They do wish the development of cottage industries, as part of a conscious ruralisation and development of small scale industries worked by electric power. But they cannot believe, as demanded by the spokesman of the A. I. V. I. A. that India's needs for a redistribution and greater production of wealth, and for a solution the inevitable ills of capitalistic production, can be satisfied within any measurable space of time by the sole development of A. I. V. I. A. activities. Hence their anxiety to evolve their own economic theory and demands, in the light of their experience and that of the world, and with the aid of the present day world of thought. Its practical expression is the formulation of the minimum demands publi-

shed first by the Zamin Ryots, thanks to the inspiration of Mr. R. Mandeswara Sarma, and then by the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers.

Peasants and Congress

The time has come when the Indian National Congress should recognise, with a great sense of satisfaction and thanks-giving, that our peasants have, at long last, reached their political majority and can be expected to think for themselves and declare to the world what is good for them. Rajen Babu, the Peasants' President of the Congress, has indeed recognised this new status of the peasants and assured them that they "are in a position to influence, and indeed determine, the views and actions of Congressmen, and as days go on, their power will go on increasing." But the present situation brooks no delay and Congress will be rendering a signal service to the peasants as a whole by handsomely and readily placing all its resources at the disposal of the peasants, to enable them to develop and strengthen their organisations in all their ramifications. No fear need be entertained that peasants' associations may fall a prey to reactionary groups. For, the servants of the peasants, most of whom have received their schooling in public life under the ægis of Gandhism, can certainly prevent such a calamity. Nor need Congress be afraid that peasants may turn against itself because of their extremism and thus undermine the position of all. For, the sole aim of the most socialistic-minded peasant is to make the Congress his own. At the same time, Congress has to exert itself a good bit to continue to retain and strengthen its hold upon our peasants. It has to carefully examine the economic theory of the peasants and scrutinise their demands and develop a workable agree-

ment with them to realise as much of their programme, in the transitional stage, as is possible and thus win their willing co-operation. There is an irreducible minimum of the peasants' demands, which was outlined by the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers, and it was submitted on the 17th of October, 1935, to the Congress President. Congress has to incorporate it within its own immediate programme and thus win their whole-hearted support.

It may be wondered whether it is so invaluable for Congress to do so much and to be so solicitous towards peasants and their demands. The answer is an emphatic 'Yes.' By an attempt to energise the peasants so as to fit them for greater struggles, Congress will be assuring itself of an invincible and ever-growing ally.

After all, the most important consideration that ought to weigh with every forward organisation like the Congress, interested in achieving a tremendous feat like National Freedom, is the degree of support that it can derive from every one. It ought to ally itself completely, whole-heartedly and unswervingly with the masses, and its happy and eventful associations with the peasants during the past half a century lead us to hope for the possibility of greater and more glorious achievements.

ECONOMIC POLICY OF PEASANTS AND WORKERS

In the following article, reprinted from the Congress number of the Bombay Chronicle, by kind permission of the Editor, Prof. Ranga makes the position of the Indian Peasant vis-a-vis the Industrialists clear. His arguements may sound to be reactionary but nevertheless deserve careful consideration of the Government as well as the public.

The Congress as well as all other Nationalist parties have been pursuing a protectionist policy in regard to the industrialisation of India and their combined influence, backed by the industrialists of Bombay and Calcutta has obliged the Government of India to adopt the present discriminatory protectionist policy, recommended by the Tariff Commission. The fathers of this policy, Justice Ranade and R. C. Dutt, hailed from Bombay and Calcutta respectively and they received their inspiration from the writings of Frederich List and the industrial history of such protectionist countries as America, Germany, France and Japan. They knew that the adoption of their programme of rapid industrialisation of India by our Government would mean heavier tax-burdens upon our masses. But they thought that the contribution made by the industries thus protected to the improvement of general economic conditions of the country would be so great as to more than compensate for the protective duties. They even felt that any undermining of agriculture, cottage industries and rural economy as a whole that may result from the industrialisation of India through Protective Tariffs would not after all be so bad, since India's backwardness

in this industrial age was thought to be due to her preponderating rural economy. The Congress and other parties have accepted their theory and the consequence of it all is the present-day Swadeshi movement with its growing number of Swadeshi Exhibitions, the fast growing burden of protective duties, the progressive starvation of workers in cottage industries and the stifling of agriculture.

Contribution of Capitalists

It is not in pertinent to question about the contribution so far made by such industrialisation brought about at such an enormous and increasing cost. Nor is it too early to put that question for it is more than sixty years since the Bombay Textile Industry has passed its infant stage and more than twenty years since it has begun to receive protection from the State and the public. The Cotton Excise Duty, which was affording, as one of its subsidiary results, some protection to the hand-loom weaving industry against itself, was abolished ten years ago and full-fledged protection has been afforded to it ever since. In spite of all this, the Indian Textile Industry is still crying out for more and more protection. It is still unable to stand the competition of Japanese industry which by the way has come into existence at a much later date and which cannot legitimately be claimed to enjoy any greater special advantages, even if we remember its exploitation of child and female labour.

Conditions of Employment still too Bad

Our Textile and Iron and Steel industries have so far failed to afford at least decent wages and humane con-

ditions of employment to their workers. Our industrial workers are still kept as inefficient as ever. No serious attempt has been made by our industrialists to train their workers and help them to earn higher wages or salaries. Not even such methods as co-partnership or profit-sharing have been sought to be adopted to stimulate greater co-operation from workers or lessen the evils of absenticism. Most of our industrial magnates are busy trying to undermine the influence of what little Trade Unionism has come to exist amongst their workers.

It cannot even be claimed by these industrialists that they have tried properly to humidify their mills. Most of the mills do not have any shelters for workers to rest and take their refreshments. Very few attempts have been made to provide healthy and decent housing for workers. The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour and the annual reports of the Factory Inspectors bear proof to the utter callousness of our industrialists to the health and happiness of our working classes. Then after all only less than 2½ millions of workers are employed in all our industries. But just think of the 30 millions of workers, employed in cottage industries, who are daily feeling their competition. Their earnings are going down and the unemployment amongst them is growing and the misery due to under-employment and under-nourishment cannot be over-estimated.

Financial Contribution of Capitalism

What is the financial contribution made not only by the Textile Industry but all the industries now being protected? The Railways were subsidised for a long time and even now enjoy many special advantages. The mines are still allowed to be worked by women. The

Tatas were boosted up by the Swaraj Party itself while in the Assembly, and what have all these industries paid to the State? Apart from four or five crores of protective duties paid upon the imports of cars and other luxuries, the only big item of State income from them is the incometax revenue of 16 crores per annum. But the non-industrialist but commercial classes alone pay not less than 6 crores towards that income. So at best all that the industrialists pay to the general revenues of the State in return for the protection given them amounts to not more than sixteen crores a year. Is it enough? They say, that it is much more than enough. But surely this contribution of theirs is not commensurate with what they get from the State.

Inefficiency of our Industrialism

They cannot even claim to have organised their mills, factories or mines as efficiently as those in other countries. Japan is able to manufacture her own machinery for textiles, iron and steel manufactures and railways. Our industrialists have yet to depend upon their imports. Japan manufactures her own cars and our industrialists are yet busy getting futile questions put in the Assembly to seek guarantee of minimum dividends, etc. which is so much in vogue in many of our cotton mills finds even economists to justify it. And no wonder, it shows no signs of self-immolation. In spite of the cheap and plentiful and comparative docile and willing labour that most of our industrialists are able to secure and the cheap and growing supply of better class of cotton and jute daily available in the neighbourhood of our textile mills, they are not in a position to assure us that within any measurable period of time they can get on without this costly protection.

Anti-National Proclivities of Capitalists

The peasants and workers may continue to willingly bear this terrible burden, if they can assure themselves that the industrialists are assisting them in their struggle for Swaraj. But they are faced with the inescapable and inexcusable Lees-Mody and Indo-British Iron and Steel Pacts which are a standing testimony to the anti-national, non-Swadeshi mentality of our industrialists.

Poverty of the Consumers

What is even more alarming for everybody is that our peasants and workers cannot hope to bear this burden of protective duties, even if they wish to, in spite of all the disabilities and defections of our industrialists. Every provincial Government has been busy during the last 15 years to augment its revenues only at their expense and the Central Government alone has levied 16 crores of additional annual tax burden since 1920 on the masses. The last quinquennial economic depression, which has not been relieved even to a slight extent either by the State or by our industrialists has cost our peasants more than half their annual income. The assets of our masses have been more than halved in their value and have become even at that unsaleable. The sufferings they have had to undergo at the hands of tax-gatherers and money-lenders have left deep traces even on our Statute-books. How can we expect such helpless masses to continue to pay these increasing burdens of protective duties ?

Insatiable Thirst for Protection

It may be some consolation for them if they can feel that our State will at least stop piling up these burdens.

But I am afraid even that consolation is denied to them. The Bombay Textiles want more protection and the Tariff Board is being daily bombarded with ever fresh applications for protection. What is even worse is that the Legislative Assembly is anxious to provide protection to any industry that may ask for it. The Congress itself has gone too far in its protectionist proclivities to easily recoil from this suicidal affection, inspite of the Mahatma's new doctrine of 100 per cent Swadeshi, *i.e.*, cottage industrial development. Anyone who raises his voice against the continuation of this protectionist policy is liable to be criticised as an unpatriotic person, as has indeed happened in my case in 1926 when I opposed it in my evidence submitted to the Tariff Board. Pandit Nilakantha Das spoke against the present policy of protection and surprised even most of the nationalists during the 1935 Budget Session of the Assembly. It may be because the Congress was unwilling to commit itself to his 100 per cent Swadeshi policy, which really has for its objective the undermining of ths present-day policy of subsidized industrialisation of India that Mahatmaji has come to establish his separate A. I. V. I. A.

Professors' Thoughts

Till now our masses as well as their intelligentsia have pitched their faith upon the recommendations of the Industrial Commission, Tariff Board and the teachings of the twin fathers of Indian capitalistic economics, Ranade and Dutt. Our university professors and politicians are busy lecturing either in the class room or in the public upon the various means and steps to be undertaken by our State to help our capitalists and industrialists in industrialising India. Even a Socialist

like K. T. Shah and an unrepentent Oriental Democrat like Radhakamal Mukherjee have had to oxpress their dissatisfaction with the inadequate special aid and protectian afforded by the State to our capitalists. It is no longer the special mission of private colleges and courageous and nationalistic professors to take Government to task for not taking the initiative in giving a lead to our capitalsists.

Russia's Contribution

It is, indeed, strange, though it is not so phenomenal in history, that just as all Indian economists have come to accept Ranade-Dutt doctrine of capitalist-cum-industrial exploitation of India, the Indian thinkers as well as the masses should be confronted not by Socialistic theories and schemes of capitalistic rationalisation alone but also by the Russian achievements of the State in addition to the co-operative ideals and achievements. Therefore it is no longer a mere matter of contemplation that anybody should long for the prospects of collectivised and co-operatised exploitation of industries and agriculture. Russia is daily adding to our experience new and glorious leaves of fresh and phenomenal developments in this new sphere of thought and action. Those hazy days when Bastable, Marshall, Leroy Beaulieu Bureavy were contending against State ownership and management of industries and when Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells and their Fabian comrades had to defend State control of industries are succeeded by the Russian days of practical State ownership, control and management and American and German days of rationalisation and State regulation and control, no wonder Indian economists are fast falling far behind the peasants and workers who are rapidly absorbing the contemporary time-spirit.

Peasants' Thoughts

It is in these circumstances that our peasants and workers have to formulate their policy and define their attitude towards the industrial career of our country. They are just as anxious as the urban classes to see India growing richer every day and advancing in her capacity to produce increasing wealth and becoming able to feed her masses more fully and to afford them greater and more enlightening and creative leisure. But they wish to achieve these objectives in a manner which will be creative, progressive and helpful to all the masses.

Some Home-Truths

It is true that in addition to the protection of the interests of the workers engaged in the cottage industries, India has to be enabled to go ahead in this industrial age. It is equally true that India needs to a much greater extent the participation and partnership of the State than other countries in her attempts to develop her productive capacity and powers. But it is much more true that whatever industrial progress is achieved has to be utilised completely and constantly for the advancement of the masses as a whole. But what little industrial advancement has been doveloped, has so far benefited the few rather than the many, enriched the growing ranks of the capitalists rather than the famished millions of the masses.

Peasants' Demands

All this does not mean, however, that Indian peasants and workers are ready to destroy the present capitalistic individualised exploitation of our industries and thus make place for ruthless exploitation of India by foreign

capitalism. But it does mean that they want better and greater regulation and control of our industries so that they will be more an asset than a liability as at present. For instance, it means that our textile industry has to devise and pursue the means to enhance the wages, increase its internal efficiency and create greater standards of life within and without their mills for their workers and be ready as soon as possible to pay its own way without any State help and to offer suitable annual contribution to the State coffers. It means that our Jute industry shall, in addition to satisfying all the above conditions, be able to help the State to root out malaria in Bengal, to educate the peasants and workers engaged in the culture of jute and to improve the communications of Bengal.

Transitional Concessions

We may have to continue to protect our capitalistic industries for some time to come but we must be able to assure ourselves that within a fixed or comparatively measurable period, those industries can pay their own way. We must also take care to see that as a result of the operations of such subsidized industries, more unemployment is created than employment provided by them. They ought to be made to create means by which in course of time, the workers engaged in them can come to manage them and the State can be in a position easily to take over their management and ownership. That means that the State has gradually to gain increasing position of partnership in them in return to the protection given to them.

Industrial Progress Engineered By State

But, of course, the peasants and workers cannot sit quiet and wait for the automatic advancement of industrialisation of India until the State comes completely to own and manage the present private owned and managed industries. Indeed, the capitalist-cum-industrial development of India is yet in its initial stages and the Indian masses demand much greater industrial exploitation of their natural resources. That can be achieved only if the State takes upon itself the responsibility of creating, developing or fostering new or old industries on completely modern scientific and mechanised lines. It is possible only if the State also encourages workers and peasants to take co-operative development of industries. It becomes a reality only from the moment the masses and the State set their faces definitely and irrevocably against individualistic exploitation of our industries and in favour of collectivised or co-operatised utilisation of all our natural resources.

Kernel of the Peasants' Thought

Thus it means that private enterprise may not be prohibited but cannot be assisted through public resources by the State. It also means that whatever diversion may be made of public funds or opportunities can be and ought to be utilised only for public or social purposes by either workers or peasants or both for communal purposes and not for individual advantages. It specially means that there can be place for private enterprise only for so long and to such an extent as cannot be or will not be captured or encroached upon by the State or its partners, the co-operative enterprises. The Peasants and Workers are not doctrinaires. They are not

demanding this change in our economic theory and outlook because they are faddist and mere imitators of the West. They are striving after such a benevolent and beneficent state because they have seen its comparative advantages and as a result of their own bitter experiences of our capitalist industry and their studies of the capitalist-cum-industrial history of Europe and the collective exploitation, undertaken by Russia.

The Peasant's Organisations are constantly working to popularise these beliefs and to spread this theory all over the country. They work at present in co-operation with the Congress. Their political programme is nothing less than that of the Congress. They aim at supplementing that Congress political programme by their economic theories and policies. They know they have profited much from the Congress of the past 50 years but they are beginning to feel that the Congress has now to imbibe their thought in order to become completely theirs—the peasants and workers.

COLLECTIVISATION OF AGRICULTURE

"To expect collectivisation of Agricvlture to make any head way with or without the assistance of the present system of Government is to think of the inpossible. But that it is the only possible method of reorganising agriculture if at all the present landed and the landless peasantry are to improve their lot even after the achivement of complete independence is o truth that must be popularised among our public and especially amist the peasanary. We have to guard against the misrepresentations likely to be put upon our propaganda" argues Prof. Ranga in the following article reprinted by the kind permission of the Editor The Modern Reviw from its July number.

The Professor puts forth a vigorous plea for collectivisation and it would serve well to dispel the misunderstandings prevalent among our peasants and also public.

The post-war Russia has made one uniqe contribution to the world's knowlege and methods of agricultural organisation by the collectivisation of her agriculture. The members of the controversy between the advocates of small scale farming, such as Lloyd George and those of large scale farming such as Prof. Ashley have not yet died out. Though most experts have contented themselves with the conclusion that there is much to be said for on both sides, keeping in mind the Parishan and Wanish small holders and the German and American big farmers, most economists have always recognised the uneconomic nature of small scale farming. If to this is added the further complication of the hereditary law and the incessant process of sub-division

and the consequent fragmentisation of land, we are face to face with the highly complicated and vicious state of uneconomic holdings and fragmentisation of India. It is to counteract this evil that Norway, Sweeden and Denmark had to pass special legislation to bring about compulsory consolidation of holdings, and also legislation to create family holdings which can only succeed in temporarily checkmating the evils of fragmentisation of holdings. But all this legislation has not succeeded either in improving the productive capacity of peasants or in enabling agriculture to counteract the inherent defects of small scale farming. Indeed such palliative reformating methods cannot rationalise agriculture and place it on the same footing as the manufacturing industries in its ability to take the fullest advantage of the ever growing scientific knowledge and improvements.

Stalin, the great mechanic of collective farming has summed up the position : Lenin says " Petty-farming is incapable of escaping from misery. If we continue to sit as of old in the petty farms, although as free citizens on free land we shall all the same be faced by inevitable ruin. The Soviet Power attaches tremendous importance to any-organisation directed towards the transformation (to the gradual promotion of the transformation) of the petty, individual peasant farm into a communal or corporative farm."

To satisfy the modern and growing needs of peasants and to raise their standard of living means, " To liquidate the backwardness of agriculture at its very roots says Stalin, arm it with tractors and agricultural machinery, equip it with a new personnel of scientific workers, raise the productivity

of labour and increase its commercial effectiveness. Can all these conditisns be realised on the basis of petty individual peasant farming. No, they cannot. There is only one path remaining the path of reorganisation in the direction of creating large farms armed with modern technique. But the land of the Soviets cannot enter the path of organising large capitalist farms. Hence the task of setting up 'collective' farms and amalgamating the small peasant farms into large scale collective undertakings as the only path for solving the problems of agriculture."

It is in the direction of organising such farms that the progress of the peasantry of this country lies. It is time that our University professors of Economics and Provincial Governors turn their minds away from the anti-diluvian pre-war Scandinavian methods of consolidation and family holdings and concentrate their efforts upon 'rationalising' our agriculture. We can ignore the scarcity value of land, only at the risk of our lives and progress and such a pre-eminently Key-store of the source of all our wealth, *i.e.*, land ought not to be allowed to be so badly, uneconomicaly and indifferently wasted away by innumerable and almost uncontrollable masses of people, if their own advancement is to be ensured.

Surely there is nothing inherently wrong in expecting our petty peasants who are today unable to eke out even a minimum living from their all but unrecognisably small holdings to give up their fondness for their nominal individual proprietorship of land in preference to the gathering of all their holdings into large, economical, progressive and profitable holdings. Such a process is not so hopelessly revolutionary as it may at

first appear to be. After all, the cartels of Germany, Trusts of U.S.A. and combines of England were brought into existence by consolidating and combining millions of small uneconomic industrial concerns of the respective countries. And the Post-war German movement of Rationalisation, which is a great improvement upon the Trusts and cartels owes much to the inspiration of Russian methods and has had many advocates in England and America. The collectivisation of agriculture seeks to do for agriculture what 'Rationalisation' has done for manufactures. In short, collectivisation of agriculture is essentially a new, economic, profitable and progressive method of agricultural organisation, developed in Russia.

That it has succeeded in Russia in helping the peasants, in addition to modernising agriculture is borne out by Sewis L. Lorwin, an American and at present the Economic Advisor of the International Labour Office and A. Abramson, Member of the General Information Section of the I.L.O. who visited U.S.S.R. in September and October 1935.

"It is clear that collectivisation represents a new principle in agrarian economy. The collective farm is a synthesis of the principles of collective ownership of land, co-operative ownership and management of agricultural machinery and personal working incentives."

"If successful, collectivisation will build up a system of agriculture totally different from the individualistic exploitation (aided, or not by co-operative societies) such for example as predominates in the countries of western Europe. It will create an agricultural population without private ownership of land, operating and working through co-operative methods, buying and selling

together and interested in improving the land and in increasing output, since the share of each member depends upon the total output of the community."

The progress made by this system as a basis of agrarian life, they say, has been considerable. "The younger generation of peasants has accepted this new form of agricultural organisation definitely."

There is however no doubt that to make our Indian peasants accept this system of reorganising agriculture is extremely difficult. To expect collectivisation of agriculture to make any headway with or without the assistance of the present system of Government is to think of the impossible. But that it is the only possible method of reorganising agriculture if at all the present landed and the landless peasantry are to improve their lot even after the achievement of complete independence is a truth that must be popularised among our public and especially amidst the peasantry.

We have to guard against the misrepresentations, likely to be put upon our propaganda. We do not want to achieve collectivisation of agriculture by any compulsion but rather we wish to be able to persuade the peasants to accept it by demonstrating to them the practical advantages of it over the present system, through the successes achieved on the collective farms to be organised on the present cultivable but unoccupied Government lands. To this end, from now on we seek to get the vast areas of Government lands, cultivable but uncultivated, exploited directly under collective farms or by co-operative societies of the peasants who are till today landless, with every possible Governmental assistance and demonstrate, through their successful working their superiority to the individualised

exploitation of land. Such experiments can be made even by the present Government but will surely be made on a vast a scale, commensurate with our needs by the National Government and the success of our move towards collectivisation will directly depend upon the collective and co-operative farms organised on the Government lands.

No peasant who has any land need be frightened at the prospect of his holding being compulsorily snatched away, if not to bring about ultimate collectivisation of holdings, but to organise the preliminary experimental collective farms. For there are available for exploitation by collective farms, vast extents of culturable and cultivable but unoccupied Government lands, in addition to the immeasurably large extents of forest land, fit to be cultivated and unwanted for the legitimate growth of forests. There was 154,610,000 acres of such land in the whole of India in 1932-33 and 39% of it was in Burma, 12% in Assam, 9% each in the Punjab, C. P., Madras and 22% in all other provinces. There was of course 50,693,000 acres of land under current fallow, which could easily be taken in hand. Therefore the state need not take the trouble to dispossess any of the peasants to establish its own collective farming or to help in the organisation of co-operative farming. It has however to stipulate certain conditions, such as inalienability and in divisibility of its lands, to be fulfilled by the grantees of the land and it necessarily has to offer them every possible financial and technical assistance to them in their initial stages to enable their communal enterprise a success.

Thus we can from now on strive to influence the Government to utilise its ownership of land and its

activities in the direction of land reclamation, settling landless people on land and subsidizing agriculture in such a way as to pave the way for the National Government to push on, with the help of a suitable background, with its whole hearted programme of collectivisation of agriculture.

What is then our attitude to be towards all such proposals, brought forward by Government or other agencies, as making a minimum holding in-alienable, non-attachable for civil decrees, establishing family holdings or consolidating holdings. In so far as all such measures do tend to minimise the possibilities of lands passing from the hands of the smaller peasantry into the hands of landlords, it is in the ultimate interests of the peasantry that they must all be supported. It is to be remembered that it is the petty proprietor, though more ignorant and less progressive to start with, who can be more easily converted into a friend of "collectivisation of agriculture" directly if it is proved to be more profitable, than the big landlord, who prizes his ownership of land and all it connotes much more than any economic advantage. It is better therefore that any legislative or administrative proposal in the interregnum which seeks to prevent the growth of the numbers and strength of the big landlord ought to be supported, and even sponsered by all Kisan workers who wish the real welfare of the Kisans.

It is usually assumed that our peasants have all the right of ownership over their lands and so their opposition to the development of collectivisation may be insufferable. But except in the Ryotwari areas, Bengal, parts of Bihar and Orissa, U. P. and C. P. the lands in large parts of Assam (4,400,000 acres) C. P. (26,949,000 acres) Delhi

(365,000 acres) U. P. (55,099,000 acres) are still considered to be the property of the Zamindars, the tenants having only the right of permanent occupancy. So over nearly 86,804,000 acres of land or ¼ of the total assessed area of British India, the peasants today possess no right of proprietorship and there cannot be any claim over or fear of losing what is not possessed.

It is true that there is an insatiable land hunger in the country and the first thing that a self-conscious peasant demands is the right of ownership over his land. Hence the successful demand of the Bihar peasants for the right of alienation. But after all the Indian peasant does not succeed very much as a result of this scramble for land ownership. Out of all our peasant holdings, only 10% have more than ten acres each, which alone can be said to be of economic size and in a position to afford the peasants a decent standard of living. Out of the remaining 76% of the holdings, as many as 23% are of one acre and less each, 33% of one to 5 acres each and 20% of five to ten acres each. Propaganda carried on enthusiastically with the strength of demonstrated profitableness of collectivisation and Governmental encouragement cannot fail to persuade the millions of land-holders having only ten acres and less and many more who cultivate but do not own ¼ of the total assessed area to accept and welcome cellectivisation of holdings.

APPENDICES

I

That the pressure of population upon the present sown area is indicated by the following figures; where as the irrigated area, protected from vicissitudes of seasons is also very small:

	Population per 100 acres of sown area	Proportion of irrigated to total sown area
U. P. ...	134	28
Bengal ...	204	7
Punjab ...	82	50
Bihar and Orissa ...	156	21
Bombay ...	62	16
C. P. ...	63	4
Madras ...	136	27
N. W. Frontier ...	108	42
Assam ...	143	10
Burma ...	80	9
British ...	115	—

II

Classification of Area in British India

	Acres (1000)	Per cent
Forests ...	89,067	13·4
Not available for cultivation ...	144,650	21·7
*Culturable waste other than fallow...	153,449	23·0
†Current fallows ...	47,453	7·1
Net area sown ...	232,246	34·8
Total ...	666 865	100

* Available for allotment to the landless people organised into collectives.

† Can be fully exploited, if better methods of manuring etc., are adopted.

III

The following figures indicate the present crop-economy in British India :

		Acres (1000)	Per cent to total
Food-grains	...	206,223	77·2
Condiments and spices	...	1,467	0·5
Sugar	...	3,364	1·3
Fruits and vegetables	...	4,855	1·8
Miscellaneous food crops	...	1,756	0·7
Total food crops	...	217,665	81·5
Oil seeds	...	17,794	6·7
Fibres	...	17,626	6·6
Dyes and tanning materials	...	621	0·2
Drugs and narcotics	...	2,241	0·8
*Fodder crops	...	10,207	3·8
Miscellaneous non-food crops	...	1,006	0·4
Total non-food crops	...	49,495	18·5

IV

Much can be done in the way of settling the landless people upon the culturable wastes other than fallows, (figures given below) and also upon the disafforested areas (figures for forests given below) and also in the way of raising fodder at least upon the vast extends of fallows, which can and

* This area is now sought to be extended by the Viceroy. Let him turn his attention to the cultivable waste

ought to be improved by proper methods of manuring and cultivation :

Provinces	Cultivated		Culturable waste	Forests
	Net area sown	Current fallows		
	acres (000)			
Assam ...	6,026	1,869	19,070	3,947
Bengal ...	24,002	4,763	6,255	4,607
Bihar & Orissa ...	24,180	6,931	6,951	7,056
Bombay ...	33,246	10,264	6,585	9,261
Burma ...	18,239	3,651	59,755	22,158
C. P. & Berar ...	24,989	3,773	14,108	16,272
Madras ...	33,880	10,375	13,181	13,693
N. W. Frontier ...	2,291	533	2,707	355
Punjab ...	28,683	2,450	14,203	1,973
U. P. ...	36,010	2,495	10,280	9,281
Total ...	232,546	47,104	153,155	88,593

V

Lenin said in regard to Collectivisation in Villages : "One would have to proceed more gradually ; to attempt here by decree's and legislation to introduce the common cultivation of the soil would be the height of folly ; only an insignificant number of intelligent peasants would agree to this."

Stalin observed "if the Party has achieved a great victory in the field of collective farming it is because it observed the tactical advice of Lenin to the letter."

He further said "the high-road of Socialist development in the village is the co-operative plan of Lenin, which embraces all forms of agricultural co-operation, from the lowest (Supply and Sale) to the highest (Productive collective forms). To draw a line between collective farming and co-operation is to make a mockery of Leninism."

Russia's Guidance for our new Viceroy

Let Stalin speak to Lord Linlithgow.

"The unprecedented success in the development of collective farming is due to the fact that the Soviet Government comprehended the crying need of the peasants for new tools and for a new technique and realised the hopelessness of the peasants under the old methods of soil tillage. And having realised all this, *it came to their aid in good time by organising central tractor depots, and machinery and tractor stations, it encouraged the social tillage of the soil by organising collective farms and finally has devoted all the resources of the Soviet farms to the aid of peasant husbandry.*

"For the first time in the history of mankind, there has appeared a Government which has proved in action its readiness to give systematic and prolonged productive aid to the peasants.

How was Collectivisation Furthered in Russia

"By granting the Collective farms facilities in respect of land, the supply of machines, tractors, seed grain etc, in respect of tax alleviation and credits."

Stalin justifies this because "preferential aid to the collective farms represents the most effective form of aid to the poor and middle peasants."

Middle Peasants to Lead the Collectives

Stalin says "as a matter fact, among the middle peasants there are excellent farmers, capable of becoming excellent administrators in the construction of collective farms. Our duty now is to attract to the controlling work in the collective farms the best among the middle peasants and give them an opportunity to apply their capacities in this sphere."

Aims and Objects of Collectivisation

(1) The agricultural workers, poor peasants and middle peasants of the village of . . . district . . . okrug . . .

voluntarily unite in an agricultural artel in order to build up, with common means of production and common organised labour, a large collective farm, and thereby to secure a real and complete victory over the kulaks, over all exploiters and enemies of the toilers, a real and complete victory over poverty and ignorance aud over the backwardness of small individual farms, and to guarantee a high productivity of labour and large marketable output of the collective farms.

Land

(2) All boundary strips dividing the land holdings of the members of the artels shall be abolished and all plots of land thrown into one large area of land to be used collectively by the artel.

In socializing fully all land holdings, the land immediately adjoining the houses (vegetable gardens, orchards, etc.) shall remain for individual use, while at the same time, where necessary and on the decision of the management committee, confirmed by the general meeting, the size of the gardens can be altered.

(3) The combined area of land belonging to the artel, must not in any circumstances be reduced. The allotment of land to members leaving the artel from the land belonging to the artel is forbidden. Members leaving the artel can receive land only from the free land reserves of the State.

Means of Production

(4) The following are collectivized: all draught animals, agricultural equipment, all livestock producing marketable products, all seed stocks, fodder sufficient to maintain the livestock collectivized, farm buildings required for carrying on the work of the artel, and all equipment for working up products. The dwelling houses of members of the artel are not collectivized.

In collectivizing the agricultural implements, the smaller tools necessary for cultivating the gardens remain for the individual use of the members of the artel.

If necessary, the management committee shall set apart from the collectivized draught animals a minimum number of horses needed for serving the personal requirements of members of the artel.

In the case of forms with one single cow, the latter is not collectivized: in the case of farms with several cows, one cow is to be left for personal use, whilst the others are collectivized. Cattle kept for breeding purposes will be collectivized in any case. A dairy artel is to be formed out of the collectivized milch cows.

The collectivization of small livestock, such as pigs and sheep, is undertaken in districts with a developed small livestock industry, the members of the artel being left a certain number of small livestock to be determined by the artel. In districts where a small livestock industry does not exist, pigs and sheep are not collectivized. Poultry also are not collectivized.

Whilst the small livestock and poultry remain in individual possession, the collective forms shall organize a small livestock and poultry breeding industry.

As a measure of insurance against bad harvests and lack of fodder, the artel shall set aside reserves of seed and fodder, which must not be touched.

The Work of the Artel

(5) The management committee and all members of the artel undertake:

(*a*) To extend the area of cultivation by utilizing the whole of the land at the disposal of the artel, by improving and working up waste land, and by surveying and rearranging the land within the artel;

(*b*) To use collectively to the fullest extent the whole of the existing draught animals, as well as all implements, all tractors and machines, all stocks of seed, and other means of production; to purchase tractors and other means of production out of its own means and also on credit, for the purpose of gradually going over to mechanized farming;

(*c*) To organize the proper use and care of the livestock and implements collectivized, aiming at maintaining the cattle and stock of the collective farms in a better condition than on the individual farm ;

(*d*) To improve the arable and pasture lands, as well as to carry out the agronomic measures necessary to increase the yield of the soil ;

(*e*) To adopt scientific breeding and veterinary measures for the purpose of rapidly increasing and improving cattle and poultry breeding for the market ;

(*f*) To develop all other branches of agricultural production in accordance with special local conditions, as well as handcrafts and homework industries suitable to the conditions of the district ;

(*g*) To organize on a collective basis the erection of farm and communal buildings, as well as auxiliary undertakings ;

(*h*) To raise the cultural and political level of the members of the artel ;

(*i*) To improve by all available means the standard of living of the members of the artel, above all, of the women and children.

Membership

(6) The acceptance of new members of the artel devolves on the management committee, which submits the list of the newly admitted members to the next general meeting for cofirmation. Workers who are regularly employed outside of the artel are not bound to appear personally.

(7) Membership of the artel is open to all toilers who have reached the age of 16 years.

Kulaks, as well as all persons who have been deprived of the franchise, are not admitted into the artel. Exceptions to this rule are allowed for members of such families in which there are Red partisans, Red Army soldiers and Red Navy sailors (private and commanding ranks) and village teachers of both sexes devoted to the causes of the Soviet Power, on condition that they give guarantees for the members of their families.

Peasants who before joining the collective farm, slaughter or sell their cattle, get rid of their stock or wantonly sell their seed corn, will not be accepted in the artel.

Artel Funds

(8) Everyone joining the artel must pay an entrance fee in money amounting to 2 to 10% of the value of his whole property, both collectivized and non-collectivized, constituting his share of the farm, with the exception of objects of household and personal use.

Should the chief source of income of the applicant for membership be wage labour (agronomists, teachers, surveyors, employees of organizations and institutions lying within the area of the artel, etc.) the amount of the entrance fee will be determined in each individual case by the management committee, but must not exceed 10% of the annual income.

The entrance fee for agricultural workers is fixed at not more than five roubles.

Workers who are regularly employed outside of the collective farm in addition to the 2 to 10% of the value of their property provided by the statute, pay a single contribution amounting to 3% of their annual wage.

Note.—Apart from the entrance fee, the artel does not demand from worker members any additional deductions from wages.

The payment of the entrance fee in instalments can be granted by the management committee subject to the instructions of, and terms as fixed by, the Central Union of Collective Farms. The entrance fees form part of the indivisible fund of the artel.

(9) A quarter to one-half of the value of the collectivized property of the members of the artel (draught animals and livestock, equipment, agricultural buildings, etc.) is set aside to form part of the undividable fund of the artel, the higher percentage being payable by the more powerful undertakings. The remaining portion of the property is put down to the share account of the member of the artel.

(10) The management committee settles accounts with members leaving the artel and returns to them their share contribution; any land allotment to the member leaving the artel can take place only from land lying outside the area of the artel. Such settlement is to be made, as a rule, at the end of the fiscal year.

(11) From the income of the artel recorded at the end of the year, the working and kindred expenses, as also the sums expended in maintaining disabled members, are to be deducted; out of the balance, contributions are to be paid to the indivisible and communal funds (from 10 to 30% into the indivisible fund and from 5 to 15% into other communal funds), as well as the amounts due for wages.

Organization and Remuneration of Labour

(12) All work on the farms of the artel is to be performed by the personal labour of its members in accordance with the rules for the allocation of work adopted by the general meeting. Only persons possessing special qualification and having had an expert training (agronomists, engineers, technicians, etc.) may be employed in agricultural work for wages.

The temporary engagement of workers is allowed only in exceptional cases when urgent work cannot be completed within the necessary time by the full utilization of all the available labour forces of the members of the artel themselves, and also for building work.

(13) The allocation of work within the artel is arranged by the management committee in accordance with the regulations in force. No member of the artel may refuse to perform work allotted to him.

(14) For the proper organization of work of the members of the artel, standards of work and rates of payment are fixed for the various classes of work specifying the quantity and the quality of the work to be performed; work will be paid both according to time and at piece rates.

(15) The members of the artel are paid for the work performed as follows: In the course of the fiscal year not more than 50% of the sum standing to the credit of the member

for work performed may be paid out as an advance for food and other requirements (in kind or in money). A final settlement for work is carried out at the end of the fiscal year.

Note.—Of the sums earned by artel members for work performed outside of the artel, from 3 to, at most, 10% is to be paid into the communal fund of the artel, the amount of this contribution to be fixed by the artel or the Central Union of Collective Farms.

(16) The artel provides material support both to its permanently or temporarily disabled members. The conditions and the amount of this relief is to be fixed by the management committee and confirmed by the general meeting, in accordance with the economical resources of the artel, but must not exceed the average rate of wages.

Disciplinary Measures

(17) All members of the artel undertake to observe the provisions of the statutes, the decisions of the general meeting and management committee, to observe the rules regarding inner division of labour and accurately to carry out the work assigned to them by the management, nad also all social obligations to the artel.

Irresponsible and negligent handling of collectivized equipment and livestock will be regarded by the artel as treachery to the cause of collectivization and as direct assistance to the enemies, the kulaks.

Such irresponsible and negligent handling of collectivized property, absence from work without adequate reason and other violations of discipline, will be punished by the management by the imposition of penalities in accordance with the rules of the artel. (For example a reprimand and warning, temporary suspension from work, fines, etc.) In regard to incorrigible members the management shall submit to the general meeting the question of their expulsion from the artel.

Management of the Artel

(18) The business of the artel is administered by the general meeting of members and the management committee. If the convocation of the general meeting encounters difficulties owing to the great number of members of the arte, or because of the widely-scattered nature of the villages, the general meeting shall be substituted by a meeting of delegates. Delegates are to be elected by the artel members in the individual villages.

(19) The general meeting or delegate meeting is the supreme authority for the management of the artel; it decides the most important questions of the activity of the artel, elects the management committee and the audit committee and approves instructions for their work. Not less than one half of the members of a general meeting (or delegate meeting) shall constitute a quorum. Decisions of the general meeting (or delegate meeting) shall be adopted by majority vote and by open voting.

(20) The management committee of the artel is elected for a year, it is the executive body for administering the affairs of the artel. The management committee allocates to its members the duties connected with the conduct of the business and production work of the artel imposing upon the respective members full responsibility for the work entrusted to them and endowing them with the necessary power.

The management committee is in duty bound to keep books according to the methods and rules of the collective farm system.

(21) The audit committee supervises the activities of the management committee, in particular the observance of the provisions of the statutes, the fulfilment of the production plan, and the carrying out of contracts with and obligations towards the state, it audits the funds, property, books and accounts, appends its report to the annual report and is accountable for its work to the general or delegate meeting.

Relations to the Collective Farm System

(22) The artel is a member of the Union of Collective Farms of . . . and performs work under direct supervision of the latter.

On the basis of its production plan, the artel enters into a contract with the Union of Collective Farms of . . . laying down the obligations on the part of the artel for the organization of agricultural production and the systematic delivery of the whole of the marketable products to the State and the Co-operatives, and the obligation of the Union of Collective Farms, and other state and co-operative organs, to supply the artel with means of production and articles of consumption and to arrange credit and organize agronomic aid to the artels.

PROTECT THE PEASANT

It was as long ago as 1928 that Prof. Ranga made the Andhra Peasants sing the slogan "abolish the Zamindari system." To-day we hear its echoes throughout India.

In this article contributed to the Roy's Weekly (Delhi) the Professor urges upon the Government as also the public the urgent need for instituting an enquiry into the "Economic conditions of the tenants af land lords who have under the permanent settlement with special regard to the continuous increase in rents, the incidence of rents, the illegal exactions and forest grievances."

Before commending this article we can not help expressing our disappointment when the Professor becomes so moderate as to speak of some compensation being paid to these Zamindars.

The article following this, reproduced by kind permission of the Editor, The Indian Express, from its' Congress Golden Jubilee Number speaks out the mind of Professor Ranga as also the Peasantry who, have in unequivocal terms demanded the abolition of the Zamindari system without any compensation.

It is universally admitted that the present land revenue system of the British Government in India presses too hard upon the peasants of the Ryotwari tracts. The rates of assessment are periodically enhanced according to the most unscientific and unreliable system of resettlement operations, with the result that today instead of absorbing only a maximum of 50% of the net income from land, as was laid down in the G. O. of 1902 of Lord Curzon, the Provincial Government,

snatches away much more than half of the net income often almost all the net income, thus leaving nothing for the peasant for labour or supervision contributed by himself and his family. The Bardoli Enquiry ordered by Bombay Government in 1928-29 and the Godavari Krishna Enquiry ordered by the Madras Government in 1929-30 have shown conclusively how defective and disastrous most of these resettlement operations are in their methods and effects. But even such a cruel and defective ryotwari system of land revenue of the Government pales into insignificance, when compared to the rent collection systems prevailing in those areas and provinces, which are subject to the permanent settlement of land revenue.

MONSTROUS

The maximum land revenue collected by the Madras Government from an acre of wet land, resettled in 1918-19 and afterwards is never more than Rs. 15 and is often only Rs. 12, whereas the peasants of a landholder (zamindar as he is known to be in Madras Province) in Tinnevelly district have to pay Rs. 100 and more on their garden lands! It will be interesting to not the rates charged in some of the estates :

The Rajah of Bobbili Rs. 35 on an acre of wetland ; the Maharaja of Venkatagiri Rs. 78 on gardenland ; the Maharaja of Pithapur Rs. 22 on wetland ; the Maharaja of Vizianagram Rs. 20 on wetland ; the Zamindar of Munagala Rs. 16—19; the Zamindar of Tuni Rs. 16—18, the Rajah of Chettinad (Pallipat Estate) Rs. 32—40.

In addition they charge separate rates upon dry land, according to the crops raised. If lemon or orange groves are raised by peasants after sinking large sums in constructing wells, improving the land etc., an assessment of Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 is levied in Venkatagiri; Rs. 5 to Rs. 7-8-0 on an acre of chillies etc. If we remember that the Government charges only rates, irrespective of the crops raised, ranging from annas 4 to Rs. 3 per an acre of dry land and Re. 1. to Rs. 6-8-0 per an acre of rain fed wet land, who can appreciate the monstrosity of these high rates charged by Madras landholders.

The Madras zimindars cannot even claim to assist their peasants to the least possible degree. They claim to charge as much as Rs. 100 or more per acre of garden land, although they do not even lend the money to enable their peasants to dig their wells etc. They demand as much as Rs. 25 per acre of rain fed wetland, though they very often refuse to repair the tanks.

They are not satisfied with their already fat incomes. Most of them are veritable Princes, when compared to the numerous petty zamindars or Talukdars of Bengal or U. P. For instance, the Maharajah of Vizianagram gets an annual gross income of at least Rs. 35 lakhs, that of Pithapur Rs. 12 lakhs, that of Venkatagiri Rs. 16 lakhs, the Rajah of Bobbili Rs. 9 lakhs, that of Ramnad Rs. 12 lakhs, that of Parlakimidi Rs. 8 lakhs, Ettiyapuram Rs. 26 lakhs, and so on. But their love of money constantly lures them to the persecution of their peasants; with the result that thousands of suits are filed every month in the Revenue Courts to demand enhancement of rents on one ground or other. For instance one Andhra estate has been demanding an

enhancement of 300% upon the present rates *i. e.* Rs. 7 per acre on the plea that there was never a settlement at all in his estate. The Rajah of Bobbili has succeeded in preventing a reduction of his 35 rent per acre! The settlement officers are so often under the thumb of these zamindars. The peasants of Parlakimidi were ordered to pay an enhancement of 100%, those of Pithapur have been obliged to agree to 18% enhancement and so on.

No wonder, even a Sub-collector was obliged to condemn the greed of the Maharajah of Pithapur, who is himself a more liberal hearted zamindar than many of his kind. This officer said, "It is surely misguided and ungenerous on the part of the zamindars, whose income runs into lakhs, to try to wring an anditional two annas in the rupee from the ryot. The transfer of these two annas benefits nobody: not the zamindar who already has more than he can spend without ostentation and has not yet learnt to spend his surplus on the improvement of the estate: not the ryots who are left incapable of reducing their debt or even cultivate their lands thoroughly and carefully and not the general public since the zamindar's swollen income is exempt from income tax and his *peishkush* (blessed phrase) is permanently settled."

A Reply to Prof. Sirkar

Prof. Benoy Sirkar has been trying in vain to satisfy the public about the great contributions of this class of landlords in Bengal, with their 30 or more intermediaries between themselves and the peasants, to the welfare of the peasants and public. He has, in his admiration for and partiality towards the Bengal zamindars, forgotten

the fact that they are the main cause for the misery, economic depression and social degradation of the peasants of his own beloved Bengal. He forgets their opposition to the recent Bengal Tenancy Act and the Debt Relief Act. He ignores the thousands of peasants who were sent to jail for arrears of rent. He even goes to the length of saying that through the heavy arrears of rent, which the zamindars have allowed to accrue owing to their inability to collect and the peasants have been unable to pay, the zamindars have been financing the peasants and thus helping agriculture. Let our Sub-Collector answer him :

"The notion behind the permanent settlement was that if the zamindars were given reasonable security they would settle down to be model landlords, alive to their responsibilities as well as to their privileges. It was the notion of trusting natures. The result has borne out the prognostications of the more cynical critics of the settlement. Absentee landlords (almost all the Bengalee and U. P. zamindars are such) collecting their rents by agents whom they barely trouble to control, never visiting their villages giving remissions only on the rarest occasions (peasants have no right to demand it) and making no effort to assist Government and District Boards in providing better communications, better water, better education or anything else of the kind in estates, are ill-advised to call in courts to enhance their already high rents. They take advantage of the letter of the law, ignoring the spirit, and the final fruit will be exasperation."

In U. P.

The U. P. zamindars are even worse. But the U. P. zamindars and the Provincial Government seem to

ignore " such a final exasperation " and the fruit thereof. The U. P. peasants in most cases do not even fare as well as Madras tenants since they do not have even fixity of tenure which the Madras tenants enjoy. There seem to be a number of intermediaries between the actual tillers of the soil and the Zamindars or Talukdars as they are better known, with all their cruel exactions and costly privileges, and no wonder the U. P. Government hastens to fasten another law around the slender necks of the peasants. The Government wishes to pass an amending Bill to the Land Revenue Act, not with a view to help the peasants—for it says in its recent *communique* (Feb. 15), " It would be regrettable to fail to adapt the rent and revenue system of the province which has been slowly and carefully evolved to the prevailing economic conditions. Such failure might well result in the introduction at some future date of a new and untried system of rural taxation based on political theory, which by ignoring established rights and tenures in land and the realities of economic conditions in the countryside might produce disastrous consequences." This may be decided upon to forestall the Kisan Sabha which has resolved to abolish the Zamindari system by the payment of due compensation.

Vices of Zamindari System

Let the Government of U. P. and Prof. Sirkar of Bengal pause a while and ponder over the heartlessness of the class of Zamindars, as depicted only too loyally by the scion of an ancient South Indian Zamindari. The Rajah of Kalahasti, in his evidence before the Sessions Judge of Nellore deposed the following : " In his family there were instances of Dasis being kept and illegitimate sons born to them but there was no custom of giving

them maintenace. One member kept Syamala exclusively and two sons were born to her but no maintenance was given to them at any time. Another had a son through a concubine and he too was not given maintenance." Who can expect humane treatment from such a class to the peasants. "Syamala—the unfortunate Dasi—was given as a dowry to his step mother" in 1887! Such things are still common even today. How can we expect these Zamindars to become really democratic and civilised!

Hence the moderate and reasonable plea of the peasants, submitted to the Peasants' Group of M. L. A's: "That it is the duty of the Government of India to make an enquiry into the economic conditions of the tenants of landlords who come under the Permanent Settlement with special regard to the continuous increase in rents, the incidence of rents, the illegal exactions and forest grievances." This enquiry must be made before Provincial Autonomy is inaugurated and power over land revenue and rent is completely delegated to the representatives of the bi-cameral legislatures which will mostly be under the undemocratic influence of the landlords.

ABOLISH THE ZAMINDARI SYSTEM*

ZAMINDARS HAVE NO LEGITIMATE RIGHTS FOR COMPENSATION

Rajen Babu, the President of the Congress stating the present Congress position vis-a-vis the peasants in saying in his Bezwada speech that the Congress may not be able to go as far as the peasants will like it to go, because the Andhra Peasants' Association and Zamin Ryots' Association stated that they stood for the ultimate abolition of the Zamindari system. Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have assured the U. P. Talukdars, before he retired from the Congress, that he would defend their legitimate rights, if need be, even with his own life. Sirdar Vallabhai Patel has expressed himself in unequivocal terms in the U. P. Kisan Conference in favour of paying compensation to Zamindars when the Zamindari system came to be abolished. Rajen Babu himself told the Andhra Zamin Ryots in his Sulurpeetah speech that Congress has to stand by the legitimate rights of Zamindars. It is therefore evident that at present the Congress is of the opinion that the Zamindars have a legitimate right to be compensated if they are to be replaced by the Government's own department for land revenue collections and that they have in addition certain rights other than the tax-collecting one which have to be safeguarded even by the Congress. It is my purpose to examine these assumptions of the Congress and see how far they are justifiable and in the interest of our peasantry and our country.

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*Reprinted from the Congress Golden Jubilee number of the Indian Express.

Zamindars as Tax-gatherers

Whatever might have been the origins of the Zamindari system, it is true that it was utilised by our rulers in the Hindu and Mahomhadan periods of our history as the tax-collecting system. The tenure of office of any Zamindar was not permanent and even the respective shares of the land revenue appropriated by the Zamindar the tax-gatherer and the King were left to fluctuate more or less violently. During the rule of a strong Emperor like Akbar, the Zamindari system of land-revenue collections was very much undermined in preference to the State's own land revenue departmental collections. In fact the strength of this system varied in an inverse proportion to that of the State. The British when they took over the Bengal revenue administration and later on that of other provinces, naturally fell back upon the Zamindari system, as they had no knowledge of local languages, customs, land records and methods of appraisement of corps, ascertainment of income from lands and assessment of land revenue. In course of time they fonnd it necessary, not in the interests of the peasants and better and more efficient administration but in the interests of law and order and their own comparative safety to order permanent settlement with the Zamindars, although even by that time many of their administrators like Sir Thomas Munro vigorously protested against it.

Of course there can be a legitimate objection to the abolition of this system of collecting land revenue if it has proved itself to be either the only one possible way just as efficient, cheap and serviceable as any other system available or in vogue or if to replace it by another system the State has to incur

very great initial or ultimate unremunerative expenditure. But the actual facts are all against its continuation. The Government has, since the establishment of permanent settlement developed a Department of Land Revenue, Records, Settlement and Survey which has reached a very high order of efficiency in every province barring Bengal. The Government's department costs, in spite of the high salaries paid to the officials and very much less than what is left for the Zamindars and indeed much less than what it costs the Zamindars themselves to collect their revenues in spite of the low salaries paid by them. The Government Department collects the revenues, keeps the land records, carries out the periodical surveys much more efficiently, systematically and cheaply than the Zamindari system.

What is more, the Government's administration of land revenue is much less disastrous to the peasants. It is true that there is much to be desired in the Government's own method of land revenue administration. But with all its defects, great as they are, it is immensely better in comparison with the Zamindari system. The Zamindari ryots are loaded with much heavier rates of assessment than the ryotwari peasants. Their tanks are hardly repaired and their wet lands yield but very poor crops. They have unlike the Ryotwari ryots no right to demand remission of land revenue even when their crops fail completely. It is but natural for Zamindari ryots to envy the Ryotwari ryots with their land revenue administration.

Why not Abolish this System?

No wonder the peasantry infested with the Zamindari system has been groaning under a much heavier and

more killing load of land revenue. The Zamindari areas are a bye-word for poverty and penury. In addition to this degrading and defrauding the peasants for the last 130 years and more, this system has cost the State many thousands of crores during this British administration alone. When the permanent settlement was established, the Zamindars were expected to get from one-fifth to one-third of their total collections as their remuneration for collecting the revenues but very soon, they began to get more and more for their share thanks to the heartless rack-renting carried on since then. At present they get from two to six times as much as they pay to the State and thus they appropriate for themselves more than fifty crores of rupees every year from out of the land-tax paid by the peasants.

The peasants of our country naturally ask why they have to suffer from such a costly, inefficient troublesome and ruinous system and why they shall not be treated in the same way as the Ryotwari peasants but be consigned to the tender mercies of the Zamindars. The public also, who have to pay the taxation ask why should such enormous State revenues be misdirected into the private coffers of a few lakhs of Zamindars. The peasants and workers of such provinces as Bengal, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Punjab wonder why they have to groan under a specially higher burden of taxation, while crores of rupees are allowed to be swallowed by the Zamindars. The poor and the peasant of all other provinces complain that they are being taxed specially in order to subsidise the Zamindari ridden parts of the country. What wonder is there if the demand for the abolition of the Zamindari system daily grows into terrible dimensions.

What About Compensation?

Do we pay compensation to an official who is proved to have been negligent of his duty as an average Zamindar has been or to an officer who has admittedly become inefficient as everyone of our Zamindars is? Does Government if it cares for the life and progress of its people hesitate to abolish a department if it no longer needs it? It may be that the staff of that department are disbanded by the payment of proportionate pensions, if they cannot be absorbed into other departments. But everyone of our Zamindars has accumulated vast private riches and therefore, no special payment is needed to pension him off. It cannot even be pleaded with justice, that the Zamindars of our country have reinvested even 1-10th of their annual net incomes upon the improvement of their tanks, reservoirs and anicuts and if at all, the countryside is certainly much the poorer for the presence of this system. Of course even if their irrigation systems had been kept in good condition or improved, which really is not the case in most parts of the country, they had received immeasurably more from them than their investments and no compensation need be paid for them. Is it not then surprising that Sardarji should have talked of paying compensation to Zamindars if they are to be replaced by State's own land revenue officials?

No Legitimate Rights For The System

Compensation has indeed to be paid in satisfaction of any legitimate rights of an individual or a class, absorbed or abrogated by the State. But so far as the zamindari system as the tax-collecting agency is concerned no legitimate right can be established. If the zamindars

had re-claimed lands from sea, forests, hills or rivers by the investment of funds there may be a legitimate right. They have done nothing of the sort and what little reclamation has been possible was achieved by the peasants themselves. If they had improved or extended their irrigation works and thus could lay claim to future revenues, there may be a legitimate right but they have done precious little in that direction. They have till now proved themselves as the unashamed drain upon the rural resources and if at all they ought to be made to disgorge if that is possible most of their riches in the public interest. But the peasants do not wish to demand any such payment of penalty by the zamindars and leave that question to be tackled by the public at large.

Ownership of Natural Resources

One of the terrible blunders committed by the early British administrators was to leave the forests waterways, subsoil properties such as minerals in the possession of the Zamindars. They had thereby unnecessarily and illegitimately left the State's natural rights over such natural resources to the enjoyment of and exploitation by the zamindars, who were only the agents of the State for the definite purpose of collecting taxes. The consequence of this has been the merciless exploitation of the peasants by zamindars in regard to forests. The ancient and customary rights enjoyed by peasants in forests were abrogated, if not abolished and much unmerited suffering was daily being inflicted upon the peasants within the neighbourhood of the forests. Similarly the ancient village communities were denied their right over the communal lands unoccupied but cultivable lands, grazing areas, communal threshing burial play

grounds. The water supply sources, irrigation facilities tanks, and reservoirs were taken out of their ancient communal management to the detriment of the irrigation sources and the peasants. The zamindar's private ownership over unoccupied lands has resulted in the extraction of inordinate nazaranas or premiums and their greed has extended even upto the trees growing or planted on the lands of peasants. The result of all this is that today while the Government ryots can have forest panchayats to regulate their 'Ryots Forests' their village panchayats to manage their communal lands, grounds and other properties their irrigation panchayats to look after the distribution of their water supplies the zamindari ryots are entirely at the mercy of the most careless and inefficient zamindars. How long is this wrong and ruinous alienation of vast rich natural resources of the public to continue? Surely there can be no legitimate talk of compensating the Zamindars for the State resuming its own legitimate ownership over the nation's own national resources. Even the Zamindars cannot have the face to claim that the forests sources of water-supply anicuts, tanks, rivers and rivulets are kept in a much better condition than or in at least as good a condition as those of the Government. It is all that can be wished for by Zamindars that they are not asked to compensate the peasants for the troubles caused and the state for the minerals unearthed. To resume one's own rights even if it be after a lapse of a century cannot by expropriation or exploitation.

Counter-Claims of the State

If and when the Zamindari system comes to be replaced by the State's own Land Revenue system where are the Government's revenue offices to be situated and

how are they to supply themselves with the necessary land records? The present offices of the Zamindars which are being used for purposes other than their purely personal cares ought to be claimed by the State as its legitimate legacy the Zamindari land records such as there are have to be claimed by the State.

The Debit Side of this Proposition

Let no one think that once the Zamindari system is abolished even without having to pay any compensation apart from the payment of some suitable annuities to the present generation of Zamindars and their dependents even if such a payment were found to be advisable the State will have an additional net annual income of more than fifty crores of rupees. The tanks and other irrigation works which are in such hopeless condition have to be reconditioned and many irrigation works which have not been exploited will have to be developed. The Zamin rents which have reached such monstrous heights as Rs. 108 per acre per annum and which have only too often resulted in making the land more an inescapable burden on the peasant than an asset have to be lowered at least to the level of the already too heavy and too depressing Government rates of land revenue in the neighbouring districts or provinces. Such minimum reductions as are necessary will alone cost at least half the total revenues now being derived by the Zamindars. The reinstatement of the legitimate and customary rights of peasants over the forest produce and resources will also cost handsomely. It is only when these questions are faced that a proper realisation of the havoc caused by the Zamindari system can dawn upon our State.

What is left for the Zamindars

But all this does not mean the pauperisation of our Zamindars. Far from it, everyone of our Zamindars (or most of them) has by now accumulated vast private properties in the shape of buildings, palaces, private lands, stocks and shares city possessions or jewels. They alone are enough to leave in their possession an unholy and fearful economic power which may be wielded by them as at present to corrupt the electorate, drug the politicians and press and capture political power and dominate the political swaraj. The peasants may be satisfied with the abolition of the Zamindari system and the nationalisation of their natural resources. But can the public stop there and leave the Zamindars in possession of their vast private possessions and resources? It is however true that the private possessions of Zamindars can be touched only to the extent as those of any other class of vested interests can be absorbed by the State. Therefore the public can legitimately expect the State's engine of taxation to tap the resources of the class of Zamindars in the same way and only to the same extent as those of the capitalists and industrialists.

Examination of Rights

Mahatma Gandhi said at the Round Table Conference in his speech on commercial descrimination that in Swaraj India every vested interest would be carefully examined and weighed in relation to the utility of the function discharged by it. The peasants are prepared to be satisfied with that method of evaluating the rights of the Zamindars. They know that according to that examination the Zamindars' claim for compensation in

returns for their rights to collect taxes and to lord over the natural resources cannot be sustained. If Rajen Babu had meant the same thing by his talk of the legitimate rights of Zamindars the peasants have not much to fear from the attitude of the Congress. But the Sirdar's talk of compensation is still disconcerting and so the Congress position vis-a-vis the Zamindars and their legitimate rights has to be cleared up.

The Congress has no doubt steered clear of the British repression during the last fifty years. It has also survived the attack made on it from within by the moderates and that made from without by the loyalists. But it has to brave itself to developing an economic programme sufficiently comprehensive and progressive as to be satisfactory to the peasants and workers if it is to succeed in its final struggles against the British Imperialism and achieve complete swaraj. It may cost it the defection of a few Zamindars and capitalists if it bravely and explicitly amplifies the Mahatma's dictum enunciated at the Round Table Conference but it will be able to assure itself of the solid and sincere support of the peasants. It may seem to it as if by exploding the idea of the legitimate rights of Zamindars it will be ranging all the Zamindars against itself but it cannot any longer be blind to the all but patent fact that the Zamindars as a whole have all along been ranged on the side of the rulers and the British. It may appear as if by its declaring to the world that there are no such things as the legitimate rights of Zamindars all those having some property or other may get frightened and ally themselves with the imperialist power. But the peasants who have the greatest affection for their property know only too well that their interests are sure to be bettered by the abolition of the Zamindari system.

It may be wondered what will be lost if some compensation is paid to Zamindars. But once the payment of compensation is thought of the Congress will be loading the dice too heavily against the Swaraj India as was envisaged by the Mahatma himself. No one can think of paying anything less as compensation than the market value of the natural resources and the capitalised value of the Zamindari revenues. Even if the peasants are obliged to agree as has happened in the U.P. conference to pay compensation to Zamindars in order only to be rid of their oppression the public as a whole cannot agree to such a suicidal step. It is therefore in the interests of the country that the Congress should declare itself in favour of the unconditional abolition of this system.

APPENDICIES

I

The following table makes it clear how widely and greatly the Zamindari system controlled in (1932 33) the agricultural economy of our country :

Province	Ryotwari	Zamindari		Total acres (000)
		Permanently	Temporarily	
		(000) acres		
Ajmer-Mewara ...	...	974	797	1,771
Assam ...	29,837	3,926	1,722	35,485
Bengal ...	...	39.277	9,978	49,255
Bihar & Orissa ...	...	41,840	11,333	53,173
Bombay ..	74.769	...	3.971	78,740
Burma ...	155,849	...	...	155,849
C. P. ...	11,184	...	40,453	64,088
Coorg ...	1,020	...	...	1,020
Delhi ...	...	...	369	369
Madras ...	62,176	28,843	...	91,019

Province	Ryotwari	Zamindari		Totol acres (000)
		Permanently	Temporarily	
		(000) acres		
N. W. Frontier ..	...	...	8,446	8,446
Punjab ...	...	...	60,172	60,172
U. P. ...	...	6,724	61,002	67,934
Total ...	334,835	121,584	198,243	667,321

II

The following figures only indicate what is being paid by the Zamindars to Government as pieshcush. But it is a notorious fact that the Zamindars get more than our times as much under permanent settlement and three times as much under temporary settlement as their own share for discharging their so-called land-revenue collection.*

Province	Land Revenue paid to Government on			
	Ryotwari	Temporarily settled	Permanently settled	Total
Ajmer-Mewara ...	...	250	115	365
Assam ...	...	1,539	373	1,932
Bengal ...	...	22,680	8,458	31,138
Bihar & Orissa ...	...	10,774	5,920	16,694
Delhi ...	...	...	569	569
Madras ..	...	7,196	1,675	8,871
N. W. F. ..	...	...	2,752	2,752
Punjab ...	...	...	51,304	51,304
U. P. ...	...	5,263	61,508	66,771
Total ...	...	...	...	1,80,397

* We do not have separate figures for Zamindari areas in Bombay and Central Provinces, which cannot be less than Rs. one crore more

PEASANT SONGS OF ANDHRA*

The Andhra Peasant is to-day in the vanguard of the All-India Peasants movement. He has twelve years of solid organizational work to his credit. He possesses a special Institute where peasant youths are taught and trained in the principle and methods of serving the peasantry. He has organized Peasant Marches with up-to-date technique to stir the countryside, to fire the imagination of the masses and to awaken the Government and public to the realization of his ideals and minimum demands. He possesses a fine net-work of organizations, an Andhra Weekly and two Printing Presses: He has indeed become so strong that even the Government and Justice Party, which till recently tried to ignore him have come to flirt with him by themselves offering to organize him into (Yellow) unions, granting him various concessions and staging conferences in his name. To-day the South Indian Peasant is a force to count with and his movement bids fair to rival the Congress in its vigour, hegemony and mass strength. In this phenomenal all-round development, the Peasant Songs have played a considerable part in filling the peasants with enthusiasm. Though they were produced and popularized at various times as occasion demanded they were published in a book form in 1934. This small booklet of songs has already gone through two editions and the third edition is now being sent to the Press.

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* Reproduced from the Contemporary India, Lahore.

What follows is only a poor attempt at translating a small portion of these songs, which have served to electrify the countryside and engender a really powerful class organization among the South Indian Peasantry.

Injustice in the Presence of God

I

WHILE He who knows no differences is still there
Why shall a few parade the world with all their crores
And countless many suffer for want of food ?

II

WHILE the All-Merciful exists
Why does cruelty rule in the world
And peace lie buried in the ashes of life ?

III

WHY does the Lord of love rule over our destinies
Why does Hate grow unabated
Why do rivers of blood flow everlastingly ?

IV

WHILE the Protector of the helpless exists
Why does desparation confront us everywhere ?
Why are mothers cruelly parted from their own children

What! The Peasant to be forgotten?

I

CAN life persist
Will worlds exist
Can countries raise their heads?
Will the bonds of slavery fall asunder,
If we do not enthrone the Peasant as our own true King
Never, Never, Never.

II

WILL our kingdom live on earth
And will not this mother earth herself be torn by 'quakes?
If mankind and God himself do not love and protect,—
Whom?
The Peasant who labours day and night, not knowing or caring
For the inevitable sufferings and pains of his lot.

Why do Nothing?

I

WHY do you do nothing?
You, the Kisan king
Can't you tell people your rights?
Can't you publish your prowess with gusto?

II

REALIZE this, the first thing
That the sharpened sabres of fearful armies,

The hungry machine-guns with all their ceaseless flames
cannot but succumb
To the fury of the peasants' phalanxes,
To the enraged fangs of the proletariat!

III

HOW do you bear this burden of taxes!
While failing to feed your beloved family?
How long do you wear out your devoted dried up bones
With no food to feed them,
With no cloth to cover them.

IV

WADING through mud, walking through thorns
Crops you raise after untold sufferings
Yet, you don't find enough to eat!
Is there then no limit to your slavery?

V

LOOK, at these parks, palaces and pleasures
Can't you recognize your own sweat and sacrifices
therein?

VI

YOU ply the plough, break open our beloved mother
earth
And these millionaires, butterflies, the consequence,
Are dancing your death dance.

VII

OH, turn to your loving spouse,
Crying out her dear heart!
At the fearful cries of your faminished children.

Can't you, Can't you raise
Your plough (like the Balram of old)
Emblem of your invincible and creative power and
Demand your Rights ?
Wrest your Rights ?
Raise your class, as you raise crops
Feed your kindred as you feed the markets !

Divine Division

I

AWAKE, Awake, All must Awake
Lands, Riches and pleasure to divide
Among all, Among all,
Come, up, come up, to search methods of Division, the Divine Division.

II

NO, it shall no longer be that others shall swallow up our produce
While we lovingly water the land, nurse the crops, plough up the river-bed,
And beautify the landscape, enrich the mother, Earth.

Down with Putrid Society

I

WE don't want, we don't want the society going putrid with false ideals
You a Pandit, so must you be Great

You, the illiterate, so must you be down and out
You, the fairest, so must greatness be thrust upon you
You, the low caste, down you go in life's struggle
Down with
Such society and such ideals.

Unite, Unite, oh, the Peasant

NEED we yearn for Food, for Freedom, for Favour
If only we all are united
We, the peasants
We, the workers.

II

MIGHT there is to-day amidst the Peasant and the Proletariat
Caste or creed we need not
Together we live, united we march.

III

WHY shall the few alone enjoy all the country's riches.
When we fill the granaries with varied and rich produce
Plenty there is, yet we are not fed
We, the hungry and starving, have a right over these riches.
The Strike is our key to the Granaries of the world.
The Strike is the weapon, divine, of this age.

PART III

TECHNIQUE OF PEASANTS' MOVEMENT

PROPAGANDA METHODS FOLLOWED IN SOUTHERN INDIA

*Out of my thirteen years of experience in organising the Kisans, consisting of both the Ryotwari Peasants and Zamindari Ryots in the Andhra and some other parts of Southern India, I have come to adopt the following methods of organisation for awakening, organising, educating and energising the peasants:

ECONOMIC ENQUIRY INTO PEASANTS' GRIEVANCES

A representative and authoritative Enquiry Committee is appointed in any new area, where the peasants movement is sought to be developed, to investigate into and report upon the economic conditions and sufferings of peasants and suggest remedies. Proceedings of such an enquiry are published widely in the Press and thus much useful work is carried on in creating interest in the peasants' problems. Based on the report of the Committee a schedule of minimum demands is prepared and published by a conference of the peasants of that district. A District Peasants' Association is formed in the wake of that conference to popularise and give effect to that schedule of minimum demands.

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*Report submitted to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President, Indian National Congress in May 1936.

Publication of Reports

To gain the support of the general public and to inspire confidence among the peasantry in their minimum demands the report of the Peasants' Enquiry Committee is published in the local language and if possible in English aslo.

Peasants' Demands are Made Irresistable

Schedules of minimum demands, thus worked out from district to district, from Zamindari to Zamindari are pooled together by the Provincial Peasants' Association and a provincial schedule of minimum demands is worked out of them and published throughout the Presidency. There are in fact two such schedules (charts) one for the Zamin Ryots and another for the Ryotwari Peasants, so greatly do their demands vary from each other. We have found that in practice, our opponents, whether they be the Civilians, Zamindars or their Partisans, have become thoroughly incapable of refuting by argument any of our demands based as they are upon the irresistable minimum needs and undeniable grievances of Peasants.

Propaganda Meetings

But to work out such schedules is only the beginning of our task. We have to acquaint the peasants of such schedules, educate them into accepting those minimum demands as their very own and help them to become vociferous in their support by associating them in ever increasing numbers in their conferences organised all over the countryside. If the thousands of our Peasants conferences do not serve any other method they atleast succeed in ranging myriads of peasants enthusiastically on the side of our minimum demands.

Peasants' Weeks or Days

To give the desired momentum for the organisation of such meetings and conferences we organise Peasants Weeks or Days when arrangements are made for whipping up the peasants, gathering them into thousands of conferences in their villages, taluks, and districts. It is at such conferences the minimun demands circularised by the Provincial Peasants Associations are explained and published to the peasants. Then the schedule of minimum demands is amplified by the addition of some more demands concerning the local grievances and the resulting catalogue of grievances are endorsed by the conferences. Thus life is put into such minimum demands by the association with them, of the self-conscious peasants' mass-mind.

Peasants' Songs and Seva Dals

Peasants' Seva Dals are improvised and youths as well as grownups are induced to range themselves as volunteers to sing the peasants' songs and shout the peasants' slogans. Thus the necessary military atmosphere is created in every meeting. The National Flag is usually hailed by our Peasants but where greater strength is sought to be evinced red flags also are made use of and where the peasants are yet in the beginning of public life a simple flag with Mahatmaji's picture is unfurled.

Peasants' Marches

The Peasants' march is about the most effective propagandistic method so far devised and made use of by peasants. It is only too true to say that under the present financially straightened circumstances of peasants and public workers we cannot expect the peasants to

evince much day to day and continued public interest in the activities of their Associations. At best they can be expected to stand shoulder to shoulder by their leaders and organisers on a few occasions and thus give a meaning to the ceaseless propaganda carried on by their leaders on behalf of their minimum demands. This the peasant marches have sought to do. So far four Peasants' Marches have been organised in the Madras Presidency. The last and the most successful Peasants' Fortnight and Marches were organised in November 22 —December 7 of 1935 and we had 28 marches in 21 districts. During these Marches our Peasants are familiarised with the Schedules of Minimum Demands. They gather in their various Conferences and reiterate their adherence to such demands. They express their discontent and dissatisfaction with Government and other vested interests for not having satisfied such minimum demands. *What is more they trumpet their ultimate objectives—the capture of complete state power by peasants and workers, the inevitability of abolishing the Zamindari and Mahajan systems and establishing a socialised industrial system.*

To March Peasants is to Enliven Them Politically

When peasants begin to move from village to village, carry on *nagar sankirtans* (Prabhat Bheris) and hold meetings to declare to the four winds as it were their objectives and minimum demands, the whole countryside is enlivened by political consciousness. The Peasants' movement becomes a reality to the masses. Their demands are brought home to them. The public agitation of Peasants is brought to their very doors.

Collectors are our Witnesses

We organised these Marches in 1934 only to the peasants conferences but they were not quite so successful either for demonstrative purposes or for bringing home to the powers that be our strength and our determination to achieve satisfaction for our demands. So we have organised them again in 1935 and '36 as in 1933 to the offices of the Revenue Officials. It is wrong to think, as some have done, that these marches to the collectors' offices have merely degenerated into the pre—1919 deputations of peasants to the district satraps. In fact these marches are taken primarily to the collectors' offices and only secondarily to the collectors themselves. What is most essential in these Marches is that the peasants ought to be given an ocular demonstration of themselves marching to give a public notice to the Government that their demands are such and such. Secondly Government is denied the opportunity of pretending ignorance of the existance of a self-conscious peasants' movement and the popular backing behind the peasants' minimum demands. In fact the political C. I. D. follow our marches and our peasants narrate their grievances and declare their demands in their village gatherings organised while they are on their way to the collectors' offices also with a view to leave no doubt in the mind of Government as to their seriousness.

Government's Contact with Peasants

Although they pretend to be independantly in touch with the mass-mind the civilians have had much to learn from their contact with the self-conscious self-respecting and organised peasants especially in regard

to the irresistability of the Peasants' Demands. Hence their anxiety not to exasperate the peasants by absenting themselves from their offices or by sermonising to them but to listen to their demands and offer to communicate their demands to Government. In the few cases where the local collectors have sought refuge from these peasant hoardes in distant camps our peasants have attached their chart of demands to the notice boards and informed the Press of that fact. Thus these Marches to the collectors' offices do serve this extremely useful purpose of making the peasants realise that they have to knock directly in person at the very portals of Government be it British or Indian in order to win entry into the citadels of power and achieve their demands.

To Declare Peasants' Referendum

To march is to declare peasants referendum. Some day our peasants like the proletariat of other countries have to march in all their numbers to the Offices of the State for the ultimate capture of power. These marches are to familiarise them with that final March the nature of that must necessarily have the multi-mass backing if it is to be successful. In the meanwhile we have to satisfy ourselves as well as the general public that the schedule of minimum demands, framed and published by the various peasants' organisations have the willing and unswerving backing of the peasants. This can best be done by these marches. No peasant who is actively opposed to any of our demands can afford to take part in our marches nor can he allow us to publish our demands without protesting.

Thus through these marches we are in a way able to declare a referendum upon our schedules of minimum

demands, give an opportunity to all to declare their views before the collectors and thus establish our popular claim for all such demands. The electrifying and energising effect of such marches can be realised by those who have been in intimate touch with the masses of the Andhra Countryside.

Peasants' Thought

No movement of such dimensions and portent as that of the peasants can hope to make much headway, unless it is related to the world movements of the peasants and workers. It must enlist the services and support of sincere and experienced economists, socialistic in their outlook and masswise in all their reactions in order to carry on research into every public problem that affects the interests to any material degree. The whole science of rural economics has to be rewritten and every public problem has to be viewed from the Marxian angle of inevitability of mass Control over the State. It is with this objective in mind the Andhra Peasants' Movement has been anxious to publish a number of pamphlets upon different problems of public importance. Hence the establishment of a Central Peasants' Reference Library and Peasants' Institute.

Peasants' Institutes

The enemies of the Kisans *i.e.*, the Mahajan and the Zamindar and the ignorant or selfish kisans themselves are constantly busy damning the Kisan workers and damaging the Kisan organisations by their interested and malicious misrepresentations. Thanks to the Hallet circular and the new orientation brought in by the new Viceroy and his Provincial Satraps, the whole

government machinary is busy diverting the peasants mind from politics to broadcasting; from classwise economic discussions to the husbanding of Viceroys' Bulls, Rural Fairs and Exhibitions, the socalled Indian Socratic Rural reconstruction, Village sanitation and social entertainments. I am rather afraid, many of our well intentioned social workers who have drawn their inspiration or status from Mahatmaji's village programmes have also been contributing something towards the further encrushing of the peasants' mind, which has been even at the best of times a little unwilling to constantly battle against India's Power to send everybody to political slumber. We have to fight against all these forces and their deadening influences. We have to counteract all their mischievous propaganda, and surely that cannot be achieved by occasional propaganda which can only be organised in a peasants' week or by periodical marches. It can be achieved only by training and sending out a regular stream of well doctrined, self conscious, zealous workers. It is to train such workers in the principles of economics and political science, viewed as they must be from the point of view of the exploited classes and prepare them for constant and faithful service to the masses like the batteries that are charged with electricity that we have started our Peasants' Institute at Nidubrole.

This institute has sent out two batches of workers of 25 and 35 respectively most of whom have become local leaders. I am glad to say that in several districts they have succeeded in winning the confidence of the masses by their really marvellous self-denying and zealous work. We are busy now with our third session.*

* The latest batch of 15 workers have already gone out to carry on their propaganda.—Ed.

The Andhra Peasants' Institute 1934

Peasants' University is our Desideratum

Our idea is that through the multiplication of such institutes in every province, we can and ought to be sending out every season or atleast every year, a good number of class conscious peasants' youths who are anxious to spare as much of their time as possible to the organisation, education and awakening of Peasants and who are ready, whenever needed to hold an ever increasing number of peasants and an ever extending area of countryside in their power and influence. It is only when we can assure ourselves that thus we have provided the countryside with a wide enough net work of leadership which is conscious of the destiny of the masses and the necessity for its own limitless sacrifices and which is capable of inspiring and holding together in its influence the teeming millions that we can with any sense of reality think of a revolution. An organised minority cannot be achieved unless local leadership is carefully trained, tutored and nurtured. To achieve this desideratum we can ill afford to depend either upon our present universities and their urban minded youth or upon the chance recruits that today flock or drift towards the banner of the Congress through the momentum of an occasional political whirlwind. We must get busy organising a University for peasants which has little value for buildings or senates, much less for money but works nevertheless through its numerous streams of class conscious and unpaid but earnest lecturers and the more numerous students whose qualification for coming for such studies is their mass—contact and love of the countryside. Such a growing band of local leaders actuated by one thought, nurtured in the same doctrines, and believing in the ultimate inevitability of the truimph

of the masses will, through all their growing mass contacts, succeed in giving greater mass content to our work and in infusing a more living faith into all our vitals. They can at the chosen moment inspire the masses hold them in control and lead them to strengthen their organisation.

Net Work of Organisations

It is when peasants' associations have some or all the advantages of the above propagandistic means and methods, it becomes easy to ramify the countryside with a strong structure of organisations. Till then the Peasants' Organisations can only serve the same purpose as irrigation canals and thus facilitate the canalisation of the peasant movement whenever freshers rush in. We cannot afford to sit idle until all other advantges and appendages are developed, nor can we expect much more from our present-day organisations than to carry on propaganda, create a favourable atmosphere for peasant work, popularise peasants demands and keep up a peasants' mind.

Finances

In the beginning we have to depend very largely upon the peasants who have between ten and forty acres of land for financing our peasants' Associations. We cannot afford to pay any of our workers or local leaders and hence the need for their own private resources or their economical and frugal touring. No wonder we are obliged to be as economical as possible in our demands upon the resources of our friends, workers and peasants. We are naturally obliged to organise only a peasants' day, a peasants' March and one or two campaigns of peasants'

conferences upon the most important occasions in order to make our scanty resources go to the farthest limit.

Finance is one reason for asking functional representation. It has gladdened my heart more than I can express here to find that atleast after our thirteen years of lonely peasants propaganda you have thrown yourself, heart and soul into the peasants' political world. You have given a new philip to our movement. We are anxious that you shall help us to get out of our present financial quagmare.

Our peasants are all keen on their own organisations. Many of them, who have sufficiently become politically conscious are also anxious to enlist themselves as Congress members. But we, who find it so hard to find peasants able to pay 2 as. per annum to our own organisations are further disabled in our work by being obliged to pursuade several of them to pay for the Congress work. Hence our inability to get even one twentieth of our real strength among the peasants reflected in the Congress. As things stand we are unable to visualise at any distant future the possibility of replacing the present predominantly urban and bourgiousie leadership by the peasants and thus be able to hug the Congress as our own mass organisation.

Functional Representation

When we ask for functional representation for the Peasants within the Congress, we have in mind the incapacity of peasants to finance both the Congress and Kisan organisations and their growing anxiety to develop their own class organisation, to strengthen their own cause within the councils of the Congress to give a meaning and a portent to their agitation for the

redress of their grievances and to force the future ministers of whatever political colour to satisfy their minimum demands. The complaint made by some of our Congress leaders that they cannot be expected to give representation to organisations which have not yet come into existance in most provinces is not unlike the argument raised by Government when asked to recognise peasants associations. As long as Congress workers and leaders like government officials continue to feel that they alone can fittingly represent the peasants and no special organisations need be developed, we cannot get out of this vicious circle. But if peasants organisations are to be genuinely started at all the granting of functional representation to them within the Congress is the surest and strongest inducement for Congress workers and leaders to use all their energies in the direction of creating a Peasants' Organisation.

Congress of Peasants and Workers

To be frank between ourselves we know only too well that a great majority of our village, Firka, Taluk and District Congress Committees exist mostly in name. They are brought together to elect the delegates and office-bearers and degenerate thereafter into paper organisations. It cannot be anything else as long as these organisations are manned and led by people who have in most cases no other interest but to continue to maintain their control over the Congress machinary. It is only too true to say that most of our Congress organisations have hopelessly failed to come to grips with the day to day grievances, sufferings, needs and demands of the masses. The unenviable yet necessary task of ministering to the growing needs of the peasants has fallen to the lot of peasants organisations, where they are allowed

to function by Congressmen or civilians or both. For we must not forget the fact that peasants' workers are obliged to fight as much against the cold and hostile indifference of Congressmen as the hostility of civilians. Now the peasants are however face to face with an extraordinary and almost a revolutionary change in the attitude towards them of Congress and Government.

From Lord Linlithgow to Sir Harry Haig, from Sir Charles Souter of Madras to the Collectors of U. P. and Madras, Punjab and Bengal, the Government are anxious to organise the Peasants and in Madras Presidency the Revenue Officials are induced to become Officebearers of Peasants Associations. Zamindars like the Nawab of Chattari in U. P., Rajah Of Bobbili in Madras, the followers of Sir Fazli Hussain in the Punjab are also trying to persuade the peasants to get into political partnership with them. Now the peasants find you giving a bold and heartfelt reorientation to Mahatmajee's memorable rural aspect of the Congress. If however we Congressmen are to succeed in carrying conviction to peasants about our rural bonafides and win them over to our side, prevent them from falling into the attractive snares of the Zamindars and Government and help them to become revolutionary, nothing short of offering functional representation to their organisations will adequataly serve the present day needs of the situation.

PEASANTS AND POLITICS

The New Constitution

Our Peasants only see new flitters specially designed for them in every chapter of the New Government of India Act. The bi-cameral legislatures, to be establish-

ed in every important province are expected to prevent the passage of legislation seeking to effect economic reconstruction. Even the lower chambers cannot be captured by any majorities of the masses, so restricted is the franchise, so communalised are the representatives and so demoralised are the political parties, run by the subsidies from Zamindars and Mahajans. To insure against any unholy alliance between all the progressive and reformatory forces and their consequent domination over Provincial Governments, the Governors are invested with all their special powers. Thus instead of being a stepping stone to the eventual attainment of complete independence and the ultimate socialism, the Government of India Act seeks to prevent, in every possible manner, the achievement of any reforms which may lead even to the slightest extent towards the establishment of even a Democratic State.

Insure Against the Act

It is therefore necessary for our Peasants not only to do all they can to get round this Act and achieve their ultimate goal but also to insure themselves in the meanwhile against the butchery to be carried on by this Act We cannot very well afford to ignore its existance, nor can we leave all its Institutions to be monopolised by our exploiters, the better to suppress us. We must, if only to prevent any greater intensification of exploitation, do our best to nuetralise the powers of the vested interests, if not to undermine them. This, we can do, either by organising mass resistance to the activities of the legislatures and ministries or by keeping peasants and workers representatives in all the so called representative institutions to espouse the viewpoint of the

masses, to resist the proposals of the vested interests and to seek to create demoralisation in the ranks of the Zamindars and Mahajans and their henchmen or by simultaneously adopting both the methods.

Peasants Cannot Work the System

Peasants can and ought to send their representatives to the *lower* chambers though they cannot hope to ever obtaining majorities in them. They cannot however have any of their partymen in the upper Chambers, since even their sympathisers in the ranks of the moneyed and landed classes who have the monopoly of the franchise for such legislatnres cannot be really depended upon to stand even by their reformatory ideals.

As for the ministries to come our peasantries have very little to gain by allowing any of their representatives to get into the ministries. The Provincial Governments are today dependant for the whole of their revenues upon taxes and duties paid by our peasants and workers. They are said to have the right to levy incometax upon landed incomes and death duties. Yet neither our Peasants' Legislators nor their ministers in a predominantly bourgiouesie ministers can hope to succeed in levying these new taxes. Any new developmental services can come to be undertaken by the new provincial Governments only by levying additional taxes upon the masses. Since the present burdens of taxes are already too heavy and crushing, no peasants' legislator or minister can make himself responsible for the impositon of any new tax or taxes. Hence the impossibility or inadvisibility of any Peasants' representative entering any ministry which is not Peasantwise in its

outlook and policy and which does not set its face irrevocably against the increase of Tax burdens upon the Peasants and Workers.

Moreover the much desired industrialisation of our country and electrification of our countryside can be directly stimulated and subsidised mostly by Provincial Governments. But all our political parties including the Congress, in its ministerial ranks are more in favour of Capitalistic development than the creation of Socialised Industries. Such a capitalistic *cum* Industrial development can be created only at the cost of the peasants and workers. And that development will be completely disasterous for the masses and ought not at all to be allowed.

We do recognise that if a party with a cent percent Peasants' and Workers' outlook and programme were to come into Office, it can do an immense amount of good work by removing many of the present administrative interferences, coercion, and repression which take such a heavy toll from the masses. The administration of Forests, Public works, Excise, including Salt Manufacture, Land revenue can be liberalised through the establishment of village panchayats in all villages and stimulating the public spirit of the peasants, much constructive work can be achieved in villages. The whole educational system can be revitalised and the local boards can be induced to turn out good useful work. A regular host of Village Vigilance Corps can be developed at the cost of the state to serve as a link between the State and the Congress. All this and much more can be done without hnving to incur much additional expenditure. What is more, by developing the constant and close association through our Congress organisations

between the administration and the public. We can build up a popular machinary which is capable of revolutionary action.

But where are the people to will, to do these and other things? Surely the people, to achieve them, must have really undiluted revolutionary mass mentality. I am afaraid that the failure of our local leadership to so far utilise in a dynamic creative and revolutionary manner, the immense resources of money and men of the eight district Boards and thus stir the country-side with a new policy, programme and fervour and strengthen our hold upon the masses indicates the utter incapacity of our present day ministerialist leadership to sedulously utilise their hold of the administration in a creative and revolutionary manner. To think in terms of revolution vis-a-vis the British in the traditional manner is not the same as to visualise and act on the socialistic revolutionary methods. I am perfectly convinced that our ministerial ranks of the Congress are unable to afford us even that much desired minimum peasants and workers' zeal, programme, policy and drive.

Therefore there is nothing creative, developmental and helpful that our peasants can expect to be done by the provincial ministers. Hence their unwillingness to allow their representatives to enter ministries.

Lower Chambers and Peasants

But how are our peasants to send any of their representatives to the lower Chambers? Are they to be set up as Kisan Candidates? If so, they have to face the candidates set up by the Congress and the Justice Party in the Madras Presidency. Since they are anxious to march hand in hand with the Congress atleast as far as

its political programme goes, they cannot visualise with any sense of equanimity, the possibility of the Justice Party Candidates capturing the seats in the triangular Contests. There is even a living danger of the Justice Party trying to permeate and degenerate the Congress as well as the Peasants' Organisations, as they have done in the case of many of our District Board Congress Parties. If we are to avoid this danger of our Organisations being hopelessly demoralised into reformistic bodies we must do everything possible to stiffen our policy and revolutionise our programme. They therefore have to come to some settlement with the Congress, so that Peasants' Candidates alone are set up in certain constituencies and Congress candidates in certain other constituencies. To achieve this, there must be a demonstrable and reliable strong sub-stratum of ideological understanding between the Congress and the Peasants. This can be expected to grow under your leadership during the next eight months.

Our local Congress organisations and their civic boards can be expected to choose such candidates in whom the peasants have much confidence. If the local Congress leadership is really peasantwise and favourably inclined towards the Peasants movement, one may expect, with some confidence, the provincial Civic Boards to so select its candidates as to win Peasants confidence. But I am sorry to have to say that our Peasants have no great faith in the bonafides of the local Leadership, in regard to our Kisan Movement. Hence our inability to leave the task of selecting Peasants Candidates for the Lower legislatures to Organisations other than the Kisan Organisations.

The other alternative open to our Peasants is to selec

a panel of two to three Congressmen who have their confidence also and leave the final choice of selecting one of them as the official Congress Candidate. By adopting this method, we can go a long way towards satisfying both the parties.

But our peasants can derive little advantage by this method if they cannot expect their legislators to keep up their seperate entity in the legislatures as Congress Kisans ready to vote differently on questions that vitally affect the peasants and workers interests, speak differently to espouse the viewpoint of the masses on such vital questions as the Zamindari and Mahajan Systems, Industrialisation, Taxation, State and Co-operative enterprises.

They will however be solidly behind the Congress whenever any vote of confidence is in question. Thus the Congress-Kisans will be an allied party willing to keep congress in power either in Ministry or in opposition but always anxious to guard and promote the interests of the Masses.

Why not Coelece?

The question naturally arises that after having agreed to give the final power to Congress to choose the Peasants' Candidates, why on earth shall the Congress-kisans try to sit as a separate group and act as such. The Karachi Chart with the Lucknow riders to it cannot be expected to sufficiently bind the Congress Legislators, since their usual mentality is still bourgiousie and their outlook capitalistic. We want people who have not only a definitely socialistic mentality and who do not at all hesitate to stand up for the masses whatever be the temporary partisan reactions. I have had by now three

sessions' experience of the Assembly and I know to my bitter disappointment how impossible and difficult it is for a genuine Socialist and a cent percent Peasants and Workers' man to jealously guard their political and economic interests. Unless a man knows that he is expected by his party and is free to expound his principles and propagate his faith to stand up for the rights of his constituents and to break into the enemy's camp, he finds it exremely difficult to discharge his duties. So even our Peasants Legislators, if they are to be cramped and conditioned by the Congress Party Dicsipline and mentality, can give very little satisfaction to the masses. Such legislators serve only to weaken the faith of the masses in their own leadership, which may highly be desired by the bourgiousie both within and without the Congress.

Why Not Trust the Congress Party?

I must confess that for one like me who has spent the best part of his life, loving the Congress ideals and six active and arduous years in the service of the great Organisation it is hard to have to admit that as far as the class interests are concerned, the Congress in its parliamentary wing cannot be completely relied upon by the masses. Our ministerialists are naturally anxious to manipulate a parliamentary majority, through every possible means. They therefore have the inducement to so frame their programme, and what is much more material, their parliamentary tactics as to attract to themselves as many people as possible. This they can hope to do only by conciliating, coaxing and nuetralising the powerful Zamindari and Mahajan interests. They will begin to do it from the very begining from the stage

of selecting the candidates. During the elections such candidates are mostly able to attract our bands of workers and have a better chance of success, what with their funds and other electoral methods. The Congress Parliamentary party will be further diluted in its ranks so many allied groups directly or indirectly under the control or within the influence of the zamindars and the mahajans. This is bound to be particularly so in this province of *pax zamindaria*, thanks to the well organised and experienced and class conscious Justice Party. If not for any other reason, atleast to prevent the Congress parliamentarians to degenerate into capitalistic-cum-liberal politicians, unconsciously upholding the principles of and institutions of the vested interests and consciously incapable of standing up for the de-vested classes, we need a class-conscious and revolutionary peasants and workers' parliamentary group. To keep the flame of socialism burning, to hoist the flag of independence of the masses and to ceaselessly fight in that legislative forum against any reactionary developments within the Congress, such a socialistic wing broadbased as it will be on the class interests of the masses will be of immense value and utility.

Will that Group be Effective

If the principle of allowing the kisans to elect their own class representatives while remaining within the Congress is accepted then it can be extended to cover the labour interests. There are in this province as manay as six seats for industrial labour. The Harijans who will have reserved seats are almost all agricultural workers and peasants ticket. In addition to these we can certainly succed in getting 60 percent Peasant Candidates set up and get 20 to 30 members elected on behalf of

peasants. Thus we may be able to have from 30 to 48 members returned to carry on our work.

OURS WILL BE THE ELECTRIFYING GROUP

Thus our group will be strong, considerable yet cohesive enough to fill the key position in the Lower Chamber. On it will have to depend the ministry for its life and strength. It will thus be in a position to dictate this policy as it has no positions to get and no powers to seek. It can certainly hope to constantly tune up the main Congress party and thus maintain the revolutionary spirit. It will be at the same time be the connecting link between the peasants and workers' organisations in the country and the Government and the Congress party behind it.

I request you to send your thoughts in regard to the proposals I have herein placed for your considention.

PEASANTS MUST CONTROL GOVERNMENT

Prof. Ranga has issued the following statement on July 1st, on the Congress President's exhortation to the Peasants in June last to vote for the Congress. Neither Prof. Ranga nor any of the Peasant leaders advise the Kisans not to vote for the Congress. What they want is a Peasant-minded Congressman.

" Nothing has pleased me more in recent months than the latest reply given by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the happy Kisans of Doiwala. At long last, we find a President of the Indian National Congress boldly avowing that the problem of Kisans and their grievances constituted the major problem of India. All our labours

during the last four years seem to have been not in vain, when we hear Panditji saying that this major problem could not be solved finally when the Peasantry could control the Government and make their will felt.

Basis of Swaraj

It is true, Babu Rajendra Prasad admitted the right of peasants in last October at Madras to control and scrutinise the activities of the Congress. But it is reserved for Panditji to declare boldly that the real basis for our fight for 'Swaraj' is that the peasantry should control the Government and make our will felt. This is not enough. This declaration of goodwill and acceptance of the claim of our peasants for the attention and service of the Congresss are not enough to ask our Kisans to join the Congress and help it to frame a suitable agrarain programme. It is more easily said than done. I am perfectly convinced that under the present Congress constitution, it is more than impossible for Kisans to join the Congress in large number so as to compel it to develop its major attention in addition to developing their own Kisan Sabhas. Hence the insistence upon the grant of functional representation for them if possible with a certain amount of weightage.

Peasants' Demands

I have already submitted my memorandum to Panditji upon the present day peasant problems and demands and it is yet too early to divulge their contents. I have yet to state to the public in view of this first appeal of Panditji to our Kisans to vote for the Congress that our Andhra Kisans have already resolved to seek the permission of the Congress to start their Kisan -

cum-Congress Parliamentary group to safeguard their special interests in the Provincial Assembly, while accepting a Congress Party's whip on all questions or occasions of confidence.

In Legislatures

We suggest that wherever the peasants organisations are strong they must have the right to suggest their own candidate from Congressmen and the Congress must adopt them as its official candidate. All the legislators thus selected and elected must sign the pledge of the Congress and Kisans and they have to be permitted to sit together as a separate group within the Congress Party, answering their own groups' whips wherever their class interests are in question while always being prepared to accept the Congress Party's whips. Moreover, all our Kisans have made up their minds not to permit any of their Congress Kisan legislators to enter any ministry even though they have to support the Congress Ministry if and when it is permitted by the Congress to be formed. Unless the Congress is prepared to go thus far and in addition consult the Kisans in its selection of other candidates for rural areas, it may not be quite in the interests of the Kisans to throw themselves heart and soul in the electioneering fight of the Congress. I hope Panditji will soon be able to persuade his Working Committee to accept our proposals.

Only Solution

At the same time let no one think even for a moment that our Kisans are anxious either to jeopardise our national struggle for Independence or weaken the Con-

gress fight against imperialism. It is just because we are as keen as all others that we must strive for the attainment of real Swaraj that we wish to safeguard ourselves from the inevitable opportunism of the Congress ministerialists. The grievance of our peasants are so many and the necessity for solving them is so great and yet the anxiety of our Congress ministerialists not to displease the vested interests is to insistant that our Kisans can demand nothing less. The formation of Congress and Kisan Parliamentary Groups is the only solution that is soon to arise in the wake of the reforms.

ALLIANCE WITH THE CONGRESS

Report sent on 18, May 1936 to Sjt Jairamdas Doulatram, Secretary of the Mass Contacts Committee of the Congress in answer to his plea for suggestions for establishing greater contact and alliance between Congress and functional mass organisations of peasants and workers.

I am wholeheartedly in favour of establishing as great a contact or alliance between the Congress and functional mass Organisations of Labour and Peasants. As days go on, our fight for Complete Independence is becoming more and more grim, demanding an ever growing mass sympathy and support. The new Government of India Act seeks, among other things, to destroy the little national unity and spirit and consciousness of Indianhood by creating the socalled communalised and parochialised autonomous provinces. It is intended to divert the politics and thought of our workers and peasants from their all-India unity, needs and demands to their local, immeasurably less important needs. Government knows that these local needs cannot be fully

satisfied, their local grievances fully redressed and political obstacles fully overcome until and unless our masses gain the fullest possible control over the Central Government and all the resources and powers of the State. But it is just to prevent that and misdirect the masses that the socalled Provincial Autonomy is being inaugurated, the better to destroy our National Movement, to undermine our consciousness of Indian Unity and Nationhood and to help us to go back to the blissful, anti-national, and pro-British days.

But unfortunately the new Provincial Governments will be so formed that our peasants and workers will have to, if only to prevent any mischief and the worsening of their present unenviable position, concentrate a good deal upon the working of the various representative and executive institutions. It is therefore highly desirable to provide adequate facilities for them never to forget the higher and larger national issues and interests. It is absolutely essential to prevent them from becoming an easy prey to the British machinations.

The Indian National Congress also is threatened with the automatic denudation of its strength and resources by the inauguration of the Provincial Autonomy. It may find itself face to face with the dreadful phenomenon of our masses loosing all interest in the far distant Indian Politics and All-Indian Issues in preference to the newly-begotten, all-absorbing provincial politics.

It is more or less a life and death struggle between the Act and the Indian National Forces. The Congress as well as the Peasants and Workers' Movements have to devise now methods of organisation and propaganda

not only to withstand the disruputive and anti-National forces engineered by the Act but also to generate new and additional strength and fervour to destroy the Act and attain Purna Swaraj. For this purpose, the achievement of complete unity and harmony between all anti-Imperialist and revolutionary organisations is imperative. Therefore a united front between the Congress and the Organisations of Workers and Peasants is not only highly desirable but inevitable if our Congress is to wish for the rapid realistion of its ends.

The policy so for followed by the Congress, of trying to speak for the peasants also and thus gaining their wholehearted support has not much succeeded. It has not any how resulted in the peasants' coming to actively associate themselves as a class with the Congress and its organisations.

Peasants are rapidly coming to have their own class organisations all over India. Such functional organisations are eminently fit to espouse their class needs and organise their forces against their enemies. It is only natural that the Indian National Congress shall try to get nearer the peasants through their own class organisations.

But it is not good either for the peasants organisations or for the Congress to establish a complete fusion between them. While the Congress is trying to bring about a loose system of National Unity the better to achieve complete independence, the peasants organisations have to seriously stand up for the class interests of the peasants and workers, while co-operating with the Congress for the attainment of national ideals, thus ensuring the achievement of the mass control over

independent India, if and when and in so far as it is achieved.

It is true that in several provinces we have yet to develop a net work of peasants' organisations. But we must set about the task of developing them and to that end the Congress has to marshal all its resources and girdle the countryside with peasants' organisations. The President of the Congress will be rendering an immense service to the peasants and the Congress by undertaking an all-India intensive tour specially to stimulate organisation work among the peasants and by collecting funds to be earmarked upto 75% for the financing of the peasants movement. The sooner we realise that the formation and promotion of the organising strength of peasants is the most revolutionary and creative thing we can do, the better it is for the Congress.

At the same time we cannot expect our peasants to have to pay their subscriptions separately to the Congress and their own peasants' organisations. They are too poor to pay even a four anna annual subscription to any one organisation and it is too difficult to organise a membership campaign for either of the organisations, It is under these circumstances, it is not wise for us to try to approach the peasants with our demands that they shall pay one subscription for both the peasants organisations and through them for the Congress. It will then be not so difficult as it is to enlist much larger number of them as members of the peasants' organisations and thus get them to be really associated with the Congress. It is only thus we can make real life display itself in the Congress through all its organisations and establish a real contact between the Congress, and the masses who have much love for

the Congress ideals but no relationship with the organisation.

In this connection I would like to quote relevant portions of my letter to Jawaharlaljee for your information.

> When we ask for functional representation for the peasants also within the Congress, we have in mind the incapacity of the peasants to finance both the Congress and the Kisan Organisations. . . . Our Kisans are all keen on their own organisations. Many of them who have sufficiently become politically conscious are also anxious to enlist themselves as Congress members. But we who find it so hard to find peasants able to pay 4 as. per annum to our own organisations are further disabled in our work by being obliged to pursuade several of them to pay for the Congress work. Hence our inability to get even one twentieth of our real strength among the peasants get itself reflected in the Congress. As things are we are unable to visualise at any distant future the possibility of replacing the predominantly urban and bourgeoisie leadership of the Congress by the peasants and thus be able to hug the Congress as our own mass organisation. . . . . The complaint made by some of our Congress leaders that they cannot be expected to give representation to organisations that have not yet come into existence in most provinces is not unlike the argument raised by the government when asked to recognise Peasants' Associations. As long as Congress workers and leaders like government officials continue to feel that they alone can fittingly represent the peasants and no special organisations need be developed, we cannot get out of this vicious circle.

We have to devise a formula by which both the Congress and the peasants organisations can come into greater institutional contact with each other without loosing any of their present freedom of action to carry on the national, economic and anti-imperialist struggles.

The membership of the peasants organisations has to be recognised by the Congress and representations for the peasants shall be granted on the various district and provincial and all-India Congress session in proportion to their strength of membership. Similarly representation has to be provided on Congress organisations to Trade Unions, Youth Leagues and Women Associations if they so desire.

But the Congress is not to be confined to these organisations alone for the development of its membership. Any peasant or worker is at liberty to become an independent member of the Congress in addition to being a member of his own functional organisation. What is more the urban classes including the intellectuals, student youth leaguers have to necessarily enlist themselves as members of the Congress. Thus the Indian National Congress derives its membership directly and indirectly.

It then becomes relevant to discuss about the relations between these two classes of members and the Congress. Those who join the Congress directly will have no difficulty to accept the Congress decisions whatever they be. But the position of those who are first members of their functional organisations and then only of the Congress cannot be so simple as this. They have to first of all deliberate in their class organisations about the Congress decisions and directions and come to an organisational decision and abide by it. If of course any of them owes also a direct allegiance to the Congress he is at liberty to choose between the decisions of the two organisations to which he belongs.

We have therefore to see what relations shall subsist between the Peasants' organisations and the Congress in

respect of their mutual decisions and directions from time to time. In stipulating their mutual relations we have to take care to see that the right of the Peasants organisations to take independent decisions and adopt and pursue separate classwise policies and programmes is improved and the capacity of the Congress to take quick and far reaching political decisions and execute its national or provincial political programmes with the least possible delay is enhanced and not impaired. At the same time neither the Peasants organisations nor the Congress shall have serious cause to feel that they are either cramped or rushed unnecessarily and unduly. It is in the light of these thoughts that the following draft constitutional provisions are suggested to be incorporated within the Congress Constitution:

1. Membership fee of a peasants organisation shall be annas two per annum. Only one eighth of it shall have to be paid as affiliation fee to the Congress.

2. Peasants representatives to the District and Provincial Congress committees are to be elected by the Peasants' Committees, in proportion to their membership and in accordance with their own rules.

3. Any decision taken by a special session of the A. I. C. C. or P. C. C. by two thirds majority of all those present shall immediately become operative upon all the affiliated organisations including those of the peasants; provided it does not conflict with any decision taken and pursued by the All India or Provincial Peasants Committee during the previous six months, regarding the class interests of peasants. If however before the expiry of a couple of months after the Congress decision, the Peasants Committee concerned does not meet in a special session and veto the Congress decision by a two

thirds majority, the Congress decision shall become binding upon the peasants organisation after that period.

4. In all questions of politics concerning mostly the national interests, Congress must have priority and in those of economic interests the Peasants organisations must get the first consideration. In pursuance of this any decision either to strike work or payment vis-â-vis the Zamindars or Sahukars or to start satyagraha to redress an economic grievance of a Peasants organisation can be taken in accordance with its own rules and shall become operative, irrespective of the decisions of the Congress organisations. But it shall be the duty of the Peasants organisation to give due notice of its intention to launch any such serious campaign to the Provincial and All India Congress Committees and defer the commencement of its campaign by one week or a fortnight at the request of the P. C. C. and by one fortnight or a month at that of the A. I. C. C. to give them the opportunity to try to bring about a settlement between the Government, Zamindars or Mahajans on the one hand and peasants on the other.

5. It shall be competent for Congress organisations to abstain from actively associating themselves with the Peasants Organisation in its campaign of direct action, if such a campaign were decided upon on the sole responsibility of the Peasants organisation It may render what assistance it can to strengthen the Peasants But it shall never do anything to weaken its fight and undermine its morale during its campaign.

6. Similarly it shall be possible for Peasants organisations not to agree to fall in line with the Congress, whenever it decides in favour of a campaign of civil disobedience through a decision supported by $^2/_3$ majority

of all those present at a special session. Due notice shall be given, not less than a fortnight for peasants organisations to come to a decision and if within two months after the Congress has launched its campaign, the Peasants organisations have failed to come to a decision in any of its sessions against the Congress decision in the manner specified, it shall be deemed to be committed to the Congress campaign. But any affiliated association may decide by a $^2/_3$ majority, to postpone its compliance with the Congress decision regarding direct action by three months each time and for two terms only.

7. The A.I.C.C. is competent to start Civil Disobedience or any other Campaign of direct action in the manner prescribed by it and it shall be applicable to all its members owing direct allegiance to it irrespective of the decisions taken by the affiliated organisations.

8. The affiliated associations must have complete autonomy in regard to the internal management, disposal of funds, ownership of property, management of several public institutions, provided nothing is done in a communal, anti-national, or anti-proletarian manner.

9. Whatever may be their views and reactions neither the Congress nor the affiliated organisations shall do anything to thwart, weaken or undermine any of the campaigns started by any of them, whatever may be the consequences.

10. The Peasants organisations shall be entitled to stipulate the minimum conditions subject to which they are prepared to support the Parliamentary Campaigns of the Congress. They must be permitted to select their own candidates, subject to the approval of the Congress. They will form an independent group allied to the

Congress voting with the Congress on questions of confidence, but exercising their independence on all other occasions, only the better to serve the interests of the Peasants.

11. But it shall be competent for the Congress Parliamentary party to appeal against the decisions of the Peasants Parliamentary party to the All-India or Provincial Peasants and Congress Committees and charge them with having failed to go in accordance with the Peasants mandate and the general Congress policy, subscribed to by the Peasants Organisations and the Peasants Group also has a corresponding right.

12. It shall be competent for the A. I. C. C. to decide by a $^2/_3$ majority upon the disaffiliation of any of the Peasants orgnisations after giving it due opportunities to mend its ways.

It shall also be competent for any Provincial Peasants organisation to decide by a $^2/_3$ majority in a special meeting at which an absolute majority of members are represented in favour of disaffiliation from the Congress

There shall always be atleast 4 peasant members and two labour members in the Congress working Committee selected from among the Peasants' and Workers representatives in the A. I. C. C. and similar provisions shall be made in regard to the constitution of the Provincial Congress Committees.

In answer to many criticisms made by some workers' organisers, Prof. Ranga informs us that he has not provided in this connection any special machinery for any struggles that may arise between peasants and agricultural workers engaged by them, since the

South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers has, in its chart of Minimum Demands, provided for the necessary conciliation and arbitration machinery. In regard to the criticism that the provisions suggested by the Professor may create unnecessary conflicts between Peasants and Congress in connection with starting and managing economic or political struggles Prof. Ranga says that he has suggested these provisions only to guide the mutual relations of the Congress and Peasants, not in regard to the ultimate struggles, which of course cannot be distinguished purely as either political or economic but in regard to the temporary crises that arise in the day to day life of our masses during the transitional stages. He says that as long as the hold of the peasants and workers over the Congress is incomplete, it may not be advisable for Peasants to be stampeded into a political struggle for the socalled Swaraj, demanded by the vested interests and hence his provisions for delaying the response of the Peasants for the Congress call for Satyagraha. Even then, he says he has made it possible only for the postponement of their compliance with the Congress order to join a Satyagraha campaign for only six months and that, thereafter the peasants organisations will automatically stand committed to the struggle and that in actual practice, it is very difficult for peasants to obtain a $^{2}/_{3}$ majority against the acceptance of the Congress order. Moreover he says that peasants are free, as at present, to become members of the Congress in their individual capacity and thus enable the Congress to carry on its struggles against the British Government. He is anxious to conserve, in the transitional stage, all the fighting strength and resources of the Peasants for fighting their economic and class-struggles, nearer at home, with the

Zamindars and Mahajans, deriving as much strength as possible from the Congress. He also agrees that once the Congress becomes entirely their own, our peasants and workers can afford to get into a greater, more whole-hearted alliance with the Congress and make their struggle a politico-economic one in all its phases.—Ed.

PEASANTS AND TAX-BURDENS

Prof. N. G. Ranga is an expert at gathering statistics. He always proves what he says by facts and figures. This chapter in which he proves beyond doubt that the present system of taxation is most inequitous and if it were to be followed it will lead to the slow but sure destruction of the peasantry, and the next on per capita *income of the Indian peasant, prove his masterly knowledge of Economics and Public Finance and one has necessarily to agree to what the Assembly correspondent of the Roy's Weekly writes: " . . . Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin might well have taken lessons from our Professor of Economics."*

The peasants and their workers will do well to note the concluding portions of this chapter, where he makes it clear that "It is the imperative duty in the interests of self-preservation of the masses to resist this vicious system of Taxation, and Public finance. It behoves them to do all they can to prevent any further taxation from being levied upon them. . . That they cannot do unless they get into politics and learn how to gain the upper hand in the political life."

Both these two are papers read at the All India Kisan Congress held at Lucknow in conjunction with Indian National Congress in April '36.

Dr. K. T. Shah estimated in 1929 the total annual income at Rs. 2,100 crores. Since then there has been more than 60% fall in the value of India's exports and other agricultural produce and so, the national income ought to be put at the present prices at not more than Rs. 1,050 crores. But Sir James Grigg, the Finance Member of Government of India has put it at Rs. 1,600

crores and he has not yet explained how he has arrived at such an enormous figure. Even if we accept his estimate, we find that the state in India has absorbed in 1932—33 as much as Rs. 20,979 lakhs or 13.1% of the total annual national income.

The cost of maintenance of the state has been rising rather rapidly during the last 35 years as has been the case all over the world. If no particular benefit accrues to the people apart from the maintenance of law and order in the country, then all this absorption by the State of 13.1% of the national income must be considered to be mostly a loss to the people at large. If however the State spends, as in England, an ever increasing portion of its revenues upon the public utility services and developmental works, all that is taken by it from the people cannot be considered as a loss. And indeed additional taxation for financing certain specific progressive public services is definitely to the advantage of the masses. For money left in the possession of a few rich people, as is mostly the case at present, while the masses are obliged to go without the most elementary public and social needs of theirs being satisfied for want of public funds, as surely is the case for the non-establishment of compulsory free elementary education or for the non-provision of drinking water facilities or for not fighting malaria, venerials etc., is little better than a waste. But its utility, when transferred to and spent by the State on public utilities alone becomes immensely greater than its nominal value. Such a policy of transferring money from the rich whose marginal utility for money grows extremely and progressively smaller and smaller to the State, whose marginal utility even in India is certainly very much higher and through it, eventually to the masses whose

value for money is almost immeasurable, is highly commendable, if only it is adopted.

State's Injustice

Unfortunately the need for such a policy, or anything approaching to any resemblance to it is not recognised by the State in India. On the other hand while as much as 13.1% of the total national income is taken as taxes by the various Provincial Governments and the Central Government, only 6.3% (1394 lakhs) of the Rs. 21,714 lakhs of annual income of the 5,64,434 income-tax payees is demanded as income and super taxes, thus taking more from those whose value for money is extremely high and less from those whose marginal utility is extremely low. What is even worse is that the marginal utility of money for the State is immensely less than that of the masses but a little more than that of the richer classes. Yet this injustice is persisted in by our state.

It is poor consolation for the masses to be told by the Taxation Enquiry Committee that the intensity of this injustice has been decreasing during the last generation.

The following table shows the place of various Taxes in the total Tax Economy:

Head of Tax	1883–84	1893–94	1903–04	1913–14	1923–24
	%	%	%	%	%
Land Revenue ...	53.15	46.71	42.76	35.42	20.75
Customs ...	2.98	3.27	9.21	12.99	24.30
Excise ...	25.07	26.57	24.97	22.92	21.67
Local Taxation ...	8.01	10.53	10.75	14.08	21.70

Head of Tax	1883-84	1893-94	1903-04	1913-14	1923-24
Total indirect Taxes ...	% 89.21	% 87.08	% 67.69	% 85.41	% 88.42
Income Tax ...	1.32	3.39	2.92	3.52	12.30
Transations, fees, and Probate duties ...	9.47	9.59	9.39	11.07	9.18
Total Direct Taxes ...	10.79	12.98	12.31	14.39	21.48

Thus over a period of 40 years, the proportion of the tax-burden borne by the poor has gone down from 89.21% to 78.42% or about 10% less since 1883—84, although their contributions in terms of crores of rupees have gone up enormously. Indeed since 1921—22 this discrepancy, existing in the relative tax burdens borne by the poor and rich, has been unconscionably increased. For instance, the Central Government collects Rs. 15.67 lakhs through direct taxes in 1936—37 against Rs, 21.89 lakhs collected in 1921—22, whereas the respective figures for indirect taxes are customs Rs. 54.82, Salt Rs. 8.75 lakhs in 1936—37 as against Rs. 34.41 and Rs. 6.34 lakhs in 1921—22. Thus while the taxes paid in a year by the rich have decreased by Rs. 622 lakhs, those paid by the poor have increased by Rs. 2041 lakhs during these last 15 years. Even if we take the Provincial Government more than 95% of whose income is derived from the poorer classes, their revenues have gone up from Rs. 7885 lakhs in 1923—34 to Rs. 84.35 in 1932—33 i.e., an increase of Rs. 550 lakhs almost all of which was paid by the poor and the peasantry.

A Sedulous Redistribution of Wealth

To add to this, the income of the District and Local Boards which is paid by the peasants has also gone up from Rs. 1214 lakhs in 1923—24 to Rs. 1551 lakhs in 1932—33, an increase of Rs. 337 lakhs. Thus there has been a sedulous re-distribution of wealth in this country and that has taken an entirely opposite direction to that of the rest of the world. Economists in the West have been advocating the manipulation of the taxation system in such a way as to progressively lessen the inequality in the distribution of incomes, while our State has been making our engine of taxation more and more rigorous, continuously impoverishing the Peasants and workers for the benefit of the State employees and the rich.

The following table indicates how unequally are the tax-burdens distributed in all the countries with special malignity in our country.

Kind of Tax	India 1923-24	England 1922-23	Italy 1923-24	Japan ...	Australia ...
	%	%	%	%	%
Land Tax ...	20.75	0.30	20.42	5.08	4.66
Consumption Taxes ...	46.97	28.04	32.15	20.97	36.78
Local Taxation ...	11.70	22.51	13.63	37.78	13.91
Total Direct Taxation.	78.42	50.85	66.50	72.83	55.35
Incometax ...	12.30	38.11	20.42	19.38	35.05
Transactions & fees ...	9.03	5.35	11.65	7.04	5.33
Death Duties ...	0.25	5.69	1.43	0.75	4.27

Every year sees a further increase in the total tax-burden imposed upon the poor and a decrease in that borne by the rich. For instance, Sir Malcolm Haily in 1921—22 imposed Rs. 19 crores of additional taxation, out of which only Rs. 3 crores was derived through increases on income-tax whereas customs (8 crores) Railway goods traffic (5½ crores) Posts (2¼ crores) which had to be mostly borne by the masses accounted for Rs. 16 crores. He had again to make up a deficit of Rs. 31¾ crores in his 1922—23 budget out of which he tried to realise Rs. 29 crores from additional taxation which included only a burden of Rs. 2¼ crores of income and super taxes contributed by the rich. Again the 1923—24 budget provided for an additional income of Rs. 4¼ crores from salt to meet an expected deficit of Rs. 4.26 crores. Thus during the three disastrous deficit years of 1921—24, the rich had to pay only Rs. 5¼ crores additional tax whereas the poor were made to pay Rs. 40 crores atleast, even if we put Rs. 7¼ crores to the credit of the richer classes as their contribution to the import duties on luxuries etc.

But during the two surplus years of 1924—25 and 25—26, the surpluses amounted to Rs. 3.36 and Rs. 2½ crores which were disposed of by the reduction of salt tax from Rs. 2-8-0 to Rs. 2-0-0 per maund and reduction of Provincial contributions. In 1926-27 there was a surplus of Rs. 3.05 crores, which was utilised to reduce Provincial contributions and to abolish the cotton Excise duty, which can be taken to lighten the burden of taxes upon the masses and the Rs. 3.64 crore surplus of 1927-28 and Rs. 2.63 crores surplus of 1928—29 were also utilised to reduce and finally abolish the Provincial contributions. The budget of 1929—30 showed a

deficit of Rs. 94 lakhs which was met from out of the Revenue Reserve Fund.

The Poor had to Bear the Brunt

The 1930—31 budget imposed Rs. 410 lakhs of new taxation, out of which only Rs. 70 lakhs was derived from additions to income and super taxes. Sir George Schuster imposed salary cuts in 1931—32 amounting to a crore of rupees per annum, and increased the income-tax burdens by five crores as against an increase in customs duties yielding ten crores more to meet the emergency caused by the economic depression. Thus in a period of 12 years, mostly the poor have had to bear continually rising burdens of taxation.

The Rich Unaffected by the Depression

It is a well known fact that the real incomes of the middle classes and the rich have been more than doubled during this depression owing to the precipitious fall in general level of prices. What with the continuous and growing protection afforded to the manufacturing industries of the country and what with the unabated import trade of the country, thanks to the Ottawa Pact and the growing State expenditure upon its staffs and services, the economic condition of the urban and non-agricultural classes has mostly remained unaffected by the economic depression of the last decade. For instance there were only 3,81,000 whose incomes were liable to pay income-tax in 1919—20 *i.e.* soon after war, when indeed the incomes of the middle classes and the rich were exceptionally swollen as against 564,434 income-tax assesses in 1933 March. That this increase in the prosperity of these

classes is fairly general is indicated by the fact that as against 2,37,000 people in 1919—20 whose incomes were between Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000 per annum, there were in 1933 March as many as 271, 171. Yet these classes, it is, whose contribution, in the shape of income and super taxes has gone down from Rs. 21.89 lakhs in 1921—22 to Rs. 15.67 lakhs in 1936-37 and even during the last two years, the sur-charges etc. amounting to nearly two crores per annum were reduced, whereas only a non-recurring grant of two crores was made to the rural classes.

On the other hand the land revenue collections have been increased from Rs. 3110 lakhs in 1913-14 to Rs 3299 lakhs by 1931-32. It is true, they were decreased to Rs. 30,86 lakhs owing to the most extreme economic depression, but to-day's prices of agricultural commodities are much lower than what they were in 1913-14. The land revenue due to irrigation which is usually known as water-rate was only Rs. 231 lakhs in 1912-13 but was increased to Rs. 286 lakhs by 1921-22 the first year of Mont-Ford Reforms and has gone on increasing upto 1932—33 when it amounted to Rs. 475 lakhs. The Excise revenue, most of which is also contributed by the peasants and workers has also gone up from Rs. 1719 lakhs in 1921—22 to Rs. 20,41 by 1929—30 and the effects of the economic depression upon these classes have been reflected by the fall in the excise revenue to Rs. 1489 lakhs by 1932—33. The stamp revenue, most of which also is met by the agriculturists has shot up from Rs. 10,88 lakhs in 1921—22 to Rs. 14,12 lakhs in 1929—30 *i.e.* on the eve of the intensification of the depression but has had to decrease to Rs. 1292 lakhs by 1931—32.

Thus the Provincial Governments have been hard put to it, since 1921—22 to raise their incomes from every possible avenue of taxation, in order to pay for their ever increasing and costly public services. The Provincial Ministers have had to create and foster their developmental services, which till 1921—22 either did not exist or were not developed in the provinces. This new and growing expenditure of Provincial Governments could be met only by raising the taxation which mostly falls upon the poor and the peasantry.

The Future

What has the future in store for the peasants and workers, in so far as the budgettary policy of the State is concerned. The Federation will be faced with fresh liabilities and may come to be in need of either fresh taxation or subsidies from the provinces. In so far as fresh taxation is concerned, we can take it that more than 80% of it will be levied upon the masses either in the shape of revenue impostes on the customs duties or mere protective duties or an increase in salt tax or a rise in Railway rate and fares or postal rates. If however a part of the deficit is met from provincial subsidies, 90% of it must eventually be derived from the masses.

The Provincial ministries flattered, as they will naturally be by their new exercise of additional powers over most of the administration, will be anxious not only to continue the present liabilities of the Provincial Governments but also to launch upon many new and necessarily costly developmental and public-utility service, which will be forced upon them more aud more insistently by the newly enfranchised masses. All this

means much additional expenditure. Naturally the ministers cannot think of reducing their tax-revenues either from land revenue or excise stamps and transactions or terminal or tobacco or entertainment taxes. Indeed they will be hard put to it to find fresh sources of revenue as they are precluded from lowering the salaries of not only the civilians but also those of the Provincial services recruited upto 1926.

New Sources of Revenue

What may be the new sources of Provincial and Central revenues? The Simon Commission as well as the Indian Taxation Committe have recommended and the Joint Parliamentary Committe of 1934 endorsed the levy of death duties and a tax on incomes from land *i.e.*, the revenues of Zamindars and Talukdars. By tightening up the collection of income tax, by stopping all the loopholes by which capital invested abroad but owned by those living in India and also that invested in India but put into the companies incorporated in England and by taxing the revenues derived by foreign shipping and other concerns which make their profits in India, our State may succeed in augmenting its revenues from income tax by another Rs. 800 lakhs but the masses have to force the rich even to agree to this.

But are these taxes likely to be imposed? There is only a very remote chance, since the Zamindars who are extremely conscious of their political opportunities and who have learnt their special advantages in the present day costly elections will leave no stone unturned to prevent any such taxes being imposed upon them. In fact the Bengal, U. P. and Bombay Governments have already led the way by imposing various taxes upon the

masses such as terminal tax, tobacco tax, entertainment tax and Madras Government was prevented from imposing a tobacco tax only by the most strenuous agitation of the peasants.

Thus unless the peasants and workers girdle their loins as tightly as possible and make a continuous dead set against any further imposition of taxation upon them, there is every likelihood of the present disequilibrium of the distribution of tax-burdens being increased to their detriment and slow but sure destruction.

A Suicidal Crime

To continue to pay more than 25% of their hard-earned and dwindling annual income towards the maintanance of the state, which mostly exists to safeguard the properties and previleges of the rich and the landed and whose arms of law and order daily strengthen the vested interests in their successful class struggle against the masses in their daily life for defrauding the latter of their legitimate fruits of labour as against the 6% contribution of their incomes by the rich is nothing short of a suicidal crime. It is the imperative duty, in the interests of self-preservation, of the masses to resist this vicious system of taxation and public finance. It behoves them to do all they can to prevent any further taxation from being levied upon them.

Put up a United Fight

How can they prevent any further taxation of their incomes? How can they lower their tax-burdens? They can do so if they organise themselves, enliven and energise their public opinion and prepare their resistance-power against taxation. Hence the imperative necessity

and importance of a careful study of the recent Peasants' struggle in Bardoli, Andhra and Karnatak and U. P. and by now the ancient Champaran. To resist the imposition and collection of taxes, rents and duty must be one of the most important immediate functions of the peasants' movement.

To persuade the rich, who have to be made to pay twice or thrice as much more as they do, if not more, to agree to accept at least the contemporary English distribution of tax-burdens between different classes is not at all possible, unless the peasants and workers develop their resistance and offensive strength and strategy. Nowhere has it been possible to persuade the rich to burden themselves with taxes through sweet reason. Even in the extra-constitutional minded England, it was the potent fear of a revolution and the practical impossibility for the conservatives and liberals to return back to power on the votes of the masses if they followed the traditional policy of piling up all new tax-burdens upon the masses, that obliged the rich to bow to the inevitable and raise their proportion of contribution to the total tax-burdens.

We may tell them in our legislatures that while the prices of exportable agricultural commodities have gone down from 239 in 1921 to 118 in 1933 *i.e.*, by more than 50% and those of rice and wheat, the two most important and staple commodities have gone down from 355 and 360 to 152 and 151 in the same period *i.e.*, more than 57 and 56.5%, while the total *per capita* tax-burden levied by the State has decreased only from Rs. 5-1-1 in 1921—22 to Rs. 5-0-6. We may say that the real tax-burden borne by the poor is very much more. But hope to make them agree

to shift a portion of that tax-burden on to their own shoulders is to waste one's own time. The one and the only argument that will tend to check, if not, diminish this continuous and disastrous drain of the inadequate resources of the masses into the coffers of the state for the benefit of the few is the organised, self-conscious and purposive strength of the peasants and workers. So in the transitional stage, the peasants and workers can, only at their own peril of pauperisation, neglect their fight against the present system of taxation.

State Enriches the Rich

Little proof is needed to demonstrate that the Rs. 210 crores spent every year by the various Governments in British India daily enriches the rich, while pauperising the poor. The services, in so far as they are manned by Indians are mostly recruited from the middle and higher classes and so more than 80% of their payments are absorbed by those whose annual incomes are above Rs. 1,000. The expenditure upon the socalled developmental services, though increasing since 1921 is not yet very considerable.

We are told that the expenditure on elementary education which mostly benefits the masses has gone up from Rs. 110 lakhs in 1897 to Rs. 230 lakhs in 1912—13 and to 293 lakhs in 1917 *i.e.*, the Gokhale period and to Rs. 783 lakhs by 1932—33. It is true. But we must remember that the State, which receives a large portion of its expenditure upon elementary and college education and Rs. 226 lakhs in 1912—13 and Rs. 790 lakhs in 1932—33 on high school education from educational cesses has spent Rs. 70 lakhs in 1912—13 and Rs. 244 in 1932—33 on high

school education, which mostly benefit the middle and higher classes of people. Thus there has not been any real transference of public revenues to the benefit of the masses and if there was any, it was more towards the higher classes. After all the educational expenditure represents much the most developmental activity and even in this, the masses have not gained at least as much as their contributions to the State would justify. The Public Health and Sanitation Departments of the Provincial Governments are still in their nascent stages and several Provincial Governments have not yet passed their Public Health Acts. Even in this regard, that the Provincial Governments have done less for the rural masses than for the urban middle and higher classes is indicated, by what was done by Madras Government so soon as the Meston-Subsidies to Central Government were stopped.

In 1922—23 the Madras Ministry made an annual grant of Rs. 20 lakhs to the development of medical facilities in the rural areas and it has not been raised even by a pie till to-day. But when additional revenues were available in 1927—28, all the Municipal Hospitals were taken over by Government at a recurring cost of Rs. 40 lakhs per annum, and this in addition to the previous heavy payments towards the urban medical facilities. The Central Government, whose developmental services have been, of late, so much extolled by Lord Wellingdon, has after all increased its expenditure only by Rs. 24 lakhs *i.e.*, from Rs. 212 lakhs in 1921—22 to Rs. 236 lakhs in 1936—37. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that our Indian Governments have not yet realised the necessity for obtaining statistics about the incidence of disease, malaria, maternity complications, unemployment, and under-employment, not to speak of

organising insurance against ill-health, old age, unemployment.

A State of the Rich and for the Rich

Indeed it is the State of the rich for the rich. It exists on our money, it feeds itself from our beggar's bowls but lives for the maintenance, enrichment and fattening of the rich. It is the biggest drone in our society and unless the masses know how to master it and make it disgorge its riches for their benefit, there cannot be any peace of mind to them or prosperity for their class or an assurance of decent future for the country. Hence the crying and indispensable need for the masses, the workers and peasants, to master this State and manage it. That they cannot do, unless they get into politics and learn how to gain the upper hand in our political life.

Appendix to Tax-Burdens

I

The following figures regarding the manner in which national revenues are raised by taxation in some other countries will show how unjust our system is : *

(1) United Kingdom (1931—32)

Taxes on Incomes	% of total tax revenue
Income Tax ...	40
Surtax ...	11
Total ...	51

(2) United States (1930)

Income Tax	% of total tax revenue
Personal ...	31·6
Surtax ...	34·9
Total ...	66·5

* World Chaos by G. D. H. Cole.

(1) United Kingdom (1931—32)

Taxes on Incomes	% of total tax revenue
Taxes on Inheritance	9
Taxes on Goods:	
(1) Customs ...	19
(2) Excise ...	17
Total ...	36
Other Taxes ...	4
	100

(2) United States (1930)

Income Tax	% of total tax revenue
Death Tax ...	1·8
Customs ...	16
	15·5
Total ...	31·5
Other taxes ...	0·2
	100

(3) France

	% of total tax-revenue
Income-Tax ...	21 %
Securities Tax ...	7·5
Other Property Taxes ...	2
Inheritance Tax ...	4·25
	34·75
Business Turnover Tax ...	19
Customs ...	5.75
Excise etc. ...	25
	49.75
Registration, Stamps and Transfers ...	14
Other Taxes ...	1.5
Total ...	100

(4) Germany

	% of total tax-revenue
Income-Tax ...	33·4 %
Corporation Tax ...	6.3
Other Property Taxes ...	6.0
Inheritance tax ...	1.1
	46.8
Sales Tax ...	12.1
Customs ...	12.1
Excise etc. ...	18.2
	42.4
Other Taxes ...	10.8
	100

II

Our tax-burdens have gone on increasing, while the total income of our agriculturists have been decreasing :*

VALUE OF PRINCIPAL CROPS IN EACH PROVINCE

Province	Value in lakhs 1928—29	Value in lakhs 1933—34	Percentage decrease
	Rs.	Rs.	
Madras ...	1,80,78	83,17	—54·0
Bombay ...	1,20,52	60,52	—49·8
Bengal ...	2,32,59	95,56	—58·9
U. P. ...	1,40,52	85,65	—39·0
Punjab ...	76,78	40,11	—47·8
Burma ...	63,38	23,26	—63.3
Bihar and Orissa ...	1,37,86	55,34	—59·9
C. P. ...	68,77	30,33	—55·9
Total ...	10,21,20	4,73,94	—53·6

III

The following table indicates how the State revenue and expenditure and public debt have not decreased since 1921:

Year		Revenue	Expenditure	Public Debt Outstanding	
		all in lakhs of Rupees		In India Rs.	In England in £ (1000)
1921—22	Central ...	115,21	1,42,86	3,39,13	205,128
	Provincial ...	70,43	79,16	91,47	
1926—27	Central ...	1,31,65	1,31.65	4,17,93	342,199
	Provincial ...	86,43	90,17	16,38	
1932—33	Central ...	125,43	123,88	5,08,46	378.116
	Provincial ...	84,34	85,66	14,80	

* Review of Trade 1934—35.

IV

The following is the General Statement of the Revenues of Central and Provincial Governments :

Principal Heads of Revenue	1921—22		1932—33	
	Central	Provincial	Central	Provincial
	in Rs. (1000)			
Customs ...	34,40,98		46,43,66	
Taxes on Income ...	18,74,13	3,43,41	17,97,40	2,91
Salt ...	6,34,38		10,07,36	
Opium ...	3,07,25		89,86	
Land Revenue ...	33,18	34,38,99	17,86	30,67,94
Excise ...	53,80	16,64,82	41,51	14,47,59
Stamps ...	24,61	10,63,46	32,75	12,59,22
Forests ...	19,69	5,63,60	18,03	3,58,49
Registration ...	1,71	1,11,85	1,12	1,12,37
Tributes from Indian Statse ...	87,18		73,57	
Scheduled Taxes ...				41,19
Total ...	64,76,91	71,86,13	82,74,65	63,04,64

V

The following is the General Statement of the Expenditure of the Central and Provincial Governments in India (in thousands of Rupees.)

Heads of Expenditure	1921—22		1932—33	
	Central	Provincial	Central	Provincial
General Civil Administration ...	1,92,59	8,40,64	1,53,35	11,08,03
Audit ...	70,46		93,47	
Administration of Justice.	10.34	4,99,26	8,78	5,12,82

Heads of Expenditure	1921—22		1932—33	
	Central	Provincial	Central	Provincial
Jails and Convict Settlement ...	45,16	2,25,13	25,33	2,25,57
Police ...	87,55	11,96,48	55,35	12,33,70
Ports and Pilotage ...	24.00	27,71	22,23	16,53
Light Houses and light Ships ...			9,81	
Eccleciastical ...	30,50		28,72	
Political ...	2,25,62		1,45,09	
Frontier Watch and Ward ...			2,17,95	
Scientific Depts. ...	1,11,86	7,36	66,53	4.71
Education ...	31,43	8,68,80	35,16	11,47,14
Medical ...	30,64		22,08	3,53.99
Public Health ...	16,40	1,41,47	13,21	1,45,54
Agriculture ...	20,74	1.77,21	30,26	2,12,45
Industries ...	1,28	68,88	1,95	65,42
Aviation ...	88		9,74	
Misellaneous depts. ...	41,32	20,30	20,21	70,95
Indian Stores ...			9,57	
Total ...	9.40,80	43,52,85	9,68,80	50,96,86
Military ...	77,87,98			50,37,50

VI

Land Revenue and Irrigation Collections

	1921—22		1929—30		1932—33	
	L. R. only	Irrigation Charges	L. R. only	Irrigation Charges	L. R. only	Irrigation Charges
Central Government ...	33,18,286	1,98,460	38,16,915	2,63,080	17,85,707	92,987
Provinces ...	34,38,98,987	3,47,72,559	33,08,93,711	4,76,89,429	30,67,94,215	4,74,87,977
Total Central and Provincial ...	34,72,17,273	3,49,71,019	33,47,10,626	4,79,52,509	30,85,79,922	4,74,80,964

So the whole of this disastrous economic depression has served to bring down the burden of land revenue and irrigation imposts only by a little more than 3 crores or 10%. Such is the responsive nature of our Government.

SEVEN PIES A DAY

Per Capita Income of a Peasant

To work out the *per capita* income of a peasant is not an easy task. The various classes of non-agricultural people residing in the country have to be excluded. The vast incomes of Rs. 42,44 lakhs of landlords cannot be so easily isolated or estimated. The respective incomes of landed and landless peasants and agricultural workers and artisans cannot be disinguished what is earned by agriculturists, by their seasonal migrations to towns is hard to be estimated. Yet an attempt has to be made to arrive at this figure, if only to give a statistical measurement to the other wise undeniably growing poverty of the agricultural classes and their increasing need for organised self-expressive for protection and progress.

To start with their income, we have to take it that except what has to be paid by the rural masses for the state, the landlords, merchants in towns and agricultural implements and what is absorbed by European and urban planters and exporters all the income derived from agricultural commodities is available for them. The payments made by peasants to agricultural labour is only a transference of income from one section to another and the same thing applies to village artisans. There are very few rural industries worth speaking about. But the salaries received by Government officials in villages are taken into consideration. Little, if any, is spent by the landlords on the maintenance of villagers, apart from the salaries earned by their petty officials. Earnings realised in transporting commodities to towns,

are an addition but the losses incurred by peasants in marketing their produce are a liability. Similar considerations are weighed one against the other and only then the following estimates are made :—

	Rs.
The value of the Principal agricultural commodities in 1934—35 ...	4,73,94,00,000
(Review of trade) ...	
All other commodities (50%) at best ...	2,36,97,00,000
Total ...	7,10,91,00,000
Deductions due to vicissitudes of seasons & marketing merchants' profits as per Madras Land Revenue Rules.	1,77,72,75,000
	5,33,18,25,000
Plus income from merchants through carting etc:—half as much as was lost in merchants' profits and peasants income from work done in towns ...	88,86,37,500
Contribution of Zamindars, through their staffs, etc. dependents (20% of their collections) ...	12,26,85,000
Railways ...	4,00,00,000
From Government (Simon Report) ...	94,80,000
	6,39,26,27,500

But this valuation of agricultural commodities includes Rs. 5387 lakhs of income derived from the exports of Tea (Rs. 2,013 lakhs), Rubber (67 lakhs), Coffee (73 lakhs), and Jute (3234 lakhs), in the production of

which Europeans, great urban magnates are mostly interested and at least 50% (Rs. 26935 lakhs) of it is absorbed by them and is so lost for the agricultural classes who pay the land revenue from out of the other 50%. We therefore get a total gross income of Rs. 61,233 lakhs for a rural population of 2418 lakhs, which gives us a per capita income of Rs. 29·4 per annum. We have to deduct from this Rs. 10,800 lakhs at 12% interest on rural indebtedness (it certainly is much more, since the Banking Enquiry Committee did not account for the debts of the workers and the rate of interest is often more than 12%). *We thus get a gross income of Rs. 50,433 lakhs or a per capita income of about Rs. 20·8 free of interest on debts. It is out of this that our peasant has to pay his taxes, rents and duties and maintain himself throughout the year.*

DEDUCTIONS

The peasants have to pay land revenue to an extent of Rs. 18,96,43,000 and the Peishcush paid by the landlords who in their own turn collect rents from their tenants amounts to Rs. 18,90,14051. But this Rs. 37,86,57.000 derived by Government does not by any means indicate the total burden of land revenue on the peasants. Our landlords pay their Peishcush under two systems of settlement, one permanent and another temporary. The former is mostly in vogue in parts of Madras, Orissa, Bengal and the latter in thePunjab, C.P.,U.P., and Assam. The zamindars under permanent settlement, who pay a peishcush of Rs. 4,63,81,517 do invariably collect as rent at least 4 times as much from their tenants (indeed in most cases their exactions are much more) *i.e.*, Rs. 18,55,26,068. Those under temporary settlements

who pay to the state Rs. 14,26,33,000 succeed in extracting as rent at least three times as much from their tenants *i.e.* Rs. 42,78,99,000 (Agricultural statistics 1932—33). So real payments made by tenants amount to Rs. 61,34,25,000 and the total land revenue and rent burden upon peasants all over the country come to Rs. 80,30,68,000 or nearly Rs. 4 per head per annum of the 2419 lakhs of the rural classes.

Out of the Rs. 6275 lakhs paid in the shape of customs duties and salt tax, the contribution made by the rural masses comes to at least Rs. 4706.25 lakhs.

So the contribution made by the agriculturist towards public revenues is as follows :—

		Rs.
L. R. collections	...	80,30,68,000
Customs and salt duties	...	47,06,25,000
Excise' on intoxicants alone of agricultural labour	...	
(Taxation committee) Peasants	...	9,68,00,000
Chow-ki-dari & capitation taxes	...	2,48,00,000
Transactions & fees (50% of the total).		4,05,00,000
Local cesses : (Statistical Abstract 1932—33)	...	15,51,06,843
Total Tax-burden :—	...	168,76,99,843
Interest on Rural Indebtedness at 10% since the Banking Enquiry committee estimated the debt at 900 crores	...	108,00,00,000
		276,76,99,843

Thus we get a total gross annual income of Rs. 50433 lakhs for all agricultural classes if provision

is made only for the payment of interest (Rs. 108 crores at 12%) on rural indebtedness and only Rs. 33556 lakhs if tax-burdens are also allowed for. This gives us a per capita income of Rs. 20.8 in one case and Rs. 13.9 in the other.

One may wonder why all this trouble shall be taken to work out through such a labyrinth of statistics and assumptions to measure the poverty of the Indian peasant, when everywhere evidence is forthcoming in abundance to prove to the hilt, the shape of famished workers, under-fed peasants, and starvation stalking the country-side. But neither the Government nor our experts wish to believe their eyes and whisperings of their hearings. They want an economic measurement of the economic conditions. Hence the refusal of Government to accept the existence of famine in any area unless workers are prepared to flock to their Test works to work there in red hot sun for ten hours a day on stone breaking for *nine pies each.* The Government boasts of its success in fighting famines and deaths on a large scale from starvation but it ignores the significance of the death of ten millions in a fortnight due to influenza in those hectic days of war.

Why This Statistical Demonstration?

It is to bring home even to the most hard hearted bureaucrat and tyrant the simple fact of the utter misery of our peasants that this statistical demonstration is made. Its upshot, *i.e.*, 11 pies per day per head when interest alone is paid and 7·0 pies per day per head when taxes also are paid, substantiates what Mahatma Gandhi has said on opening the Village Industries Fair at Lucknow. He said that "the teeming rural millions

are dying of poverty." Were it otherwise, their per capita income, excluding taxes which is only 7·0 (seven pies per day cannot be lower than the allowance made by Madras Jails for the maintenance of a 'c' class convict (*i.e.* 18 pies per day). It is a wonder why so few people alone seek shelter in the comparatively better provided for jails. It certainly speaks volumes of the immeasurable, though silent self-respect and suffering of our masses.

The above calculations are borne out by other testimony. In my daily perambulations, not wholly political through our villages during the last 13 years, I have heard again and again the peasants and workers confessing their inability to have more than one meal a day for half the days in the year.

Dr. C. A. Bently said to the Agricultural Commission in 1926, when surely conditions were better. "A very large proportion of the population do not have enough to eat, although it has not been considered bad enough to call it a famine." Enquiries made in 1923-25 into the rural conditions of Guntur District, one of the most so-called prosperous areas gave Rs. 50 as the per capita income and at the present day prices, it can only be Rs. 20. Thus the secret of Gold Exports is out, our rural masses have been disposing of all their gold, rather than completely starving, to escape the tyranny of the tax-gatherer and the mahajan. For want of a class-conscious agitation, nothing more than spasmodic "Peasant Marches" have indicated the cancer in our countryside.

Appendix I

Distribution of non-cultivating proprietors taking rent in money or kind :

			in (000)
1.	Indians as a whole total earners	...	2,977
	Working dependents	...	280
	Dependent as subsidiary	...	893
			5,150
2.	Provinces as a whole total earners	...	2,273
	Working dependents	...	127
	Subsidiary dependents	...	729
			3,129
3.	Assam-Principally	...	22
	Working dependents	...	1
	Subsidiary „	...	18
			41
4.	Bengal Principally	...	616
	Working dependents	...	12
	Subsidiary „	...	155
			783
5.	Bihar and Orissa: Principally	...	106
	Working dependents	...	2
	Subsidiary „	...	50
			158

6.	Bombay Principally	...	172
	Working dependents	...	8
	Subsidiary „	...	32
			212
7.	C. P. & Berar, Principally	...	52
	Working dependent	...	1
	Subsidiary „	...	23
			76
8.	Madras Principally	...	533
	Working dependents	...	28
	Subsidiary „	...	56
			617
9.	N. W. F. P. Principally	...	36
	Working dependents	...	4
	Subsidiary „	...	12
			52
10.	Punjab Principally	...	247
	Working dependents	...	24
	Subsidiary „	...	121
			392
11.	U. Pr. Agra. Principally	...	409
	Working dependents	...	40
	Subsidiary „	...	241
			690

APPENDIX II

PER CAPITA INCOME OF DIFFERENT NATIONALS

United Kingdom	...	(1924)	435	dollars
United States	...	(1927)	652	,,
Germany	...	(1928)	231	,,
France	...	(1927)	218	,,
Italy	...	(1925)	140	,,
Belgium	...	(1926)	223	,,
India (Agrl.)	...	(1936)	5	,,

PEASANTS AND WORKERS

THEIR MINIMUM DEMANDS

For the first time representatives of Peasants and Workers met on the 28th April 1935 to evolve a Joint Programme of work and formulate a combined chart of their minimum demands. Prof. Ranga is more often than once misunderstood to be purely a Peasants' man and that he never thinks in terms of agricultural labour. It may interest his critics to know that Prof. Ranga's first activity after his return from the continent was the organisation of Agricultural labour. The following demands formulated by him and approved by the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers are a further proof of his anxiety for the agricultural workers.

Apart from this these demands go to show what actually are the needs of the modern Indian Peasant. It was only on the basis of these demands the All-India Kisan Congress formulated a General Chart of Minimum Demands of the Indian peasantry as a whole.

Representatives of Peasants and Workers' Associations in this presidency, met on April 28th under the auspices of the Peasants' Protection Committee, when the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers' Associations was formed with Mr. K. Nageswara Rao Pantulu, M. L. A., President, and Prof. N. G. Ranga, M. L. A., General Secretary.

AIMS AND OBJECTS

The Federation, will work for the economic and political advancement of all peasants and agricultural

workers. It will seek to bring about better exploitation of land and greater productivity of agriculture and a higher standard of living of peasants and workers in a "progressive collectivisation of agriculture." For this purpose, it will aim at the exploitation of the unoccupied but cultivable waste lands of Government by co-operative societies of peasants and workers. It will be the aim of this Federation to bring about co-operation between the peasants and the agricultural workers by seeking to settle their mutual economic relations by the establishment by a suitable conciliation machinery. It will also strive for the abolition of all those systems of land revenue other than the ryotwari so that the State and Peasants may have direct dealings with each other without any intermediaries.

The Federation will immediately make efforts to bring about legislation to reduce the burden of agricultural indebtedness, and press for other measures necessary to protect the indebted peasants. The Federation would urge the grant of lands only to co-operative societies of peasants and workers without the right of alienation, the development of cottage industries and the ruralisation of industrial development, reduction of the burden of indirect taxation imposed by Provincial and Central Governments, reduction of the land revenue and other taxes upon peasants. It will take all steps to raise the general level of agricultural prices and the standard of living of the workers and peasants and safeguard the interests of peasants and workers in the coming elections and for this purpose seek to co-operate with the Indian National Congress.

THE DEMANDS

General:

(1) Peasants and workers stand for unicameral legislatures only and for the ultimate abolition of Zamindars and all other intermediary institutions between the peasants and the Government.

(2) Zamindars ought not to be permitted to stand for general constituencies so long as they wish to have any reservation of seats.

(3) The Peasants' Unions in Zamindari or Zamin or Talukdari areas and also in other places ought to be statutorily recognised by Zamindars Government, and others concerned.

(4) There must be established a Political Fund for workers and peasants to finance their electioneering campaigns for Local Boards and Provincial and Central Legislatures.

(5) Only a minimum and uniform and standard rate of assessment shall be charged upon all lands, with a much lower water rate than what obtains at present on wet lands.

(6) A separate Irrigation and Industrial Development Budget must be instituted in every Province to utilise all the profits from irrigation works whether productive or unproductive for further development of such works in famine-ridden and other areas and for the extension of hydro-electric schemes to rural areas.

(7) To reorganise the Tariff Board so as to make it really representative of the Legislature and constitute it as a permanent tribunal to be able to decide whether and how long any particular industry required or does not require protection.

(8) To so redistribute the burden of taxation, provincial and central, jointly or variously, as to impose at least 75% of the tax burden upon the richer classes whether Zamindars, Sahukars or others whose annual income is more than Rs. 10,000 per family.

(9) To institute and impose immediately a progressive income tax upon all net incomes whether derived by Zamindars or others from land above a minimum of Rs. 2,000.

(10) To lower the freights upon the transport of agricultural commodities for the internal trade.

(11) To re-orientalise the educational policy so as to spend 75% of the educational grant upon the educational and occupational advancement and enlightenment of the youth and adult of workers and peasants.

(12) An Irrigation Law must be passed in order to regulate the rights of Government and peasants and restrict the rights of Zamindars over irrigation resources in Zamindari areas.

(13) The Inamdari Peasants ought to be granted permanent occupancy rights over Inam lands.

Rural Indebtedness

Old Debts:

1. To pass suitable legislation through the Central or Provincial Legislatures to achieve the following results:

(*a*) To cancel that portion of the accured interest which is the result of a rate of interest higher than 5% upon all old debts.

(*b*) To scale down the burden of the total indebtedness of workers and peasants in proportion to the fall in prices since 1929.

(*c*) To settle as far as possible with the consent of both parties lands and other properties in settlement of debts thus scaled down.

(*d*) Wherever either party is unwilling to accept such a settlement, to arrange repayment of debts by a large number of equal annual instalments (not less than 40) either directly by the peasants or indirectly by Government, which in turn has to recover the sums from the peasants.

FRESH CREDIT FOR PEASANTS

2. (*a*) All India (if possible) or Provincial (at any cost) legislation is needed to regulate the money-lending business so as to protect the peasants and workers from the clutches of the Sahukars.

(*b*) Rate of interest ought not to be more than 6% on all rural debts.

(*c*) A special rural insolvency law to be passed to enable the masses to get free from the entanglements of unbearable debts.

(*d*) Imprisonment for debts including arrears of land revenue shall be abolished altogether.

(*e*) The lands of peasants upto an extent of 10 acres of wet land or 20 acres of dry land or 5 acres of wet and 10 acres of dry land for each peasant and the agricultural stock needed therefor and the milching cattle

needed for a family of five, in addition to the present unattachable properties, ought to be declared unattachable for the recovery of debts. This demand seeks to place peasants in about the same position vis-a-vis the Sahukars, as salaried employees.

3. (*a*) The present unlimited liability of the rural co-operative credit societies ought to be conditioned.

(*b*) The power of the primary co-operative credit societies to charge penal rates of interest on arrears ought to be restricted.

(*c*) The rate of interest charged for co-operative credit ought not to be higher than 6%.

(*d*) Taccavi loans ought to be distributed through co-operative societies on the advice of Peasants' Unions, at 4% interestre payable on 40 equal annual instalments.

(*e*) The Land Mortgage Banks have to be started all over the presidency to cover all the villages and that credit must be distributed not only to liquidate old debts but also to effect agricultural improvements.

(*f*) Land mortgage credit must be repayable only in 40 equal annual instalments at a rate of interest not higher than 6%.

Sub-Tenants:

1. Suitable legislation has to be undertaken to see that,

(*a*) interests of sub-tenants of Zamindars, Jenmis, Kanamdars, Mirasidars, Zamin and other Ryots are safeguarded.

(*b*) Land Courts, which have to be established to protect the Zamin Ryots, have also to work out schedules of costs of cultivation in every District for both wet and dry lands and garden crops and settle the limits within which the tenants and land owners can fix their respective shares of the net income by mutual bargaining. These Land Courts must have the right to enforce such agreements duly registered.

2. No tenant can be evicted from the land within the first ten years unless he, of his own accord, wishes to give it up or has been proved to have fallen into arrears of rent for two consecutive years.

ZAMIN RYOTS

1. All the land available for cultivation in the Zamindari or Talukdari or including Home Farms, Lankas, Padugai lands, Banzars, Janmis lands, ought to be declared 'ryoti' and which, when occupied, must confer the right of permanency of tenure to the peasants concerned and no premiums ought to be charged upon any such or other Zamin lands.

2. (*a*) The Zamindari rates of assessment ought to be lowered and at least to the level of the Government rates in the neighbourhood, without any prejudice to any lower rates, if and where prevailing in the Zamin areas and such rates must be permanent.

(*b*) Survey and settlement of rates must be undertaken in every estate without any prejudice to greater blocks of land paying smaller sums.

3. Remission of assessment must be granted in all Zamin areas according to the rules of the Board of Revenue.

4. A Central Zamindari Irrigation (sources, tanks, drainage, etc.) Protection Fund with various feeder funds in all the Zamindaries has to be established. The immediate reconstruction or repair of all tanks, reservoirs anicutts, etc., has to be undertaken. A five or ten year plan of improvement of the irrigation resources ought to be prepared and carried out.

5. Every Zamindari has to make suitable and adequate contributions to such funds.

6. The right of the Zamindar to,

(*a*) summarily attach the properties of the peasants for arrears of kist must be abolished.

(*b*) The peasants who have purchased zamin ryots' lands one year after a decree has been obtained for arrears of land revenue ought to be freed from the encumbrance of the decreed arrears due from the outgoing owners.

7. At the time of registering the sale-deeds, forms of transfer of parties should be signed by both parties which should be transmitted by the Sub-Registrar to the Zamindar who should immediately effect the transfers in his accounts and issue a fresh pattah to the purchaser without any fee and if the Zamindar does not so issue a fresh pattah within three months, the purchaser and seller shall become free from all other arrears of revenue.

8. Whenever a Zamindar is himself the bidder for the 'Ryoti' land auctioned for the recovery of arrears

of kist, the land should not be knocked down for any price lower than that prevailing in the neighbourhood for similar lands.

9. There shall be established special Iterinary Land Courts to settle the disputes between Zamindars, Janmis on one side and tenants on the other and also between landowners and their sub-tenants all over the presidency.

10. The customary rights of the peasants and workers to secure the forest produce must be safeguarded and the Zamindari forests have to be handed over to the Village Panchayats of the neighbouring villages on the same terms and in the same way and through the same Revenue Agency as obtained in Government areas for Forest Panchayats.

11. All communal lands, howsoever originated, have to be placed under the authority of the Local Boards and an anna per rupee out of the Land Revenue Demand or the Zamindari must be given to the Local Authority for Village Development purposes.

12. The present ownership of the Zamindars over natural and mineral resources over or within the Zamindari lands must be vested only in the state.

Agricultural Workers' Demands

A (1) Compulsory Labour Exchanges have to be established by Government to equalise and regulate the demands for labour in different agricultural seasons and areas.

(2) Decasualisation Schemes have to be attached to the Labour Exchanges to minimise the unnecessary reserves of labour in transport,

shipping, road-making, rice-hulling, ground-nut shelling and other employments.

(3) To extend the Factory Act, Workmens' Compensation Act, Payment of Wages Act to agricultural workers also, wherever possible and with suitable alterations.

(4) To establish unemployment insurance, sickness and health insurance.

(5) To undertake a national health and housing programme and enable every worker to enjoy minimum housing accommodation.

(6) To declare unlawful the various methods of lending credit to workers which result in a rate of interest higher than 6%.

(7) To extend every Convention of the League of Nations with suitable alterations, which has been extended to industrial labour.

(8) While opposing the principle of reservation of seats for any class of people, we demand for agricultural workers and peasants atleast twice as many seats as are granted to industrial labour.

Trade Boards

B (1) Trade Boards have to be statutorily established for every District, representing equally the peasants and workers with an appointed Member (a District Judge nominated by Government) as President, to fix minimum wage-rate (time and piece-work rates) for different kinds of agricultural and allied operations.

(2) Similarly wage conditions in such cottage industries as hand-loom weaving, utensil manufacturing, beedi and cigar making have to be regulated by Trade Boards.

(3) Village officers, presidents and members of Panchayat Boards and Panchayat Courts and peasants and workers Union have to be availed of in order to enforce the decisions of the Trade.

C (1) All the unoccupied but cultivable lands of Government and similar lands and the home farms of Zamindars, Talukdars and Zamins over and above 200 acres of wet land or 500 acres of dry land must be reserved for the agricultural workers and small peasants and progressive process of distributing these lands among landless workers peasants having less than 5 acres of dry land or $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of wet land collectively and through their co-operative agricultural societies, without any individual right of alienation, must be started.

(2) To thus enable workers and peasants to settle collectively on such lands, Government has,

(*a*) To undertake anti-malarial campaign and to do everything to make those lands fit for cultivation.

(*b*) To exempt such societies from the payment of any assessment for the first ten years.

(*c*) To extend adequate credit facilities to those collective farming societies.

(*d*) To loan the services of competent agricultural demonstrators to such societies so as to manage their affairs for the first ten years or for as long as the members desire.

(*e*) To bear half the cost of housing of agricultural stock needed for the habitation of workers and peasants and their cattle.

PEASANTS AND WORKERS

D (1) Compulsory Arbitration Boards have to be established to settle the wage and other disputes concerning the conditions of employment, which may arise between peasants and workers.

(2) The decisions of such Boards ought to be made enforceable in the Courts.

(3) Any dispute may be referred to the Arbitration Board by either of the parties to the dispute or even by Government.

(4) The Arbitration Board must be constituted with an equal number of the representatives of workers and peasants in addition to a Chairman selected by Government out of a panel, approved of jointly by the Provincial or District Unions, as the case may be or the workers and peasants or other employers in cottage industries.

UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

E (1) Government must inaugurate a systematic Development Scheme in order to provide employment to the unemployed.

(2) Government has to give bounties to organisations like the A. I. S. A., A. I. V. I. A., to enable them to enlarge the scope of their activities and to foster cottage industries with or without the aid of electric or other power so as to provide work for more labour.

F (1) Local Boards as well as Provincial Governments have to give in accepting tenders first preference to organisation of workers which undertake to finish public works.

(2) Similarly the lands of religious, charitable and other public institutions must be leased out at prescribed rates to peasants 'or workers' unions, whichever ask for them.

(3) Even where contractors are availed of to construct any of the puhlic works, the minimum rates of wages ought to be fixed and enforced by the concerned public authority.

PEASANTS' PROBLEMS

How They can be Solved

[*Memorandum submitted to Government by Peasant Group of M. L. A's.:—At this most critical juncture in the history of our country, it is necessary to examine the position of the Indian peasant vis-a-vis the Government and see how the British Policy of State in India has affected our peasants. The present unenviable economic and social conditions of our peasants are the result of that British policy, which will soon become the heritage of the Indian —ruled Provinces. It is therefore necessary for our public as well as Government to realise what the peasants feel about their own present conditions. We have attempted to indicate in the following paragraphs the peasants' point of view in respect of some of their problems.*]

Land Revenue Policy. The Joint Parliamentary Committe of 1919—20 has recommended that the Local Governments should try to place on a statutory basis their land revenue systems. But barring the Punjab and Bombay Governments, other Governments have not at all moved in the matter. It was in 1902 that Lord Curzon has issued the well-known G. O. on Land Revenue Policy and an attempt was then made to ascertain the method and incidence of land revenue assessment in different provinces. It was in that G. O. that Government of India gave an undertaking that under no circumstances would the land revenue be allowed to absorb more than half the net income from land and that any enhancement, if found necessary would be made only on the basis of a corresponding rise in prices of cereals. Although 32 years have since passed and the land revenue imposts have therefore been enhanced

in different provinces to the utter disadvantage of peasants, Government of India has so far refused to review the position. The reports of the Bardoli Blooms-field Enquiry and the two Godavaris-Kistna Enquiry have shown only too clearly that enhancement of land revenue has been imposed none too leniently and fairly. The Bardoli Satyagraha has also indicated the danger underlying this blind-folded apathy of Government of India and the heartless policy followed by various Provincial Governments. The Bombay Government claims half of the rental value and Madras Government half the net income and Punjab Government has introduced sliding scales of land assessment depending upon prices of grain. It is therefore high time that Government of India reviews the whole system of land revenue in different parts of India and develops a uniform, scientific and dependable system in accordance with which the future autonomous Local Governments can regulate their land revenue policy and as a result of which, the incidence of land revenue can be lowered and the periodical resettlements stopped.

The Effects of the Zamindari (Talukdari) system. The woes of the tenants of the Talukdars (known as Zamindars in Bengal, Madras, Bihar and Orissa) are too many and too bitter to be detailed in this monograph.* Yet not one attempt has so far been made by any of the Government Commissions or Committees to enquire into their plight. It is true that in some provinces halting attempts have been made to improve their conditions, by conferring on them permanent tenure, right of alienating the lands, restricting the right of the landlord to enhance the rents etc. But no uniform policy has

*See the Report of the Andhra Zamindari Ryots Enquiry Committee.

been till now developed in regard to the rents to be charged by the landlords with the result that the rents vary considerably from province to province, always to the detriment of the tenant, as contrasted with the peasants directly under Government. There are still being collected many illegal exactions from the helpless peasants in terms of cash, grain, and forced labour and there exists no easily approachable appellate authority, legal or executive to prevent them. It is the duty of Government of India to make an enquiry into the economic conditions of the tenants of landlords who come under the Permanent Settlement, with special regard to the continuous increase in rents, the incidence of rents, the illegal exactions, the forest grievances. It is however necessary to see that in no case is the rent charged by a Zamindar higher than the land tax levied by the Government in the neighbouring District on Province. This enquiry must be made before the Provincial Autonomy is inaugurated and power over land revenue and rent is completely delegated to the representatives of the bicameral legislatures.

Landless Workers and unoccupied lands.—More than one-third of the total arable and cultivable land of this country is still unoccupied and in possession of the State. There are millions of landless peasants and agricultural workers whose hunger for land is unsatiable. Yet no attempt has so far been made by the Central Government to evolve any general and uniform policy of assignment of these lands to these land-hungry people. In certain provinces, as in Madras and Bombay, certain Government lands have been reserved for assignment to depressed classes but no systematic policy is followed by any Provincial Government in assigning them even to the depressed classes.

It is necessary in the interests of the State and the continued self-preservation and prosperity of the peasant-class that such unoccupied but cultivable land ought to be granted only to co-operative societies of landless workers and petty peasants, without the right of alienation and individual ownership, so that the benefits resulting from the cultivation and occupation of such lands can perpetually be enjoyed by the deserving landless peasants and workers. It is the duty of Government of India, in consultation with the Local Governments to adopt at least now the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and make such lands habitable, adapted for profitable cultivation and easily approachable from markets. To rid our vast lands of their marshy swamps, to create, provide adequate drinking water supplies, to create necessary drainage facilities and to settle on them the land-hungry millions will benefit the country not only by increasing its national wealth but also by swelling the land revenue income of the State.

Forests. Peasants do realise the importance of preserving the forests' growth in our country and their successful guardianship of the forests through the Forest Panchayats entrusted to their care in Madras Presidency bears eloquent witness to this fact. But unfortunately the Reserve Coupes, in which forest growth is sought to be protected from cattle and sheep and goats are established only too often so close to the villages regardless of the needs of the peasants and cattle for some space to move about that the poor peasants have been too often and too heavily victimised by their neighbourhood of forests. Moreover the ancient rights of the peasants to obtain free supply of fuel, timber for agricultural implements and grazing for their cattle have

been seriously curtailed, if not ignored, so much so that they are obliged to curse their proximity to forests. These sufferings have become so acute as to drive the Kanara and Andhra peasants into the bosom of Satyagraha, only to shake themselves off the tyranny of the forest administration. Unless the reserve coupes are removed from within a mile's radius from every village, the ancient rights of the neighbouring peasants reinstated the Forest Acts suitably amended and the functions and rights of the Forest Panchayats extended all over India, there cannot be any peace either for Government or for the public.

Communications. One of the most important directions in which the peasants can be helped is through the all-round development of communications for the movement of agricultural goods to the markets. It is a deplorable fact that just as the Local Boards are beginnig to improve the rural road communications by the construction of roads and bridges, the Government of India should begin to arrest such a development, lest it might compete with the Railways. The canal communications, for whose development there are immense possibilities in this country, had been in their turn destroyed or undermined by the railways. Even the river navigation has suffered immensely and such towns as Allahabad which were once very famous for their inland navigation facilities, have had to fall back upon railway traffic alone. It is admitted on all sides that the railway is too costly to build and to maintain and a poor country like India has to use it only for the transport of perishable and very valuable but less voluminous commodities. Yet thanks to the blindfolded affection of our Government to the railways and their indirect benefits to the foreign trader, both the road and canal traffic

which alone most of our agricultural commodities can afford, at least for internal trade, have been neglected, if not thwarted. Anyhow since Government protests so vehemently that the freight charges on agricultural commodities cannot be lowered by the railways, it is necessary, if the peasants are to be genuinely helped at all, to take immediate and concerted measures to improve and extend the road and canal communications. It is also necessary for Government to follow a policy of progressive nationalisation of Railways in order to utilise the profits therefrom for the lowering of the third class passenger fares and the freights on agricultural commodities.

Internal Trade. Yet another direction in which the marketing facilities can be improved is by the systematic development of internal markets for our agricultural commodities and the manufactures turned out of them. Despite the fact that according to the Bombay School of Economists, India's economic progress has gone up through the growth of the dimensions of her foreign trade, actually India has been the loser to an immeasurable extent by the destruction and neglect of her internal trade and the ignoring and gradual disappearance of her internal periodical markets. The over-emphasis laid upon export markets has contributed not a little to the diminution of the importance and the stoppage of the legitimate growth of our internal trade in our own commodities. Even now at least five times as much business is transacted in our internal trade as in our export trade and it behoves the Governments (Provincial and Central) to concentrate all their resources upon the proper organisation of internal markets, the development of sorting, packing and standardisation of our goods, the regulation of forward contracts and stock-exchanges.

But a full and adequate development of cheap and serviceable canal and road communications by boat and motor is the first preliminary for such a development.

Rate of Interest. *Usurious Loans Act.* It is a notorious fact testified to by every committee or commission that reported upon the conditions of the masses that peasants and workers have been obliged to pay enormous and ruinous rates of interest, ranging from 12 per cent upto 100% and even more. Being conscious of the inability of most of our debtors to escape from the clutches of money lenders and to avoid paying suicidal rates of interest, the Government and Central Legislature have tried to save them in spite of themselves through the Usurious Loans Act of 1918. But owing to the usual prejudice displayed by the Courts in favour of creditors to whose class most of the Judges belonged, this Act, which only depends upon the discretion of the Courts for its operation has more or less remained a dead-letter. Though the Royal Commission on Agriculture and Banking Enquiry Committee have recommended that Government should take suitable steps to remedy this defect, Government of India has so far sought to do nothing to help our indebted masses. The failure of the Courts to afford the protection of this Act to the debtors makes it incumbent upon Government to bring forward without any more delay, legislation to definitely fix a maximum rate of interest (6% as suggested by the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers) compulsorily enforceable in Courts and then empower Courts to enforce Section 3 (1) *b (ii)* of this Act, *i.e.*, notwithstanding any agreement purporting to close previous dealings and to create a new obligation, reopen any account already taken

between them and relieve the debtor of all liability in respect of any excessive interest, etc.

Rural Insolvency Law.—The Royal Commission on Agriculture, Labour Commission and Banking Enquiry Committee have all recommended the passing of a special insolvency law to meet the special needs of ignorant, helpless and poverty-ridden masses and help them to free themselves from hereditary debts or impossibly heavy debts by offering their belongings and then to start their life afresh with a clean slate. But Government has not even tried to draft a bill to meet this crying need of the masses.

Detention and arrest of civil debtors. To detain and arrest civil debtors under any circumstances is a barbarous practice. The Royal Commission on Agriculture has recommended its abolition and even Mr. Satianathan, I. C. S. (Madras) the Special Officer appointed by Madras Government in 1935 to enquire into Agricultural indebtedness has also suggested its abolition. But all that the Government of India dares to do is to introduce a Bill only to make it more difficult for creditors and Courts to consign civil debtors to jail. There can never be any chance to honest debtors to deal with their creditors on a par until and unless this right of the creditors and courts to consign them to jail for failure to pay off their debts in time is abolished.

Exemption from attachment. Sections 60 and 61 of the Civil Procedure Code Act of 1908 detail the properties which cannot be attached for civil decrees. The salary of Government servants is exempt up to Rs. 40 per mensem and up to half of any excess salary and Government of India now proposes to raise this limit up to Rs. 100. But barring the agricultural tools and seed

grain, everything possessed by an agriculturist is liable to be attached and sold away. This discrimination against peasants, is most unfair and hence, the proposal of the South Indian Peasants Federation to exempt from attachment ten acres of wet land or twenty acres of dry land or five acres of wet land and ten acres of dry land according to our suggestion.

Grain for maintenance etc. Section 61 expects and empowers Local Governments to specify the quantities of grain needed to maintain the peasant's family and pay for agricultural operations until the next harvest which ought to be exempted from attachment. But till now no action seems to have been taken by most of the Provincial Governments, although this privilege, if extended to peasants, will be extremely helpful to them; thus displaying the indifference of the authorities to peasants' welfare.

Taccavi Loans. If all the above needs of the peasants are satisfied, it may be contended that Sahukars and Banks may be unwilling to lend any money to peasants and workers. But it is still possible for the masses to borrow from Government for all agricultural and productive purposes under any of the Taccavi Acts, *i.e.*, Agriculturists Loans Act, Land Improvement Loans Act. It is true that Government have not yet carried out the recommendations of the Banking and Agricultural Commissions in order to popularise this credit. But it is the duty of Government to adopt those recommendations and in addition, to lower the rate of interest on such loans and increase the number of instalments of repayment.

Co-operative Credit. The present economic depression has made one thing clear so far as co-operative

credit is concerned; that though the funds of the Primary Co-operative Credit Banks are quite safe, their unlimited liability has caused the ruin of innumerable peasants. The system of collection and joint security is so rigid as to work more hardship on debtors than even private credit. An All-India Enquiry must be made into the effects of the present system of co-operative credit upon the peasants and necessary action taken to make it more a beneficial agency than a deadening influence as it is at present.

Industrialism. The peasants and workers have been made the scape-goats for the sake of development of industrialisation of India. They would not have grumbled at it if only they could have assured themselves that through it India has been placed well on the way towards progressively profitable industrialisation. But instead, they have been faced with the continuous growth of unemployment among those engaged in their cottage industries, and the insatiable clamour of industrialists for more and more protection. Neither Government nor public have imposed any conditions upon the industrialists in return for the protection afforded with the result that we are faced with the most inefficient yet costly management and the least paid and ill-trained working class. Surely it is but fair, if peasants and workers are expected to continue to bear this growing burden of protective duties that the industrialists are expected to run their mills on up-to-date lines, to reorganise their production so as to do away with protection within a specified period, to pay minimum wages at least to their working classes and to restrict themselves mostly to such production as will not compete with that of the cottage industries.

Cottage Industries. Our peasants do realise the advantage of mechanisation and rationalisation of our industries but they are also equally conscious of the fact that more than thirty millions of workers are dependent for their livelihood upon cottage industries as against two and a half millions of industrial workers. They are naturally anxious that any industrialisation which may be assisted by their co-operation must be so developed and furthered as to absorb more of these cottage industries than those who are thereby thrown out of employment.

State Aid to Industries. Peasants are keenly conscious of the fact that they have to bear the bull's share in any protection—direct or indirect—given to industries. They are therefore not unnaturally anxious that any such assistance ought to be given to such enterprises—co-operative or collective—as will benefit either the consumers or the workers and not the few middlemen, *i.e.*, the so-called capitalists or industrialists. It means that the peasants are opposed to such methods of state help as advancing capital at a low rate of interest, standing surety for a minimum interest, advancing technical assistance at low rates of remuneration to the private capitalists. They are at the same time as anxious as all others to see that Indian industrial interests are not sacrificed for the benefit of foreign interests.

Education. Education is another direction in which peasants can be helped but have been defrauded since the beginning of this regime. Much—too much—money has been spent upon higher and collegiate education and the development of elementary education has been dwarfed. The peasants want free, universal and easily obtainable elementary, professional and adult education

A thorough re-orientation of the policy of distribution of funds and development of institutions is very badly needed. Much will be the gain if the further development of colleges and high schools is suspended for at least ten years to come and more and more is spent upon elementary education alone. If only Government puts its heart into it, it will certainly be possible to harness the millions of educated unemployed to the yoke of educational service, if need be, on mere subsistence salaries and with of course the willing and enthusiastic co-operation of the masses which till now has not been obtained.

Social Insurance. To make Famine Relief a provincial matter is a great mistake. It is necessary for Government of India to undertake to discharge its responsibilities in helping the peasants during famines and pestilences. It is also the duty of Government to organise Cattle and Fire Insurance.

Social Life. The social iife of the peasantry has become most discouraging and positively unbearable. No Government has thought it fit to develop any housing scheme, not to speak of any garden-city, town-planning. Scarcity of drinking water supply is still a grave menace. Latrines have yet to be provided for most of the villages and tanks even where they exist are in bad repairs. The Crore Rupees Grant of 1935—36 could not have touched even a fringe of this aspect of peasant life. But it has served the excellent purpose of showing how great has been the downfall of the village and how much more has yet to be done if villages are to become habitable. Special attention has to be paid in regard to Libraries, Broadcasting, Co-operative organisations and Better Living Societies.

Law and Order. It is only too true to say that the peasants and workers derive precious little benefit from the law and order boasted of by this Government. The Police forces are not enough to protect the villagers; hence the maintenance of village watchmen at the cost of the peasants. The Courts are invariably manned by urban and moneyed classes and hence the administration of law against the peasant and the poor. What wonder is there that the cry of Law and Order only evokes painful memories among the peasantry.

Village Panchayats. No amount of assistance from Government can get the villagers out of their present irredeemable slough of despondency and serfdom unless a spirit of self-reliance and self-respect is engendered among them. That can best be done by the organisation of a Village Panchayat in every village and by delegating to it more and more of the civic functions of a Local Board. The success of the Village Panchayats of Madras and Bombay Presidencies shows the great potentialities for good, latent in this Panchayat Movement.

Taxation. Taxation is one of the most destructive agents by which British Government has impoverished our peasants. That the Government is too costly and burdensome is admitted on all sides. That the Governmental expenditure of the public revenues benefits more the foreigner than the Indian, more the urban classes thanthe rural masses is equally conceded. But what is less well recognised is that in deriving its revenues, this Government has sedulously followed the destructive and unfair policy of taxing the peasants and workers in deference to the rich and the landed who can indeed pay many times more than at present without feeling the incidence of it as much as the masses. The Taxa-

tion Enquiry Committee had recognised this pitiable fact; yet the British Government has slept over it till now. It now seeks to console the peasants and workers by seeming to empower the future Provincial Legislatures to raise income tax upon agricultural incomes of Zamindars etc., while actually making such a thing impossible by establishing bi-cameral legislatures. What is more, the Madras Government has shown the way the wind is likely to blow by offering to levy a Tobacco License Fee so soon as it has come to need some additional revenues. This cruel policy of crushing the peasants through too heavy and disproportionate taxation must be stopped.

Public Expenditure. Most of the public expenditure in this country is devoted to the payment of the services and what little of it is derived by the Indian element in them is again pocketted by those who hail from the towns. Very little is being spent upon social or development services and more than half of it is covered by the expenditure upon education, which again mostly benefits the urban classes. Even a civilian like Mr. Darling has had to deplore the partiality of this Government towards towns in the dispensation of its favours. Thus the policy of public finance of British administration had continuously resulted in unrelieved and endless draining of the resources of peasants and workers for the benefit of foreigners and urban classes. It is time that the century—old drain of economic resources from villages is stopped and an increasing portion of the public expenditure is diverted for the benefit of peasants and workers, preferably through the medium of Village Panchayats. A supreme effort has yet to be made to model the services, medical supplies, sanitary conveniences and transport facilities and industrial rejuvenation upon the limited resources of the peasantry.

Consultation with Peasants. Government has not yet cared to take peasants into their confidence at least in regard to matters directly concerning the peasants' interests. Hence, its failure to provide for the representation of peasants on such bodies as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, Railway Advisory Committees, Sugar, and Tea-Cess Committees.

Organisation of Peasants. It is a pity that while all other much smaller interests, are organised on an All-India basis our peasants are yet to have an All-India Congress. The Government of India's want of solicitude for the welfare of the peasants is indicated by the refusal of H. E. The Viceroy to give his consent for the introduction of the Peasants' Union Bill.

One word more—

The above suggestions are made with a view to help the state to do justice to the much exploited peasant. *Justice if denied too long, gives birth to revolutions which upset everybody's calculations and comforts except those of the exploited.* We sincerely hope that both the Government and public will take to heart this well-meant warning.

PEASANTS' GROUP RESOLUTIONS

1. (*a*) It shall be the primary object of this Group to do every thing possible to lower the tax-burden laid directly or indirectly on peasants by the Central and Provincial Governments and to see that the expenditure of Government is so redistributed as to benefit the peasants to a much greater extent than at present.

(*b*) This Group urges upon Government the extreme necessity of giving preferential benefit of any budget surplus that may be realised (next year) to villagers, peasants and agricultural works in view of the fact that ever since the economic depression has set in, ever fresh burdens of taxation—direct and indirect—have been piled upon peasants and workers while other classes have been given the benefit of budget surpluses.

2. While recognising the need for affording adequate and timely protection to Indian Industries in order that such industries when properly and fully developed, may provide remunerative employment to the growing numbers of the unemployed, this Group is anxious to see that the masses are burdened by protective duties only for so long and to such an extent as will be demonstrably proved to be necessary.

3. This Group opines that the development of cottage industries is just as important and necessary for the economic solidarity and well being of peasants as that of big industries and will therefore strive its best to see that the interests of those millions who are employed in small industries are adequately protected and that Government pays an increasing attention to their needs.

4. This Group urges upon Government the necessity and advisability of so amending the Civil Procedure Code Act (Section 60) as to exempt 5 acres of wet land or 10 acres of dry land of every peasant from attachment for civil decrees.

ENQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF PEASANTS URGED

Peasants' Group of M. L. A's Demands

At a second meeting of the Peasants Group of M. L. A's held at New Delhi during the '36 Budget Session of the Legislative Assembly the following resolutions were passed.

It may be interesting to note that the Group has succeeded in focussing Government's attention on most of the Pressing Problems and that Government have been favourably considering their suggestions.

1. This Group deems it urgently necessary that the Government of India shall review the whole system of land revenue in different parts of India and develop a uniform scientific and dependable system in accordance with which the future autonomous local Governments can regulate their land revenue policy and as a result of which the incidence of land revenue can be lowered and the periodical settlements stopped.

2. This Group requests the Government of India to make an enquiry into the economic conditions of the tenants, of land lords who come under the permanent settlement and the temporary settlement of U. P., Bihar, Orissa, C. P., Assam and the Punjab with a view to devise ways and means for protecting and improving their conditions (vis-a-vis the landlords) before Provincial Autonomy is inaugurated.

3. In view of the great need for providing for the Harijans and other land-less agricultural classes with some cultivable land without the right of alienation

this Group urges upon the Government of India to devise, in co-operation and consultation with the local governments and the Representatives of the agricultural workers the necessary ways and means for settling the land-less agricultural workers upon the available cultivable but unoccupied government lands available in this country, and adapting those lands for profitable cultivation providing adequate drinking water supplies and otherwise fitting them for human habitation.

4. It is necessary, if the peasants are to be genuinely helped that Government of India in consultation with Local Governments and the peasants' representatives shall take immediate and adequate steps to improve and extend road, and canal and inland water-way communications in addition to following a policy of progressive nationalisation of Railways, in order to provide the peasants with full and adequate cheap and serviceable system of communications.

5. This Group demands immediate legislation to abolish detention and arrest for civil decrees and to make 6% the maximum permissable rate of interest and a separate Rural Insolvency Law.

6. Immediate efforts must be made by the Government of India in consultation with the Provincial Governments, before the Reforms are actually inaugurated to remodel the services upon the limited resources of the peasants and to develop medical supplies, sanitary conveniences, transport facilities, education and industrial and agricultural research and developments at least in proportion to the contributions made by the peasants towards the public revenues.

7. This Group expresses its great dissatisfaction at

this year's Budget in that it has failed to give any tax-relief to the poor and the peasantry, in spite of their growing poverty and their unabated but burdensome contributions to the public revenues, to provide for any recurring grant to the Rural Development Fund and to lower the charges on Post-cards and it has, on the other hand continued the disastrous and unfair policy of reducing the taxes upon the rich and continuing to pay pre-depression salaries to the highly paid staffs and services and it proposes to make huge allotments for the rebuilding of Quetta under the unmanageable and undependable supervision of the Army.

8. This Group warns the Government that its budgetary policy is suicidal for the country and ruinous for the peasantry and is calculated to create much discontent among the Peasant and Workers.

9. This Group protests against the refusal of His Excellency the Viceroy to give his sanction for introducing the Peasants' Unicn Bill in the Assembly.

THE PEASANTS' INSTITUTE

The first Peasants' Institute was organised by Prof. Ranga in April 1934, with a view to train up young men and women to organise the peasants and workers on a class-conscious basis. Though he was met with stout opposition from certain of his own friends, Prof. Ranga with his usual zeal and perseverence successfully conducted the school.

So far 3 sessions were conducted regularly every year and he hopes to make it an annual feature of his activities.

The following report submitted to Mahatmaji in May '36 at Tenali, when he was on his way to Bangalore by Mr. G. L. Narayana, M.A., Resident Master, shows that the institution has already justified its existence.

The Andhra Peasants Institute was started in 1934 under the auspices of the Peasants Protection Committee. It was run in the Rama-Needu Adult Educational Institute which was opened by Mahatma Gandhi on the 23rd of December 1933. Its first session was run for six weeks in the summer of 1934 with 25 students and the second session for 8 weeks in April—June 1935 with 35 students recruited from the various districts of Andhradesh. This Peasants' Institute was well served by the excellent reference Library installed in the Rama-Needu Institute.

Object Of The Institute

The main object of the Peasants' Institute is to teach Peasants' youths, the principles of economics and political science from the peasants' viewpoint and train them

The Andhra Peasants' Institute 1935

in the methods of organising the peasants. To provide the peasants with a local leadership recruited from their own ranks, conscious of the objectives of the peasants' movement and the ultimate destiny of the workers and peasants is the motive force for this institute. Prof. Ranga, the President of the Peasants' Protection Committee is also the Principal of the Institute and a definite and class conscious bias is sought to be created in the countryside through its activities.

Self Conscious Local Leadership

The Andhra Peasants' Movement has realised after its 13 years career that to create a network of organisations and enable them to function for the betterment of the peasants, a regular well-trained and educated youth conscious of their duties must be made available for our peasants. So long as we depend upon the spasmodic and fitful response given by the youths who are not really conscious of the real direction in which the peasants ought to be moving we cannot hope to create a really powerful political organisation, capable of striving for the achievement of the ultimate peasants' goal—the achievement of complete political power for the masses including complete independence for the country.

Along with other political propaganda and organisational activity of our students they are encouraged to interest themselves in hawking khadi and A. I. V. I. A. products and encouraging the sales of cent per cent swadeshi goods. They are expected to do all they can in Harijan uplift, famine relief, adult education, trade union organisation works.

THE WORK OF OUR STUDENTS

Famine Relief. Messrs. D. Sooryanarayanareddy and G. Latchanna have been organising the peasants of Ganjam District and helping them to fight the serious famine that rages in that District.

Harijan Uplift. Mr. Sadasivan is in charge of the Kesava Harijan Hostel in Anantapur and Mr. Vallabha Rao has organised a number of Night Schools for the Harijans of Venkatagiri of Nellore District.

Cottage Industries. Mr. Virabhadra Rao has been hawking the products of Cottage Industries in Kistna District.

Swadeshi Exhibitions. Messrs. Virraju and K. Sastry have interested themselves in Congress electioneering campaigns and Swadeshi Exhibitions.

Peasant Organisations. Almost all our students have on their return home pushing on with the organisation of the Peasants' Movement. Kurnool, Anantapur, Chittor, Ganjam, Kistna, Vizag and Guntur Districts have benefited most by their activities.

Peasants' Seva Dals. In Ganjam, Vizag, Guntur and Nellore Districts Peasants Seva Dals have come to be organised by them. Their contribution to the success of the Congress in the elections is universally appreciated.

Peasants' Songs. The small booklet of 'Peasants Songs' has been taken to the remotest corner of the Andhra countryside by these people and the songs which seek to make the masses conscious of their rights are today being sung by the masses in a large number of villages.

Organisation of Hill Tribes. Mr. Vallabharao has succeeded in organising a large number of hill tribes of Chittor District.

Medical Relief. Mr. Kotadas, a Harijan has been cooperating with the Vinayashram in offering medical relief to the poor and the peasantry.

Youth Leagues. Mr. Visweswararao of Kistna has been playing an important part in the development of youth leagues in that district.

Agricultural Workers. Mr. Venkatasubbaiah, a potter, has been engaged in organising agricultural workers of Nellore District.

Peasants' Marches. Our students have played a very prominant and praiseworthy part in organising, and leading the Peasants' Marches, that took place in 1934, 35 and 36 in almost all the districts.

The Rama-Needu Institute and the Ranga Library, that owe their inception and inspiration to Bapuji's blessings have rendered invaluable help to the Peasants' Institute.

It is an educational institute whose principal and lecturers are all national workers asking for no pay. Its students are those who are anxious to fit themselves well for the thankless and arduous peasants' works. It aims at preparing the ground for the eventual elimination of all vested interests, the salvation of the masses and the achievement of complete power for the peasantry and the proletariat, the real dream of Bapuji himself.

Similar institutions, with the same ideals and towards the same end have been organised at Kovvur and

Lahore. Efforts are also being made to establish like schools at Cuttack, Agra, Nagpur next year. Another on the same lines has been organised in West Godavari.

The Peasants Institute is again in session for a month and claims to have made a genuine effort to serve the masses as to deserve Bapuji's blessings.

Mahatmaji's Message

When this report was presented to Mahatmaji, he gave the following message to the students of the Peasants' Institute.

SYLLABUS OF THE INSTITUTE

What for is the Institute? What are the subjects taught, how are the students trained? These are some of the questions that are ushered upon the Principal and the Resident Master of the Andhra Peasants' Institute.

The Report submitted to Mahatmaji will throw enough light upon the aim of the Institution and the nature of the Training given to the youths. This syllabus gives the rest of the information on the subject. We trust it will be of great help and use to those workers who want to run similar institutes.

1. **The history of the present day capitalistic** *cum* **industrial world from primitive stages.**

The evolution of the state from early times in close association with and dependence upon the economic system. —The tracing of the interdependence and inter-relationship of the state and economic organisation on one side and the dominant economic interests at successive stages. —The fate of the present industrial age culminating in the eventual emergence of peasants and workers control of state, its industrial system and social life.—That the creative Karma of our kisans and working classes is sure to lead towards the replacement of present day capitalistic control of our state by the Socialistic state.

2. **Fascism.** The history, policy and results of Italian and Austrian and German fascism.—Nationalist and anti-pacifist reaction against internationalism and pacificism. —The rebellion of the middle classes against the proletarian domination.—The organised, militant and anti-democratic trials of the rich and the landed to suppress labour and save themselves from the ultimate ruin.—The blind uncivilised, blood-thirsty support of the youth, middle classes and high class farmers to the upper classes in their fight against the disunited but class-conscious, anti-imperialistic socialists and communists.

3. **Fascist possibilities elsewhere.** In England Sir Oswald Mosley,—in America Kukhux Klan and Nira,—in Japan Jingoism—in China Kumin Tangs drive against communists—in India Moody-Lees Pact, Bombay merchants ultimatum to Jawharlal, Sir Setnas' Resolution in Council of State—Liberals Non-Co-Operation with Civil Liberties Unions—Governors lead in organising Zamindars etc., into agriculturist or peoples parties.

4. **Organisation of Capitalists.** The various chambers of commerce—merchants chambers, the all India merchants chambers, the various industrialists organisations—their influence with Government, Liberals and Congress—their policy and programme—their half-hearted participation in our struggles—the Mody-Lees pact—advantages derived by them from Government through protection, from Congress through Swadeshi—their present united front against Jawharlal—their unwillingness to look after their own workers or to be considerate towards cottage, industrial workers—organisation of Zamindars—the growth of their organisation in Madras, U. P., C. P., Bengal—their pre 1935 Act programme and policy—sporting, amusements, dignities and ceremonials—growth of their political consciousness since 1920, especially in Madras, stimulated by special representation, legislative councils—official stimulus through Governors for development of land lords' political status—the All India Zamindars' Organisations, following upon their representations at the R. T. C.—their fast growing class consciousness.

5. **A study of the economics of the trade cycles.** Their close dependence upon the capitalist system—their emergence from the principle of profit and self interest—their depudations—the only way available to stop them is socialisation or co-operatisation of all means of production and distribution.

6. **Industrialisation.** History of Indian Industria' development—policy of protection advocated by Justice Ranade, Gokhale, Dutt, Kale—policy of discriminated protection proposed by Tariff Commission—recommendations of Indan Industrial Commission—the present Indian industrial policy.

7. **Cost of our Industrial Policy.** It leads to the quickened growth of private enterprise at the cost of and under the ægis of state—poverty of our consumers—their incapacity to bear these increasing burdens.

8. **The beneficiaries of our protectionist and industrialist policy.** Only capitalists—Neither consumers nor producers benefited—ccuntry being defrauded—industries always inefficient.

9. **Industrial Population.** In cottage industries versus m ills—measures needed to help cottage industries and also to protect the workers employed therein—Manufactures under state or cooperative management needed to provide employment for millions of unemployed.

10. **The History of Labour's Organised Direct Action.** The Chartist Movement in England, the Paris Commune, the Russian black Sunday of 1905, Russian and German revolutions of 1917, capture of factories in 1919—20 in Italy.

11. **The Emergence of the Third International.** Its outlook, Marxian doctrines as interpreted by Russian thinkers.

12. **Practical Reforms.** Repeal of settlement laws and the passage of factory legislation in England, the social insurances in Germany, Belgium and England,—the trade union legislation,—the British trade union political fund,—the German economic parliament,—the British and German workers councils,—the Australian arbitration boards,—the British and Australian trade boards.

13. **Private enterprise versus nationalisation.** The achievement, limitation and disabilities of private enterprise.—Minimisation of the inevitable wastage inefficiency and disorganisation of private enterprise through trustification, rationalisation.—Development of joint stock companies, their management, leading inevitably to trustification, dependence of share-holders upon managing directors who in their turn depend upon the management.—The motive power of private enterprises, profits and self-interest, this leads to growth in the beginning, then to decay through the inevitable trade cycles and the socalled overproduction.—

The solution for the losses sustained by society by leaving all the profits of industries, for the trade cycles crisis resulting in the continuous check to industrial progress and the growth of millionaires and their enormous unproductive millions is the socialisation of industries.—The advantages of socialisation of industries—economy, better management, better conditions for workers, for protection consumers, safeguarding public interest.—The question of democratic management of such industries ensuring efficient management, through a democratic system of recruitment, democratic control of industries through co-operation between producers and consumers.

14. **Agriculture.** Distribution of land—methods of cultivation—collectivisation versus consolidation—scope for increasing production—yet over population on land. Unoccupied lands. Their extent—to be granted to landless without any right of alienation for cooperative exploitation.

15. **Land revenue.** In ryotwari tracts, system of settlement and resettlements—history of Lord Curzon's G.O.—R.C. Dutt's ideas permanent settlement not satisfactory—governments' claim to take not more than 50% of net income examined—the Bardoli satyagraha, the Godavari-Kistna agitation against resettlement enhancements of 18¾%,—the Punjab sliding scales of rates, the Madras system of resettlement,—the Bombay system of half net rentals,—the recommendations of Taxation Committee—Karachi resolution—the Socialists' demands—the all India Kisan Congrass demand of exempting minimum holdings from land revenue and taxing aricultural incomes above a certain minimum.

16. **Zamindari system versus peasants.** Its History in Hindu, Moghul and British periods and Dutt's, Sircar's views about its utility—Zamindars, peasantsand Governments —permanent settlement, and its terms—the rights and duties of Zamindars vis a vis the tenants in the different provinces—the occupancy rights ownership of land and the rents. periodical settlements, limits of enhancements—kinds of rent, grain, cash,—systems of survey—settlement—systems of rent collection—kinds of officers bribes taken—recovery of rent arrears—torturing of peasants for the collection of rents—rights of tenants in law—garden lands, irrigated lands, rents

thereon—improvement of, tanks, restoration, reapir—how to help peasant to take advantage of legal provisions—tenancy Acts, Civil Procedure Code Act—revenue collection G.O's.

17. **Zamin ryots organisation.** Andhra movement—Venkatagiri satyagraha—economic enquiries carried out in the Andhra—undertaken in C.P. Orissa, Bihar and Bengal—minimum demands of the Zamindari tenants of the Andhra—peasants marches in the Andhra.

18. **Abolition of zamindari system.** No compensation—Andhra Ryots' demand, to pay compensation U.P. demand—to save 62 crores per annum for the state,—to reduce rents to save the country from the economic, political and social thraldom.

19. **Constitutions.**—Written and unwritten—their advantages and disadvantages—English French and American constitutions and the New Russian constitutions.

20. **Parliamentarism.**—The customs and conventions standing orders favouring the rich, Social atmosphere of the legislatures too suffocating for the poor.—The organisation and necessity for political parties.—Thefinancing of parties.—The predominence of influence in them of the rich.—The incapacity of voters to control parties and The inevitability of the dependence of voters on parties for guidance to select and support candidates.—The necessity for controlling parties, America's attempts to prevent them from becoming caucuses.—The inevitability of parliamentary dictatorship in crisis, coalition ministry.—For the masses to gain full control dictatorship of one party is essential.

21. **Representative Institutions.**—Bicameral legislatures, their inter-relationships.—The special functions and powers of lower chambers, especially in regard to budget and ministries.—Disadvantages of having a second chamber; their control over popular rights and d emands.—Representation of different classes of people in the legislatures.—Qualifications of voters.—Organisation of parties.—Conduct of elections.—Who can and does succeed in elections, the power of the money during elections.—The over-weightage of the rich against the poor.

22. **Ministries.**—In republics and monarchies.—Dependence of ministry upon the confidence of the majority in the lower chambers.—One party ministry or coalition ministry.—The pendulum principle of different parties going into ministry by alternative chances is acceptable only when all the parliamentary parties are agreed upon the fundamental basis of their vested interests.—Once the rich are disgusted with socialists they waive all the usual parliamentary decorums and establish their dictatorship the examples of Italy, Germany and Austria.—The terms of the ministry—fixed for four years in U. S. A. dependent upon the confidence of the lower chambers, as in England, France, Japan etc., or fixed and for an indefinite period as in Italy, Germany, Austria, and Russia.—The power of the ministry dependent upon and varying with the public opinion among the ruling classes as in non-Russian and fascist countries, dependent upon the influence of the fascist or Bolshevik parties.—The control of civil services by the ministry, its nature, and extent.—The co-operation between the people and the ministry.—The harmonious and mutual co-operation possible only in Russia where the ministry's only aim is the uplift of the masses with their co-operation through their own party.

23. **Indian Constitution.** Company administration, neglect of India's partnership in the administration, Sir Thomas Munro's views.—Relations between the Company and the Government, Pitt's Act etc.—British Crown direct suzerainty.—Development of Legislatures.—Minto-Morley reforms.—Mont-ford Reforms.—Simon's, R. T. C.'s and 1935 Act schemes.—Broadening of Indian franchise from indirect voters to direct property owning voters, extension to educated people, wives of voters by 1935 Act, demand for adult franchise, Nehru Committee.—Councillors—nominated, non-official, nominated majorities till 1919, elected majorities between 1920—1936.—Executive councillors, all European. One Indian in Minto-Morley period, two to four in Mont-Ford period, introduction of ministers since 1920, the 1935 Act's Provincial Autonomy scheme.—Relationship between Central and Provincial Govenments, first provincial governments more or less independent than mere vassals of the

central government, greater devolution of powers to provinces since 1920, Finance, since 1920, greater financial powers to provinces, 1935 gives autonomy, partnership of both in sharing the proceeds of certain taxes such as incometax.

24. **Masses and the Indian Constitution.** The Minto-Morley scheme helped only the higher classes—The Mont-Ford scheme helped the urban and rural middle classes and the higher classes—The 1935 Act seeks to insure the classes against the impact of the masses—Bicameral legislatures, commercial safeguards, governors' special responsibilities, franchise covering only the lower middle classes and other independent, seek to prevent the growth of political power of the poor—Though the peasants have had votes since 1920, they could not make use of the power but allowed the zamindars to exploit them—It seeks to destroy the national consciousness and intensify the communal bickerings and prevent the growth of class consciousness.

25. **Local Self-Government.** Its history in ancient India, Ripon's reforms, development since 1920—nominated members and presidents or elected members and presidents—District and taluk boards and their functions —village panchayats in Madras Presidency—funds for local boards—their expenditure on communications, educational institutions—waste of money on high schools and starvation of elementary education—the party system in local boards, their policies, the popular or official administration of boards.

26. **Budgetting.** Orthodox budgettary policy, balancing expenditure and income of the state for only one year, State counting only the tax revenues and income from the State properties and enterprises as its income—The post-war Russian budgettary policy, the whole national life covered by the States' activities, the new economic policy leading to the first and second five year plans—The manner of making the five year plans, executing and controlling plans, the relationship between the central and provincial Governments and the industrial and factory units, the NIRA of president Roosevelt looking ahead for a few years—The balancing of the budgets by, borrowing, or by additional

taxation or by both—The levying of additional taxation, upon the rich, or the poor or on both.

27. **Public expenditure.** The old Bastable—Gladstonian idea of it, the smaller the public expenditure the better accepted according to our Indian liberals—The new Fabian idea endorsed by Dalton and Mahatma Gandhi of expending as much as possible on developmental and social services and productive purposes—The failure of the Indian Governments to utilise public funds through public bodies in order to stimulate people's incentive to work and save—The Indian States' active partiality towards the Haves and the British in their expenditure—The need for a redistribution of public expenditure so as to spend 75% of it upon the masses.

28. **The Public Debt of India.** The analysis and recommendations of the Congress Committee on public debt of India—The productive and unproductive debt—The interest charges, payable to non-Indians, in India or England—The management and cost of floating our public debts—The influence of world capital marketting conditions, Indian capital supply, political conditions in fixing the rate of interest—The advantages of converting our public debt from higher rates into lower interest-bearing debts—The manner of repaying public debts, creating our sinking funds and paying into them from out of budgettary surpluses, budgettary revenues—The incidence of the burden of the repayment of debts—The advisability or otherwise of balancing budgets from borrowings in ordinary times, war times and economic depression—The economics of public borrowing for developing productive economic resources and enterprises of the state or for financing famine-protection developmental schemes or for minimising unemployment and stimulating trade and Industry through the development of public works by Public Debts.

29. **Public Services.** The method of recruitment, by competitive examinations, by nomination, by selection examinations and preparing waiting lists—Regulation of recruitment by Public Service Commissions and G.Os.—The classes of people getting into services, the present conditions and qualifications requisite for recruitment favour the higher

and richer classes—The standards of public duty and honour of civil services—Their impartiality is no proof against their prejudices against the poor—disabling the masses to a greater extent than the present day laws—The redistribution of public resources, through the maintenance of services from the masses to the upper and middle classes form the rest of India to the N.W.F., Punjab and other provinces throughout the Army, the draining of our resources to England—The statutory safeguards to prevent the lowering of scales of pay to the services, the possibility for lowering the cost by introducing lower scales of pay as in other countries—The attempts made by the non-Brahmin party and through G.Os. to introduce more and more officers belonging to different communities the need for introducing the working classes into them—The control of the people and the ministry over civil services, the minimising of their corruption.

30. **Public Health and Hygeine.** There are still many provincial Governments which have not passed public health acts—The bad habits of our masses—The evil effects of the growth of towns on public health—The high birth and death rates, the low vitality of our masses—The want of public latrines, the virulence of epidemics still going unchecked.

31. **Public Education.** Statistics of expenditure and the growth of it upon different kinds of education, university, high school and elementary—The uselessness of higher education in the light of growing unemployment among the educated middle classes—The needs of the masses for elementary education being starved—The educational development and expenditure thereon, in all other countries—The university results as compared with those outside India, the conquest of slavish-mindedness and the want of enthusiasm on the part of our students—The need for winning the co-operation of the public and parents for sending all their children of school-going age to schools —The need for introducing lower scales of pay and better training for teachers in a shorter time.

32. **Foreign Capital.** Estimate of total investments of foreign capital in rubber, tea, coffee, timber plantations, in cotton, jute, iron and steel, tin plate industries—The

nationalist policy of introducing Indian control over such foreign enterprises—The drain of India's resources as interest and salaries from such enterprises—The British and non-Indian investments in Indian controlled enterprises—The advantages and disadvantages of the investment of foreign capital in India—The recommendations of foreign capital committee—Mahatmaji's speech on commercial discrimination at the R. T. C—The Commercial safeguards; the possibility of eliminating this drain by paying off a portion of compensation and confiscating it.

33. **The history of the Socialistic thought.** The Utopian Socialists, the French thinkers, Saint Simon, Fourier, Proudhon, Louis Blanc, Sorel, the German thinkers, Lasalle etc., the Russian Nihists—Karl Marx and Frederich Engels and the first International—The emergence of the Social Democratic party in Germany, Social Democratic Federation, Fabian Society, Labour Party in England and the French Socialist Party and Syndicalist organisation and the American I.W.W—The Second International War, its reactions.

34. **Co-operative Movement:** The history of the British consumers' co-operation—Owen, Rochdale, pioneers, the Manchester and Glasgow C. W. Ss—the development of the German co-operative credit movement,—the Danish, Irish, Italian producers co-operation—the post-war Russian co-operative movement, the slow growth of non-credit co-operative movement—the special necessity for and adaptability of co-operative movement to Indian conditions—the recommendations of the banking enquiry committee—Royal commission on agriculture—the idealism behind the co-operative movement that it can help workers to replace the capitalistic organisation through peaceful means by a socialistic society—Owen's, Fourier's, Saint Simon's, Syndicalist's, John Ruskin's and Mahatmaji's hopes could not be realised—there are definite limitations for this movement to grow under the ægis of the capitalism, the move of the British Governments to tax the dividends of co-operative societies,—its extraordinary potentialities in a country with a socialist government seeking to establish socialism *i.e.* Russia—

hence the impossibility for Indian Co-operators and A. I. V. I. A. to help us to reach a better state of things without socialism—the history of Indian Co-operative Movement, Sir Frederich Nocolson's, Strickland's and Darling's reports, the Punjab movement in the hands of officials, the Madras and Bombay movements in the hands of non-officials—the special development of co-operative credit movement in our countryside.

35. **Labour Movements.** The history of the Factory Acts —the influence of international labour opinion, I. L. O. and International Trade Union Congress—war, post-war boom and the strikes on railways etc.—the Trade Union Act and Trade Disputes Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Payment of Wages Act, Mines Act—the growth of trade union movement, the Trade Union Congress, the influence of Congress leaders thereon—the split between the Joshi group and communists—the formation of National Federation of Labour—the 1935 Giri-Joshi-Ruikar's proposals pourpalers —the 1936 Bombay Compromise to bring about unity between T. U. C. and N. F. of labour—the Government and I. L. O., the ratification of international Labour Conventions—the growing unwillingness of Government to co-operate with I. L. O. because of its solicitude towards capitalists—The Royal Commission on Labour —the present position of Trade Unions, Railwaymen's federation and other unions, their representation in future legislatures—their lessons to peasants, five lakhs of organised labour have forced Government, Congress and Press to pay special attention to their demands—the idealogy of our Trade Union Movement on strikes, political and economic destiny of our country.

36. **Labour Departments.** The Madras Government's solicitude towards the depressed classes—Bombay Government's attention to urban labour—the nature of help rendered —the digging of wells, providing house site, offering scholarships, organising labour schools and co-operative societies.

37. **Unemployment.** The present day Indian's wrong idea of the cause and extent of unemployment—the urban middle class unemployment is only an insignificant portion

of it and its solution cannot touch the fringe of the great problem, the incidence and effects of unemployment on workers—Unemployment is incidental to capitalism, it is inevitable, the theory of labour reserves in anticipation of demand, the effects of trade cycles which are produced by capitalism—the western methods of unemployment relief, labour exchanges, waiting lists and de-casualisation schemes and unemployment insurance—unemployment may be fought by a developmental programme as in U. S. A—India's Famine Relief Policy—Russia's successful elimination of it —India's unemployment extent, nature, effects—socialism the only solution.

38. **Famine Relief Policy.** History of Indian famines, their effects—Government's efforts to save the people and the cattle—famine commissions, their recommendations, better transport facilities, protective irrigation schemes, better credit facilities, land improvement loans act, agricultural loans act, co-operative credit, the test works and famine relief—present famine relief policy—test works are started too unwillingly and too late and wages for test work too inadequate—famine relief given only after declaring an area famine stricken an impossible thing—method of preventing the breaking out of famine—protective irrigation developmental schemes—introduction of diversifications of crop is to start development of subsidiary occupations, relieving of population burden from land.

39. **Civil Liberties.** The history of their growth in England through parliament, Wilkes, Milton, *Habeas Corpus Act*—their advocates Milton, Roussou, Thomas Paine—their free enjoyment in industrial nations as long as capitalism had nothing to fear—their extension to all countries with parliamentary institutions—their incorporation in the German constitution to the fullest extent—their partial abrogation in England and complete nullification in Germany, Italy, Austria and India since their enjoyment is found to be detrimental to the domineering class interests—The Civil Liberties movement in India.

40. **Religion:** History of religions—the relations between religions and upper classes—the attitude of religious heads

towards the causes for the poverty of the masses—their interested fatalism, their onesided conceptions of heaven and hell—the vested interests of priests—the need for helping the masses to grow out of their dependence upon the religious vested interests—the secularisation of education and life of the people—overcoming the dangers and troubles arising from inter-communal strife and competetion—the only antidote for religious mania and begotism is the development of class-consciousness—the history of the fight of man against religion, culminating in the solutions of the Reformation, the French Revolution, and Russian Post-October Revolution.

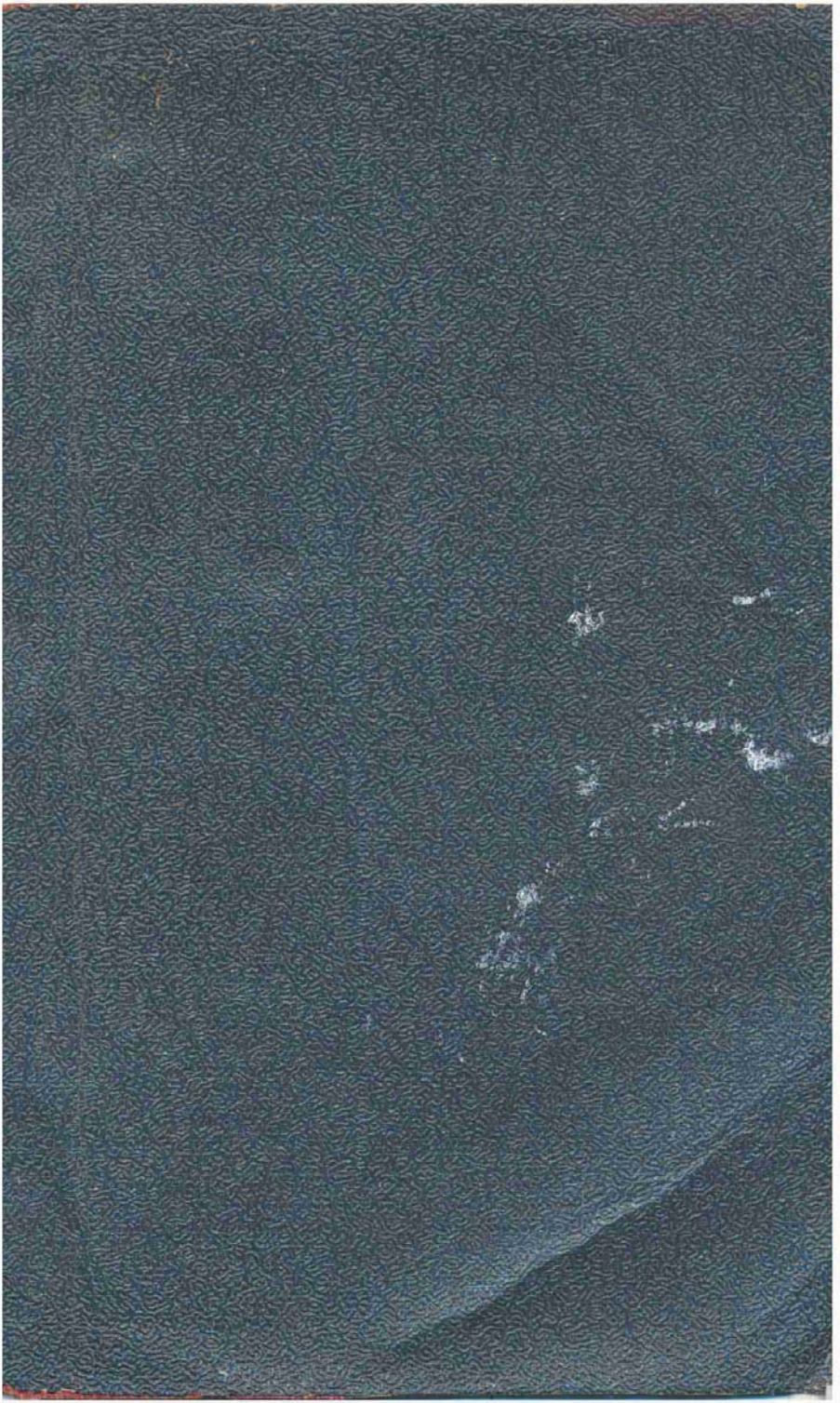
41. **Press and Propaganda.** The results of modern elections are mostly dependent uponthe press and propaganda—the control of the press by the rich in the west and in India—propaganda daily becoming more costly—it can be used mostly by the rich and the landed—the antidote of the poor for all this is personal canvassing, development of organised minority, adult education.

42. **Rural reconstruction.** The history of private effort. The Servants of India Society and Servants of People's Society, Y.M.C.A. and Ramakrishna Mission's contributions—the Punjab rural reconstruction boards—official reconstruction Plans—taluk and district rural development committees of Bombay and U.P. organised by Government—Mahatmaji's contribution—Khaddar and A. I. V. I. A—the many Ashrams in different provinces—Government of India's rural development grants of 1935 and 1936—the philosophy and futility of rural reconstruction—it can at best shave off some evils and sooth some people, cannot solve the national problems of sanitation, water supply, housing and unemployment.

43. **Adult Education.** The history of adult education in England, Denmark, Australia and Canada—the workers' educational association, the labour and liberal summer schools of England—the Andhra experiments, Y.M.C.A. summer schools —the Andhra Peasants' Institutes—the need for university extension schemes—the necessity for training propagandists for carrying on national work in the country and the special contribution of the Andhra Peasants' movement.

44. **Library Movement.** In America, England, and Baroda—the contribution of the Andhra movement—its utility to the masses who have to retain and improve the education derived from elementary schools.

45. **Rural Water Supply.** The large tracts going without proper water supply—the consequent prevalence of diseases such as guinea worm.

46. **The Struggles of the Masses.** Industrial labour strikes and lock-outs—the development of fighting strength of labour through trade unions and creation of class consciousness—The forest Satyagraha—No rent campaigns—The fight of the masses against Government, Zamindars and mahajans—the fight of the masses against the laws, Usurous Loans Act, Civil Proceedure Code, Estate Land Acts or other tenancy Acts, Rent and revenue recovery, Acts—insurance against litigation.—The possibilities for masses to rush into the enemy's camp even through the present laws—the legal remedies needed—the technique and possibility of direct action.

47. **How to make the world safe for the masses.** Fight against fascism—united front on part of working class parties—creation of class-consciousness among the militant and organised minority—the utilisation of every means possible in the direction of parliamentary Governments, and civil liberties unions etc.