

# WHEN CONGRESS RULED

{ A CLOSE-RANGE SURVEY OF THE CONGRESS  
ADMINISTRATION DURING THE TWENTY-EIGHT  
MONTHS OF 1937-39 IN THE UNITED PROVINCES }

GOPI NATH SRIVASTAVA

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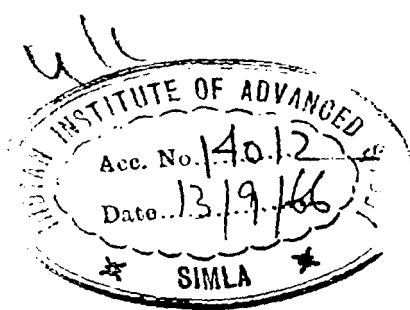
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*By*

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Mr. Gopinath Srivastava belongs to that band of Congress workers who in response to Mahatma Gandhi's call in 1920 walked straight from the class-room to the political field. He is now only thirty-seven but has a political record of a score of years. Since 1920 he has been an active worker in the Congress cause, having suffered the rigours of jail life no less than half a dozen times.

Writing is his hobby and for short occasional periods he has been engaged in regular journalistic pursuits. He wields a forceful pen which is not afraid to move on original lines. He is what he never conceals a 'rightist' and has been prominently associated with Congress moves for council-entry and office-acceptance, not he to forbear from expressing his views at times when elder men would hesitate to speak against the popular currents of belief.

In the last Congress Government in the United Provinces he was rightly chosen as a Parliamentary Secretary. Besides Jails and Criminal Tribes, he was also put in charge of the Public Information Department. In the latter capacity he was equally in touch with everything worth knowing in the province. His reactions of the twenty-eight months of Congress regime in U. P. have been presented in the following pages. His scru-

pulous regard for facts during this period of Congress Rule in the province, popularly taken as the laboratory of India's political and constitutional experiments, and the way he has grasped the underlying principles of Government and administration are ample testimony of the author's quality as well as of the constructive genius of our people.

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## CHAPTER I

### CIVIL LIBERTIES

The Congress assumed office in July, 1937 and went into wilderness in November, 1939. These 28 months of office with the exception of 14 days during which the Congress remained out as a protest against the general policy towards political prisoners might be reckoned as a continuous period of active service to the country in earnest fulfilment of what the Congress had so long stood for. The period is certainly a brief moment in the perspective of Indian history. It may also be considered as short in the course of India's struggle for Independence. But there is no denying the fact that within the limited span of 28 months were focussed all the constructive energies of the men who were responsible for the governance of as many as eight provinces covering the bulk of population outside the states. Like an hour-glass this period concentrated the light which emanated from minds great and small but all rendered akin by sacrifice in the cause of freedom. Therefore an account of these two years and a quarter of what happened to the country will not be amiss. As this province by virtue of its peculiar problems had of late become the hub of Indian national life the following pages may as well illustrate the wider endeavours of the country at large.

A word or two is necessary before I proceed. I do not propose to dwell long over details. Being connected with the organisation and administration of the Public Information Department I have had opportunities to study piles of files on all relevant and irrelevant matters. I have never considered them to be nuisance, because in my opinion the sense of facts is a priceless possession and must always precede the sense of values which is the mark of disinterested observation. But there is always the danger of losing sight of the wood in the trees. So if I lay stress on the vital issues involved in preference to the particulars I will do so in a spirit of compromise. In other words I would request the readers to take me on trust when I deal with the generalities and to form their own opinion when details are given.

Regarding my political views I say with pride that I have been a Congressman from my youthful days. According to common usage which in my opinion is devoid of any significance, my politics are of the Right. In fact, I have always considered them to be so. My sympathies, however, with the labour and the kisan movements are strong. In my opinion all mass movements should be cherished. But at the same time I must confess my inability to fully appreciate those tendencies which in the name of ideologies create diversions and lead to the discrediting of the parent organisation at a moment when the call is urgent for united action. India is big, Indians vary between themselves on various counts, variety makes for the richness of life. Yet



beneath the seeming differences there is the underlying unity which is symbolized in the Congress. If the Congress claim to speak on behalf of India's aspirations has any meaning, then discipline becomes the categorical imperative and nothing which hinders the development of the grand theme of national demand has a rightful place. All my efforts have been motivated by the supreme consideration of loyalty to this basic assumption. This strand in my mental make-up will perhaps explain certain defects in my analysis. In other words, I am cognisant of other possible analyses of the social and economic forces which were released and fostered by the Congress Government, but I have chosen the Congress point of view for the simple reason that they are in my opinion subsidiary to the main functions of a national organisation that captured political power against countless odds in eight provinces.

The main function of the popular Government was the extension of the scope and content of civil liberties. It would be no exaggeration to say that up till July 1937 they did not exist, and even if they did, they led an apologetic existence. Bans were put on nearly all radical associations, particularly students' organisations and volunteer corps. The Criminal Law Amendment was hanging like a many-bladed sword over the necks which were insolent to bear heads. The speeches by seasoned politicians were reported by men who were not particularly famous for their education and the garbled versions offered pretexts for prosecutions. Correspondence of political workers was censored. Stu-

dents in search of employment had to produce certificates from the authorities to prove their non-participation in "subversive activities". Even casual attendance at a Congress rally came within the purview of the above. No wonder that the number of political prisoners increased at a rate which was the despair of even our fast moving population. In fine, all thoughts were dangerous. Government in India had forestalled the Japanese, the German and the Italian, all the Fascist regimes in the suppression of free thinking.

The very first thing that the Government did was to lift the ban imposed under the Criminal Law Amendment Act upon a number of associations in Cawnpore, Allahabad, and in other districts of the province. Orders that had illegalised a number of progressive societies like the Youth League, the Kisan Sangh and the Hindustan Seva Dal were withdrawn. The Government had maintained a black list and securities had been demanded from a number of journals. This black list was discarded and the Press for the first time enjoyed full opportunities to give free play to their views. One method by which the Press had been controlled so far was by the payment of direct subsidy. In the course of the last two years, I may say with confidence, no use was made of the same for the purpose. Yet another well-known procedure was patronage through the distribution of court notices to the favoured papers. Soon after the assumption of office, orders were issued to the district magistrates to the effect that no discrimination in this regard was to be made against any press or news-

paper for its political opinions. In the main two principles were enunciated in the Government order; first that the circulation was to be the sole criterion for the claim of any newspaper to receive court notices and summonses because the Government realised that the money ultimately belonged to the litigants and therefore it was necessary that court notices should reach the people concerned in the quickest possible time. The second principle was to ensure to the Hindi and Urdu papers of the province with the requisite certified circulation, a regular flow of the notices, for which monthlies were excluded and preference was given to the weeklies, bi-weeklies and dailies in an ascending order. The district magistrates were also requested to submit quarterly returns in order to enable the Government to find out how far the principle of rotation was being followed. The result was on the whole satisfactory. I say 'on the whole', because during the first stages of the operation of the Government order, the old system could not be immediately liquidated. Vested interests continued to pull their weight for some time. But with greater vigilance on the part of the authorities, rotation gave a fillip to the Hindi and the Urdu Press as a whole and eliminated by a process of competition papers which led their mushroom existence solely on the patronage of court notices.

I have already referred to the securities which had been demanded under the Indian Press Act (Emergency Powers Act 1931). These were at once refunded, because it was felt that the grounds for action in nearly all cases were political. Later on, however, the Congress

Government without reversing its policy had to amend its practices. Liberty which the Press for the first time began to enjoy was like a heady wine. Certain sections of the Press took advantage of the situation and began to preach aggressive communalism. For long the Government tolerated this outburst. But when it was found that certain papers were inflaming the sect or the community for whom they were catering, into open violence against another or the rest, the Government impressed upon them the necessity of observing the decencies of public life from which alone grow those comprehensive civic rights that encompass the specific ones of the Press. When a conflict was threatened between these two orders of rights, the Government proceeded to persuade. When persuasion failed, action was taken against the recalcitrant ones of the press. In no case, however, did the Government depend upon subterranean methods or its extraordinary novel powers. Ordinary provisions of the existing laws were considered sufficient.

A few words may be considered necessary at this stage to explain the mechanism of persuasion. A Press Consultative Committee was formed to serve as an effective liaison between the Government, on the one hand, and news-agents and journalists, on the other. In the absence of a properly organised journalists' association in the province and of any other precedent the members of the committee had to be nominated for a fixed term at the end of which it was expected that the journalists of the province would themselves take it up. The idea

was to take the press into active confidence in matters concerning them. Here was a body which could advise the Government on matters affecting the liberties and the convenience of the Press vis-a-vis the Government. If a particular journal was considered to have offended against the canons of fair expression, the Government, instead of taking any action themselves, would choose to refer to this body of jurors who were recruited from the same profession. The Committee was not packed but consisted of an equal number of representatives from the Hindi and the Urdu press presided over by one who by experience and ability had equipped himself for the task. Interests which were opposed to the politics of the party in power did not miss representation. In fact, it was widely held in the Congress circles that the composition of the Committee erred on the side of generosity to the opponents. Quite a number of cases were referred to the Committee, the proceedings of which were always confidential. Every case was adjudged on its journalistic merits. It is a pleasure to note that the Committee discharged its duties to the satisfaction of all. During riots this Committee appealed to the press of the province to forbear from publishing news which might exacerbate communal feeling. The press took the cue and behaved worthily.

The question of political prisoners was naturally important to a Government which was manned by those who were not unacquainted with the sweets of prison life. All throughout the world wherever and whenever there has been a fight for independence the first plank

of settlement has been the liberation of political prisoners. Congressmen had courted jail in large numbers in the preceding series of national movements. Pledged to non-violence as they were, their offences were more or less technical breaches of the law. But like a mighty current the Indian movement had collected in its sweep a number of people, the nature of whose offences was more serious. The Congress did not condemn their motives, though it could not subscribe to their methods. But the Congress never gave up its faith in its own purifying efficacy and hoped for the day when non-violence would replace short-cut methods by the process of moral persuasion, and impatient idealism would be studied by constructive redemption. Prompted by this faith the Government not only released a large number of political prisoners, including those convicted in the Kakori case, on their own merits, but welcomed a crisis on the general principle. The significance of the crisis is not to be measured by the number of days for which the Government remained out of office. The release of political prisoners had been an important item in the election manifesto. This had to be redeemed. The more important issue was a constitutional one. The Congress had accepted the responsibilities of office as a result of certain negotiations between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy. One of the assurances secured was that the Governors of the respective provinces would not interfere with the day to day administration, while reserving to themselves the ultimate responsibility for the peace and tranquillity of the respective provinces.

So when the proposal for the release of political prisoners was mooted, a conflict arose. Let it be admitted that it was not between the Congress Ministry and the Governor at all. What the Governor did was to refer the matter to the Governor-General who on the strength of Section 126(5) of the Government of India Act, 1935, instructed the Governor to disallow the release. In protest the ministry resigned on February 15. Mahatma Gandhi, as the country knows, resolved this crisis by his supreme tact. His contention was that law and order were the immediate concern of ministers and that nobody ever questioned the need for maintaining peace and tranquillity. The ministry never objected to the procedure of individual examination. The country began to question the good faith of the British Government. The Governor-General ultimately gave power to the Governor to agree to a settlement, with the result that a joint statement was issued containing this important sentence—"that there was no reason to fear any usurpation of, or interference with, the legitimate functions of the responsible ministers." The ministry withdrew the resignation on February 25. The meaning of this settlement therefore lies in the fact that the Congress Government was under no delusion as regards the limitations of the Government of India Act and had taken the first step to prove its disappointing qualities, and extend the frontiers of civil liberties as far as was possible in the circumstances. But the most important significance of the crisis, in my opinion consisted, in the all-India character of the dispute. Truth to tell,

the problem, quantitatively, was not a large one. When the crisis came there were only 15 political prisoners inside the U. P. prisons. The question primarily concerned Bengal and the Punjab, the two non-Congress provinces. But the U. P. and Bihar ministries could not very well rest on their own oars and neglect what was happening in two other provinces. It was not, this should be made clear, an interference with either the executive or the legislative powers vested in other provincial governments but it was a lever to lift public opinion all over India on the question. By the February crisis the U. P. and Bihar lined up with the two provinces of Bengal and the Punjab which were in the enjoyment of a smaller quantity and a lesser quality of civil rights by virtue of their peculiar circumstances and fully established the claim of the Congress to speak on behalf of the whole of India. One of the results of the Dispensation of 1935 is the growth of provincial feeling. No ministry owing its allegiance to an all-India organisation like the Congress could lie idle and allow it to grow. The crisis bespoke a sincere attempt on the part of the constituent provinces of India to stop the process of vivisection.



## HARIJANS

I have used the word civil liberties so far in the sense of a corpus of rights which subject people usually consider to be inherent, nay, as birth-rights and from the enjoyment of which they are debarred by an alien administration. But the term is really much more comprehensive than that. On account of our pre-occupation with politics we have learnt to equate civil liberties with the political. If, however, the Congress stands for honest thinking and for national regeneration the question of those in our own society whose only natural function seems to be to remain depressed is to be brought within the scope of the term. Thanks to Mahatma Gandhi, the attention of the country has been drawn to the Harijans. Without exaggeration and even at the risk of being used by the political adversary I make bold to state, however, that the denial of civic rights from the Harijans by the upper castes has been of a more intensive quality and more serious kind than that by the Government from the Indian people inasmuch as the former has had the sanction of religion. I do not believe in the curses of history, but if they do exist they are operating in India today. We have got what we gave. This is the reason why in any account of what the Congress Government did for the extension of civil liberties, its attempts to ameliorate their condition must needs be

immediately included.

In the U. P. the total strength of the scheduled castes is 10,526,057. The Chamars together with *koris* account for about 66% of this number. Of the Chamar males aged 7 or more only 7% are literate and the corresponding figure for *pasis* is 5%. Literacy among females is less than one-tenth of the above. These figures need no comment. So the Congress Government realised that unless something substantial was done for the removal of illiteracy from among the ranks of these 26% of the total population, they would act as a drag upon the social body. The educational problem was two-fold. First to encourage school going habits, and secondly to foster that type of education for which they are occupationally fit. So in the provincial budget there was a special provision of about 3 lacs of rupees a year for their education. A major portion of this expenditure was allotted for the award of special scholarships and stipends to school going boys and girls. Three post-graduate scholarships of Rs. 25/-, 8 degree scholarships of Rs. 20/-, 16 intermediate stipends of Rs. 16/- each and 1,760 high schools, 576 vernacular middle schools, 5,640 vernacular primary schools, 48 vernacular training school stipends of varying amounts from Rs. 2 to .7; in all scholarships worth Rs. 102,790 were given. For the supply of text books and writing materials to deserving Harijan students the Government allotted about Rs. 7,500/-. In many cases examination and tuition fees were either paid or exempted. A special provision was made for the admission of de-

pressed class students to the teachers' training institutions for vernacular schools and 144 schedule class students were admitted annually to it. It really meant that the Government expected that within a reasonably short period there would be a sufficient number of trained teachers available to take charge of existing institutions for depressed classes as well as other new schools which were proposed to be opened in the future. The depressed classes unfortunately experienced difficulties in getting their children admitted to ordinary institutions. The Education Department took necessary steps for the removal of obstacles and of invidious treatment in such admissions. The District Boards of the province as well as certain Municipal Boards were asked to appoint from among depressed classes supervisors whose duty was to stimulate demand for education.

I have already indicated that the Chamars form the majority of the schedule castes in the U. P. The Government initiated a scheme for the development of raw hide industry. The industry as is well known has been so long carried on by primitive methods. Some attempts had been made in industrial schools to introduce more scientific treatment of leather. But it was realised that unless such schools were brought to the villages and particularly those villages in which the depressed classes lived, there was no chance either for the improvement of the hide industry or for the economic uplift of the Harijans. So tuitional classes in tanning were opened. The class consisted of an expert instructor known as *ustad* who gave demonstrations in the use of improved

tools and appliances. He, with the help of a commercial assistant, tackled three main branches of the work, namely, flaying, preservation and curing of hides and tanning by improved methods. Instructions were given in the production of the correct type of leather that would find ready market. After a certain fixed period the class moved on to another locality. Prizes in the shape of tools and appliances were distributed for efficiency.

But the Harijans also lived in cities. In the urban centres 25% of scholarships and stipends at the various technical and industrial institutions were reserved for depressed class students. In 1937-38, 168 industrial scholarships amounting to more than Rs. 16 thousand were reserved for them. I must admit that the full amount could not be utilised as an adequate number of Harijan students did not come forward. It is not so much a comment on the earnestness of the Government effort as upon the age-old inertia of public apathy.

I think that the policy of the Congress Government towards the Harijans was intrinsically sound. The general attitude towards the problem is ethical. This is very good in its way, especially when it is a reflection of the nature of the large struggle as interpreted by Mahatma Gandhi. But however desirable that attitude may be it does not materially help in the solution of the problem, for which a combined psychological and economic approach is essential. At best the moral approach makes for a sort of paternal benevolence and often leads to some kind of patronising reformism that produces

complacency among those who give and sullen resentment among those who take. I am on the whole glad that the Congress Government of the United Provinces was not affected by any cheap variety of enthusiasm that exhausts itself in no time.

Psychologically, the Government wanted to instil a sense of equality in the institutions which dealt primarily with schedule castes. In May 1938, the Government through the ministry of Local Self Government issued a circular to municipal boards, district boards and notified areas in which it impressed upon the local bodies that the Government attached considerable importance to all questions regarding the welfare of sweepers. The local bodies were also advised to provide maternity benefits to sweeper women in their employment. In consequence sweepers became conscious and struck for the removal of their grievances. In every case the strike was settled most sympathetically and with a grant of increase in wages. To secure full representation of depressed classes in services, all recruiting authorities were asked to show preference in favour of schedule castes whenever the candidate was in other respects suitable. Restrictions in the matter of recruitment of depressed classes as police constables were removed. The Government asked District Officers to exercise vigilance in stopping *begar* being taken from depressed classes by Government servants and others. A number of co-operative societies chiefly credit societies were started exclusively for the depressed classes with a capital of rupees two lakhs and 50 thousand half of

which was owned by them. The total strength of the depressed class co-operators stood in 1938 at 35,000. Eighteen hundred square miles of reserved forest land were also offered to the *shilpkars*. Twenty acres of land was given to the Allahabad Harijan Sevak Sangh at a concessional and nominal rate of Rs. 10 per acre per annum. The Sangh later on applied for the reduction of rent from Rs. 10/- to Re. 1/- per acre. The Improvement Trusts of Cawnpore, Lucknow and Allahabad devoted themselves to slum clearance which directly bears upon the living condition of lower castes in these crowded cities.

Under the scheme of rural development provision was made for a special grant of Rs. 30,000/- for water supply among depressed classes. The Government also declared that it would not recognise any distinction between individuals in the use of public property such as public wells. Thus was self-consciousness sought to be generated in the minds of the Harijans. It was an all round effort and contained seeds of success.

## CHAPTER II

### POVERTY AND PROPERTY

In India the political movement has not been solely directed towards the elimination of the alien rule. Side by side with the above it has aimed at broadening the very basis of political life. Confining our attention to the history of the Congress which certainly corresponds to the history of political consciousness among Indians in recent years we find that the democratic process has marched inexorably from leadership in the hands of a small number of men from the professional class into the mass organisation of to-day. The Congress is no longer a field-day for lawyers during Christmas for passing pious resolutions in faultless English and impeccable frock-coats. Its membership has come to millions and leadership percolated from the top to the near-bottom. In districts and village *mandals* the urge is from below. It will not do to say of the Congress movement during the last ten years that it has succeeded by permeation from above. The secret of its success is the pressure from that larger humanity which comprehends all castes, creeds and classes of the people. Through the large numbers of its primary members democratic process in the Congress organisation has been greatly extended. I admit that it is not yet complete to-day. A vast concourse still remains outside creating new

issues and accentuating the old. The role of the landless for example in the determination of the Congress policy is not yet active. The leaders are still their protectors. But at the same time it is equally true that the essence of the conflict between the political movement in India and the measure of self-determination which the British Government are willing to concede consists in the lack of correspondence between the quantity and quality of democracy achieved by the national organisation and what is recognised in the Government of India Act to be politically possible in this country. In other words the lag between the achievement by the people on the one hand and the conceded actuality on the other is responsible for a grave misunderstanding which exists in the relationship between India and Great Britain. That this misunderstanding has brought about the present constitutional impasse is only a small point after all. What is disastrous is implicit in the fact that while the democratic process will be pursued, however, haltingly, by the national organisation it will be sought to be arrested by the administration which always finds it difficult to keep pace with dynamic movements and seeks alliance with all the forces of reaction in the name of orderly evolution.

Democratic process, however, does not hang in the air. It acquires meaning by coming to earth. Various countries in the world have tried by diverse means to attach significance to it by bringing it closely to the realities of living. Even then we find a considerable part of the world protesting against democracy.



The reason cannot be any other than the fact that neither the democratic leader nor the official in a democratic Government ever equated the problems of living with economic difficulties. Before the Congress organisation was vitalised by Mahatma Gandhi, Indian politicians thought that if questions regarding currency and exchange were solved in India's favour the days of prosperity would begin. Mahatmaji thought otherwise. With his characteristic incisive intellect he hit upon the one basic fact of Indian poverty, namely, the destruction of cottage industries without their substitution by any other. Among the cottage industries the most important was spinning and weaving. Therefore he launched the khadi programme which has since then acquired spiritual values. Whatever may be said about the economics of khadi it has to be admitted by all that through khadi programme the Congress has furthered the democratic process in the Indian national movement. Whatever moral value it has, accrues from the fact of democracy being capable of exciting moral fervour in India today. The khadi programme has brought the poor within the purview of our political attention—that is in my opinion its chief virtue. It has concretised our demand for independence by including the poor man in the village in any future scheme for Swaraj. By constant harping it has become such an integral part of our mental furniture that every man and woman who spins shall not be missed if and when we come to grips with democracy. In fine the Khadi programme will make us avoid the mistake of the previous century that

started under the auspices of the French Revolution. Beyond this I cannot afford to be sentimental about it.

As a realist, however, my emphasis has been slightly different. I have come to realise that though the word poverty is bandied from mouth to mouth neither has its real nature nor its connection with political movement and democracy been satisfactorily analysed. Far be it from me to minimise what the Congress Government did for the revival of cottage industries in these two years. Sincere efforts were made to improve their production, to facilitate their marketing, stimulate their growth and draw the attention of the public to the dire needs for their promotion. Grants were made to deserving people for starting new small scale industries, surveys were made, technical assistance was given and every thing possible within the defective angle was done. It would be no exaggeration to say that by the genius of Dr. K. N. Katju the whole question was tackled in a manner that had not been clearly conceived earlier. Dr. Katju's supreme contribution lay in the fact that he rightly understood the spirit of the Indian national movement and acted on it in the only natural and legitimate way by putting the problem of poverty in the text of co-operation. I have no doubt that in future any Congress Government which means to do well by India will have to keep Dr. Katju's programme of co-operation in the fore-front.

But even co-operation with, or shall I say, by its comprehensiveness and its moral atmosphere fails

to go to the roots of poverty. My argument is as follows: There is no poverty in the abstract, just as there is no democracy with capital letters. Poverty is an economic condition of people. People find themselves in certain material situations. The most important economic ones among them are property relations. In a country like India these property relations are the systems of land tenure to which the poor man is born. Co-operative societies as they are usually understood in India have nothing to do with property relations. Some attempts have no doubt been made to consolidate scattered holdings, but, none so far, on a new system of co-operative ownership. In this province again co-operative societies have laid stress on the credit side. Certainly, indebtedness is a cause of poverty. But at its best it is only a subsidiary cause. Indebtedness arises from various causes, such as the discharge of social obligations and the payment of rent and dues, legal and illegal. The former is a creation of social habits. So long as tradition plays its part Indian men and women will go on spending in an unproductive manner. Besides, expenditure by itself is negative. The positive cause of debt is certainly the stress which is put upon the peasant's purse by the system of land-ownership and tenure. Therefore poverty is a function of forms of property in land. The U. P. Congress Government tackled it in its own way through a series of legislation which in the opinion of some may have even transcended the advertised intentions of the Congress.

## TENANCY

So we come by the impulsion of logic to the important measures initiated by the Congress Government in regard to tenancy, revenue and debt. On August 2 the Premier announced the Government's intention to form two committees of the legislature to consider the forms of tenancy and land revenue law and to examine proposals for the relief of rural indebtedness. The Board of Revenue was subsequently asked to issue instructions for the stay of proceedings for the recovery of arrears of rent previous to rabi 1344 *fasli* by ejection or otherwise and for the stay of proceedings for the liquidation of indebtedness under the Encumbered Estates Act. By two stay of proceedings Acts the stay orders for old rental and civil debts were validated. These stay orders created the inevitable unsettlement. Certain zamindars either did not collect or simply withheld payment until forced. The tenants began to think that there was no need for the payment of rent or that if they paid they would lose the benefits of subsequent legislation. However, the misapprehension was removed and the position settled down in no time. The land revenue and rent collections were full by the end of 1937.

Relief for damages to kharif crops was given on a more generous scale and the Encumbered Estates Act had practically no effect during the year. In 1938, the

province was affected by serious floods and *takvi* to the tune of 21 lakhs of rupees was distributed. By the Rent and Revenue (Relief) Bill of 1938, the principle of proportionate relief obtaining in Agra was extended to Oudh. The Stay of Proceedings (Revenue Courts) Act of 1937 and the Temporary Postponement of the Execution of Decrees Act were extended to a period of 18 months from September 1938. The Abatement of Rent Suits Act, 1938 was also passed by which tenants, other than permanent tenure holders, fixed rate tenants and tenants of *Sir* were allowed to institute suits for the abatement of rent irrespective of any time bar. The Land Revenue (Amendment) Act enabled statutory tenants in arrears to apply for abatement and commutation of rent. An important provision of this Act was that rent could not normally be enhanced by more than one fourth of the existing rent. Another significant notification was issued exempting one-third of the agriculturist judgment debtors' rabi crop of 1346 *Fasli* from liability to attachment and sale in the execution of decrees. The period for depositing the rent in court without payment of fees was also extended. Two committees were appointed to go into the question of Government estates in Kumaun and the rest of the province.

These were some of the palliative measures and their list is not exhaustive. Besides, they are too technical to be of any value in a running account. The most far-reaching and comprehensive measure which has just received the Governor's assent was the Tenancy

Bill. I do not think that to any single measure in the history of legislation in India so many amendments have been moved and against which so much opposition roused. But if we choose to remain dispassionate, now that the dust of controversy has been laid, we cannot fail to realise its far-reaching character in affecting the very structure of the life of the people and in accelerating the democratic process. For a correct appraisal of the measure certain facts about the situation in the province have to be borne in mind:

1. Half of the land in this province is owned by a very small number of big landlords who form but only half per cent of the total strength of their class.

2. A vast majority of these landlords cannot trace their ancestry beyond 100 years of British rule. That is to say, most of the landlords were farmers of revenue, tax collectors, officials, *mukaddams* and *pradhans*. They were created into zamindars in accordance with the policy of strengthening the landlords.

3. The State's share, which was originally fixed at nine-tenths of the rental collection, had been reduced to 40% *de jure* and 30% *de facto*. A modification had been made in the method of calculating rental valuation for the purpose of fixing State's share by leaving out of account the prospective increase during the term of settlement and by allowing deduction for improvements and bad collection in the interest of landlords. In consequence of this policy zamindari rights became very valuable and money was poured into land.

4. After 1929 agricultural prices fell precipitately

and made it impossible for the tenant to meet his rental obligation. This fall in prices has been a permanent feature of the state of agriculture during the last ten years.

5. Each taluqdar in Oudh had some *Sir*. Originally *Sir* was meant for personal use. But when the landlords were in office, the *Sir* land was considerably extended with the result that its possession was abused. *Sir* became like the feudal lord's *demesne* and the landlord was the dictator. *Sir* was let out and the tenants could be ejected at the landlord's will, practically without any reference to law. In Bara Banki alone the taluqdars possess 148 acres of *sir* per head on the average. The number of zamindars paying revenue up to Rs. 250/- is 11,85,000 in the province, and of those who pay more than Rs. 250/- is 44,000. Out of 44,000 there are few who possess *Sir* of more than 40 acres.

6. There are grave discrepancies in land tenure between Agra and Oudh whereas poverty is uniform. In Agra and Oudh there are statutory tenants without hereditary rights. There is a distinction between *pahi-kasht* and resident tenants. Tenants suffer from *Begar*, *Nazrana* and various forms of cesses. They have no rights to plant trees on their holdings. The determination and modification of rent as well as the grounds of enchancement, abatement and ejection have been without due regard to any sound economic or for the matter of that even human principles.

7. In very few cases the tenant got any receipt from his landlord for the rent paid.

I am sure that the above facts make a composite

picture in the heart of which the ordinary villager in this province is to be seen. Everybody will admit that it is a tragic sight. So the Congress Government felt that unless the position was changed, the villager could not come to his own. So the Tenancy Bill had to be passed in the teeth of opposition, the beauty of which consisted in the fact that it was strengthened by the capitalists. The Muslim League's position was somewhat peculiar. It was busy after protecting the interests of Muslim zamindars and securing the Islamic law of inheritance among Muslims. The real ratio of Muslims among the cultivators was 9·8 though their population ratio is more than 14. On population basis the Hindu cultivators constitute 88 per cent of the Hindus of the Province, but Muhammedan cultivators are only 29 of the Muslims. Thus it was clear that the Bill could not and did not affect the Muslims in any respect more injuriously than it did the Hindus. The Act, however, provides that in the case of Muslims *Sir* would devolve according to the Islamic Law of Inheritance.

Let us enumerate the principal changes which have been sought to be affected in this Tenancy Bill, the first law regulating the rights of cultivators as applicable to both Agra and Oudh. The account that follows corresponds to the chapters of the Bill as much as is possible.

The Act does not apply to the Jaunsar-Bawar pargana of the Dehra Dun District or to the portion of the Mirzapur district south of the Kaimur Range. Both these areas are partially excluded areas under the Government of India Act 1935 and the legislature as such has no



power to legislate for them. Neither does the Act apply to that portion of Kumaun division to which the Agra Tenancy Act 1926 did not apply.

Under the Act, all trees whether they occupy the land for a longer or shorter period constitute the grove. A new definition of crops has been introduced by which bushes are also recognised as crops.

The Act provides that on land ceasing to be grove-land the grove-holder becomes a hereditary tenant and the rights of grove-holders as regards transfer and sub-letting have been made independent of custom or contract.

The second chapter deals with *Sir*, the most contentious item in this piece of legislation. *Sir* has been defined as all land which was *Sir* at the commencement of the Act under the Agra Tenancy Act, 1926 or the Oudh Rent Act 1886, but land belonging to landlords paying more than Rs. 25 local rate corresponding to Rs. 250 land revenue ceases to be *sir* if it was not *sir* before the passing of the Agra Tenancy Act 1926 or the Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act 1921. Of the remaining *sir* of landlords paying more than Rs. 25 local rate that portion which at the commencement of the Act is let to tenants ceased to be *sir* and the tenants became hereditary tenants subject to the following condition: that

1. there will be no reduction in the *sir* area for landlord who has less than 50 acres *sir*, and
2. if a landlord has more than 50 acres of *sir* he will retain the minimum of 50 acres.

But under the Act there may be a change in the actual

fields which are *sir*. Provision is made in the Act in cases in which a landlord possesses *kbudkasht* and has let part of the *sir* for the conversion of the whole or part of his *kbudkasht* into *sir* and the granting of hereditary rights to the tenants of an equal area of his *sir*. No reduction or alteration is made in the *sir* of landlords paying Rs. 25 or less local rate whether that *sir* was acquired after the passing of the Agra Tenancy Act 1926 or the Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act of 1921 or before or whether that *sir* is sublet or not. There is no provision in the Act for an increase in the *sir* area. Tenants of the *sir* have been given security of tenure for 5 years. The Act further provides, as has been stated above, that in the case of Muslims, *sir* devolves according to the Islamic Law of inheritance and in the case of Hindus by personal law. But if as may frequently happen in Oudh, occasionally in Agra, some of the heirs under the Islamic Law or personal law did not succeed to proprietary rights to *sir* they will hold their share of *sir* as hereditary tenants.

Chapter 3 deals with classes of tenants. Probably the most important feature of the Tenancy Bill is the conversion of all statutory tenants and their heirs both in Agra and Oudh into hereditary tenants, and the abolition of the distinction between *pabi-kasht* and resident tenants. Even those tenants in Oudh who possess under-proprietary or proprietary rights in the village are also to become hereditary tenants. But tenants in Oudh holding under a special agreement by judicial decision made or passed before the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 are

treated as a special class. Occupancy tenants in Oudh do not form a special class, but several of the provisions of the Act distinguish between rights of occupancy tenants in Oudh and those in Agra in the light of the following circumstances. The right which a person in whose favour the ex-proprietary rights accrue possessed under the Agra Tenancy Act of 1921 or the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 to relinquish these rights has been abolished by the Act and the right of such a person to surrender his ex-proprietary rights after they have accrued has been limited. In the case of sale, an ex-proprietary tenant can surrender his holding only after the expiry of six months from the date on which they accrue and in the case of mortgage after the expiry of three years.

The number of possible heirs to the holding of an ex-proprietary or occupancy tenant in Agra or of a hereditary tenant has been increased by Chapter IV of the Act. The devolution of hereditary tenancies in Oudh will follow the same law in Agra and will not be according to personal law. But the holdings of tenants under special terms in Oudh and of occupancy and exproprietary tenants in Oudh will follow the personal law as before.

Under the Act, in Agra no distinction between the powers of ex-proprietary, occupancy and hereditary tenants to sub-let is made and they are allowed to sub-let for five years and again after the expiry of the period of three years. Tenants holding on special terms in Oudh and occupancy tenants in Oudh retain their existing right of unlimited sub-letting. But the rights of

ex-proprietary tenants in Oudh will in future be those of ex-proprietary tenants in Agra. Hereditary tenants in Oudh will have the same rights as regards sub-letting as those in Agra. Non-occupancy tenants will have the right which they now have in Agra of sub-letting for a period of one year and again after another period of one year, but the right of sub-tenants or tenants of *sir* to sub-let has been abolished. Provision is made for the voluntary exchange of land in the tenant's holding for land which is a landholder's *sir* or *kbudkasht* and which is fallow; as well as for the exchange of land between the tenants of the same class with the consent of the landholders. If any person with the object of consolidating his holding or of building a house or of improving the amenities thereof wishes to exchange any of his land for other land he may apply to the sub-divisional officer for an order of compulsory exchange. Generally speaking, exchange under this provision can be effected only with landlords, persons holding from the same landholder or persons standing to one another in the relationship of landholder and tenant. Right of a landholder to acquire land in the possession of the tenant has been restricted to the acquisition of sufficient land to provide the landholder for five acres for a house, a garden or a grove. The compensation payable for land so acquired has also been increased. Landlords are also given the right of payment of compensation to acquire tenant's land which is situated within the limits of municipalities, cantonments, or notified areas if such lands are required for building purposes. It will thus be seen that in the

matter of devolution of tenancies, sub-letting, exchange and acquisition of land, the landholder's rights have not been quashed but only restricted.

Certain general provisions relating to tenancies have now to be considered. Under the Act, a suit for the declaration of the rights may be filed in the revenue court by a person claiming to be a tenant or a joint tenant or by a landholder claiming that certain land is his *sir* or *khudkasht*. A suit of this nature by a tenant will be allowed even though the tenant is not in possession. Provision is also made in certain circumstances for the issue by the court deciding such suits of injunction and the appointment of a receiver.

The principal change in the law regarding improvements is the giving to a tenant other than a sub-tenant a right to construct on his holding a residential house or any other building serving an agricultural purpose without the permission of the landholder. But if the landholder's permission is not obtained, the tenant is not entitled on ejection to receive compensation for such an improvement. He may with the landholder's consent, sell it to someone else or he may remove it. Hereditary tenants are given the right to make any improvement other than the construction of buildings in the immediate vicinity of their holding or the construction of tanks. The provision of the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 providing for the determination by the subdivisional officer of the cost of improvement made with his consent has been retained in the Act and in future it will also apply to Agra. Tenants other than non-

occupancy tenants have been given an unrestricted right to plant trees on their holdings but if the trees which the tenant plants or proposes to plant are likely to damage adjoining land any person interested in that land may apply to the sub-divisional officer for an order forbidding or regulating the planting of trees or directing them to be removed. It is further provided that any trees existing on the holding of a tenant at the commencement of the Act shall belong to the tenant if he has been in possession of the holding continuously since 1st July, 1927. Disputes between a landholder and a tenant regarding the ownership of trees will in future be decided by the sub-divisional officer.

It will thus be seen that a Government officer has been installed in the centre of relationship between the landholder and the tenant. The importance of this move is obvious. The tenant is no longer left at the mercy of the landholder. True it is that the *ma bap* relationship has been disturbed but those who are acquainted with the abuse of this domesticity will at once realise that their removal was urgent.

The *begar* and taking of *nazrana* are both prohibited under the Act. Payments in kind which are of the nature of rent are not forbidden but if they are taken in suits for enhancement or abatement of rent their value will be taken into consideration in determining the amount of rent to be paid in cash.

I do not know how far this provision of the Act will be observed in spirit but if the tenants once realise that *begar*, *nazrana* and cesses are illegal the entire labour

of the Congress Government in this province will have been amply rewarded. The extent of abuses in this connection is not known outside this province. They remind us of the last decade of the 18th century in France.

I have said above that so long there had been no sound governing principle in the determination and modification of rent. At best it was empirical. The trouble about the rule of thumb practice is that it at once becomes a matter of fisticuffs. So the Act provided that in the determination of rent rates suitable for hereditary tenants, the rent-rate officer will in future consider not only the actual rents paid and the prices of agricultural produce at different times—this was done before—but he will also compare the valuation at his rates with the value of the produce to ensure that the valuation does not exceed one-fifth of the produce. He will also consider the prices of articles entering into the cultivator's cost of production. I know how difficult it is to calculate the farmer's cost of production. But the point is not one of academic finesse, it is one of impressing upon the officer the utter need for looking into the expenditure side of the producer in calculating rent rates. Probably, the word 'expenses of production' as distinguished from the 'costs' would have been better. But when to-day we find that the Economic Adviser to the Government of India as well as its Commerce Member are insisting on "the rate of replacement" in the determination of prices which in their present condition are nothing but preposterous profiteering in the eyes of

the man in the street, it is but bare justice to remember that the farmer of the soil does incur certain expenses in connection with his occupation.

A few other minor changes have been introduced in the determination of rent rates. In Agra they, in so far as they are applicable to occupancy tenants, will as heretofore be determined after a consideration of the actual rents paid by those tenants and the rent rates applicable to hereditary tenants. In Oudh they will be two annas below those applicable to hereditary tenants. The rent rates applicable to suits for abatement by sub-tenants or tenants of *sir* will be the rates applicable to hereditary tenants with an addition of one-third thereupon. Rent rates applicable to tenants holding on special terms in Oudh and to ex-proprietary tenants will be two annas in the rupee below those applicable to occupancy tenants. The rent-rates officer or a Settlement officer will be appointed to each district for 20 years, but the period for which a tenant can hold at the same rent will be ten years. In regard to the grounds for enhancement or abatement, the Act lays down that a rise or fall in the prices of agricultural produce will not count. On the other hand abatement will be allowed if the rent substantially exceeds valuation of the holding at the appropriate rent rates and enhancement will be allowed if the rent is substantially below that valuation. The right of landholder to claim enhancement of rent on account of improvement continues but in future both in Agra and Oudh such enhancement will be claimable only when the improvement is made by the landholder and not when it is made



by the State. At the same time the Act provides for the appointment of a special officer to alter rents in the case of a sudden rise of prices owing to some extraordinary cause or in an emergency. In the latter case rents may be abated summarily. If the result of the special officer's enquiry is to increase or decrease the assets of a mahal, the land revenue will be increased or decreased proportionately.

Previous rules relating to scale of relief have been made more generous and provision was also made for relief in *malikana* in cases in which relief is given in revenue.

The Act also provides that in future all receipts for rent must be on a printed form sold by Government. Books of 100 receipts will be sold in the tahsil for two annas. It will be incumbent on the landholder to prepare and retain the counterfoil of each receipt granted by him. If in any suit or proceeding in which the payment of rent is in dispute the landholder fails to produce his receipt book the court may make any reasonable presumption against him. A landholder who fails to give a receipt is liable to a penalty not exceeding twice the amount paid, and a person who habitually neglects or refuses to give receipts is liable on conviction, in the case of a first offence, to a fine of Rs. 100 and, in the case of a second or subsequent offence, to imprisonment for three months or to a fine of Rs. 500 or to both.

A decree for arrears of rent may be executed by the sale of interest of the tenant in the whole or a portion of the holding in respect of which arrears accrued but

may not be executed by the arrest of the judgment-debtor. The Court may also lease the holding for a maximum period of six years to any person who pays the amount outstanding under the decree. In the case of expropriatory, occupancy or hereditary tenants, a decree for arrears of rent which has not been satisfied in full within one year of the date of its being passed, can be executed by the ejection of the tenant, but the rent of the area from which he is ejected must not exceed one-sixth of the amount of the decree. If a tenant is ejected from the whole or any part of his holding all arrears in respect of that rent are wiped out. On the other hand if there is a general refusal to pay rent or canal dues in any local area, Government may declare that arrears of rent or of canal dues may be recovered as arrears of land revenue. The Act further assures that no tenant shall be liable to ejection from his residential house in a village merely on the ground that he is ejected from his holding in that village. In the case of expropriatory, occupancy or hereditary tenants ejection for arrears of rent is allowed only when the arrears do not exceed one year's rent. The old procedure has been radically altered in the Act. The application for ejection for decreed arrears must be filed between 1st June and the 31st August. The tenant will be allowed up to 31st May next following the expiry of a period of one year from the date of the order on the application to pay the arrears or if he consents the arrears, up to the 31st May next following the expiry of one year from the date of a decree being given against him. If he does

not do so, he will be immediately ejected. Until he pays the arrears or is ejected the tenant will also be bound to pay the rent of each agricultural year by the 31st May of that year. If he does not do so he will be immediately ejected. Under the Act the tenant can be ejected only from the area illegally sublet. In the case of all *thekas* given after the commencement of the Act the *thekadar* is liable to ejection after ten years.

The Act provides that grants at a favourable rate of rent, hitherto existing in Oudh only, will also be possible in Agra in future.

I have given a detailed account of the salient provisions of the Act in order to show in what material respects it is an improvement. If the above account is carefully read, none would accept the contention of a certain section of zamindars and taluqdars that the Tenancy Bill is confiscator. If anything, the Act does not affect the majority of the zamindars at all. When we remember the facts about the position of land ownership in this province, we find that only three to four thousand of the zamindars are likely to be affected by the provisions of the *sir*. In fact under the provisions relating to *sir* the zamindars paying revenue up to Rs. 250/- are not affected at all and they form the vast majority. It does not mean that they remain what they were. On the other hand, they have undoubtedly been shaken in their attitude to the tenant. This vast body of small landholders were so many petty tyrants in their own zamindari. By the Act they will be made to realise the futility of their tyranny and adopt more reasonable

and civilised forms of approach towards the tenants. The Tenancy Act will make it impossible for them to execute illegal cesses, to eject tenants at their will and commit all those sins of ownership which in their cumulative effect have created deep resentment in the minds of the masses. From one point of view the Tenancy Act has offered this large number of zamindars the only hope of rescue from the coming tide. I do not hope that in the long run the tide will forbear from swamping them. But if the provisions of the Act are given effect to, in the right spirit, it may be held back for some time. In any case there can be no two opinions on the fact that the Tenancy Act has sought to convert the feudal structure with all its antiquated forms of property relationships into legal and contractual ones. Some people think that the Act did not go the whole hog. It may be true but for the realist it is sufficient unto the day thereof. The Tenancy Bill proves the statement that the physiology of civic society is to be sought in the democratic processes of political economy. The measure was certainly political but it was economic as well. As a matter of fact, it is an extension of civic rights into the ranks of those who were so long outsiders to the processes of democracy.

Certain observers have noticed that the strongest thing about this initiation of the masses in the democratic process is that it was done by a zamindar. The Hon'ble Minister of Revenue was Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and he is a zamindar of Bara Banki. Mahatmaji once commended the national spirit shown by some young land-

lords of the province, a number of whom had taken active part in the Civil Disobedience Movement as well as in the no-rent campaign. Their spirit was different from that which had earned for their elders titles and other official recognition. But even they could not declass themselves so completely as Mr. Kidwai did. To a very large extent do class-interests modify our thought and action, and their divestment requires a form of courage and imagination which can only be partly measured by positive sacrifices. The man, when he coined the classic phrase "the zamindars are mere rent-collectors", was in no irresponsible mood. Not only did he speak out his conviction that the landlords had betrayed their trust but he also boldly suggested that in the future society their function would be limited to the work of collection for the state which should be of the people among whom the tenants formed the majority. Since that date when Mr. Kidwai made the remark the whole attitude of the public towards the landlord class has changed. It is no longer the same mixture of vague gratitude with grudging recognition about historical utility. To-day this province thinks more of the dying bird than of its plumage.

And with what gay insouciance this was effected! Laughter that turned away wrath, sarcasm that stabbed without wounding and a tactical skill which turned the Legislative Council, the repository of what to give it a respectable name is called sanity, into a radical body: these will always be associated with Mr. Rāfi Ahmad Kidwai's piloting of the Tenancy Bill. In this, he re-

ceived the very able support of Shri Ajit Prasad Jain his Parliamentary Secretary. But that is not surprising, for Rafi Saheb possesses the secret of securing loyal service. Nobody knew better than he, the supreme art of getting work done by his colleagues and subordinates. Yet the credit must go to him in the main, if it is to go to any man more than any other in this remarkable achievement of precipitating the process of history. Our province has not produced a more genuine radical and a more skilful politician. Many are those, Congressmen and non-Congressmen, service-men or otherwise who will bear out the truth of my statement. I have served him as his Parliamentary Secretary in immediate charge of prisons and publicity and I know his realism and idealism alike. His is the most concrete mind I have seen and his action is worth tons of ideologies. He is the best friend of all active progressive forces in the country.

### CHAPTER III

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Once fixing the main forms of property relationship in the interests of the tenants the next step was to breathe new vigour into the rural community itself. The word 'next' should not be misunderstood. It was really a simultaneous effort. Rural life is essentially organic and India being rural all her problems partake of the nature of an organic whole. In other words, no attempt at improvement can follow a temporal sequence. Just as in the case of a plant it is the same upward sap which governs the leaf, the flower and the seed, so also in the social body it is the sap of life coming from the masses which is equally responsible for all the co-ordinated endeavours. It was the supreme merit of the Congress Government as a Government to have realised this basic fact of living.

When the Congress assumed office the Government of India scheme of rural development was in operation by which a grant of Rs. 15 lakhs and another sum of Rs. 2 lakhs for two years from 1935 was available to the entire province. In 1936 another sum of Rs. 17 lakhs was sanctioned to be spent on a four or five-year plan. According to the exigencies of the Government order this sum was to be devoted to different schemes, each under a separate department. The whole thing

suffered from the evils of departmentalization, official supervision and control.

The Congress scheme for rural development was essentially different. Its basic assumption was that it should be organic. In the second place, its method of approach was self-help as opposed to artificial spoon-feeding. Emphasis was therefore laid on voluntary co-operation and personal contacts. In administrative details the difference was marked. The whole area of the province and not certain selected villages alone was to be covered in five years. A Rural Development officer was appointed to co-ordinate operations. The Provincial Rural Development Board was established and Advisory Rural Development Associations were formed in each district with non-official majority. Later on the composition of the district association was modified with a view to bring the non-official and the official elements in closer bonds.

The first year of the Congress Government was occupied with spade work. Real work began in 1938. Twenty rural development centres in a district, each comprising 20 to 30 villages, were started with an organiser in charge, whose chief duty consisted in the formation of a Better-Living Society. The objects of this society were all-inclusive. There was hardly any aspect of rural life which would escape the net. Many considered the duties of the district organiser to be onerous. But any division of functions would have minimised his usefulness.

Some idea of the activities of a district associations



may be obtained from the following account of the District Rural Development Association of Lucknow. A few miles away from the city the village Gauri is situated in the heart of the country-side. Round about it are certain villages to which it acts more or less as the nucleus. So the Gauri compact area was selected. First of all a survey of the economic and social condition of the area was made. On the basis of the results of the survey action was taken. Within a year the area was equipped with a *panchayat ghar*, a hospital, a seed store, a radio house, a preparatory school and a veterinary hospital. They are all housed in a building which was made possible through the generosity of the local zamindar. During 1938, 15 other centres were established in the district. In all 93 better-living societies were registered and as many as 700 panchayat meetings were held. Every circle was served by a seed store and three times the quantity of rabi seed for 1937 was distributed in 1938. More than 1700 refuse heaps were separated from *abadi*, 586 soak pits dug, 56 village lanes constructed and repaired, 910 manure pits made, 228 fruit plants distributed, 23 scrub bulls castrated and 390 diseased ones were treated. On the industrial side tanning and toy making industries were started, both of which according to the latest report are prospering. Medicines were given to more than 40,000 patients from hospitals and dispensaries of the district which today can boast of having a dispensary within a '5 miles' radius of every village. In 1938 there were nearly 2,000 vaccinations. A cholera week was also

organised in the district and was mainly responsible for the early arrest of this epidemic when it spread across the province. Thirty seven wells were built and 9 specially for Harijans. Twenty adult schools, and two primary schools were started and 11 circulating and 5 fixed libraries established. Physical culture was not ignored. In about 40 *akharas* and 4 clubs gymkhana daily exercises were taken up by young men with great enthusiasm. Four radio sets regularly worked throughout the year. This, I submit, is not a bad sample of the work done by the Rural Development Association.

In the first year the Government made an immediate provision of Rs. 10 lakhs which was to be increased in subsequent years. In 1938 more than Rs. 80 lakhs were budgetted on various items under the rural development scheme. Thus, for example, a sum of about 6 lakhs was granted to various district associations for improved water supply, libraries and adult schools. The Government also started 42 new veterinary hospitals, 25 new Veterinary Assistant Surgeons in addition to the 180 already existing ones, at a cost of about 50 thousand rupees. Mobile centres were established to control cattle disease. Rs. 50,000 were allotted for rural allopathic dispensaries. Sixty-four allopathic, 146 Ayurvedic and 46 Unani dispensaries were operating in charge of qualified men. Medicine chests were distributed in villages and 24 maternity welfare centres were opened, each in charge of a qualified nurse who was to train village *dais*. Suitable grants were made to the Provincial Fruit

Development Board and 10,000 roots were distributed in the three hill districts.

The above is, however, a bare account of the manifold activities of Rural Development Department under the Congress Government. Some details of other sister departments are, however, necessary to show the complete pattern which was devised to improve the condition of the countryside. So long as the quality of agriculture could not be improved and the faith of the agriculturists in their own efforts not stimulated, the better living societies could not function properly. It is well known that the standard of our agricultural production is low. True it is that a large number of iniquities overwhelm him in the performance of his primary duties towards himself and the land he possesses, but at the same time it is to be admitted that he is not always a good farmer in the light of modern knowledge and technique of agricultural operations. Attempts were made by previous governments to teach him the virtues of modern agricultural methods, but they were fore-doomed to failure. The gulf between knowledge acquired in model farms and actual practice was very wide indeed. Then again the Indian agriculturist gambles on rain. The way in which he looks up at the clouds for the tiniest drop of rain or prays to the rain-god for withholding his favour, is pathetic. Therefore the Agriculture Department under the Congress Government brought agricultural experiments into the farmland itself. Within the farm a certain portion was set aside for the purpose of experiments. This had its

immediate effects.

Once the utility of enlightened methods of cultivation was brought home the rest was easy. Before the Congress Government came to power this Department had only 200 seed stores and the amount of improved seed handled by them was totally inadequate. So, at first, use was made of the Government of India grant of 2 lakhs earmarked for wheat. Three hundred and eighty new seed stores situated at different rural development centres were opened, each to serve the needs of two such centres. Three lac maunds of improved seed of different varieties were collected and distributed by the middle of 1938. The figure is certainly not high but if the programme could be pursued with the same zeal it was expected that in about 4 years nearly one-fifth of the total cultivated area in the province would be under improved seed. In regard to payment for seed it has to be noted that cultivators got it on *takavi* or on *savai* or on exchange; the former two were for prosperous cultivators while the last was adopted in the case of the poorer ones. By the exchange system the cost of transport and loss on account of the difference in the prices between improved seeds and *desi* ones were borne by the Government. Each seed store was placed in charge of one trained supervisor with three assistants. Every Assistant demonstrated in six or seven villages and told the villagers the secrets of crop rotation, the necessity for cultivating leguminous crops, the best preparation of composts and the use of improved implements for the purchase of which facilities were provided. It was planned that

the staff would also organise the co-operative disposal of the agricultural produce. A sum of Rs. 1,59,000 was provided in 1938 for the purchase of bulls and cows of good breed for supply to stock-owners. Government provided 250 stockmen, that is, one stockman for 4 rural development centres to look after the castration of inferior bulls and make adequate arrangements for control, prevention and treatment of cattle diseases. Each stockman after being properly trained for six months in the different branches of animal husbandry was to work under the supervision of the veterinary assistant surgeon in the nearest hospital. The scheme could not be given effect to in all its details as the province suffered from a dearth of trained men. Two cognate problems, however, could not be tackled by the Congress Government on account of their complicated nature arising out of the intricacies of land ownership. The development of grazing land in order to make additional quantity of fodder available for cattle and the laying out of plantation for fuel to replace the dung which is generally used for fuel could not be fully carried out. Probably, enormous pressure of population upon land conspired with the existing forms of property ownership towards the occupation of grazing lands and forest areas by the land-hungry masses. The Congress Government appointed special staff for the purpose but nothing material could be achieved in these two years.

As stated above, the basis of the entire scheme of rural development was the better-living society which was being organised in each village. The object of the

society was to promote the moral and economic interests of its members, inculcate habits of saving and thrift, prevent extravagance, and frivolous and unnecessary litigation, settle disputes locally, take steps for better agriculture, improve breeding and condition of cattle, develop the use of improved agricultural implements, better the quality and sale of cottage industries, make arrangements for education, encourage games and recreation and inculcate habits of self-help. The co-operative department was obviously committed to the self-same objects. With alacrity the department gave assistance to village organisations in setting up better-living societies. A number of co-operative societies for the marketing of village produce were started and money was sanctioned to the Milk Marketing Union, Lucknow and to the Provincial Co-operative Union in connection with the schemes for the collection and supply of milk from the rural areas. The most important development was in regard to the organisation of Co-operative Marketing Societies of Cane Growers. Great success was attained in this direction and nearly 6 crore maunds of sugarcane which is nearly one-third of total requirement of the sugar factories were expected by the beginning of 1938 to be handled by these marketing societies. A number of special schemes were set in operation such as the treatment of *usar* land by molasses and the development of fruit culture in the hills and plains.

Sugar deserves separate treatment by virtue of its great importance in the economic life of the province no less than by what the Congress Government did to

make it stand upon its legs through rural development schemes alone. In one sentence, the Congress Government took every step needed for the encouragement of sugar cultivation right from the cultivation of sugar cane to the marketing of sugar. The principle was intensive work in selected areas; the unit of development being a zone in charge of a trained graduate in agriculture who would supervise operations in a number of villages. As a result of this intensive work the yield of sugarcane doubled itself and in many areas where damages were done by red rot and pyrilla the cane of the developed zones remained unaffected. In September 1937 there were only 24 zones. The number was enlarged to 61 by the end of 1938 at a cost of about 5 lakhs of rupees. The total cost of such intensive development in Sugar came to 8 lakhs in all. The next step was to ensure regulated supply to the factories. The need for such action was obvious. Unregulated supply made for congestion at the factory gates at some periods, with inadequate supply at others. In fact this had previously resulted not only in the contraction of the season but also in the loss of sugar. So the Cane Commissioner was instructed to do his utmost for regulating supplies. It will be no exaggeration to say that the executive order for such action saved to the cultivator and the factory an amount equal to half a crore of rupees in one year alone. The Government supplemented the order by incorporating the provision for compulsory regulation of supply in the U. P. Sugar Factories Control Act. Under the law specified areas

were assigned to each factory in which it was to make purchases up to a specified minimum quantity and arrangements were made to enable the cultivators to supply the cane regularly.

But executive orders and legislative enactments could not go very far. The effective remedy was certainly the organisation of co-operative societies of growers themselves for marketing purposes, to enhance the bargaining power and to ensure the members of the society collectively against fraud and malpractices. In one year about 2 crore maunds of sugar were handled by co-operative marketing societies alone; in 1938 about 6 crore maunds of cane.

In this connection it may be mentioned that from one other vital direction the sugarcane cultivator's purse was filled. The minimum price in the year preceding that in which the Congress Government came into power was something like 4 annas per maund. In 1937, the Government increased minimum price to 5 as. 3 pies a maund which put an additional one crore of rupees in the pockets of those cultivators who supplied sugarcane to the factories. Later on, the prices of sugar in the market being much above the level of previous year, Government considered it just to increase the minimum price to 6 as. 9 pies per maund. A higher price for sugarcane to the cultivator, however, was possible if sugar was not sold below a certain level. The Sugar Factories Control Act provided for a Syndicate of which every factory would have to be a member. The Syndicate possessed the power of controlling the



price by regulating supply of sugar released for sale in the market and by fixing the price at which it should be sold by factories. By the Act, the levy of a cess on the sale of cane to sugar factories was also provided. This cess did provide a very substantial source of revenue to enable the Government to forge ahead with its nation building activities. In collaboration with the Bihar Government the Sugar Control Board was established. When the Congress Government resigned the Sugar Syndicate was raising objections against what it considered to be too high a price to be paid to the sugarcane cultivator.

## CHAPTER IV

### COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Apart from the Sugar Industry in which nearly 32 crores of rupees had been invested, 72 mills employing more than one lakh of persons involved, the Congress Government could not concern itself with any major schemes for industrial development. Not that the Government was indifferent to the problems of industrial reconstruction but its idea was to build the economic structure soundly from the base. As such the revival of cottage industries was the initial charge. In regard to large-scale industries all that it did was first to appoint a Committee to suggest which large-scale industries could be selected for development in the province with a fair prospect of success and what steps should be taken by Government to encourage the same. A sum of Rs. 25,000 was provided for investigations and various suggestions were examined.

The problem of cottage industries is three-fold, (i) to collect data (ii) to improve the quality of the articles made (iii) to secure a market for them. In 1937-38 a detailed scheme costing 2 lakhs of rupees for the development of industries in village areas was approved by the Provincial Rural Development Board. Eight Surveyors were appointed to obtain adequate information on which to base further action. Arrangements

were made for the training of instructors of rural industries and aid was given to a number of polytechnic institutions for training in industries like spinning, weaving, dyeing, printing, carpentry, tanning, leather working, hand-made paper, basket-making and smithy. Master craftsmen wherever such were available were appointed to hold peripatetic classes in cotton and wool weaving, dari weaving, wool spinning and weaving, dyeing and printing, cotton and silk dyeing and printing, carpentry, hand-made paper, tanning, basket-making etc. To ensure ready sale of these improved articles stores were started. Two lakhs of rupees were provided for this purpose in addition to 3 lakhs of rupees as loans.

*Gur* industry in particular received a fillip as a result of direct government assistance in the way of a grant of one lakh of rupees. The scheme was to utilise to the best possible advantage the major part of the sugar crop of the province which was not utilized by sugar factories and which was being converted into *gur* of inferior quality by primitive methods. Better crushers were introduced and methods of boiling were improved so that the extraction of juice from cane was increased and the cultivator got more *gur* of a better quality. Special classes were organised at various centres and demonstrations arranged. Instructions in the manufacture of palm jaggery was given in the Etah district where Prohibition was introduced. Various grants were given to Shri Gandhi Ashram, Meerut, and other institutions for the improvement of khaddar cloth. Government servants were provided with khaddar

liveries. In handloom industry quite a big volume of business was transacted. The Handloom Emporium of Lucknow arranged for new designs and stores at selected centres of handloom industry. Arrangements for calendering and finishing as well as some research work were being conducted. Similarly for woollen goods central stores were established at important centres under the control of supervisors who trained weavers. Arrangements were made for the collection and supply of yarn and marketing of goods produced by the weavers. Besides a designing section, a plant was installed at Najibabad which is the chief weaving centre of the province. Weavers were also given demonstrations in improved appliances and methods of weaving.

The hide industry attracted much attention from the Government inasmuch as it is really the industry of the depressed classes. As mentioned before a certain sum was provided for its development with practical demonstrations. A grant of Rs. 10,000 was given for hand-made paper industry in addition to Rs. 3,000 for research work at Dehra Dun. Rs. 2,500 were sanctioned to the workers to enable them to start work. A training class was also opened and instructions issued for the purchase of hand-made paper for Government requirements. The whole of the blotting paper purchased by the Government was hand-made.

For molasses, schemes for research were sanctioned. For the manufacture of power alcohol from molasses Government took early steps in collaboration with the Bihar Government. At the time of resignation the

Power Alcohol Bill was pending.

In oil two model crushing units were installed, and for glass a technologist was appointed. Quite a considerable amount of money was provided for the development of glass industry in the province.

Probably the best illustration of the solicitude of the Government for minor industries was the establishment of a board to consider applications and make recommendations to government in the matter of grants for the establishment of various industries by ambitious men. Quite a big amount of money was thus disbursed for industries as varied as wood work, oil crushing, leather dyeing and printing, hosiery, ghee-making, soap, hand weaving, locks, fruit-preservation, polishing, spinning and weaving. Regarding the financial side of the minor industries in the province a limited liability company called the United Provinces Industrial Financing Corporation Ltd., was registered with an authorised capital of Rs. 50 lakhs with three nominees of the Government on the Board of Directors. The Corporation was to give loans to and guarantee the loans of small industrial concerns in the United Provinces at moderate rates of interest. Subject to certain terms and conditions, Government agreed for a maximum period of 15 years to make certain annual payments to the Corporation not exceeding Rs. 15 lakhs. A marketing company for the buying and selling of goods and their acceptance on a consignment basis was to function side by side as a subsidiary concern to the Corporation. It has to be admitted that on account of

various factors over which the provincial government had no control the Financial Corporation could not achieve much. There was a tremendous amount of hostile opinion against the Corporation much of which could be explained in terms of vested interests. At the time of the resignation of the Congress Ministry the Corporation was recovering from the shock.

## CHAPTER V

### LABOUR

The number of industrial labourers in India is not large; their standard of living is certainly higher than that of the vast majority of peasants who cultivate their land or higher than those who hire themselves out to petty farmers in the villages. At the same time their political consciousness is more advanced on account of their somewhat better organisation, comparatively greater security, their acquaintance with modern methods of mechanical production and their residence in areas where ideas move more quickly than in the country side. It has been said that industrial labourers have always been the vanguard of mass movements in other countries. This is true so long as we remember the companion fact that unless the vanguard is supported by the rear-guard, which is the rural community of tenants and peasants, there is every chance of the former being cut off and beaten by the drive of vested interests through the weak links of the line. In any case, the question of linking up the labour movement with the national movement is of supreme importance. So far as I can see, either labour movement is an integral part of the national movement, in which case labourers form only one section of the masses though with specialised interests, or labour is independent of it, in which case

it has to face the danger of being left to itself in all its isolation. Between these two alternatives, the Congress in my opinion has chosen the first, and rightly so.

For some time, the labour movement in Cawnpore was abstracting itself from the national struggle in the name of a foreign ideology. Good sense, however, dawned when labour realised that Congress Government alone could give effect to their legitimate demands and force their employers to meet their grievances. I emphasize the word 'Congress Government' because previous governments were a sort of an unholy alliance between landlords and capitalists. It is not my purpose to trace the history of labour movement in this province. A brief account of what happened in Cawnpore during these two years and a half would give my readers an idea of the Congress attitude towards labour in a concentrated form. Even before July 1937 labour trouble was brewing at Cawnpore. A number of strikes had occurred most of which were unsuccessful. When the Congress assumed office, the whole province began to feel exhilarated. This feeling with all its sense of liberation and hopes of great future was the cardinal fact in the history of the province. If we miss it we will lose the perspective of events in every sphere including law and order. I mean that a sense of freedom that was occasioned as well as positively generated by the Congress Government was more valuable even with the crude expressions thereof than the feeling of deadness and inertia which was mistaken for law-abiding and orderly habits and which had so long been the stock-



in-trade of good rule by previous administrations. Prompted by this feeling as well as by the accumulated stock of existing grievances a number of strikes took place in several textile mills in Cawnpore for securing increase in wages and a general improvement in the conditions of employment. The employers had reduced their wages from time to time, either directly by the revision of the rates or indirectly by the curtailment of bonuses and allowances. Through rationalization and other methods of intensification unemployment had increased; and active members of the Mazdoor Sabha, the only organisation of textile workers in Cawnpore, were victimized with the none too hidden purpose of crushing their trade union activities. The Premier at once acquainted himself with the situation and promised to take legitimate steps in the matter. Dr. Katju discussed the demands of the workers with the representatives of the labour and Employers' Association and a Labour Officer was immediately appointed. The negotiations fell through, however, because the Employers' Association would not recognise the Mazdoor Sabha as the mouthpiece of labour. So a general strike was threatened at Cawnpore. The Employers' Association agreed to grant recognition to the Mazdoor Sabha and the mills in Cawnpore resumed normal work within a fixed date. The workers refused to go back unless all their demands had been agreed to by the employers. Section 144 was promulgated and action was taken against certain individuals including the General Secretary of the Mazdoor Sabha. The Premier

again intervened and his efforts were successful in bringing about an agreement which provided for the appointment of an inquiry committee. The Cawnpore Labour Inquiry Committee was appointed with Shri Rajendra Prasad as its Chairman to examine and report on the condition of workers and labourers employed in the factories of Cawnpore. The work of the Committee was hampered in various ways. The representatives of the employers and of labour withdrew. Lightning strikes were declared and the Employers' Association would not furnish detailed material until a very late stage. In all the Committee had 38 sittings and the draft report was submitted on March 24, 1938 and published on April 24. The findings of the Inquiry Committee are well-known. The Mazdoor Sabha accepted the recommendations whereas the Employers' Association rejected them. The attitude of the employers caused great resentment among the workers and they decided to declare a general strike despite the opposition of the Congress, Muslim League and the Mazdoor Sabha leaders. The strike spread rapidly and within an hour, 10,000 men of the day shift suspended work. In the next two days all the textile workers in Cawnpore totalling about 24,000 men had downed tools. In all 16 mills were affected. The strikers formed voluntary corps, each mill supplying 200 men, and a general strike council for the peaceful conduct of the strike. The sixteen mills, on the other hand, posted notices at their gates stating that as labourers had struck work and did not present themselves, the mills would

be closed until further notice. While the strike was on a group of 20 strikers with 7 leaders met the Hon'ble Premier and the Minister for Industries. They assured the Ministers that they had publicly expressed regret for not acting up to the leaders' advice and passed a resolution reiterating their full confidence in the Congress and Mazdoor Sabha leaders who were then guiding them. They also demanded enforcement of the entire report by the Cawnpore employers and an enquiry into the cases of victimized workmen in various mills. It was also alleged by them that attempts were being made to create communal differences amongst labourers. The strike at Cawnpore intensified as days passed and the strikers received ample support from the Cawnpore City Congress Committee, the Provincial Congress Committee, the workers of Lucknow as well as the district Muslim League. The labourers in the Hosiery mills in Cawnpore also joined. A new feature of the strike was the participation of women picketers who showed equal zeal as their men in dissuading clerks and other workers from going to the mills.

The course of the strike was throughout peaceful. The Government after acquainting itself with relevant facts and different viewpoints published their resolution on the report of the Cawnpore Labour Inquiry Committee. The keynote of the resolution was the same as that struck by the Hon'ble Premier when he opened the proceedings of the Committee. He had stated that "there is no genuine conflict of interests between the employers and the employed because the success of one

depends on the prosperity of another; that a satisfied well-organised strong labour force is a great asset to industry; and an intelligent well-equipped, well-fed, well-housed and efficient labour force can increase the general efficiency of the industry and promote both quality and quantity of goods produced." After pointing out that not only those directly engaged and interested in the industry but the public in general was suffering considerable loss on account of the stoppage of work in the Cawnpore mills, the resolution stated that "textile industry is a valued asset of Cawnpore and it should be the sacred duty of the well-wishers of the province to bring about conditions which not only stabilized but also further promoted the growth and extension of the industry. All our hopes for the future depend on a speedy industrialisation. We have ample raw material, unlimited man-power and luckily now enough of technical skill and the money market is easy. This is the opportune moment for pooling all resources for constructive purposes. Let all suspicion and mistrust be allayed and let good-will and confidence be rehabilitated with robust faith in future. Let it be remembered that the textile industry has been built with the sacrifice of the general public and even to-day it is being maintained by the millions who make use of the products of our indigenous mills. The industry is protected by the State and there is a high import duty of 25 per cent on all British and 50 per cent on non-British textile imports. It is thus a national industry and almost every single individual in this province has contributed towards its

establishment, preservation and growth. In fact it would be no exaggeration to say that the general public has paid more for the building of the industry than those who have invested money for running it. In arriving at the decision which Government had announced in this resolution they had been influenced primarily by the anxiety for the promotion of efficiency and progress in the textile industry at Cawnpore and they earnestly addressed that the implementing of these decisions would lead to the achievement of this object."

In the above paragraph all the fundamentals were struck with that statesmanship and moral fervour which the public of the province had loved to associate with the Premier's pronouncements.

The Mazdoor Sabha welcomed the resolution but the employers could not find their way to accept it. They wrote a lengthy letter explaining their economic objections. But the head and front of their charge was the activities of the Mazdoor Sabha which they considered to be an undisciplined body having no influence and authority over its members. So the Association said that they would accord recognition to the Mazdoor Sabha when it had furnished proof that it had been duly reconstituted and was working on sound lines, which, of course, the Association was careful to lay down. The employers waited on deputation and discussed with the Premier and other Ministers for three days. The Government replied formally to the employers' memorandum. Regarding the strikes the Government said that it fully realised the harm that

illegal and various strikes caused to all concerned. Such strikes were very much to be deprecated and Government were anxious that some machinery might be devised which would put an end to such strikes. The Government also expressed that they were anxious that the existing strike should come to an end. The Industries Secretary was asked to carry on negotiations to the next stage. Mr. Kharegat considerably narrowed the field of conflict between the employers and workers; still the vital point of difference remained namely, the recognition of the Mazdoor Sabha. A break-down was imminent and preparations were made for the intensification of the struggle. However, thanks to moral persuasion the strike ended after a peaceful struggle for 50 days. The Mazdoor Sabha agreed to re-organize itself along the lines suggested by the Inquiry Committee. The picketers arrested during the period of this strike and not tried till then were released. A satisfactory settlement by the Government between the employers and the workers in Cawnpore after a strife spread over nearly 2 months came as a great relief to all concerned. It was acclaimed by all sections of the press throughout India. In pursuance of that agreement a Labour Commissioner was appointed to act as conciliator and try to prevent dismissals of workmen on inadequate grounds.

But Cawnpore was not to see the last of the strikes. Trouble arose in connection with the New Victoria Mills. Early in 1939, the management of that mill felt that if they would continue to run the mills without serious financial loss, a readjustment of the wages was

to be made. An application was consequently made before the first Labour Commissioner. The New Victoria Mills later on reduced their hours of work by working three days a week. So a local strike was declared on May 2, 1939, which lasted till June 5. Another local strike was declared on July 27 and the management paid off the workers on August 9. The Mazdoor Sabha took up the cause of the employees of the Victoria Mills, supported the previous lightning strike and declared another general strike on October 2 which affected 40,000 workers. The Government made the best effort to bring about an understanding between the Employer's Association and the Mazdoor Sabha. The Government suggestion was to refer the dispute to arbitration by a judicial officer of the standing of a High Court Judge. Both Employers and the Mazdoor Sabha agreed to the suggestion, but the former insisted on such measures as withdrawal of the threat of a general strike and the discussion of the terms of reference including the *locus standi* of the persons to the dispute before referring the matter to arbitration. The Mazdoor Sabha on their side demanded the re-instatement of certain workers. The issues were whether wage reduction was justified and how far the management was right in insisting upon not taking back the old workers. The management's argument was that wages paid to the workers in the New Victoria Mills were higher than in other mills and that owing to trade depression and various other causes retrenchment was essential. It has to be remembered that Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru deprecated

the general strike but the City Congress Committee supported the workers because they felt that they could not be left in the lurch. The general strike continued for about a week and was withdrawn when the Mazdoor Sabha leaders saw the futility of a strike on such a large scale. Throughout these negotiations Government's function was to keep the ring clear. The Government brought it home to the Mazdoor Sabha that lightning strikes without giving a chance to the mechanism of arbitration and to good sense in general to function would not be tolerated.

I have given the history of the two general strikes of Cawnpore in some detail in order to show the Congress policy towards labour. It is not for me to apportion blame in the matter. The employers are what they are but the labourers under their existing leadership were not very helpful. Probably, that is a penalty which every country pays in any period of struggle. Still the lines of divided allegiance are too sharp to be ignored. Cawnpore is an illustration of the principle that subsidiary interests cannot flourish unless there is a genuine practical appreciation of the fact that they are part of the whole and as such they must submit to the discipline that the whole demands. I believe that this principle is different from what is at the basis of totalitarianism.

Side by side with the above, labour welfare work was undertaken in right earnest. A number of welfare centres in Cawnpore, Lucknow and Bareilly were opened with the object of weaning the workmen away from drink and drugs and to offer facilities for reading,



medical assistance, games and recreation which included cinema shows, radio, etc. Enquiries were also made regarding their housing in congested quarters. A Committee was appointed to examine the organization of the system of management of Government Presses to secure to the staff reasonable conditions of service regarding payment, hours of work and holidays.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDUCATION

Probably, future generations of educated Indians will remember these two years of Congress administration more by the re-orientation, nay, the revolution in educational policy which was initiated on the lines of what is known as the Wardha Scheme than by any other single achievement. Thinking people in India had always been conscious of the limitations of the educational system such as the lack of a well-defined policy, the close dependence of instruction upon examination and its unrelatedness to the needs of the country. Tinkering reforms had been introduced before, but they suffered from an absence of vision and boldness in going to the roots of the problem. It was felt therefore that nothing short of a thorough overhauling of the educational policy could make it fall in line with modern developments and reflect the hopes and aspirations of the people. Mr. Sampurnanand applied himself to this stupendous task with his usual zeal, and brought to bear his progressive views upon the entire scheme of education. In March 1938, a committee under the chairmanship of Acharya Narendra Deo was appointed to examine and report on primary and secondary education. The terms were very comprehensive and the Committee was asked to keep in mind the Wardha Scheme.

When the Committee was sitting, an immediate need was felt for a trained staff. So in August, the Basic Training College was opened in Allahabad where graduates could be trained in new method of pedagogics centring in one or two basic crafts. Next month, opportunities were given to women to be trained in the Theosophical School at Benares. A number of teachers were appointed in certain colleges and normal schools for vocational training.

A second committee was appointed to enquire into the working of the universities and make recommendations for effecting much desired improvements. The report of the first committee is a remarkable document and bears a detailed summary.

After describing the general causes which contribute to the deficiency in primary education and laying stress upon poverty which requires supplementary earnings by children whose services are requisitioned from morning till dusk, the report advocated a type of education which fitted children for their hereditary occupation or for other gainful purposes. If the time spent were not generally devoted to book-work and daily indoor routine and if they were engaged for considerable portion of their day at school in out-door daily activities co-ordinating hand, eye and brain, then much of the objection of parents in sending them to schools would disappear. Therefore, the report said that the system which could effectively replace the old system should have the following principles as its basis:

1. There should be a uniform system of com-

pulsory primary education for all children both in rural and urban areas.

2. Compulsory primary education should be provided on a nation-wide scale and should extend for 7 years.

3. Throughout this period education should as far as possible be carried on through concrete life situations and be correlated with one or more forms of manual and productive work in the context of the social and physical environment of the child. The choice of the craft or crafts should be made with due regard to their educational value and to the environment of the child.

4. The medium of instruction throughout the period of instruction should be Hindustani.

The schools in which this type of education would be imparted, that is to say, basic schools were expected to replace all preparatory and primary vernacular and anglo-vernacular schools for boys or for girls or for both. English was not to be taught at this stage. The nature of knowledge to be imparted was expected to produce a student of higher intelligence and more akin to his environment than was being produced under the existing system. The abolition of the present system of vernacular education and the introduction of basic education in its place logically involved a change in the secondary stage. Here also the major defect was that it did not provide varied forms of training for life and employment to suit the different interests and abilities of a large number of pupils. In other words, there

was a drab uniformity and a predominance of the literary type of education. So the Committee thought that if education at this stage was to be a self-contained unit and not merely an extension of the preparatory stage it should take cognizance of the psychological differences in aptitudes and inclinations which usually take place during the age period covered by this stage. Educationists all over the world are agreed that a well-organised system of college education must have three aims; the preparation of the individual as a worker and producer in society, preparation of the individual as a citizen and the preparation of an individual as a person. In order to secure these aims, the Committee suggested that the existing system must be replaced by a fresh one inspired by new spirit and adapted to the needs of a new society, that is ever ready to shoulder the responsibilities of freedom. It was therefore recommended that the secondary stage of education should commence at the age of 12 and last for 6 years. These secondary institutions or colleges would have a standard somewhat higher than the present Intermediate standard and they would offer courses dealing mainly with literature, social study, natural science, mathematics, arts, commerce, technical and professional subjects and domestic science for girls. The Committee also recommended that more provision should be made for technical and professional training and stress was to be laid on extra-curricular activities. Different types of vocational schools were also suggested and a number of other measures were recommended for attracting women teachers

for basic schools. The Committee duly considered the question of examinations and came to the conclusion that with the introduction of free and compulsory basic education, examinations would have to be substituted by more varied and reliable tests of intelligence. Great attention was to be paid to the training of teachers.

The Re-organisation Committee submitted an interim report on the basis of which a training college at Allahabad was started. Rapid strides were made in the scheme as soon as the basic training college at Allahabad started functioning. The zeal and enthusiasm of both the teachers and taught has been borne out by a number of distinguished visitors and educationists who owe no allegiance to the Congress. Refresher courses in theory and practice, craft teaching on basic lines as well as in the principles of basic education were started at each of the seven headquarters for the teachers of district and municipal schools with effect from 1st of May, 1938 and lasted till 15th of July. As mentioned above 250 teachers of district board and municipal schools received instruction. The courses were conducted by the graduates who had completed their training at the basic training college at Allahabad assisted by 14 district board teachers at each centre, who had received the short course training at Allahabad. To ensure that training proceeded on right lines, the Minister for Education accompanied by officers visited the centres. On completion of the refresher courses teachers took charge of class I on basic education lines in the existing primary schools. From July as many as 1750 schools

opened class I on new lines with the help of an equal number of teachers. A second refresher course was started in August with 250 teachers. This method of progress ensured a steady flow of teachers trained on basic lines. By the end of the year 1938 even carping critics concluded that the success of the scheme was assured.

A few words are needed regarding the scope and function of the Universities Committee which was appointed in May, 1938. The Committee had a prolonged session at Naini Tal and it disposed of a considerable part of the heavy agenda placed before it. The scope of the Committee's enquiry was very comprehensive. At the time of writing the Committee has not yet concluded its deliberations and a complete picture of the desirable scheme of higher education has not yet emerged. One of the questions before the Committee was the expansion of studies and a co-ordination of effort between different universities. Without committing myself, I may say that after the report of the Universities Committee has been published young men and women of our province will not have the same grievance against the literary type of university instruction which, to a large extent, has been responsible for the present state of educational affairs.

The Congress Government was not unmindful about the higher education of girls. Two new high schools for girls were opened and a third at Gorakhpur was taken over. The vernacular middle schools at Naini Tal and Fyzabad were reopened as Government

High Schools. In regard to the education of Harijans the Government sanctioned an additional recurring grant of Rs. 65,000 a year for expenditure on the award of scholarships to Harijan children and a further recurring sum of Rs. 10,000 for grants to Harijan institutions. Yet another Rs. 10,000 a year was sanctioned for the first time in 1939 for the award of scholarships to the children of backward classes other than scheduled classes who are educationally as backward as the scheduled castes and were not included in the schedule. The importance of this grant will be apparent from the fact that in this province a number of castes exist between the high caste Hindus and the scheduled castes. A detailed scheme for the utilization of the grant was under preparation when the year closed. When candidates were selected for admission to Government and local board educational institutions, 150 such candidates were selected from all over the province. In addition, a number of them were admitted to the Government Training Colleges at Allahabad, Agra and Lucknow. A very significant change in the educational policy was the abolition of the Book Committees. Authors and publishers were told not to submit new text-books for schools for consideration until further orders. On 5th November, 1938, a notice was issued asking authors and publishers to submit books in the languages of the province. In all 16 sets were received and they were being considered by a sub-committee appointed by the Government. Regarding management of private educational institutions, Government appointed a com-



mittee to examine the administration and working of aided anglo-vernacular schools. The report of the committee was under the active consideration of the Government by the end of the year.

In the matter of adult education a province wide drive was started on 15th January, 1939 which was very widely observed as "Literacy Day." Meetings all over the province were held, processions and *Prabhat pheris* were taken out and over half a million including the Governor of the province signed the literacy pledge. The signatory promised "to make at least one man and women literate within one year or to pay rupees 2 (the minimum cost of making an illiterate adult a literate) to the Education Expansion Officer to do the work on my behalf." Forty-eight committees in 48 districts were set up and organisations vied with one another in giving warm approval to the scheme. Mr. Sampurnanand laid particular stress on the fact that this was only the first step towards mass education. But no body could do more with the inertia of inheritance and the momentum of vested interests in scarce two years of administration than what the Congress Government did. It was the dynamic personality of Shri Sampurnanand which was responsible for what was achieved.

## CHAPTER VII

### EXCISE

It is well known that the Indian National Congress is for total Prohibition within the shortest possible time. To redeem a pledge that had been made in strict consonance with the religious, social and cultural heritage of India and in full consciousness of the harmful effects on health and morals as well as upon the standard of living of the poor addicts, no cost was considered high enough for the Congress government to discharge its primary obligations by those who on account of their very poverty could ill resist the temptation to drown their sorrow and boredom. I am, however, not one of those people who think that people ground by poverty can be made moral over-night by legislative enactments. A point which in my opinion has always been missed by idealists is the fact that people become addicts only when they have lost faith in life and have bidden adieu to all prospects of betterment. Add fatigue to this attitude and you increase the Excise revenue. But I admit that no popular government could go into the roots of addiction within two years of its rule. In my opinion prohibition policy must needs be pursued in the context of a general economic policy that will instil faith among villagers in their own capacity to better their lot. Our Government did act in the knowledge that unless public

opinion was mobilised by propaganda and education, Prohibition could not succeed. At the same time it is also a truism that unless restrictive measures are there to get support of public opinion nothing could happen. These were the general grounds of the U. P. Government's policy in regard to excise.

Prohibition as an experiment was first tried in the Etah and Mainpuri districts. The enlightened opinion of these two districts was demanding Prohibition. From all reports the experiment proved a success. So on 1st April 1938, Prohibition was extended to Budaun, Farrukhabad, Bijnor and Jaunpur. As these areas did not border on any Indian state and Bijnor and Farrukhabad formed compact areas with Etah and Mainpuri, the danger of smuggling was minimised. Bijnor and Jaunpur also had made a success of the state-managed agency by which consumption had been considerably reduced in the previous year. I may here mention that the excise policy in our province differed materially from that of other Congress provinces. Excise restrictions were introduced not in one area but extended throughout the province, and Prohibition was introduced only in select areas, two at first but extended to four more the next year.

The most important measures in connection with excise policy were as follows :

(a) reduction of opium and charas shops by 20 to 25%,

(b) fixation of retail prices much above those ruling in different localities. In 1937, the prices had been in-

creased and in 1938 they were allowed to remain. For *charas* retail sale prices as well as the issue price were raised by about 20 rupees per seer,

(c) state-managed agency; in 1937 this system was introduced in Allahabad, Lucknow, Jaunpur and Bijnor. In Benares it was enforced in regard to drugs. In 1938, Prohibition was introduced in Jaunpur and Bijnor whereas in Allahabad and Lucknow the state-managed system was allowed to continue. In other important districts the system was extended. Collective experience showed that state-management was responsible for a very large reduction in the profit-making motive on the part of the licensees. Up till now this was responsible for the increase of sales by constant resort to illicit practices. In the areas under state-managed agency the fall in consumption was twice as large as the fall outside. There was no doubt of the fact that this system was largely responsible for increased temperance throughout the province. The advantages of state-management as against the previous system of surcharge were very marked.

(i) The profit-making motive of the licensees always tended to increase consumption. So the Congress Government felt that if it could be removed, consumption would go to the rock-bottom requirements of the consuming public. Licensees lowered the sale price, provided special attractions, adulterated the quality and adopted various other tricks to draw customers. It was, therefore, necessary to restrict competition with its attendant evils.

(ii) While state-management lowered consumption it added to the revenue of the Government inasmuch as the profits which would otherwise accrue to the licensees went to the state.

(iii) In so far as state-management prohibited consumption at the premises it led to further reduction and removed many of the sordid sights and practices at the shops.

(iv) The Congress Government continued the auction system but with a vital difference namely, with fixed retail prices. The surcharge system which had been introduced in the province in 1922 was later on altered to the auction system in the case of liquor licences and a couple of years later in the case of drugs licences also. This resulted in an enormous increase of consumption of all types of intoxicants. In certain cases the retail sale prices were lowered than even the economic level. This again in turn stimulated consumption. The large increase in drunkenness and use of drugs condemned the auction system in its old form. So the only alternative was the surcharge system. On the other hand, ten years of the working of that system did not inspire confidence, because the advantages which were expected from it did not materialise. Those who sponsored the surcharge system believed that consumption would be automatically controlled by the rate of decrease in profit in consequence of increased consumption; a cleaner trade with fair profit and continuity of tenure would be assured; the annual set of licensees would not be shifted; the ugly incidents connected with the annual

sale would disappear and the morale of excise officers would improve. The critics of the surcharge system had, however, pointed out that while it would result in a decrease of revenue, there would be no proportionate decrease in the real consumption of intoxicants on account of the reduction in profits. It was even feared that the balance of the demand would be met by illicit supply and that sales of the shops would decrease while the total quantity of consumption from illicit sources would remain at least the same. The critics who were Congressmen had pointed out that prices could not be controlled by surcharge, and only vested interests would be created and corruption among subordinates would increase. All these criticisms were borne out by actual practice. The constant fall in the consumption of licit liquor from 10 lakhs to 3 lakhs gallons per year showed the extent of illicit distillation and smuggling. The number of excise cases shot up from 450 to about a thousand. The new licensees felt that so long as they could not make more profit there was no need for interfering with illicit traffic. In fact as has been said 'an unholy alliance was struck between the licensed vendors and the illicit distillers'. The whole business was charged with intrigue and corruption and there is on record the case of one gentleman who by skilful tactics and canvassing at one time obtained control of as many as 153 shops in the province. The Government could not very well lose the revenue and allow the profits to mount in the pockets of the illicit distiller and the smuggler. These considerations made it im-

possible for the Congress Government to go back either to the surcharge system or adopt the auction system without amendments. Retail sale price was, therefore, fixed at a level substantially higher than the rates of 1933 under the auction system and in certain cases even higher than under the surcharge system. The Government also issued instructions that auction in future should be conducted in a strictly fair and impartial manner. The combination of intensive propaganda by the Government and the public, the reduction of shops, and improvement of the auction system, the fixation of retail sale price and the state-managed agency system were responsible for the progress of Prohibition in the various districts, a fact which was simply borne out by at least two unofficial reports written by disinterested and non-political observers.

## CHAPTER VIII

### I

## IRRIGATION & PUBLIC WORKS

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that solid work in irrigation and public works requires a long-range planning. No dramatic change can be effected either in the construction of canals or in building operations within 27 months. Like the course of a river, the programme is bound to be slow-moving. Yet in certain important directions such as economy, re-organisation, extension of existing schemes into new areas, the measure of assistance to subsidiary industries, floods and their prevention, surveys etc, many improvements may be brought about. These were done. I do not propose to give full details of each scheme. A bare outline should suffice to indicate the genuine efforts undertaken by the Congress Government in the U.P. to make the Irrigation and the Public Works Department subserve the needs of the people to an extent greater than before.

The Congress Government appointed a committee to consider the working of the existing canal rates, their fair incidence and of the agency employed for their collection. In case any reduction was suggested this Committee was asked to examine how far the expenditure in



the irrigation department could be reduced and whether the amalgamation or re-organisation of the engineering services which were spread over different departments was possible. Certain tentative recommendations were made such as the amalgamation of Agricultural Engineering Service with Irrigation Service and the taking over from the District Boards their buildings and roads department. Those who remember the conditions of these roads in the districts cannot but appreciate this finding of the Committee. A large programme costing over a crore for the construction of new roads and 16 lakhs for the improvement of the existing roads was taken up. The Hydro-electric Grid progressed favourably in the western districts and supplied power to about 1400 tube-wells irrigating thousands of acres of land which had so long been starving for water. The area irrigated by the tube-wells during *kharif* 1937 was more than 1,20,000 acres as against only 66,000 in *kharif* 1936 which was a year of heavy monsoon. The area irrigated during the *rabi* 1937-38 and *kharif* 1938 was more than 3,20,000 acres. Hydel scheme was also sought to be extended in the eastern districts as well as in Kumaun for which special committees were appointed. Above all, Hydel was made to stimulate the growth of a number of large and small industries, such as Sugar refining, Dairy, Small oil mill, Calico printing, Pottery, Printing Press, polishing lathes, Saw mill, Rice hulling and polishing, Gold and silver thread work, Weaving, Chaff cutting, Rolling of metal plates for utensils, Ginning and carding, Manufacture of tin and canisters,

Electro-plating, Soap and chocolate-making, Spray printing. Government decided that the Sarda Canal should also be extended to the eastern parts of the province where spring level was falling and the demand for water was frequent. This scheme alone would cost 35 lakhs. Bundelkhand is notorious for its precarious cultivation. Its canal service was poor, so a scheme costing about 6 lakhs was sanctioned for this area.

A serious catastrophe which the Irrigation Department was compelled to tackle was the unprecedented flood in the north-eastern districts. Floods had been recurring at frequent intervals lately, though not of such magnitude. So a senior officer of the Irrigation Department was appointed to survey the valleys and to suggest measures for preventing the floods. The special officer submitted a report in which he pointed out that the problem could be solved only with the active co-operation of three provinces, namely, Bengal, Bihar and U. P. An appeal was issued by the Governor and the Premier to the country to subscribe to the flood relief fund which was opened without delay. Immediate grants were given by the Government for the relief of the distressed and tentative measures adopted for the re-habilitation of the people who had been displaced. Some money was given to the district magistrates concerned for advance to the poor among the dispossessed for building houses. Grazing lands and forests were opened for the supply of grass for thatching.

A number of committees were appointed in connection with public works to enquire into the various

problems such as the use of tar and bitumen in painting roads and to find out if any one of these could be manufactured in the province on a large scale. Another committee sat to revise the existing motor vehicles rules.

To encourage young men in this province to learn aviation, the Congress Government created aviation scholarships and arranged with the U. P. Flying Club to train their stipendiaries, at a cost of Rs. 21,000/-. A big steam power house costing about 16 lakhs and another hydro-electric house costing about 20 lakhs had to be constructed by the Congress Government because the demand for electric power had so increased that it could not be supplied by the existing power houses.

## II

# LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

In every country the seeds of democracy lie in the villages. More so in India and in our province with its hundred thousand villages. But unfortunately before the Congress Government came into power, local self-Government had vested in the hands of the propertied class. Necessity was therefore felt to recast the entire scheme of local self-Government in the province. A committee was appointed and its report was published after a great deal of meticulous care. It is a pity that the Congress Government could not find time to give effect to its important recommendations. The main feature of the report is that the town area committee and *gaon* panchayats should be re-organised on more democratic lines and should exercise more comprehensive powers in all branches of administration. The local bodies, according to the report, would be constituted on the cumulative system of voting without any nomination, the franchise would be extended to every adult, male or female, and the property qualifications would be done away with. There would be *Adalti* Panchayats for the exercise of judicial functions, to be formed out of a panel of panches selected by voting by *gaon* panchayat, which was a separate and a bigger

organisation consisting of all the adults of the village, and out of the panel nominations would be made to the *Adalti* Panchayat by a committee consisting of the Collector, the Chairman of the District Board and the Pargana Committee. The Committee further recommended the abolition and replacement of notified area committees by town area committees or municipal boards according to the population of the area concerned. Under the previous system the *panches* and *sarpanches* of village panchayats were appointed by the Collector. But the Congress Government issued orders advising the local authorities to appoint them through informal elections. The Notified areas had no elected chairmen. This acted against the responsibility of the areas. So the Commissioners of Divisions were asked to take immediate steps for the election of non-official Chairman.

The local bodies were asked to report about the lot of sweepers and scavengers in their employ and advised to do their best to improve it.

In pursuance of the Government policy of granting relief from indebtedness to agriculturists, the District Officers were asked to stay execution of all decrees passed by the village panchayats on the agriculturists.

In the matter of nomination to local bodies the Government consulted local opinion as to the suitability of the person to be nominated.

The efforts made by the Congress Government to stop the scourge of cholera epidemic which raged all over the province in the year 1938 are worth recital. The fair at Brindaban had passed off quietly but the

Kumbh mela at Hardwar was followed by a severe outbreak of cholera. The Director of Public Health was authorised to employ any number of medical officers in addition to the normal staff of the department to cope with the situation. Nearly 2 lakhs of rupees were sanctioned in addition to the normal allotment for epidemics. At one time as many as 80 extra medical officers were working. Free distribution of medicines, disinfectants and anti-cholera vaccine was ordered and grants-in-aid were given to the local bodies for other anti-cholera measures. Mrs. V. L. Pandit, the Minister in charge, visited most of the affected areas and personally supervised the anti-cholera measures. The cholera epidemic was followed by floods to which reference has already been made. Rs. 30,000 were sanctioned for the free distribution of quinine as a preventive measure against the consequential outbreak of malaria. This supplemented the anti-malaria scheme which had been extended in October 1938 to certain areas in the Terai and in Hardoi. The Government provided Rs. 2,00,000 from provincial revenues to supplement the grant of a similar amount made by the Indian research fund association. It was planned that in the entire province malaria would be controlled within the course of five years. The provincial branch of the Red Cross Society was given an annual grant of Rs. 1,20,000 for maternity and child welfare work. In addition to the existing 147 maternity and child welfare centres in the rural areas and 146 in the urban 24 new centres were opened in 1938 in the rural areas. The scheme was to

train village *dais* at each centre and after three months the centre would be moved to the other areas for similar work. A resolution was passed in the Provincial Legislative Assembly to make vaccination compulsory in rural areas. During the Congress rule as many as 30 new school clinics were opened in towns with qualified health officers who treated the scholars free.

To my mind, the most important work done by the Congress Government in the Medical Department consisted in the extension of medical facilities in the rural areas and in the impetus given to the indigenous system of medicine. The Congress Government wanted to provide medical assistance for every village. As Allopathic medicines are costly for the villagers, Ayurvedic and Unani systems were encouraged. To achieve this object of easy medical assistance a provision of about five lakhs was made in the budget with a view to open 300 Ayurvedic and Unani dispensaries, 48 additional Allopathic dispensaries and 10 travelling ones at suitable centres. Certain practitioners of the Ayurvedic system were given subsidy to settle in rural areas. The net result of this scheme in full operation would have been the establishment of a medical centre within 5 miles of every one of the 1,00,000 villages in the province. In addition to the above measures the existing Board of Medicine was constituted into a Statutory Board, and the Indian Medicine Bill was introduced (*i*) to confer statutory status on the Board, (*ii*) to register vaidyas and hakims, (*iii*) to empower the Government to stop quackery by demanding registration of all practis-

ing vaidyas and hakims and debarring all unregistered vaidyas and hakims from practising. Besides the grant of Rs. 45,000 annually to the Ayurvedic College of the Benares Hindu University and the Tibbya College of the Aligarh Muslim University and Rs. 10,000 annually to the Unani Medical School, Lucknow and the Rishikul Ayurvedic College, Hardwar, non-recurring grants were given to a number of institutions such as Bundelkhand Ayurvedic College. An earlier Act of 1934 was revived for the registration of nurses, mid-wives and assistant mid-wives for whom a training centre was sanctioned. The Women's Medical School at Agra was, however, abolished, and it was converted into a training school for nurses. The Agra Medical School was raised to the status of a medical college as a result of the recommendation of the Medical Reorganisation Committee. An ambulance dispensary for women was started as an experimental measure in the district of Unao for giving medical relief to women at their doors. A van was fitted to move about in the district equipped with the latest supply of medical appliances. The system of supplying each rural development centre with a sort of working dispensary and a rural organiser with a medicine chest brought relief to a very large number of villagers who had so long been denied any form of medical relief.



### III

## PRISONS AND JAILS

The very first thing which the Congress Government did in connection with the improvement of jails and prisons was the setting up of an expert committee. The report was early submitted and re-examined by a committee consisting of the members of the Legislature. Most of the minor recommendations were immediately given effect to. In regard to the major ones, another departmental committee was set up to submit a plan for five years during which some of the recommendations would be brought into force. These were the opening of a Borstal institution, of a special jail for the mentally deficient or defectives, a new scientific system of classification and case work for prisoners, standardization of labour in jails, a training school for jail staff and a college in penology to turn out students who would be appointed later on as Superintendents of Jails. The Committee also recommended a system of adult education and panchayat system in jail, a medical subordinate service and a thorough overhauling of the staff. For the first time the term 'political prisoner' was defined. According to the Committee all persons convicted in the prosecution of political activities with a political objective and without any idea of personal gain and having no communal or sectarian bias were to be classed as political prisoners.

For them a number of facilities were granted.

For the regulation of jail industries, a Director of Industries was appointed and a Jail Depot was started. A scheme for the payment of wages to prisoners was in working order. Three Acts, the Borstal, The First Offenders' and the Prisoners Release on Probation were passed by the Congress Government. To supplement the above enactments a Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society was formed with a committee functioning in every district of the province. A recurring grant of Rs. 12,500 was given to this society. Local bodies were asked to consider their grants to this Society as a proper charge on their funds. A Probation service was started for the province. Non-official visitors were no longer to be nominated by the Commissioner but elected by the district committee of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society.

To popularise the science of penology the Society published a monthly magazine called the *Penal Reformer*. It created a lot of interest throughout India. It may be mentioned here that the Government allowed the use of tobacco by prisoners in jail. For the professional and incorrigible the Government wanted to establish a separate jail but the idea did not materialise.

## CHAPTER IX

### FINANCE

The salient facts in regard to the finance of the province under the Congress Government have been explained by Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant, the Finance Minister in a series of budget speeches which are as noteworthy for the clear grasp of details as they are the models of lucid exposition. The guiding principles were two: (i) rigid economy in the existing administration and (ii) financing of all nation-building activities. If I am allowed to reduce these two points to one I may say that the Congress budgets were always framed with a view to better the condition of the poor in the country side.

When the Congress Government assumed office they were saddled with the inheritance of a deficit of 30 lakhs in accordance with the estimates framed by the predecessors. It will be recalled that when the Congress Government took office in July 1937 the budget for the year 1937-38 had already been framed by the interim ministry. The Congress Government had to provide for 12 lakhs of rupees on account of new expenditure. In all, therefore, there would have been a deficit of 42 lakhs if rigid economy had not been effected. By March 1938 this possible deficit of 42 lakhs was reduced to 12 lakhs. Later on it may be noted, fresh items of

expenditure amounting to 7 lakhs were added through supplementary estimates. Unfortunately, however, the actual receipts fell by about 40 lakhs. So if we add the anticipated deficit of 19 lakhs to this 40 lakhs fall in revenue, deficit would, in any case, have been about 59 lakhs. As against this the provincial government received a sum of Rs. 19 lakhs, which still left 40 lakhs to be recovered. By the end of the first year of Congress administration, the whole of this deficit that is to say 40 lakhs was practically wiped out. In the next year again, that is, in 1938-39 there would have been a deficit of 15 lakhs. Actually however it was converted into a surplus of 15, though the receipts fell short in revenue, stamps and irrigation, and various other charges increased. In 1938-39 there was a proposal to float a loan of one crore of rupees. On account of strict measures of economy this loan was considered unnecessary. In the budget estimates for 1939-40 a loan of 2 crores of rupees was projected for the purpose of capital expenditure and productive advances. Three months treasury bills for 80 lakhs of rupees were floated in October 1938 and finally paid in January 1939. The rate of interest on these bills was less than two per cent. A very significant fact of the budget administration was the arrangement for the repayment of the provincial debt. The Congress Government made an annual payment of Rs. 123 lakhs with the result that the provincial debt was considerably reduced. Contributions of the provincial government towards the sinking fund were progressively increasing and so the liabilities were

being correspondingly reduced.

Ways and means devised by the Congress Government have been criticised by a number of people who guided by their self-interest could not understand their implications. At the time of writing the Parliament by one of its hurried amendments has chosen to invalidate the Employments Tax. At the risk of reiteration I may state the following facts about the distribution of income in our province. Here there are about 60,000 persons with Rs. 12/-, 93,000 between Rs. 12 and Rs. 200/- and near about 3,000 with an income of more than 200 rupees per month. To put it in another way, for every person enjoying Rs. 200 or more per month there are 20 who are getting only Rs. 12/-. So when the Government proposed a graduated employments tax leaving untouched those people who had an income of about Rs. 200 and less per month, the total contribution expected of the Government servants was of the order of Rs. 13 lakhs. But 13 lakhs was exactly the amount that the inferior servants received as a result of the increase in wages which the Government sanctioned. The Employments Tax, however unpleasant it was from the point of view of the upper classes, was certainly a serious attempt at economic readjustment, without encroaching upon the purse of the average tax-payer who I presume never has an income of more than Rs. 2,500/- per annum.

It is not necessary to go into details of any of the budget estimates. But a few points may, however, be mentioned to bring into relief the progress of expendi-

ture in certain nation-building departments. If we compare the figures of 1939-40 with those of the previous two years we find that Education had jumped from 206 and 211 respectively to 215, Medical from 34 and 35 to 38, Industries from 15 and 20 to 30, Co-operative credit from 5 and 6 to 8 and rural uplift from 3 and 29 to 40 lakhs. At the same time it has to be remembered that liberal remissions of land revenue were being granted in these years! As the Premier said, "the Government sanctioned remission even in cases in which suspensions had been proposed as it was difficult for the cultivator to pay up the accumulated arrears for two seasons out of his meagre produce even in a normal year. We allowed remissions still to the extent of 30 lakhs. This was the highest figure in recent years. We have, since we came into office, granted 52 lakhs by way of calamity remissions while the total amount sanctioned under that head during the preceding years had been only 17 lakhs and 64 thousand."

In addition to the Employments Tax there was the tax on petrol at the rate of 2 annas per gallon of petrol sold and consumed in the province. This was expected to bring a revenue of 8 lakhs. The Petrol Tax was to be utilized for the purpose of repaying the loan taken for road development as well as to finance the part of the road programme. An increase of 2 annas per gallon in the price of petrol did not in any way interfere with the progress of motor traffic in the Province nor did it affect the purse of those who could easily afford their joy rides. Other taxes namely, the Enter-

tainment tax, the Court-fees and Stamp Act were really not inroads made on the purse who could afford to pay them. Virtually, they are taxes upon those who could afford entertainment and the luxury of litigation.

Let us study the negative side of the Congress Budget, viz., economy. No sooner than the Congress came into power, all possible means for curtailing expenditure were explored. Substantial reductions were made even in 1937 in General Administration, Police and other departments. The Finance Committee that was set up appointed a sub-committee which investigated the possibilities of retrenchment in the entire field of provincial expenditure. The Government then considered the introduction of reduced scales of pay for new entrants to various services, and the abolition of special pays and various allowances. The question of amalgamation of engineering services was departmentally examined and all possibilities of economy and retrenchment in the irrigation branch mooted. Certain posts were amalgamated and hill exodus was abandoned. In the next year's budget still larger economies were made under different heads. The travelling allowance rates were reduced, period of camping curtailed and other miscellaneous items of expenditure examined and revised. An enquiry was conducted into contingent expenditure in all offices and as a result of proposals the Government effected economies to the tune of nearly 2 lakhs of rupees. Another reduction of a lakh occurred in the allotments for maintenance and repairs of buildings of several departments. The scales of salaries

for new entrants were reduced and pension rules, particularly, those relating to commutation in a lump sum were scrutinized. But these economies did not stand in the way of the extension of capital programmes. In presenting the budget for 1939-40 the Premier announced a capital programme amounting to 124 lakhs as compared with 48 lakhs of 1938. The nature of the capital programme was beneficial and its expenditure was urgent; the portion concerning irrigation including hydel being remunerative. Under the Debt and Deposit heads a sum of 25 lakhs was provided for additional advance for the purchase of seed and 7 lakhs as takavi for cane crushers.

Apart from the salient points discussed at the beginning of this section I may mention a few general considerations in the budget policy as pursued by the Congress Government. The budget provisions of any provincial government so far as they affect the economic life of the people are limited by the policy of the Government of India over which the provincial governments have no control. Each provincial government has certain definite commitments under salary heads etc. Therefore a large part of its revenues is frozen out of action. Within such ambit the Congress Government in the United Provinces worked. And yet it smoothed the circulation of money-incomes by all means in its power. By the minimum fixation of price of sugarcane and other non-financial measures such as stay orders and prohibition it directly and indirectly put or kept money into the pockets of the poor. The prohibition policy of



the Government made for forced saving inasmuch as it disallowed expenditure on uneconomic consumption. Through rural development schemes and other measures the Congress Government gave employment to the lower middle class, the monetary value of which was larger than the total amount reduced by the Employments Tax from larger incomes. If from one point of view the budget policy of the Congress Government could be called as one of economic adjustment, from the point of view of general level of money incomes it can be said that it made for stabilization of levels. Another point in connection with the expenditure is to be noticed. The Congress came with a desire to materially help the people. Orthodox economy based upon the policy of *laissez faire* would not have mended matters. On the contrary, it would have enhanced the differences between high incomes and low incomes. Therefore, the only course left open to the popular government was to increase beneficent expenditure. This was in consonance with modern practice all throughout the world. One other item of the budget besides the Employments Tax was criticized, namely, prohibition, inasmuch as it affected the revenues of the Government. Independently of the merits of Prohibition, the loss in revenue involved thereby may be defended on grounds of financial justice. The Congress Government felt that the excise revenue fell heavily upon the poor and very lightly upon the rich. In other words, it was a tax on the poor for his weakness. On the other hand, I have been told that the improvement on the standard of

living of those who gave up drink and drugs and had their consumption reduced was perceptible. This certainly increased their purchasing power. In any case, the stoppage of unnecessary expenditure contributed to the welfare of a large section of the people.

## CHAPTER X

### COMMUNAL SITUATION

No apology is needed at this juncture for going into the question of Hindu-Muslim relationship in the province at some length. In December, 1939 when I am preparing this draft for the book, Mr. Jinnah's proclamation of the 'Deliverance Day' has been engaging the attention of the public. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has given the quietus to the unfounded charges of the President of the Muslim League. My views on the need of a Congress-Muslim League understanding will be fully expressed in another section at the end of this chapter. Here I am only concerned with what the Congress Government actually did on behalf of the Muslims in various matters and a narration of the actual incidents of the most important riots in the province. While I was the Parliamentary Secretary, I had to study the files on the cases of these riots. I jotted down a few points as they occurred to me. I have borrowed freely from my notes. I am sure that I have not betrayed confidence. In fact, what follows must be well-known to the country.

In all there are three or four aspects of the Hindu-Muslim question such as the communal proportion in services and representation in local bodies, educational facilities, the use of religious rights, usages and privileges

and the exercise of certain specific rights.

Now the Muslims in the United Provinces form about 14 per cent of the population whereas the non-Hindus and non-Muslims 5 per cent, the rest may be said to be Hindus. In regard to Muslim representation in services all the facts show that it was in excess of what was sanctioned on the basis of population. Thus, for example, in the Provincial Executive Service, the Hindus were 52·5%, Muslims 39·6%; among Tehsildars, Hindus were 54·9 per cent, Muslims 43·6%; among Naib Tehsildars, Hindus were 55·9%, Muslims 41·1%. In the provincial judicial service Hindu percentage was 72 and Muslim 25; in the cadre of Deputy Superintendents of Police it was 56 and 28; among Police Inspectors, Hindus were 46·4% and Muslims 30%; among Sub-inspectors Hindus were 54·2%, Muslims 43·8%; among Head Constables, Hindus were 35·3%; Muslims 64·4%. In the Provincial Agricultural Service Class I, Hindus were 64% and Muslims 21%. In Class II Hindus were 76 and Muslims 12%. In the Subordinate Agricultural Service, Hindus 73% and Muslims 25%. Among Veterinary Inspectors, Hindus 24% and Muslims 52%; among Veterinary Assistant Surgeons, Hindus were 35% and Muslims 58%. Among gazetted officers of the Co-operative Department, Hindus were 62·5% and Muslims 37·5%. In the Forest Service, Hindus were 57% and Muslims 19%; among Forest Rangers, Hindus were 80·5% and Muslims were 18·5%; among Deputy Rangers, Hindus were 74·4% and Muslims 25%. In the Excise Department among Assistant

Excise Commissioners, Hindus formed 57 and Muslims 14; among Excise Inspectors, Hindus were 65, Muslims 31 on the percentage basis. In the U. P. Education Service Class I out of 15 posts 4 were held by Muslims. Recruitment to the Rural Development Department was always the favourite target of attack. I am not here concerned with the merits of the case though I am convinced that the proportion of men who by virtue of their intimate knowledge of the countryside were qualified for posts was greater among Congressmen than among any other group of individuals. I am only referring to communal percentages. Here also among Organisers, the villains of the piece, 22% were Muslims. Among Divisional Superintendents 10 men were recruited for 10 divisions out of whom 3 were Muslims, 1 was Christian, 1 depressed class and 5 were Hindus.

In matters educational a few facts about the province may be remembered. The number per thousand of Muslim literates aged 5 years and over is about 59 and of Hindus 54. In other words, the average literacy among Muslims is higher than among Hindus. I also found on inquiry that the average attendance of Muslims in all the states of education from primary schools to colleges was proportionately higher than that of the Hindus. The number of Muslim scholars receiving education in various schools and colleges was at the end of 1937, 4.2% of their population and of Hindus 3.2%. Now these facts prove that Muslims of the province cannot have any complaint about their educational backwardness as compared with the Hindus.

From a scrutiny of the statement showing grants made to Muslim institutions in the U. P. by the Education Department in the year 1938-39, I find that nearly 4 lakhs of rupees were given. I am not particularly happy over this amount; I only wish that it were 10 times, nay, 100 times larger. But the fact remains that generous grants were made to Muslim institutions. Regarding the exercise of specific rights I would only mention two instances. In the Mela Bill in response to the wishes of certain Muslim M.L.A's inelas relating to Muslim shrines were excluded from the scope of Government supervision. In the matter of waqfs a survey was made by two Muslim Deputy Collectors and the management of the waqfs fund was provincialized.

So far as language was concerned the Congress Government decided to publish everything in Udu that was published in Hindi so long as people continued to agitate on behalf of communal script and a common language, namely, Hindustani, was not evolved.

The most important civic right is freedom of opinion. I do not remember a single occasion when it was curtailed in the case of a Muslim because he was a Muslim. On the other hand, I cannot but mention that even when action was necessary it was not taken. It may have been a weakness. I personally think it was. But the fact remains that the most reprehensible speeches were delivered at meetings inciting communal hatred and frenzy, and specially directed against the Congress, its leaders and against Congress Government. Not a single Muslim was prosecuted for such speeches. Nu-

merous anti-Congress and anti-Hindu pamphlets and articles of a virulently communal nature were published. Only once action was taken, namely, against the *Star* which published a particularly objectionable article at a time when Allahabad was facing a communal riot. A Congress worker who had made an anti-Muslim speech was however prosecuted under Section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. Two pamphlets issued by Hindus and one issue of a Hindu newspaper were proscribed under Section 99-A of the Criminal Procedure Code on the ground that they contained matter which was offensive to Muslims. Lest I be misunderstood I refrain from making any further reference to this aspect of the matter beyond this that if anything the Congress attitude towards the Muslims was more than generous, nay indulgent. Which certainly is not a matter of criticism, but its non-recognition is an occasion for regret when it does not lend itself to political exploitation by an interested party seeking excuses for perpetual domination.

*Pirpur Report.* It will be remembered that the Council of the All-India Muslim League appointed a committee to enquire into Muslim grievances in the Congress provinces. The Pirpur Report mentioned certain cases where Muslims were alleged to have been the victims of Hindu communal frenzy. This report insinuated that the Congress Government was directly or indirectly responsible for the riots. In the matter of local bodies in this province the Pirpur Report was kind enough to say

that its administration was on the whole satisfactory from the Muslim point of view. So I shall leave that question and confine myself to the 'atrocities'. Mr. Jinnah in one of his statements referred to Tanda, Dadri, Bhagalpur and Hazaribagh where Muslims were oppressed by the U. P. Congress Government. A school boy knows that Hazaribagh and Bhagalpur are in Bihar. I will now deal with the incidents in regard to riots in these places.

*Dadri riot.* Dadri fair began on November 15 in 1937. The place is situated about 5 miles from the town of Ballia and the fair is held on the left bank of the Ganges and lasts for more than a week. It is one of the principal cattle marts in this province and thousands of cattle exchange hands. That year the fair attracted a large concourse. The actual market is usually in an enclosure in the extreme south of the area and occupies more than one square mile. The place where exchange takes place is near the heart of the actual market. Special police arrangements had been made for the fair under two magistrates and a large number of subordinate officials. There was a Muslim Circle Inspector in charge of the police arrangements. Special police stations for the fair and a separate police station for the actual market were provided. The main bathing day that is the night between 17th and 18th November was over and the crowd had dwindled from 2 lakhs to 30 thousand. On the 20th November an altercation started between a butcher and some Hindus about a calf. It was reported that a Hindu had sold his calf to the butcher and wanted



to take it back on payment to him, which the butcher refused. There was some altercation and the butcher ran to inform the police officer who was at the gate of the market. But before the police could arrive about two or three hundred Hindus attacked the butchers. A few policemen who were inside the enclosure tried to check it but they were themselves beaten in the melee. In the meanwhile police reinforcements had come, the rioters had dispersed and a large number of cattle driven out of the enclosure. The riot did not last more than half an hour. The casualty list included a number of butchers, besides six constables. A number of cattle were lost but of this about 200 were later recovered and returned to the butchers. Two butchers were seriously injured. The Muslim Sub-Inspector came with more police and drew a cordon round the butcher's enclosure; a number of arrests were made and the injured persons were attended to by the medical officer on duty. Two butchers who were seriously injured were removed to Ballia Hospital and the Civil Surgeon personally attended to their injuries. One of them succumbed the same night. The District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police had in the meantime hurried to the spot and made adequate arrangements for patrolling the town of Ballia by posting police at danger spots. Quiet was soon restored. The same night the District Officer of Ballia was informed that certain bogeys loaded with cattle had been looted at the Phephna station. When he rushed to the scene, he was informed that some cattle had been seized and a number of butchers beaten. An

armed guard was placed on the station and the District Magistrate personally brought the butchers with him to Ballia. A similar assault was made at about 2 the same night near a village called Jalalpur. These are the facts of the riot in Ballia, known as Dadri riot. The investigation in the Dadri riot case was conducted under the supervision of the Muslim Circle Inspector as a result of which a large number of persons were challaned. The majority of witnesses were Muslims. The fact that the riot did not take place on the main bathing day and the behaviour of the crowd was peaceful proves clearly the absence of any pre-meditated arrangements. I have looked into the question very carefully and found not the slightest trace of evidence of any premeditation. No meetings were held, no lectures were delivered inciting Hindus to disallow butchers from buying or moving cattle. Only one leaflet on the subject of cow protection was distributed at the fair but there was no incitement in it to commit acts of violence. The district Congress authorities co-operated with the district authorities in the matter of patrolling the fair area and in restoring the confidence of the panic-stricken people. The prompt action of the authorities with Mr. Jafar Ali Khan at the head as the Collector of the district was recognised by the Pirpur Committee as well as by the President and Secretary of the District Muslim League. I wonder what they felt when their leader referred to Dadri!

*Tanda riot.* The main charges in connection with the Tanda riot were against the officers, chief among whom was a Muslim. There are other subsidiary charges

like not attending to the wounded, withholding of news, suppression of evidence, etc. The Government put the whole case under judicial inquiry by an experienced judge of the Chief Court. An open inquiry was made by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Yorke who gave the fullest opportunity to all concerned. The Government on their part gave strict injunctions to the officers involved in the riot to remove themselves from any taint of suspicion in regard to evidence. But the Muslim League withdrew from the case. Immediately on receipt of information about the riot the Premier wired to the Commissioner of the Division as well as the Deputy Commissioner of the district to take all effective steps in the matter and hold an immediate inquiry. The two reports of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner were soon received by the Government. I am not in a position to disclose the contents of these two official documents, nor of the report of the judicial inquiry, but I will ask my readers to take me on trust when I say that there was unanimity on all the important points regarding the responsibility for the riots.

*Benares.* Two more typical incidents should suffice. I first select Benares riot for the simple reason that Benares is supposed to be the citadel of Hinduism and of Hindus. Therefore if anywhere atrocities were committed upon Muslims they should have been at Benares. Throughout December 1937 and January 1938 serious attempts were made by the leading citizens of Benares and by the district officers to end communal bickerings by arbitration and peace committees in mohallas. By the

end of January both communities appeared to have been very nervous. Three meetings were organised by the local Muslims on the 22nd, 23rd and 26th of January, in the first of which the Secretary of the District Muslim League, Ballia, related in glowing colours the incident of the Dadri fair riot. On the 28th a meeting was held at Benares to protest against the decision of the Lahore High Court in the Shahidganj Mosque dispute. On the 29th, another meeting was held in a mosque at Shivala and yet another on February 1. The Government was in full possession of the facts about who were organising these meetings. On 2nd February the District Magistrate convened a meeting of the peace committee and advised various measures to restore confidence, such as a joint manifesto by Hindu and Muslim leaders, a notice by the District Magistrate proposing to prosecute any person found disseminating false rumours, increased activity of the mohalla peace committee and a stern warning to all goondas and mischief-mongers who were already listed in the *thana* register. As a result of this the Bakrid passed off smoothly. On *Ekadshi* day the Hindus played with dry colours and not one incident of any molestation of a Muslim by a Hindu was reported. The Moharram ended on March 14 and the Holi began on the 16th without the slightest sign of any increase in the communal tension. The immediate cause of the outbreak is most interesting. On March 16 in the morning two parties of Hindus who had no love lost between them started throwing colour on one another. Members of these parties had knives which were used and one

Raja Ram was killed and another Saligram severely injured. This incident gave rise to a rumour that Hindu-Muslim clash had started. Meanwhile a Holi procession was passing through one Mohalla to which the Hindu residents of the same mohalla objected. The procession went on and at a place called Nai Sarak some coloured water was thrown on two Muslims. The Muslims of the vicinity gathered to stop the processionists at which the latter turned into another lane. Another incident occurred when a Hindu blackened the face of one Muslim boy which led to exchange of blows between the boys and later on between their relations. These two incidents and the rumour of the the death of a Hindu led to the first clash. The Holi procession was attacked by the Muslims and the trouble spread into other areas, in one of which Muslims attacked the shops of 3 banias and damaged their property. Some persons at the shop of one dealer in air guns fired shots from air guns and if air gun shots could injure they certainly injured a few Muslims as was reported. The shops of two Muslims were also looted. Trouble was luckily over in this area within an hour. In another mohalla one University student was beaten by some Muslims. He managed to escape with slight injury and told his friends that his companion was missing whereas he had actually been sent by a prominent citizen of the locality safely to the University. Some students of the University became very excited and came out. The District Magistrate assured the University authorities that adequate action would be taken against the persons concerned. Beyond

this the students did not take any part in the trouble. In the meanwhile the communal riot scheme was put into force. Police pickets were posted and precautions were taken to stop further clashes. Military did a route march and proclaimed by beat of drum that armed police and military had orders to fire on rioters. Two platoons were posted in the Victoria Park. Stray assaults however continued in out of way places resulting in 6 injuries. The trouble was over the same day. Holi was celebrated without any further incident. On the morning of March 17 all shops were opening. At about 7 however a Muslim was unexpectedly stabbed in the back in the open street. This caused panic and was the signal for reprisals and stray assaults in by-lanes, which continued on the 18th and 19th. By the 20th the city reverted to normal conditions. The total number of casualties were—actually died of wound—Hindus 6, Muslims 3; injured Muslims 48, Hindus 41; and the number of persons arrested was Hindus 88 and Muslims 76. It will thus be seen from the above that no pains were spared by the district authorities in the establishment of peace committees in localising the area of the riot, in arresting the culprits and taking drastic action where needed. Not one instance of deliberate unfairness in the matter of arrests or of medical attendance to the victims of the riots is on record. I do not derive any consolation from the fact that during these two years the important festivals of the Hindus and the Muslims coincided. These are transcendental happenings and any Government in India will have to accept them as such so long as religion

plays the ignoble part that it does in Indian life. My only consolation is that the number of cases where misunderstanding gave rise to riots form a microscopic number as compared to the number of occasions where Hindus and Muslims continued to practise their ancient habits of participating in one another's festivals.

*Gorakhpur.* Much play has been made of the prevention of cow slaughter in Zahidabad in Gorakhpur and the events that followed. The facts are that the place is an exclusively Hindu mohalla and the Muslims had settled only recently in that part of the city. There is a temple of Gorakhnath in that area, from which the city of Gorakhpur derives its name. Certain Gurkhas are devoted to this temple and they live in that locality. Those who know the Gurkhas need not be reminded of their deep religiosity and the ease with which their fanaticism may be excited. In 1936, cow slaughter had been prohibited in this area, but two Muslims disobeyed the order and were convicted and sentenced to 6 months' rigorous imprisonment. This was before the Congress Government arrived. In 1937 a similar order was issued which was not actually disobeyed. But a civil suit was filed and a decree was passed which declared that the Muslims had the right to perform cow sacrifice in their houses "provided that in the exercise of such right they did not commit a nuisance or infringed any rule or law or direction issued or promulgated by the legally constituted authorities relating to the said right." I have quoted from the decree in order to prove that it did not confer any absolute right, even upon private sacrifice of

cows. The local authorities retained as in similar circumstances the right to regulate the performance of the decreed right. The District Magistrate of Gorakhpur, a very senior and a trusted officer of the Government, felt however that peace could not be maintained in the area as it was so close to the temple. Slaughter was *not* prohibited. It was allowed to be performed in the slaughter house as also in a private house. The District Magistrate tried his best to bring about a settlement but unfortunately did not succeed. The sacrifice was performed. Next year the Muslims did not exercise their right as a gesture of good-will. So much about 'prevention of cow-sacrifice.'

I cannot forbear from mentioning one more instance. A story was circulated by a member of the Muslim League that in Hardoi a mosque had been demolished. I refer to it because it gained considerable currency. The report from the District Magistrate contradicted the entire story. A faqir had established himself in that mohalla very recently and there was no document or anything in writing to show that the plot of land was handed over to him for the construction of a mosque. In fact, no mosque had been constructed there and only two mud walls had been raised. This is a fair sample of many such atrocities which the Congress Government was and is still being held to have committed upon Muslim rights.

The readers will now have formed their own estimate of the 'atrocities' perpetrated by the Congress Government from a perusal of my detailed description



of some of the important riots in the province during the twenty-eight months of Congress rule. The account, let me repeat, I have sought to make as objective as I could within the limits of my power. It was with genuine regret that I penned these lines; regret not because the riots occurred in the Congress regime, but also because of the fact that they occurred at all. No Government would have been proud of them and no province would remain unashamed of such defacement. I derive no consolation from the previous blood-bath of Cawnpore, the holocaust in Eastern Bengal or the orgy of Sukkur. At the same time they are facts. Here, however, I join issue with those who want to exploit these facts to their advantage and to our perpetual slavery. These facts are no more and no less than the degrees of a thermometer when a patient's fever shoots them up. These pointer-readings are only indicative of a deeper malady. To change the language they are symptoms of a want of adjustment. I am of the opinion that if the hopeful situation that was created during the Congress election had been utilised to the fullest extent, in short, if it had been treated in a realistic manner by the immediate formation of a Congress-League rapprochement, ending in a coalition Government, the initial adjustment would have been made, its reactions felt throughout the country and the present impasse would not have developed. The progressive elements in both the groups would have combined and the fissiparous tendencies one notices to-day would not have arisen. It is in this context that a reference to the riots and 'atrocities' ac-

quired any meaning.

So then a realistic approach towards the Hindu-Muslim question is the need of the hour. On one side we recognise the existence of a large number of patriotic Muslims whose record of service is unparalleled in the history of our movement. On the other, a huge number of Muslims consider themselves as a separate entity. We also know that Hindus and Muslims have to live together. Their numerical strength will also remain different. In other words, majority will remain majority and minorities will be minorities. There is no escape from this demographic determinism. Hindus know it and very often are vain over it; the Muslims and Scheduled class feel this arithmetical inferiority and seek to cover it by aggressive behaviour and unfounded allegations. All this is natural inasmuch as what is true of the individual cannot be false for communities. Therefore the only solution for these competing facts is an assurance of safeguards for minorities and the earnest generation of a faith in the minorities that these safeguards are to be observed not only in letter of the law but in spirit.

Assurances, Congress has given in all solemnity. The problem is now of faith. For which both parties must needs meet half-way. The Hindu charge is that the Congress has over-reached itself in appeasement. The spirit in which the charge is laid is too frankly communal to bear notice. The Congress attitude is not one of appeasement, but just solicitude for Indian welfare. But from the other side there should also be a

will to believe. I have searched for it in vain in the action and thought of the Muslim League. On the contrary, there is the 'Deliverance Day!' Does the statement which has been read by the Muslims in the holiest of their holy places conduce to any settlement with the Congress? Will it further negotiations? Will it take India a step further towards the common goal, Independence? Let us accept the best interpretation available for the statement. For a moment we believe that it was not meant to wound anybody's feeling. But then why a Royal Commission to look into the grievances? Why not the Federal Chief Justice? Why not a joint committee of Congress and League? Is this faith in a Royal Commission consonant with the League's dignity, its aim of Independence, its mistrust of Federation which was one such gift of British statesmanship? Is it not tantamount to postponing negotiations, to killing all possibility of joint pressure, to the extinguishment of immediate prospects for a common understanding? I think it is. Therefore it will not serve any useful purpose to proceed with the talks any further.

But the Congress can ill-afford to mark time in the meanwhile. There is no interim period of inaction when a country has a long distance to cover. The struggle for Independence has no rest-pauses. After clearly thinking out the course the next step has to be taken. The Congress therefore should make a final declaration about its attitude towards the question of minorities. It will be clear, comprehensive and emphatic to remove all doubts and every possibility of misinterpretation.

If the minorities still choose to remain unconvinced the Congress should leave it at that. Freedom's battle cannot be given up even for appeasement. This may sound as a counsel of despair. But it is not. Sensible and patriotic Muslims will continue to strengthen the organisation that carries on the struggle. Its grimness is the sole guarantee of Muslim co-operation.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SPEAKER AND THE CONSTITUTION

Shri Purushottam Das Tandon was our Speaker in these formative years of provincial autonomy. He had equipped himself for his onerous task of the custodianship of the rights of the people's House by a period of intensive training longer than that of any other public man in the province. By sacrifice for the nation no less than by constructive endeavour he was the doyen of our politicians. His services were universally recognised when he became the President of the Servants of the Peoples Society, an organisation to which only the Servants of India Society could bear comparison in the record of learning and self-less devotion. When the elections were over Tandonji was unanimously chosen as the Speaker of the Assembly. His was no easy task. There was the noble example of Vithalbhai Patel and the correct tradition of his local predecessor to uphold. Everybody has agreed that a better choice could not have been made.

As if that was not enough Tandonji proceeded to enrich the rights of the Speaker in various ways, none of which however contravened the rights of the House. Soon after his election he made the famous pronouncement which caused a stir in the country. He said that within the House he would be the Speaker but outside

he would remain the party man. His statement was challenged not on the score of any apprehension of his partisanship but because it was taken as a departure from the English practice. The Government brought a resolution supporting this contention and it was passed. Certainly, according to English practice the Speaker after election sheds his allegiance to the party. But later instances in England itself of contesting the Speaker's seat showed that the old convention was breaking. Besides French and American usages pointed the other way. Records showed that in the States Speakers as such would persist as party-men, i.e., even in office. Tandonji did not certainly mean to imitate them. What he willed to do was not to commit political suicide outside the House. He would not accept the constitutional usage of Great Britain as sacrosanct. And after a regular attendance of all the sittings presided by him who can point out a single instance of partiality or of impropriety committed by Tandonji ?

Yet, I shall be untrue to myself if I do not express my own views in this regard. I am against imitation. I am all for striking new paths. But I fear that in itself Tandonji's example is difficult to follow. What is easy for a man of his integrity, dignity and sense of propriety may be difficult for those who would come after him. French and American practices have led to unhappy results. The difference between a likely misapplication of Tandonji's theory and active partisanship is tenuous. Precedents are meant for ordinary mortals, and I do think that they had best remain so.

What however can be done within the limits of strict constitutional propriety, provided the will to serve the larger interests of the country is there, was illustrated by Shri Purushottamdas in one of his early pronouncements. He decided that the members of the Assembly could speak if they chose in any of the languages of the province, which they found suitable. Not only that; the Speaker could call upon any member to speak in the language which the Speaker thought adequate for a better understanding of what was meant to be conveyed to the House. This certainly led to clear exposition and a higher standard of debate in the House. Questions and answers were written in Urdu and Hindi and the proceedings of the House as well. The increase in the work of reportage was nothing compared to the advantages gained in the political consciousness and by the languages of the province. I am of the opinion that in consequence of this order the political consciousness and political literature of the province were both enriched. I bear witness to the high literary quality of a large number of speeches delivered on the floor of the House by the Opposition and Congressmen. The Hindi and the Urdu Press began for the first time to report in full the proceedings of the House.

Any record of the Congress Government will not be complete without mentioning the last statement of the Speaker in connection with the war. No Speaker anywhere had done it before. But it was not merely original, nor was it a mere consistency in views and attitudes. It was a deliberate performance of the Speaker

with his high-powered sense of duty by the House of the rights of which he was the custodian. He pointed out, as a Speaker, that by the amendments to the Government of India Act and by certain rules in connection with defence of India the rights of the House to freely legislate had been seriously curtailed if not taken away. As this statement was delivered before the War resolution was moved it did not succeed in arresting the attention it deserved. The subsequent resignation stole its importance. But constitutional history of India will make amends by giving it its due prominence.

One word about the Speaker's conduct of proceedings. That it was uniformly dignified and impartial, needs no emphasis. Tandonji had even said that he would not like to be the Speaker by the will of the majority alone, and that if the Opposition expressed in any way that it had no confidence in him he would at once resign. What I mean to stress is the way in which he handled questions and answers in question-time. If the Government were late in reply or if the Opposition indulged in argument in seeking information he would at once pull them up. The rights and privileges of the House could not be in safer hands. Nor could the country expect a bolder man for the interpretative enlargement of constitutional procedure.



CHAPTER XII  
COMMENTS

Thus far a record of the various activities of the Congress government in our province. I have tried to keep away my sentiments. It was difficult. After all, my long association with the larger organisation had built certain predilections into my bones which were strengthened by the Congress Government's own achievements. Yet, I consider it my duty to express myself freely on what appears to me to have been its weaknesses. My object in doing so is neither to create an impression of intellectual superiority nor to indulge in the luxury of criticism but only to offset any feeling of complacency that may have been generated in certain minds, and underline the lessons that should not be forgotten in our next venture. When Congress comes back, as it is sure to do so with greater strength, let the strength be more than ever before by virtue of its quality.

*The Cabinet.* In my opinion, the first serious deficiency arose in connection with the distribution of portfolios. The distribution of work among members depends upon principles and personalities alike. People seem to think that aptitude, training and reputation are the sole considerations. True, but only in the matter of selection. There are, of course, cases on record where

the new incumbent was a perfect stranger to his duties before he took over charge, and yet proved a success. One might even call it the English tradition. On the other hand, there is the contrary practice of appointing only experts or trained men. Each has its own merits and demerits. Ignorance may be fresh whereas experience may be narrow and wooden. It is difficult to have a compromise between these alternatives with the result that no cabinet can either be a committee of experts or a coterie of ignoramuses.

At the same time the principles of distribution are to be observed. A few such have been universally recognised. In the first place, the Premier should confine himself to the work of co-ordination between various departments, supervision of general administration in the province and the formulation of the larger policies. His burden should be as light as possible in order that he may be released for his superior functions. Secondly, the Finance Minister should have no other portfolio but his own. In these days, finance is an intricate problem, particularly in a country like India where so many nation-building developmental activities are to be taken up. Thirdly, in no case should spending departments be vested in the hands of the Finance Minister whose department in every country has adopted the motto of saving at all costs. Fourthly, other departments should be functionally correlated, like agriculture, co-operation, Trade and Industries. These should be grouped together on the basis of organic affinity and entrusted in the hands of one man thereby

ensuring against overlapping. If these principles of distribution are observed smooth working is possible.

By and large the Congress Cabinet in the United Provinces was an excellent team. But its excellence was sought to be defeated by its smallness, which was an unfortunate political necessity. To put it bluntly the Cabinet was not meant to be so compact as it was when the Congress won the elections. Then it was almost a certainty that the Muslim League would be represented in it by at least two of its leading members. When that hope was dimmed the doors had to remain shut. As it was, the U. P. Cabinet lost in health what it gained in compactness and solidarity. The Ministers worked like Trojans and fell ill not being gifted with the Trojans' health. Pandit Pant's vitality was shattered and he had to retire to the hills for some time, Mr. Kidwai fainted on the floor of the house and was asked by the doctors to leave Lucknow, and Mrs. Pandit had to leave India to recoup herself. They did not spare themselves because they thought that so much was waiting to be done and a long lee-way had to be covered. They were fighting against time itself, time that had worked against India, and time, as they felt, was pregnant with wondrous possibilities. But they forgot that their life was in time and thus endangered it. Grand no doubt, but on the plane of emotions. Below it was the little fact of a small cabinet each member of which took upon himself an amount of work too heavy for human shoulders. Even those of Pantji, an Atlas among men, bowed. He was in charge of Home Affairs, Finance and Forest in

addition to Premiership. On the top of it he had to give account of his stewardship to his party. Even his spare hours were occupied by visitors who had no business except to invite him for the opening of an exhibition or a room in a rural hospital. He cheerfully acceded to all demands. But nature had her revenge. Long before he was forced to leave Lucknow, he was a physical wreck.

Pantji is recognised on all hands to be a financial genius. He had made his reputation in the Central Legislative Assembly. When he took the portfolio of Finance, the people in the province knew that its finances were safe, that there would be no wastage, that development departments would not starve for money and that the country would not suffer the spectacle of the bloated haves on one side and the pale havenots on the other. These hopes were fulfilled. But at what cost? Pantji is not an ordinary being. The province will not produce men of his type at the bidding. Where he succeeded others will fail. Hence also the need for separating the Ministry of Finance from Premiership in any future government. The fourth principle viz., the entrusting of cognate departments in one pair of hands was consummated in the case of Dr. Katju. Yet one sometimes felt that Justice did not logically go very well with Excise, though in actual practice they combined excellently so long as Dr. Katju was in charge.

*Law & Order.* My final series of observations relate to Law and Order. I exclude the labour strikes at Cawnpore and elsewhere for the simple reason that in nearly all

cases these manifestations were orderly. I have in a previous section expressed myself against lightning strikes. They were certainly wrong and extremely embarrassing, yet probably they could not be avoided. In any case the withdrawal of the last general strike and the non-violent conduct of the first one of 50 days are facts to be considered by an impartial observer before he pronounces the series of strikes as breaches of law and order. I for one cannot call a protest against impossible conditions of living as illegal, though it may be disorderly in the ordinary sense of the term.

Real breaches of order occurred on three counts: (1) Shia-Sunni controversy, (2) the khaksars, and (3) the Hindu-Muslim riots to which I have already devoted a full-length chapter. Though the outbreak of riots is always a deplorable fact, yet the statement of the Government attitude towards the main problem which unresolved leads to violent manifestations is helpful in removing misapprehensions about Government's intentions.

*Madhe Sahaba & Tabarra.* The Government policy regarding the Madhe Sahaba and Tabarra controversy was logically consistent. In the resolution of March 28, 1938 on the report of the Allsop Committee which had been appointed earlier to go into the whole question the Congress Government had emphasised that "the Sunnis' right of public or private recitation in praise of even three khaliphs was not in dispute. This right they undoubtedly possessed." In the next communique issued on the subject on November 11, 1938, that policy was emphatically repeated. In neither of these two

authoritative statements was the Sunnis' right of public recitation of Madhe Sahaba denied, only its method and circumstance were circumscribed by the necessity of peace and order. The last announcement of the Government on the subject on March 30th, 1939 was therefore consistent with the policy enunciated by the Congress Government throughout. It may also be pointed out that the Congress government followed the recommendations of the two Madhe Sahaba committees, one of which was of 1908. These two committees never questioned the right of Sunnis to public recital of Madhe Sahaba except on three specific days. Government resolution on Piggot Committee's report (dated January 7, 1909), says "to issue a general proclamation with intent to run liable to punishment in having in any public place and in any circumstance whatsoever sung or recited in an audible voice verses in praise of the first three khaliphs is a step the Government is not prepared to take." The Allsop Committee only underlined the principles and policy of Government resolution of 1909. If, therefore, Madhe Sahaba Tabarra controversy ended in a riot accompanied by firing, it could not be traced to any attempt on the part of the Congress Government to depart from the general policy sanctioned by various committees of earlier days. The Congress Government, however, did not rest content here. They invited Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to settle the sectarian dispute, he being one of the greatest theologians and the accredited leader of the Muslims in the country. In spite of his ill health he came and brought the Shias and Sunnis

together. But unfortunately the intransigent members of both parties more particularly of the Sunnis nullified all his honest and noble endeavours. In fact the agitation was a part of the widespread attempt to discredit the Congress Government. The Shias had always been strong supporters of the Congress, whereas among the Muslim Leaguers Sunnis formed the majority. Here was a golden opportunity to take away as many supporters of the Congress as one could in the name of religion. The Congress Government realised it. Here is my criticism. Once a clear-cut consistent decision was formed, it lost heart to adopt vigorous measures to give effect to it.

*The Khaksars.* I am convinced that the eruption of Khaksars in the province was the most serious challenge to the Congress Government that was ever made. The movement contained all the germs of reaction. It was a menace to democracy, civil liberties and law and order. I have no doubt that the khaksar movement can be compared with the Nazi and the Fascist movements in the West. If these two have led the world to disaster, the full potentialities of khaksar movement are no less menacing for India. I make no apologies for giving a full account of the khaksar movement.

The seed of the movement was first laid in the pages of an Urdu publication called *Isharat* or 'Hints' by Mr. Inayatullah Khan. It was a mixture of uncertain religious doctrines which in the name of reform exhorted the Muslims to recover their lost glory, and of certain political dogmas which depended upon a crude theology

for the establishment of political power by the Muslims over India.

To a casual reader the ideas contained in the book were reminiscent of the Pakistan and occasionally of the pan-Islamic movement started a couple of decades ago. Probably, there was also a strain of the Wahabi movement that had found a strong hold in the Punjab. One could even detect a trace of the Khadim-i-Kaba. Readers today may compare the Ishrat with Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' on at least two essential points, namely, the evolution of symbol, and the revenue they fetched to the authors thereof.

The movement that began in a village near Lahore in 1930 collected in two years 90 followers who were all villagers and susceptible to discipline. Once transplanted into Lahore, the movement gathered pace and about three hundred young men came within the fold in course of a few weeks. It was at Peshawar, however, that the Khaksar movement developed the technique which has made it notorious. It consisted in obedience to the letters of order but defiance to their spirit. One band would be recruited, trained and disbanded to yield place to a fresh one. If a party of fifteen men were not allowed to march through a street, groups of 15 would march through different streets at the same time. If leaders were asked to leave an area they would continue to communicate their orders through men in plain clothes. Thus was learnt the first lesson in the breaking of pledges.

Two years later when the movement spread over



from the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province into Hyderabad and Sind, the necessity of a weekly organ for the movement was felt. The "Al-Islah" was started and soon found its way into this province. In June 1934, Allama Mashriqi received his second order to quit the Peshawar district. He laid low for about a year and by the end of 1935 organised a camp at Delhi into which Khaksars from about 300 places flocked. The year 1936 saw a more intensive organisation in various centres where training in mock military fights were duly given. The problem so far was financial but it was solved by the gift of about nine lakhs from an ex-Mir of Sind—the Thyssen of the party.

With this timely assistance the movement gained a fresh accession of strength which emboldened the Allama to issue an ultimatum to the Punjab Government demanding the installation of a Radio station at Lahore, the establishment of a central (Zakat) fund and the removal of restrictions upon Government officials to participate in the Khaksar movement. The ultimatum ended by holding out a threat that in case of refusal, the Ministry would be seen out of office. We do not know what action the Punjab Government took in this matter, but if we are to trust the Allama once at least, the Punjab Government agreed to the lifting of the ban on Government officials and considered the second demand.

Another ultimatum was issued to the Premier of the North-West Frontier Province sometime in May 1939, in which dire consequences were predicted if "he did not improve his ways and if he did not suspend

his hostility towards the Khaksar movement.”

The history of Khaksar movement in this province is no less interesting. It was given out that the Khaksar volunteers were wedded to the service of the people. On account of the Congress activities social consciousness had been aroused in the countryside, but when the Muslim League deterred the Muslims from joining the Congress and itself failed to canalize their expectations, the Muslims felt inclined to join a movement that promised some social good. For a disarmed population the lure of arms, uniforms and parade was irresistible.

It must be admitted, however, that in the beginning the Khaksars in the United Provinces did not show themselves as a danger to law and order. Meanwhile, the unfortunate Shia-Sunni controversy was started in Lucknow and tending to rend the great Muslim community in twain. Lucknow itself was in a highly disturbed condition with daily prospects of riots. It was at this moment of crisis in Muslim solidarity that Mr. Inayatullah Khan found his opportunity. In the issue of "Al Islah" of Lahore, dated June 12, 1939, the first reference to this Shia-Sunni dispute was made. The article stated that those who took part in it deserved death according to the Quran and that if the Shias and Sunnis could not arrive at a compromise between themselves within a fortnight serious measures would be adopted against Shia and Sunni leaders. In short, three from each sect, the names of whom were known to the Allama, were to be executed, of course, by the Khaksars.

The Ahrar Muslims took up the challenge and a

batch of Ahrars was reported to be coming from Agra to Lucknow. The Muslim Youth League also offered its services to protect the leaders and oppose the Khaksars. There was a counter-announcement in the 'Al Islah' of June 30, on behalf of the three Janbazes that they were prepared to come to Lucknow to consign the traitors to the community to the "flames of Hell" and that they were "only awaiting orders". The 'Al Islah' of July 21, exceeded the frankness of all previous issues by its violence. An Armageddon in the province after July 21, reddening of the streets of Lucknow with blood, the extinguishment from the land of the satanic Government as well as an earthquake for Lucknow were duly promised. In the issue of August 4, Mr. Inayatullah referred to "blood and fire" inasmuch as any settlement was out of the question. On August 25, a statement was published by the Commander-in-Chief of Bahraich Khaksars that one thousand Khaksars were marching to Lucknow to play with "blood and fire".

In pursuance of the above policy, Mr. Inayatullah sent on August 7, the following telegram to the Government:—

"Orders 3,000 Khaksars issuing, forcible settlement Lucknow dispute. Ready co-operation Government provided reasonable conditions acceptable Shia-Sunni offered. Please wire intention."

Such a telegram could not be replied to. So another "gentle" reminder came that the Khaksars were determined to end this dispute by all means. As the tone of this message was not as bad as that of the previous

one, the United Provinces Government sent the following reply:—

“The United Provinces Government is itself desirous of ending this dispute at the earliest possible moment and if the Punjabis had not interfered in it, it would have been already ended. Government accepts the co-operation of all organisations in this connection so long as the methods adopted to end the Shia-Sunni dispute are peaceful and within legal limits”. The Government also inquired whether the threat of murder held out in ‘Al Islah’ was really on his behalf and whether he undertook the responsibility for the same.

No reply was, of course, forthcoming excepting a subsequent article in the ‘Al Islah’ in which it was written that the Khaksars would smash the U. P. Government and use force against the Shia and Sunni leaders. It was the old story over again. But a curious side-light to the movement is to be found in a passage in this article of August 18 which mentioned that it would not prove a bad bargain if an understanding could be achieved between the Shias and Sunnis by offering a fight to the U. P. Government, which was a Congress Government. The Allama followed the article by issuing orders to Khaksars to proceed to Lucknow.

Thus began the destructive eruption in this city famous for the smooth and cultured tenor of its existence. On the arrival of the Khaksars with their Janbazes, it was announced that a salute of 101 crackers would be fired in the city and a parade would be held in honour

of Mr. Bhurgri of Sind. The atmosphere of Lucknow was surcharged at this time and section 144 had been declared in the city, under which people could not go out in the streets with lathis or sticks. So the Khaksars were informed by the District Magistrate that under section 144 they could not be permitted to let off bombs or to march on the roads in a uniform and with spades. Mr. Wahiduddin Haidar, the local captain, complied with the orders of the District Magistrate. Consequently, Mr. Inayatullah ordered the public flogging of Mr. Wahiduddin Haidar on the charge of obeying the orders of the authorities. Herein lies the second Nazi technique of the Allama. It deliberately provokes a clash with the authorities in the name of internal discipline.

When on August 25, Mr. Inayatullah visited Lucknow, all the noble and patient efforts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad for the settlement of Shia-Sunni dispute were seriously challenged. At a number of meetings Mr. Inayatullah delivered speeches in which he asked his followers "to take lives, to beat and kill these men and drive them away". This they did faithfully and a number of men were wounded, though not killed, a young hawker was beaten, an editor's life was threatened and some Muslims were attacked with spades. Mr. Inayatullah was obviously very pleased with these achievements because he gave a statement to the Press in which he proclaimed "We do believe in violence. Non-violent people must be stamped out from the face of the world. Non-violence is unnatural".

The Press of the province, however, refused to give it publicity.

In the meantime, Tabarra agitation had been suspended and the 'raison d'être' of the Allama's visitation had disappeared. But that was a small consideration. Mr. Inayatullah refused to move away with his followers. On the contrary, he put up before the Government certain fantastic proposals like the removal of restrictions on spades, restraint on newspapers writing articles against the Khaksars, permission for military parades, withdrawal of all cases of rioting, and to cap it all, the prosecution of the self-same news boy who had been beaten by the Khaksars. Such proposals could not be entertained. The Allama said he would not budge from Lucknow till his demands were fully met. So the Government arrested Mr. Inayatullah and some of his associates on the night of September 1.

The arrest had an immediate effect. The Khaksars wanted to return to their homes and they applied to the Government for free passage or tickets. Information reached the Government that the Allama also wanted to leave Lucknow if he was provided with a special train for himself and his followers. As the Congress Government did not provide more than a second class berth for the Ministers, the suggestion was not found acceptable. Anyhow, the Khaksars came to the railway station, and got into the train. But just when the train was going to start they pulled the chains, jumped out of the compartments and began to beat the policemen. But for the blood on the platform the whole incident

would have been considered as a silly escape. Undignified it remained and will remain for ever.

Once inside the jail, Mr. Inayatullah was in jitters. His position was pathetic. Bereft of his followers and the moral support of his admirers, he found it difficult to keep his ends up. The rigours of jail life, in spite of the comforts provided, were too much for him. His prudence prevailed and he gave the following in writing on September 2 to two respectable non-official gentlemen who had gone to see him in jail. The text of this letter deserves quotation in full for its intrinsic humility:

“Respected Ahmad Hussain Sahib, M.L.C. and respected Syed Wajid Husain Sahib Rizvi, Moradabadi, I assure you that after the withdrawal of the notice under section 107, I will neither enter the U. P. for one year nor order or permit batches of Khaksars to come from any other province. The Khaksars of the United Provinces will be directed not to interfere in the Lucknow Shia-Sunni dispute. You can hand over this letter to the Chief Secretary to Government for assurance.”

(Sd.) INAYATULLAH

When the letter was shown by these gentlemen the Government considered it proper that Mr. Inayatullah and other Khaksar leaders should execute an undertaking and address the Government direct. Mr. Inayatullah and other Khaksar leaders agreed to this. In the presence of the jail officials and K. B. Hafiz Ahmad Husain and others, Mr. Inayatullah sent one undertaking and others sent a second. The undertaking of Mr.

Inayatullah is as follows:—

“I hereby give an undertaking that for a year after the date of the withdrawal of the notice under section 107, I will neither enter the U. P. nor permit or order batches of Khaksars from any other province to enter the United Provinces. Khaksars of the United Provinces will be instructed not to interfere in the Lucknow Shia-Sunni dispute. I give this letter to the Chief Secretary to Government for his assurance.”

(Sd.) INAYATULLAH

The undertaking given by other Khaksar leaders runs thus:

In the case of K. E. vs. Inayatullah Khan and others (Section 107, Criminal Procedure Code):

“We, the persons whose signatures are affixed below promise and undertake that if the U. P. Government withdraws the case under Section 107, Criminal Procedure Code, instituted against us we would immediately return to our province and would not interfere in any way in the affairs of the United Provinces for a year from date.”

These two undertakings were given on September 2 in the presence of K. B. Hafiz Wajid Husain Rizvi as well as Col. Jafary and other jail officials. These undertakings have since been considered by Mr. Inayatullah as forgeries of the Government.

On receipt of these undertakings, however, the Government released Mr. Inayatullah and his other associates and seated them in the train. The train started



and even reached Malihabad, the place for mangoes. The Allama got down from the train and wanted to return to Lucknow by another. The police were, however, still busy at the Lucknow station making arrangements for the departure of other Khaksars. Mr. Inayatullah got scent of their presence, at once jumped into a third train booked for Hardoi and got down from it again at Sandila. This game of hide and seek was ended by Mr. Inayatullah when at long last he boarded the train for Delhi.

Soon after his departure from the province, telegrams threatening dire consequences to the Government began to pour in. Allama's followers must have felt that their prestige had suffered. The Allama certainly did so. His method of restoring it was however unique. He flatly denied having executed the bond, called it a forgery and distortion and promised to visit Lucknow a second time. He came. When he reached Malihabad station, he was arrested for the second time for breach of section 144 and sentenced to imprisonment for one month and a fine of rupees fifty or a week's further confinement in default.

Such was the story of the Khaksar challenge in Lucknow. In other cities their disturbance was less melodramatic, though not less mischievous. The movement so far as this province is concerned was started with false pretensions of social service and ended by becoming a danger to public order and tranquillity. Its technique, developed in accordance with Allama's own admission, was breach of pledges, falsehood and

open and organised defiance of authorities, particularly, when they were pledged to the preservation of civil liberties. The Khaksars exploited the noblest ideals of the Congress Government. It is not, however, strange to remember that the Khaksars withdrew from open defiance as soon as the Congress Government resigned. Their quarrel as the Congress Government realised very early in the day was with the Congress itself. But I know that the movement is still collecting strength in the province. Its offering of guards for Muslim Leaguers on arrival at important cities may be pleasing to a political party which has no hold over the masses and must needs discover ample compensation in military glory. But sooner or later whoever comes to assume the reins of government, either the Congress or the Muslim League or even a Congress-League coalition, this challenge of the Khaksars to law and order will have to be taken up. The Congress Government's attitude towards the Khaksars was certainly correct so long as the Muslim League was in open sympathy with it. In fact, an important Leaguer expressed his gratitude to the Allama in Lucknow for breathing new life into the Muslim League through the difficulties that his movement had created for the Congress Government. Yet, I feel that the Government's attitude should have been stronger, much stronger, in view of the menacing potentialities of this Indian edition of a Fascist movement.

*The Police.* My next criticism relates to the Police. The term police is very vague though the duties connected with the department are held by the public to be

clear-cut, namely to restore order when it is in danger. Needless to say that the police has many other tasks to perform such as day to day vigilance, detection and prosecution, etc. Detection is a highly specialized function of the police department. So far as ordinary crime is concerned the public knows the limitations of the police staff. I have no proofs to hold that in this matter there was any appreciable increase in the efficiency of the police during the Congress regime. I had expected that with the advent of the popular government there would be closer association between police and the public in the matter of detection of crimes. Of course, in excise crimes vigilance did increase with the result that the number of excise cases went up. I know that excise is not a branch of the police, but my point in making this reference is to bring out the failure of the police department to evoke public approval in spite of definite instructions. There is another aspect of detection which is under the special branch of the Criminal Investigation Department. Here I will not be far from wrong if I say that the special branch of the C.I.D. was running, figuratively speaking a government parallel to the popular political government. It would not of course come out in the open as much as it did previously. Also in comparison to what was happening in Bengal and the Punjab the C.I.D. in the United Provinces lay low. Soon after the assumption of office the Congress Government ordered that C.I.D. reporters would not be present in political meetings. Later on, however, when communal feeling was aroused it was

considered necessary to have some of the aggressively violent speeches to be reported. The C.I.D. reporters were drafted for that purpose but certainly that was not their usual function. But I do remember cases of seizure by the C.I.D. of innocent books on radical and progressive thought even in the city of Lucknow. When sedition of yesterday became the accepted doctrines of today the C.I.D.'s occupation became hunting the Red. The Congress Government's policy regarding the Red was very liberal. In fact communism as a theory was considered to be on par with any other theory of political and economic reconstruction. The C.I.D. did not act up to this policy and went on with its own ways.

Much criticism has been levelled against the morale of the police staff during the Congress regime. The Opposition cried hoarse over its deterioration. If by deterioration they meant greater contact with the public and less 'Zulum' it was a fact. But if they meant greater corruption—it was just not true. The average policeman is like the average citizen, good or bad, as circumstances permit. For aught I know the circumstances were better inasmuch as the public during these two years and a half would positively refuse to placate the tin-gods in street corners. Whether the constable cherished ill-feeling for this denial of the public to supplement his income is beside the point. If it proves anything it should multiply instances of harassment. But harassment decreased. So far as the staff were concerned I should think that the operations of the Anti-Corruption Department instilled fear, if not morality

in their hearts. A number of prosecutions took place with salutary effect upon the rest. My criticism of the working of the police therefore consists in the fact that it considered itself to be almost autonomous in the discharge of its duties. I do not know how far this subterranean autonomy was the direct consequence of the Government of India Act. But about the feeling of its existence I had little doubt.

*Civil Service.* I do not consider, that the Congress administration was all that it should have been. How could it be so under the Government of India Act which maintained the premium on civilian secretaries? In the existing system secretaries can mark any file for the Governor even when it is submitted directly to the ministers, in which case the latter have no option but to send the file on. Of course, this right of civilian secretaries was not always abused, but its existence shows the cracks in the so-called provincial administrative autonomy. Coupled with it is the fact that secretaries have direct access to the Governor. Even admitting that secretaries were souls of honour, the right itself took away from the ministry the independence and the nationalism of their policy. Their very existence is an unseen caveat to the will of the people.

I do not mean any personal disrespect to the personnel. Man for man they are no better and no worse than others. Some I know who gave their best, yet others who were either indifferent or basically hostile. Their qualities and weaknesses were only to be expected. They had been trained in the office procedure, noting

of files, and in address to details. At the same time they had the defects of their virtues. They were wooden. If some retained their humanity they were considered very exceptional. Red tape was a noose round everybody's neck. Files multiplied files; notings cancelled notings, while orders were hanging fire. The cleverest official was he who could drive a coach and four through a scheme. It was called administrative soundness and ability. Premium was put upon postponement. The waste was more tragic because it was often unintentional. Still I do not blame the 'servants' half so much as I do the system under which they had worked. They had been pampered beyond measure with the result that they started believing in their superiority. They had worked as agents of an irresponsible Government and dreaded demonstrations of popular will. Their contempt for action arose from non-experience of popular efforts. Well, might the Indians cry, Alas! these be your gods! But the gods will have to descend on earth to shed their paradisaical abstraction. Nothing but complete control of the services will convert the services into instruments of national welfare. People will dictate the general terms and they will work out the details. Any intermediate position is intolerable. They are agents, that is the first proposition, they are human agents, that is the second; and being human agents they should be made to subserve the larger interests of that section of humanity which is Indian—that is the third and the last. If these are recognised and acted upon Self-Government will prove itself to be better than what-

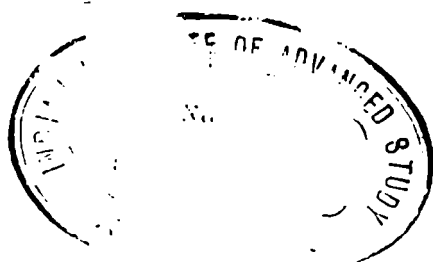
ever Government bad or good they were once asked to administer.

It will be evident from my comments that the record of Congress achievements in the field of administration suffered from the defects of the system under which it worked. That the record was not inglorious could be primarily traced to the spirit of service, which motivated those who guided it and made them rise above circumstances as predicated by the Government of India Act, and ultimately to the disposition of the national will that had been steeled by the supreme organisation of the country for the purpose of winning freedom. The Congress Cabinet behaved as agents of the master-interests of India. So in their basic conduct there was no faltering. I am aware of the opposite point of view that provincial considerations were subjected to the decisions of the High Command and as such departed from the pure theory of democratic government. My views are slightly different. At this particular stage of our political development the consciousness of one-ness is a concern to which local affairs should be subordinated. Then again, the High Command only saw to the broadest outlines of common discipline. Our provincial Congress Committee too, being the most radical of all similar bodies in India, never erred on the side of mere subservience. Discipline we had on larger issues where the province as a whole displayed almost a military discipline. The fact that few or no references were made to the All-India body for settlement would alone prove my contention. In the latter half of 1939 certain dis-

ruptive tendencies no doubt developed, but the heart of the Congress was ever sound. There was no falling off in the ardour of the average Congressman in the U.P. in the zeal for freedom. As such no question of the High Command acting as a brake on the one hand, and of the provincial wheels desiring to move faster on the other, ever arose. I also speak from inside knowledge when I say that there was no interference by the Congress High Command in the administration of the provincial government. Only the closest co-operation prevailed; the members of the Working Committee were only too willing to extend their helping hand whenever a local problem, such as Shia-Sunni controversy, assumed all-India proportions. If the Congress Governments had more time, I am sure, larger policies of administration would have been tackled on the basis of common agreement but with due deference to local conditions. Actually, many such conferences were in the offing when Congress ministers resigned. The Home Ministers, the Industries Ministers had met and their deliberation were fruitful. Many more were to have come, but they had to be shelved in view of the very much larger question of India's attitude towards Great Britain in the prosecution of the War. Here is the secret of all Congress Governments in India in the brief span of their rule. They succeeded only because they had the sense of values to perceive that in a situation of conflict administrative problems must yield place to India's independence. The Congress has set large aims before which the success of smaller mechanisms must recede. It is with a mention



of this context that I conclude this inadequate record of the work done by the Congress Government during the twenty-eight months of its rule.



With acknowledgement to various publications the list of which is large.



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