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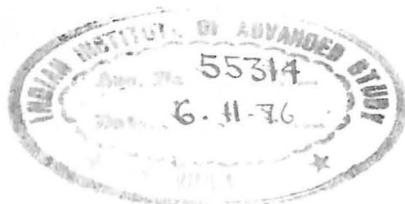
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Foreword

THIS brochure traces the origin of the language problem from the early period to the present day. It seeks to present the whole problem in the right perspective for the benefit of Congress members in particular and the public in general.

The controversy has witnessed many ups and downs. Soon after independence the country was confronted with a problem of adopting some Indian language as an official one. The controversy and discussions in the Party meetings as well as on the floor of the Constituent Assembly happily ended in the acceptance of Hindi as an official language. The decision was universally hailed and a wave of satisfaction prevailed.

1965 was the year marked as a dead-line for the complete change-over from English to Hindi. As this deadline was drawing nearer and nearer, controversy raised again its head and soon in various parts of the country, particularly in the South and East, it was taking a shape which at one time threatened the very unity of the country. But the provisions of the Constitution were doing their work. The Official Language Commission and the Parliamentary Committee on Official Language provided forums to absorb extreme viewpoints and bring about reconciliation. Because of them most of the debate took place in cool atmosphere. Credit goes to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee whose Herculean efforts brought almost near-unanimity in outlook on the whole problem. However, some dissenting voices found their echoes in the controversy that was already raging in some parts of the country. The entire controversy was set at rest when the Prime Minister Nehru gave a formula in his speech delivered in Lok Sabha on August 7, 1959. This changed the entire atmosphere. Again a wave of satisfaction was witnessed. His second speech on September 4, 1959 further

(ii)

clarified the formula and today we are happy to note that the controversy has been resolved and country is marching ahead with one voice. Language, as it should be, is a binding force for the unity and solidarity of the country.

We approached Pantji for a foreword. Politely he brushed aside our request. Our remarks about him came in our way. His foreword would have been a very valuable piece. However we preferred not to withdraw those remarks. Therefore we have to be content with a short excerpt from his letter :

“I have glanced through it and have no doubt that its publication will be helpful in clarifying the Congress Party's stand on this important issue. It covers considerable ground without being too lengthy and presents the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee on Official Language in their correct perspective It is complete in itself and hardly needs a foreword.”

The main responsibility of preparing this brochure was naturally on the Bureau of Parliamentary Research. Shri Om Prakash Kalra, our Research Officer, bore the main brunt. The guidance and assistance of Shri Jamal Khwaja M.P., Shri Ishwar Dutt and Diwan Chaman Lall M.P. came readily and our thanks are due to them.

H.C. HEDA
Secretary

Official Language Controversy Set At Rest

INTRODUCTION

The demand for political freedom was essentially a demand to shape and mould the destiny of our country according to our values and the genius of our people. Political freedom was naturally a means of doing so. Much before the attainment of freedom visions of the new India had stirred the imagination of the thinking people of our country including our leaders. The idea of a secular and a classless society as the aim and democratic planning as the method found an element of expression in the speeches and writings of our leader Shri Jawaharlal Nehru as early as the 1930's. The idea of having a common Indian language as lingua franca of the country that would lead to an emotional and intellectual integration of the country is of even earlier origin. Lokmanya Tilak in Maharashtra and several prominent people such as Bankim-Chander Chatterjee in Bengal gave a lead to the country in this respect, as a part of the nationalist movement for the freedom of the country. But as in almost every aspect of recent Indian history, it was Gandhiji, who, above all, formulated the problem of a common Indian language as we understand it today and who gave the inimitable stamp of his personality, his broad-mindedness and his vision to the whole problem. He named it Hindustani in the beginning and later he called it Hindi-Hindustani.

In the most unambiguous and categorical manner he pointed out that the highest spiritual, moral and intellectual development of people was possible only through the use of a mother tongue as the medium of instruction and administration. To him there was no conflict whatsoever between the various regional languages spoken in India and the Hindi-Hindustani.

After the achievement of independence, the Constituent

Assembly set itself the task of formulating a concrete answer to the whole problem. Members of the Constituent Assembly were eager to solve the problem as amicably as possible.

The decisions taken by the Constituent Assembly in the matter of an official language were almost unanimous and there was great satisfaction in the country that a target date had been fixed for the replacement of a foreign language by Hindi. Due recognition was also given to the importance of various regional languages thus avoiding the possibility of any conflict between the various languages of the country.

The country was satisfied at the collective wisdom and the spirit of caution and realism embodied in the provisions of the Constitution with regard to the language problem. The statutory provision for the appointment of an Official Language Commission to be followed by the Report of a Parliamentary Committee and the provisions for the periodic review of the problem as a whole assured the people that the matter was being tackled in a very scientific and objective manner. However, after the pause of a few years the language question started to take rather an ugly turn and all sorts of complications, doubts, fears, suspicions, charges and counter-charges started to disturb the minds of the various regions of India. Opposition not only to 15 years time limit but to the introduction of Hindi as such started gathering momentum among some sections of the people particularly those belonging to Tamilnad and Bengal. Some distinguished people of the country including lawyers, judges, educationists, scientists etc. irrespective of the region they hail from also started making pleas for the retention of English in the wider interests of the country as a whole.

On the other hand the supporters of Hindi also intensified their campaign for the introduction of Hindi as early as possible, some of them going to the extent of suggesting that it should be done immediately and expressed unqualified criticism of the slow progress that was being made as also the half-hearted

manner in which the Government was tackling the problem. Thus a vicious circle seemed to have set in, the growing support in Bengal and Tamilnad for English adding to the impatience of the protagonists of Hindi in the North and their impatience adding to the resistance of the people in the South and in the East.

It was in these conditions that the Official Language Commission was appointed in 1955 consisting of most outstanding and eminent persons of India and presided over by Shri B.G. Kher. It submitted its Report In July 1956. The Report is a monumental work running into 495 pages. The Report of the Commission was not unanimous; three members of the Commission appended notes of dissent. The publication of the Commission's report again gave rise to a good deal of controversy.

This was taken note of by the Indian National Congress at its annual session at Gauhati where a resolution was passed regarding the controversy that had arisen and regretted that in some quarters even the basic provisions of the Constitution with regard to the desirability and necessity of having an Indian language as the Official Language were ignored. Following the Congress session, two conventions were held at Madras and Calcutta in December 1957 and March 1958 respectively. These were attended by several prominent persons of India particularly from Tamilnad and Bengal. The general consensus of opinion at both these conventions was that English should continue to remain indefinitely as the official language of the country and that the Constitution of India should be amended accordingly. On the other hand, the protagonists of Hindi continued to press the demand that Hindi could have been and should have been made the official language even before the expiry of the 15 years period, and in no case should it be continued after the 1965 deadline.

The next landmark in the history of the language problem was the appointment of the Parliamentary Committee to consider the Report of the Official Language Commission. This Committee

was presided over by Shri G.B. Pant, who with his characteristic cool and objective judgment reconciled the opposing view-points and brought near unanimity to the whole problem. The Report which was submitted to Parliament in April 1959 was hailed in all quarters as a personal triumph for Shri G.B. Pant who had brought to bear his balanced and sagacious approach to the whole problem.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Frank Anthony introduced a non-official Resolution in the Lok Sabha for the inclusion of English in the list of languages enumerated in the VIII Schedule to the Constitution. In the debate that followed great passion was aroused and heat generated. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru replied to the debate and made a monumental speech which clarified the entire issue and evoked the largest possible measure of agreement among all the sections by virtue of the balanced and impartial approach which is characteristic of our great leader. So great was its impact upon Mr. Frank Anthony and his other supporters, that he ultimately withdrew his resolution and expressed his full confidence in the wisdom and fair-play of the Government presided over by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.

During the Monsoon Session of Parliament 1959 the Report of the Committee of Parliament on Official Language was discussed in the Lok Sabha. The discussion was initiated by Shri G.B. Pant. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru spoke for a second time and once again he applied the healing touch to the painful sores of all concerned. While vigorously defending the wisdom underlying the provisions of the Constitution and thus assuring that no agitation would be allowed to deprive Hindi of its rightful place as the ultimate official language of the Union, he affirmed that no undue haste would be made in the matter that might adversely affect the just and legitimate interests of the non-Hindi speaking people of this great country. He assured the non-Hindi speaking people that English would be given the status of Associate language

and that it would continue to enjoy this status as long as the people from non-Hindi speaking areas desired. His last speech put an end to the controversy that had been troubling the minds of the people in this country. This brochure seeks to commemorate the two great speeches of the Leader by putting forth in brief outline the history of the language problem and controversy from the emergence of Gandhiji on the political scene of India to the present day and its successful solution.

It is hardly necessary to emphasise the importance of the solution for the all round harmonious progress of the country in its march towards the attainment of the goal of a strong and united India exemplifying the wisdom of diversity in unity and unity in diversity.

CHAPTER I

Development of Indian Languages

According to the linguistic survey of India there are spoken at present 179 languages and 544 dialects in the country. But the number of developed languages with a literary tradition is not very large: These have been mentioned as 13 languages (omitting Sanskrit) in the VIII schedule to the Constitution. The percentage population returned as speaking these languages as their mother-tongues in the 1951 census was as under :

<i>Language</i>	<i>Percentage to total Population</i>
Assamese	1.39
Bengali	7.03
Gujerati	4.57
Hindi (including Urdu, Hindustani and Punjabi)	42.01
Kannada	4.05
Kashmiri (comparable figures about Kashmiri not available)	
Malayalam	3.69
Marathi	7.57
Oriya	3.68
Sanskrit	.0001
Tamil	7.43
Telugu	9.24
—Population returned as speaking other languages as their mother-tongues.	9.22

Amongst these languages, the Hindi language has by far the largest proportion of speakers in the Indian population although the number does not constitute a majority of the total population.

The Indian languages can be classified into four distinct family groups, viz. Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman, the two most important families being, the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian. Although once the Dravidian forms of speech were prevalent over wide regions of the sub-continent, at the present day Dravidian languages are confined to South India. The Indo-Aryan and Dravidian forms of speech have profoundly affected and influenced each other. The large proportion of Sanskrit words found in the South Indian languages indicates the historical synthesis between the Aryan and the Dravidian languages. The four great literary Dravidian languages are Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam.

The earliest record of the Indo-Aryan language is found in the Rigveda. Apart from language used in the Vedic hymns, there may have been dialectical varieties amongst forms of speech then current and these are called by scholars the Vedic Prakrits. While these were being cultivated, the Vedic language passed on from generation to generation through an oral tradition, largely in the custody of the priestly classes, substantially without change. Sometime about the 7th Century B.C. was evolved the standardised language which has since been known as Sanskrit. Sanskrit for many centuries thereafter was the one language *par excellence* of culture amongst the *literati* in all parts of India.

However it was never the language of the common people. The great Mahavira and the Buddha for the sake of carrying their religious messages to the common people deliberately and purposefully resorted to Prakrit forms of speech and most of the Jain and Buddhist literature of the time, was in Pali and Ardhamagadhi. The edicts of Asoka are composed in the Indo-Aryan Prakrit dialects prevalent at that time.

The original Indo-Aryan Prakrits subsequently developed into Apabhramshas or the spoken languages of the masses which, in their turn, evolved into the modern Indian languages. The

Sauraseni, Maharashtra, Magadha, Vrachada and Kekaya were the main Apabhramshas from which the modern Indo-Aryan languages are believed to have originated. Thus from the Sauraseni have sprung Western Hindi, Rājasthani, Punjabi and Gujarati, from the Maharashtra Marathi; from Vrachada, Sindhi; while Bengali, Assamese and Oriya have originated from the Magadha Apabhramsha.

Between 11th century and 13th century, with the advent of Turko-Iranian power in the North and South India, the official language, Persian, with a large number of Arabic words made its impact upon the Indian linguistic scene.

In the North a form of speech first known as Hindi, Hindui—or Rekhta and subsequently known as 'Zaban-e-Urdu' came to be developed. From the 14th century onwards there also developed a literary language known as 'Dakhni' in the courts of Golconda and Bijapur in South India. In the earlier period the writers of Urdu showed a far greater catholicity to the regional languages as in the works of Amir Khusro and many others. A large number of Hindus also contributed to the literary traditions of Hindustani.

While these developments were shaping in the areas directly under the influence of the Muslim rulers, a virtual renaissance was taking place amongst the great languages of the country. Several of the modern Indian languages other than Dravidian, trace their literary tradition from about the beginning of this era. Jnaneshwar in Marathi, Tulsidas and Surdas in Avadi and Brajabhasha, Guru Nanak in Western Hindi and Punjabi, Vidyapati in Maithili, Chandidas in Bengali, Shankardev in Assamiya, Saraladas in Oriya, Narsi Mehta in Gujarati and many others produced during these centuries the large bulk of literary, religious and speculative literature, most of it in poetry. This upsurge represented the breaking away from the previous tradition of using Sanskrit, Pali and Apabhramsha as the language of culture and addressing the intellectual classes rather than the common people.

All these languages continued to develop and flourish in their respective regions until the advent of British rule in India introduced a new factor in the Indian linguistic scene. While on the one hand considerable impetus was given to these Indian languages specially in the field of prose literature, on the other hand the gradual replacement of Persian and the South Indian languages for higher official purposes led to the neglect of these languages and they did not grow as far as administrative, scientific, and secular aspects are concerned. English became the language of culture and the key to the advancement of Indians in various walks of life. The adoption of English as a medium of instruction at almost all levels decided the fate of the growth of Indian languages for the next 100 years. However, it did not take long for nationalist tendencies to assert themselves and even as early as the first decade of the 20th century there were many Indians who, while granting the importance and the desirability of the study of English, emphatically asserted that the medium of instruction as well as the language of administration should be the mother-tongue. Champions of Indian languages emerged in Maharashtra, Bengal and U.P. The names of Lokmanya Tilak, Bankim Chander Chatterjee, Justice Sharda Chander Mitra and others come to our mind in this context. This brings us to the Gandhian era in the political history of India.

The demand that the medium of instruction and the language of administration should be the mother-tongue was put forward very early by Gandhiji as an obvious corollary of freedom from foreign domination, although he was by no means opposed to the value and utility of English as the language of international diplomacy, science and commerce.

C H A P T E R I I

Demand for National Language and its fulfilment

I. Demand

Gandhiji was one of the first few Indians who could foresee the disastrous consequences of a foreign tongue acquiring a predominant position in the life of the people. He therefore raised a protest, as early as 1909 against the neglect of Indian languages and against the over-importance attached to English. The ball which Gandhiji had set rolling in the first decade of the century continued to be in full play for about 40 years till it was set at rest by the Constituent Assembly in 1949.

The first pronouncement about Hindi as the national language of India was made by Gandhiji in his Presidential Address to the Gujerat Educational Congress at Bharauch in 1917. He maintained that there was no other language which could compete with Hindi in its claim to be the official language for all India purposes. In 1918 he presided over the Indore Session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, and ever since then he continued ceaselessly to propagate the cause of Hindi-Hindustani written in both Devanagari and Persian scripts. Accepting the lead given by Gandhiji it was decided by the Indian National Congress at its Kanpur Session held in 1925 that the work of the provincial organisations would hence-forward be carried on in the respective regional languages and that of the All India Congress Committee in Hindi-Hindustani as far as possible. A large number of organisations sprang up in various parts of the country for the propagation and development of Hindi.

In the beginning, the Hindi Sahitya-Sammelan, Allahabad and

other sister organisations with similar aims had categorically accepted Gandhiji's view about the Hindi-Hindustani as the national language in two scripts and that both of them were to be encouraged and learnt by all patriotic Indians, but later due to unfortunate estrangement between the various sections of the country, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan started to differ from Gandhiji and others on the issue of the script and other matters and Gandhiji severed his connection with that body. Undeterred, he continued to preach the cause of Hindi-Hindustani as well as that of the regional languages in the most eloquent and effective manner throughout the length and breadth of the country. However it was obvious that nothing much could come in this respect as long as India was not politically free. In 1937 with the advent of provincial autonomy in India practical opportunity for implementing some of the Congress policies and decisions first presented itself to the Congress leaders. The movement for a common Indian language naturally received great impetus during this time. There was great enthusiasm throughout the country for the learning of Hindi particularly in the South. The services rendered by Dakshini Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha were very valuable. It is a tribute to the liberalism of the Congress leaders that they encouraged the study and use of both the Devanagiri and the Persian scripts in Northern India where Hindi and Urdu were flourishing side by side.

The demand for a common Indian language as the medium of instruction and medium of administration naturally came to the fore-front after the achievement of independence in 1947. This question was certainly one of the most important and fundamental questions that had to be tackled by the Constituent Assembly of India. Obviously no other Indian language could rival the claim of Hindi understood in the larger sense becoming the official language of the country as a whole. This was due not to the literary superiority or wealth of Hindi as compared to other Indian languages but solely due to the simple fact that it was the language spoken by the largest single group of people in the country. But there

was a good deal of controversy as to the meaning of Hindi and as to whether the official language was best termed Hindi or Hindustani. Gandhiji had consistently advocated Hindi-Hindustani as the official language in preference to the highly Sanskritized Hindi on the one hand and the Persianised Urdu on the other. The partition of the country into India and Pakistan had considerably reduced the claim of Urdu written in Persian script to be the lingua franca of divided India. But many people believed that in spite of the partition of the country the Hindi-Hindustani as visualised by Gandhiji, although written in Devanagari style exclusively was still the best solution of the language problem of India. However, after a great deal of discussion and consideration, the Constituent Assembly decided that Hindi in Devanagari script should be the official language of the country and provided a 15 year time limit during which English would continue as the principal official language.

The Members of the Constituent Assembly who participated in the proceedings concerning the official language question showed a spirit of true accommodation and patriotism as well as of realism and broad-mindedness. Gandhiji himself had never opposed the study or minimized the value of English for India and it gives us a measure of pride and satisfaction to note that our leaders also shared the same spirit with Gandhiji and even paid tributes to the English language for its role towards the emotional and intellectual integration of the country as well as of its undeniable service in introducing the people of India to the modern technological, scientific and humanistic culture of the West. They granted that English had been the pipe-line through which modern knowledge had flowed into our country and led to a political, cultural and social renaissance. We give here extracts from some of the speeches delivered in the Constituent Assembly on this question.

Shri Shyama Prasad Mookerjee

“If it is claimed by anyone that by passing an article in the Constitution of India, one language is going to be accepted by all,

by a process of coercion, I say, Sir, that that will not be possible to achieve. Unity in diversity is India's keynote and must be achieved by a process of understanding and consent, and for that a proper atmosphere has to be created. If I belonged to a province where Hindi is the spoken language, I would have felt proud today of the agreement to which practically all the members of the House have voluntarily submitted themselves by accepting Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of free India Why do we accept Hindi? Not that it is necessarily the best of Indian languages. It is for the main reason that that is the one language which is understood by the largest single majority in this country today. If 14 crores of people out of 32 crores today understand a particular language, and it is also capable of progressive development, we say, let us accept that language for the purposes of the whole of India, but do it in such a way that in the interim period it may not result in the deterioration of our official conduct of business or administration and at no time retard true advancement of India and her great languages.

"I say, Sir, we would be suffering from a sense of inferiority complex if we examine the role that the English language should play in this country from any narrow stand-point. It will be for us, the representatives of the people of free India to decide as to how progressively we will use Hindi and other Indian languages, how progressively we will get rid of the English language, if we feel that for all time to come for certain purposes, we will allow English to be used or taught we need not be ashamed of ourselves. There are certain matters which we have the courage to speak out, not in individual or educational interest, but where we feel that such a step is to be taken in the interests of the country as a whole."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

So far as language is concerned, this has been admitted on all hands that the language spoken in Northern India can only be made

the Lingua Franca, but it has got three names—Urdu, Hindi and Hindustani”

The general framework or the set up of the language spoken all over Northern India is one and the same, but in its literary style it has got two names—a style replendent with Persian is called Urdu and a style leaning towards Sanskrit is known as Hindi. The term ‘Hindusthani’ has developed a wider connotation; it embraces all forms of the language spoken in Northern India. It includes Hindi as well as Urdu and even more than that. It includes each and every shade of the spoken language of the North. It does not exclude any. It covers all

“ We have to replace English, which is a literary and extensive language, with a national language. That can only be done by making our own language rich and extensive rather than limiting its scope and extent”

Shri Purushottam Das Tandon

“We have been speaking of a national language for years and years. It is not a new subject before the House. It was in the 19th century that this idea of a national language took shape in Bengal, not in U.P. or Bihar. I have with me the original of what Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote. I have the original of what Keshub Chandra Sen wrote. I have the original before me of what was written in 1908 by the “Bandamataram”, the editor of which was Shri Arobindo Ghose

“That idea took shape there and then. Tilak supported it and Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, took it up. My point is that this movement has been there for years and people have worked in accordance with certain ideas about the acceptance of Hindi as the national language. It has been taken for granted more or less that Hindi is the national language and work has been going on in different provinces on that assumption.”

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru

"A very wise man, the Father of Nation, thought of this (language) question, as he thought of so many important questions affecting our national future. Now the first thing he taught us was this that while English is a great language and I think it is perfectly right to say that English has done us a lot of good and we have learnt much from it and progressed much—nevertheless no nation can become great on the basis of a foreign language. Why? Because a foreign language can never be the language of the people, for you will have two strata or more—those who live in thought and action of a foreign tongue and those who live in another world. So he taught us that we must do our work more and more in our own language.

"Partly he succeeded in that, only partly, possibly because of the inherent difficulties of the situation. For it is a fact that in spite of all his teachings and in spite of the efforts of many of the honourable members present here who are keen and anxious to push up our own languages, the fact is that we continue to do a great deal of our political and other work in the English language. Nevertheless, this is true that we cannot go far or take our people by the million in a foreign language. Therefore, however great the English language may be—and it is great—we have to think of doing our national work, our public and our private work as far as possible in our own various languages and more particularly in the language that you may choose for all India use."

Fulfilment

Constitutional provisions regarding official language of the Union and other relevant matters are contained in Part XVII of the Constitution of India. The dominant ideas of the constitutional provisions are that by 1965 the use of English for the official purposes of the Union shall in the main be replaced by Hindi which shall also be the language of inter-communication

between States and the Union and between one State and another. It has however been provided in the Constitution that the Parliament will have the discretion to continue English for specified purposes even after 1965 and for as long as necessary. The salient features of the Constitution in this regard are :

English is to be replaced by Hindi only for the official purposes of the Union and as the language of inter-communication between the States and the Union and between one State and another. The State Legislature has the authority to adopt by law any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the official language or languages of the State.

The Constitution lays down a phased programme for the change-over from English to Hindi and in determining the pace of change, due regard has to be paid to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India and just claims and interests of persons belonging to the non-Hindi areas in regard to the public services.

The Constitution enjoins upon the Government to promote the spread of the Hindi language and to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India.

C H A P T E R I I I

Report of the Official Language Commission

In accordance with Article 344 of the Constitution, the President of India appointed the Official Language Commission in June 1955. The late Shri B.G. Kher was its Chairman, with many distinguished persons as its members.

The Commission was required to make recommendations to the President as to:

- (a) the progressive use of Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union;
- (b) restrictions on the use of the English language for all or any of the official purposes of the Union;
- (c) the language to be used for all or any of the purposes mentioned in Article 348 of the Constitution ;
- (d) the form of numerals to be used for any one or more specified purposes of the Union ;
- (e) the preparation of a time schedule according to which and the manner in which Hindi may gradually replace English as the official language of the Union and as a language for communication between the Union and State Governments and between one State Government and another.

In making these recommendations, the Commission was asked to have due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India and the just claims and the interests of persons belonging to the non-Hindi-speaking areas in regard to the public services

The Commission conducted the inquiry for more than a year. It toured the entire country, interviewed eminent persons, lawyers, scientists, educationists and others. It sent a questionnaire to all State Governments and various other institutions and finally presented the Report to the President of India in August 1956 and the same was presented to the Parliament in August 1957.

A brief summary of the views and recommendations of the Commission is given below :

The language provisions of the Constitution are wise and comprehending ; while clearly enunciating the objectives, they make due provision for developing the Union language, the special case of language for law courts and legislation, and the difficulties of the transitional period. They are viable and elastic, and it should be possible to accommodate the situation as it develops without amendment of the constitutional framework.

Practically all responsible opinion accepts the constitutional settlement, although some persons have doubts as to the preparatory period of 15 years being ultimately found adequate ; others are of the view that the period will be found adequate for a general change-over of the linguistic medium provided sufficiently energetic steps are taken in the meantime. However this is not an issue on which it is necessary or possible for this Commission to pronounce.

In the light of the fully democratic basis of the Indian policy established under the Constitution, it is not possible to envisage English as the common all-India mass medium. About 1 % of the population has presently anything like an adequate linguistic ability in English. The programme of compulsory elementary education, enjoined in the Constitution, can be conceived of only in terms of Indian languages.

The obvious linguistic medium for pan-Indian purposes is the Hindi language. Hindi has been adopted as the Union language and the language for inter-State communication in the Indian Consti-

tution having regard to the relative numbers of the population who speak and understand this language, compared to the other regional languages, and not because in point of development, or in point of literary wealth, other regional languages in India are in any way inferior to Hindi.

The Hindi language will replace the English language only to a limited extent in one sense as it would not wholly 'step into the shoes' of the English language, the regional languages having been yielded their appropriate places ; in another sense, however, having regard to the vast programmes of compulsory education and literacy ahead, the extent of coverage that would accrue to the Union language would be enormously in excess of the population served by the English language at present or of what could possibly be served by any such foreign linguistic medium.

Terminology

The principal ground-work for the development of the Union language and the regional languages is the furnishing to them of an adequate technical terminology wherever it is deficient at present.

In adopting terminology, clarity, precision and simplicity should be primarily aimed at. Doctrinaire insistence on language purism is deprecated.

Promising sources for adopting new terminology should be available in the indigenous terms current in the past, and the terms currently used in actual life amongst various categories of craftsmen, artisans, etc. These should be explored. In suitable cases, international terminology may be adopted or adapted to the genius of the Indian languages.

The maximum possible identity in evolving new terminology of all Indian languages should be aimed at.

Union Language and the Educational system

The children undergoing compulsory education up to the age

of 14 years in terms of Article 45 of the Constitution would receive about 8 years of school education, during the whole of which they would have studied the regional language both as a subject and as a medium of instruction for other subjects. It is essential to provide for a minimum of three or four years of instruction in Hindi during the later part of this period.

Even when English ceases to be the medium of instruction in our Universities, it would be necessary, for a long time to come, to provide that the graduates emerging from our Universities especially in the scientific subjects and professions, are equipped with a sufficient command of English (or other suitable advanced foreign language) to enable them to comprehend and follow further advances in their particular departments of study through journals and new publications available in such language.

In view of the different purposes that English would now serve in the educational system of the country, it is necessary to review the present teaching methods and the content and character of instruction in English imparted presently. English should be taught hereafter principally as a 'language of comprehension' and not as a literary language, excepting when it is taken as a voluntary subject for special study.

In our view instruction in Hindi should be compulsory at the secondary school stage all over the country and the arguments for such a course of action are strong and decisive. However reason of expediency might also have relevance within particular regions and the decision as to when compulsion should be introduced must be left to be made by the State Government concerned in whose jurisdiction the decision anyhow lies.

If English is to be displaced as a general medium of university education, the question arises whether it should be replaced by one single common medium, i.e. Hindi in all Universities, or by respective regional languages in the Universities in the different regions.

There are certain advantages in a country-wide single medium of university education; at the same time there are strong and comprehensible reasons which urge people-to seek to replace the English medium by the regional language.

In the case of scientific and technical educational institutions, where students drawn from different linguistic regions avail of the instruction imparted, the common medium of the Hindi language will have to be adopted; where students are drawn exclusively or almost wholly from a single linguistic group, the medium will have to be the regional language concerned. All such cases must be decided Pragmatically on the specific merits of each.

Form of Numerals

We have no recommendation to make for the issue of directions by the President for the use of the Devanagri form of numerals in addition to the international form of Indian numerals for any purposes of the Union between now and the time when the issue will be re-examined by the next Commission to be appointed in 1960.

Language of Law and Law Courts

We are of the view that the constitutional provisions in regard to language, relative to proceedings and deliberations of Parliament and legislative bodies of the States, are sufficient for the requirements of the situation.

Apart from the authoritative enactment which, in our opinion, ought to be eventually in Hindi, both in respect of Parliamentary legislation and State legislation, there may be need, for the sake of public convenience, to publish translations of the enactments in different regional languages. In respect of State legislation, this would be normally necessary in the regional language(s) prevalent in the State, whereas in respect of parliamentary legislation it may be necessary in all the important regional languages current in the country.

We consider that it is essential, when the time comes for this change-over that the entire statute book of the country should be in

one language which cannot be of course other than Hindi. Therefore, the language of legislation of the States as well as of Parliament and also of course consequently the language of all statutory orders, rules etc., issued under any law, should be the Hindi language.

The country's judicial system used to function, ere the last few decades, in languages other than English. The change-over to Indian language media from English may appear novel to the present generation which sees before it the English language proliferated over the entire judicial system. However it is only natural that justice should be administered in a country in its indigenous languages and provided the change is brought systematically the prospect should not provoke alarm or cause apprehension about its basic practicability.

So far as the language of the Supreme Court is concerned, eventually there can be only one language, *i.e.*, Hindi, in respect of the entire court proceedings and records, including of course the judgment and orders. When the time comes for the change-over, the Supreme Court will have to function only in Hindi language. The authoritative texts of reported judgments of the Supreme Court will also be published in the same language.

Processes issued in Hindi by the Supreme Court, when addressed to a non-Hindi region or against a person whose mother-tongue is not Hindi, should be accompanied by a translation for the convenience of the concerned party.

Provision should also be made for reliable translations of Supreme Court decisions being available in the State language in separate regional language series.

With the Supreme Court functioning in Hindi and the subordinate judiciaries of different States functioning in their respective regional languages, there has to be some stage where the multiple linguistic pattern has to be broken and integrated. The multiple linguistic circuit fails to be broken at the High Court level and it is

at this stage that there has to be a 'facing of both ways' viz., Hindi as far as the Supreme Court is concerned and the respective regional language (s) so far as the concerned subordinate judiciary is concerned.

So far as the processes, decrees and orders of High Courts are concerned, we would suggest that, wherever necessary, it may be provided that they would issue in regional languages in their authorised translations, in addition, to their original issue in Hindi.

Apart from the option of delivering judgments in English, there may be an option to High Court judges to deliver judgments in their regional languages provided English or Hindi translations of such judgments are authenticated by them.

Union Language and Public Service Examinations

So far as the all-India and Central Services are concerned (and this would apply, unless otherwise provided, also to other all-India services created hereafter), the alternative of the Hindi medium in addition to the existing English medium may be introduced after due notice. As and when other regional languages become a medium of instruction in the universities up to graduation stage as Hindi has done, the admission of other linguistic media will have to be considered.

The medium of the English language may be continued as an alternative for as long as may be necessary: if, eventually, a position would arise when this alternative could be dispensed with, such dispensation should be of course made after a sufficiently long notice.

Concluding Remarks

In spite of apparent diversities of Indian linguistic and cultural patterns, all the important Indian languages have close and strong affinities. These affinities are a reflection of a basic unity and a common 'Indian way of life'.

Indian unity is not merely the recent result of "Pax Britannica".

The idea of an all-India political unity has always inspired Indian political thought: this urge for unification is only the political expression of the cultural identity of Indian life.

The problem of a common pan-Indian linguistic medium is not unprecedented in Indian history. In the past the Sanskrit and the Persian languages and in recent decades the English language have served as such a medium.

If energetic steps are taken for promoting a 'rapprochement' amongst the various regional languages of the country, within a period of a very few years the 'distances' between the different Indian languages would be considerably reduced.

As citizens of a polyglot country, it is essential for us to encourage widespread multilingualism amongst members of all linguistic regions and to this end to make appropriate provisions in the secondary and university systems of education.

We were greatly impressed by the general concern for the unity of the country and the anxiety to consolidate it which characterised the greater part of the evidence in all regions; by and large, the issues were approached by all concerned with objectivity, realism and in a spirit of tolerance.

Language is only an instrumentality and there need be no heat or passion on the issue of language. While the complexities of the Indian language problem are unparalleled, we feel that, properly approached, reasonable solutions are available and we feel confident that the problem will be successfully tackled and solved.

Three members of the Commission, namely, Dr. S.K. Chatterjee, Dr. P. Subbarayan and Shri M.P. Desai appended minutes of dissent which have been incorporated in the body of the Report. Mr. S.K. Chatterjee and Dr. P. Subbarayan expressed the view that English should continue to be the official language and also the

medium of instruction at the University level far beyond the target date of 1965 not merely on account of the practical difficulties involved for a large number of non-Hindi speaking people but also on account of the inherent richness and value of the English language which has become almost a world language. They thought that no loss to the national self-respect of India would take place as a result of this decision. In view of the fissiparous and parochial tendencies that were raising their ugly head in various parts of the country, they thought it would be in the best interests of the unity, stability and ordered progress of the country on progressive democratic and humanistic lines that the status quo should not be disturbed and that the Constitution should be suitably amended. They were however not in principle opposed to the introduction of Hindi as the official language of the union as and when in the fullness of time it became a sufficiently developed language to take the place of English and also become sufficiently popular and well understood in the non-Hindi areas of the country. But they did not stipulate any time-limit whatsoever as to when this possibly be expected to happen nor did they positively mention as to the efforts that should be made towards this goal. Dr. Subbarayan was also opposed to the introduction of Hindi as an optional medium for the purposes of recruitment to the all India services.

Shri M.P. Desai, on the other hand, maintained that the Commission had evaded the most important part of its duty, namely to suggest a concrete and clear-cut time-schedule and a phased programme for the gradual replacement of English which may lead to the emergence of the Hindi as the full-fledged official language by 1965. He also did not agree that it was not practicable to admit various regional languages as media for the public service examinations and all-India services. He was of the opinion that all these regional languages in addition to Hindi should be allowed as media of examination and that the initial and prima facie difficulties of uniformity of standard could in principle be overcome if sufficient thought were given to it. He also offered a tentative solution of the

problem. Apparently he implied that 15 year time limit was quite enough as a transitional period and he thought that the deadline should not be exceeded in any case. Thus he differed from the majority opinion of the Commission in a direction opposite to that of Dr. Chatterjee and Dr. Subbarayan. He did not believe that the unity of the country or the standards of education and administration etc. would suffer due to speedy change-over as was feared by the other two members. In this respect he was closer to the general consensus of opinion of the majority of the members.

CHAPTER IV

Controversy Restarted

Monumental and weighty as the deliberations and conclusions of the Official Language Commission were, the controversy over the official language issue did not stop after the publication of the Report. The ever-growing opposition of a section of the people in Tamilnad and Bengal found its organised expression in two Union Language Conventions held at Madras in 1957 and at Calcutta in 1958. Some other distinguished people from other parts of the country also joined issue with them. Notable among them were Shri K.M. Munshi and Shri C.D. Deshmukh. Shri K.M. Munshi said :

“With the dawn of freedom there was an urge to remove English from its position, not to the extent to which it is replaced by Hindi, but all at once. It was the result of hyper-sensitive nationalism, the consequences of which have complicated the problem. Movements are afoot to eliminate English rapidly from several spheres of life Hindi cannot take its place with equal speed; the vacuum is being filled by regional languages. By an over-enthusiastic effort at removing English from its place, Hindi has not gained, it has lost nationalism. Regional consciousness is growing.

“Though to the ordinary mind the elimination of English appears to be a highly patriotic performance, our greatest danger today is militant regional linguism . . . In whatever hurry we may be to eliminate English, we should not forget the value of English in the immediate present, nor its importance in shaping our future . . . It is through English that we maintain high level of our intellectual and scientific training and achievement.”

Shri C.D. Deshmukh said : "Development of our minds will be impossible without extensive and reinforced resort to one of the most advanced languages of the world, that is, English. It opened the door to us at least two-thirds of the current scientific and technological literature and *belles lettres*. In this rapidly shrinking world of ours intellectual and spiritual development must increasingly be a cooperative endeavour from which no nation however gifted it fancies itself to be, can afford to remain aloof."

Persons in sympathy with this point of view also drew the attention of the public to the observation made by the Radhakrishnan Committee:

"English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world, and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance. Our students who are undergoing training at schools which will admit them either to University or to a vocation must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give them access to the treasures of knowledge, and in universities no student should be allowed to take a degree who does not acquire the ability to read with facility and understand works of English authors."

Shri C. Rajagopalachari

"Passing on to the question of the official language, the biggest language group of the people of India is the Hindi-speaking population. This may be admitted straightaway. If India is to be one people, in politics, in commerce and in arts, Hindi is the one language that must claim attention from all the people of India besides their own regional language in whatever part of the country they may be living. Trade cannot for long remain confined within the borders of one language area. So it is impossible to confine the literary and cultural or political activities of the people within the boundaries of any mono-lingual area. If an Indian

citizen desires to be cultured and educated in a true sense, he must be able to express himself and feel at home wherever he may be in India. A man whose ambition is to be a cultured Indian cannot enclose himself in his mono-lingual shell.

"It follows that a sound knowledge of Hindi must be one of the aims of all education in all parts of India. Hindi is bound to be the national language of India.

"An official language is different from what may be called the national language. We decide what is a nation's language on a basis of fact. But when we have to impose a language as the official language we have to consider many issues of justice and fair play and expediency. We cannot shut our eyes to these considerations and go by mere majority arithmetic when we, directly or indirectly, exercise statutory compulsion. If the people not speaking Hindi had been scattered all over, being a small minority everywhere, the position would have been different. But the fact is that in large and compact parts Hindi is not spoken and the millions of men and women living in those areas speak other languages. The rule of over-all majority cannot be applicable under such circumstances in the matter of language.

"As for the Central Government and for inter-State communication in India, my view is that English should be the official language. Official reports and documents have to be in a language which happens to be in fact the most convenient medium for such inter-State use. There can be no doubt that as a result of historic causes, English is the best medium for such purposes. The persons now dealing with inter-State and Central Government papers in all the States are able to handle the English language with ease and precision, more easily and with greater precision than even their own mother tongue as far as high-level official work goes.

"In any case, even if the decision be that Hindi should

ultimately be imposed on all India as the medium for Union official work and inter-State affairs, logic requires that compulsory instruction in schools must precede such a bold step and it must be effectively carried out for at least two generations before we can think of such imposition. And we must be prepared to face the feeling and sentiments that any imposition of that kind must generate in the minds of the minority. Heitation on the question of compulsory Hindi in schools in all areas is consistent with a policy of making Hindi the official language of the Union."

However, the first organised expression of opposition to the introduction of Hindi as the official language was the holding of a Union Language Convention in Madras in 1957 which was attended by a number of prominent persons like Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, Sir Mirza Ismail and others, where a resolution was passed to the effect that English should continue as the official language of the Indian Union and that the Constitution of India should be amended accordingly. A similar convention was held in the following year at Calcutta which was attended more or less by the same set of persons who participated in the first Convention. Brief summaries of the speeches made by some prominent speakers are given below:

Dr. Naresh Chandra Sengupta: "Let it be remembered that Hindi is as much a foreign language to more than half of Indian people as English is and certainly not easy to pick up, unless we are talking of the *bazar* Hindi. Why should people who have been used to English be forced to adopt another foreign language which is perhaps equally difficult to learn."

Master Tara Singh: Numbers, it was true, were in favour of Hindi speakers. But that could not be the only criterion. The difference of opinion could be decided by agreement and force or by majority of votes. Why should not the present inter-State language continue till mutual agreement was reached?

Shri C. Rajagopalachari: The Hindi Plan would create disintegration and disunity in the country. It may not happen at once as it may be covered up with party discipline. Hindi is as much foreign to the non-Hindi speaking people as English to the protagonists of Hindi. If, therefore, Hindi is pushed to a position to which it did not aspire, it will create disunity.

Shri C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar: "The elimination or neglect of English from misplaced motives or prejudices or local patriotism will be a definite disservice to the cause of culture and higher education and research and further, will develop needless jealousies and antagonism between State and State."

Sir Mirza Ismail: It has been a great disappointment to many that the Congress failed to give the right lead to the country on the language question. "English should continue to be the official language" at the Centre as its replacement by Hindi would demand "a high price in provincialism and in the limitation of international contacts."

The Convention Passed the following Resolution.

1. This Conference having considered the meaning and the implications of the Pragjyotishpur Congress resolution on the language issue has regretfully come to the conclusion that it has not in reality made any advance on the Constitutional position as it stands and that indeed it has reiterated the position that Hindi must be accepted as the official language and that all steps must be taken from now on towards that end, whether it be in a near or more distant date.

2. This Conference is of the opinion that no attempt should be made to give any particular regional language the position of the Union Official Language for the transaction of the business of the Centre or Inter-State affairs in as much as any attempt in that direction would result in grave injustice and consequent serious discontent amongst the people adversely affected.

3. This Conference is emphatically of the opinion that the official language of the Union should, under the inescapable conditions in which the affairs of the Union have to be administered, continue to be English and that there is no other alternative by which we can secure efficiency and avoid discrimination.

4. This Conference is of the view that Part XVII of the Constitution of India should be amended as to provide for the retention of English without any time-limit of the Union Official Language and so as not to curtail the right of future generations to take such decisions in respect of the matter as they may deem fit from time to time.

5. In view of the multi-lingual character of the Union of India, this Conference is of the opinion that the principle of identity of language between the people and the administration can be given effect to only at the State towards making the several languages of the people the official languages of the respective States.

This Conference desires to make it clear that Hindi can only be treated as a regional language and any assumption that it is the national language of India will be unreal and instead of leading to unity will create the feeling that one section—and that the larger section of the people of India, is relegated to an inferior position.

6. This Conference is deeply perturbed at the situation in Punjab where the settlement arrived at in regard to the State language problem was sought to be disturbed and where still feelings are strained; this Conference hopes that peace and harmony will be fully restored in that area but desires to express its concern that any attempt made in other parts of India to push the claim of Hindi to a position of pre-eminence may result in similar difficult and unpleasant consequences and respectfully warns the Government of India against taking or countenancing any steps in the matter of language that may arouse antagonism.

7. This conference is of the opinion that the All India Services should be recruited on the basis of the official language of the Union continuing to be English and that any other course would lead to difficulties and undesirable discrimination which will cause grave injury and give rise to acute discontent amongst those adversely affected.

8. This Conference is of the opinion that all orders, decisions and the like issuing from the Union Government or its departments which concern the people of any particular areas should not only be issued in the official language of the Union but should also be made available in the language of the people concerned.

9. This Conference is of the opinion that any attempt to replace English at the Union level of administration will automatically lead to deterioration of attention to the study of that language in the Universities and other educational institutions which will greatly affect the flow of modern knowledge and thereby prejudice progress in all directions.

10. Apart from the controversy over the Union Official Language this Conference is of the opinion that the omission of English from the list of recognised languages of India is an error which should be rectified.

11. This Conference is of the view that the question of the medium of instruction and the place of other languages in the educational curriculum should be left to the Universities and the State Government and that no policy directive should issue from the Centre in this regard as envisaged by the majority report of the Official Language Commission.

12. This Conference approves of the resolution adopted at the All Bengal Language Conference presided over by Dr. N. Sengupta on December 26 and 27 in Calcutta and the resolution adopted by the Union Language Convention held on

December 22nd in respect of English continuing as the Official Language for Union and Inter-State purposes.

During the same period the State Assembly of Madras discussed the memorandum which the State Government had earlier sent to the Central Government concerning the official language issue. The views of the members were more or less similar to those expressed in the Conventions. The State Assembly and Council of West Bengal also debated the issue and passed the following resolution :

Non-official Resolution on State Language :

Resolved that whereas the question of official language of India is now being examined by the Parliament ; and

Whereas this Assembly (Council) cannot agree with the recommendations made in this regard by the Official Language Commission ; and

Whereas this Assembly (Council) feels that for the unity and progress of India, the whole question of official language demands fresh examination ;

This Assembly (Council) is of opinion that—

(1) Sanskrit should be used for such ceremonial purposes as the Government of India may from time to time specify;

(2) Parliament should by law provide for the continuance of English as the official language until such time as Hindi and some other Indian languages are accepted as the official language of the Union :

(3) Communication between this State and another and between Union and this State should be on a bilingual basis, one of the languages being the State language Bengali and the other the official language of the Union as it may be at the time ; and the Constitution may be amended accordingly.

(4) Early steps should be taken to enact a law in this State adopting Bengali to be used for all official purposes and providing for the use of English wherever essential and for such purposes as the State Government may determine from time to time. Attempts be made to give effect to this clause before December, 1960.

(5) The pattern or patterns of language or languages to be used for educational purposes as the Primary, Secondary and University stages of education should be settled by the State Government after consultation with a body of educational experts to be appointed by them.

(6) The medium of instruction and examination in the State shall be Bengali :

Provided that the claims of linguistic minority of the State to have the medium of instruction and examination in their own language till the end of the Secondary stage shall be recognised.

CHAPTER V

Report of Committee of Parliament on Official Language

In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, a Committee of Parliament on Official Language consisting of 30 members, 20 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha, was constituted in September, 1957. Shri G.B. Pant was the Chairman of this Committee. The Committee was to report to the President of India its opinion on the report and the recommendations of the Official Language Commission. The Report was submitted to Parliament in April, 1959.

The Report suggested that after 1965 when Hindi became the "principal official language," English should be used as "subsidiary language for the purpose to be specified by the Parliament" and for as long as necessary.

Like the Language Commission the Committee recommended that the task of planning and implementing a time schedule for the switch-over to Hindi be left to the Central Government.

In the opinion of the Committee "a Democratic Government cannot continue to function indefinitely in a language which is understood by only a fraction of the population. In a country like ours which is committed to the objectives of a Welfare State and a socialist pattern of society, the Union and State Governments are concerned with practically all aspects of the life of the citizen and the adoption of a language medium which might be more widely understood by the people is necessary for the efficient discharge of governmental

functions. Official work will, therefore, have to be transacted in the linguistic media most widely understood by the people."

"The constitutional settlement is an integrated and comprehensive scheme. It was evolved after careful consideration in the Constituent Assembly and was adopted without a division as representing the greatest common measure of agreement among the different linguistic groups in the country. It provides for the use of Hindi as well as of other national languages for official purposes."

Regarding the importance of English the Committee said: "The gradual replacement of English in official work by Hindi and the regional languages does not mean severance of our ties with English. The special place which it must continue to have in the intellectual and scientific fields, and as a means of international contacts is not conditional upon the perpetuation of the existing arrangement. We live in an age of rapid scientific advancement and technological change. The development of science and technology may take place at an ever faster pace in future, and these subjects will play an increasingly dominant part in our national life. The output of literature in these subjects is tremendous, and it may not be possible to translate all important works or articles that are published. Advanced students of science and technology have to be familiar with one or more foreign languages. English has not only a rich literature which is intimately connected with the whole body of Western thought and culture but is, at present the most important vehicle of scientific and technical information. It is also the most widespread language in the world today. For us, amongst foreign languages, the choice of English is obvious, both because of its importance and utility and our present knowledge of it. Thus, although English cannot continue to be the medium of instruction in schools and colleges or the official language of the Union or the State in India for long, it will still continue to be of great help to us, and remain an important subject of study, specially for those engaged in advanced scientific work."

The Committee was anxious to emphasise the undesirability

of making the linguistic transition too sudden. The switch-over to Hindi should be so regulated that it caused the least dislocation and inconvenience.

In the end the Committee expressed its opinion that it may not be practicable to bring about a complete change-over by 1965, but "it is important that there should be no relaxation of effort in carrying out preparatory measures for facilitating the change-over."

Prof. Dr. Raghu Vira, Shri Harish Chandra Sharma, the late Shri P.C. Bhanj Deo, Shri Purushottam Das Tandon, Seth Govind Das, Shri Frank Anthony and Shri Thakur Das Bhargava appended their notes of dissent to the report.

While Seth Govind Das, Shri Bhanj Deo, Shri Purushottam Das Tandon and some others regretted the slow progress that had been made in effecting the change-over from English to Hindi as well as the failure of the Commission to suggest a phased programme and mechanism for the final change-over to Hindi in 1965, Shri Frank Anthony was of the opinion that English should continue to be the official language and that the constitutional provisions should be modified. He maintained that English was undoubtedly foreign in origin, but in fact and legally it was an Indian language and it alone could maintain the political and cultural unity of India in virtue of its being completely neutral and also its retention would not lead to any advantage by one linguistic group over other in the matter of entry to services etc.

CHAPTER VI

New Lead by Prime Minister

The Report of the Committee of Parliament on Official Language had not yet been considered by the Parliament when Mr. Frank Anthony introduced a non-official Resolution in the Lok Sabha seeking that English be included in the list of languages enumerated in the VIII Schedule to the Constitution. Great controversy was created and a number of fiery speeches were delivered in the Lok Sabha by both the opponents and the protagonists of Hindi. The speech of the debate was delivered by our Leader, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. It was remarkable for its clarity, breadth of vision and fair-mindedness to all concerned. So great was the impact of that speech upon all the members of the House including Mr. Frank Anthony that he ultimately withdrew his Resolution. We reproduce below the full text of the speech of the Leader :

My approach to this (official language) question is not hidden. I have repeated it on various occasions. It is not an approach of those worthy colleagues of ours whom I would call the Hindi enthusiasts, nor is it the approach of the other colleagues who are the English enthusiasts. Personally, I am an enthusiast for both: Hindi and English—when I say Hindi, I mean the Indian languages also—provided they function in their proper domains and spheres. I do not see any real conflict. There may be overlapping. Necessarily languages overlap which is not harmful. They have a good effect on each other but we should avoid this approach of conflict, as if the advance of one language somehow crushes the other. I recognise that in the past, English was undoubtedly imposed by the power that dominated over India. Therefore, while on the one hand it brought and opened out windows of knowledge, etc., it also had

that stink in it of being a language, sitting on the top of our own languages and our own cultural traditions. That is true; to some extent that memory lingers though we should try to get rid of it and consider these matters more objectively and impersonally.

In the course of the debate, many aspects of the language issue have been referred to, although it is well to remember that Mr. Anthony's Resolution only touches one small aspect of it; it does not cover the rest. It is true also that the moment you touch these matters, immediately you shake up a hornet's nest and all kinds of things—not only language but all kinds of suspicions in people's minds, fears come up and rather come in the way of calm and logical thought. One cannot help, therefore, looking at this relatively small matter in this large context. Nevertheless, let us consider it in the smaller context.

Shri Nath Pai, who was just speaking, appealed with eloquence for our helping the Anglo-Indian community to maintain their individuality and all that. I am all with him. I just do not see, however, how this particular amendment, this way or that away, helps or hinders. It is a very very minor matter from the point of view of maintaining their individuality. I am indeed all for it. There are other forces that play in India which will help in maintaining it and some other forces which will come in the way. That is because all kinds of forces came to unify India and to mix us up with each other. I hope I am not talking of the Anglo-Indian community alone but all of us. These forces which mingled and commingled will grow and not keep us in water-tight compartments—compartments of caste, for instance. If that happens, no doubt, that kind of thing will affect the Anglo-Indian community also and I think it would be good if something happens, not by any pressure but by the natural process of racial integration and all that.

This particular resolution really has no real effect on that, because I recognise that English is and should be considered the mother-tongue of the Anglo-Indian community. By putting it in

this list you do not make it a mother tongue either more or less. As the House knows, our policy is to encourage education in the mother-tongue, whatever it is. We go about in the North-East Frontier Agency teaching people in their tribal languages. Some of them are very imperfect, not developed: nevertheless, we think it important to start their primary education in their own language. If you start in any other language, Assamese, Hindi or whatever it may be—these languages come at a later stage—there is an element of difficulty of foreignness to the child. If you do that in the case of the tribal languages, surely in the case of the more developed languages that is even more important. Surely, in the case of English it is very important. For people who consider English as their mother tongue well, it is for them to decide—it is their mother tongue and they should be given every facility for that.

Shri Anthony referred in his speech, I think, to the so-called Anglo-Indian schools. I do not personally know much about them, so I dare not say much; but without knowing much I would say this, that any facility for Anglo-Indian education should be maintained, should be continued and should be facilitated necessarily.

Now, it must be remembered that the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution containing the list of 14 languages is certainly not an exhaustive Schedule of Indian languages. Obviously, not. There are other languages which are not mentioned there, quite a number of them. In fact, in the amendments to this resolution I see some odd languages mentioned for inclusion. Therefore, you must not consider that the non-mention of a language means that it is not an Indian language or is not a language used in India. That is not correct.

Take another language not so much used in India. There are plenty of Indians who have French as their mother-tongue in Pondicherry and elsewhere. We have promised to honour French in Pondicherry and to encourage it. We are encouraging it, and it is

the language of that little State of Pondicherry today; it is used in the spheres of education, law and the judiciary. All this is done in French. What will happen in the distant future I do not know. It may be that before too long a very considerable number of Portuguese-speaking people will also be within our country. Many are within our country today, outside Goa. But, no doubt, Goa will come. We have even now given the assurance that the Portuguese language of Goa will be honoured, we respect it and it will be a language of India in so far as those people are concerned.

So my outlook is somewhat different. I am not referring, of course, to all the other languages which are more typically Indian all over the place. There is Sindhi for instance; it is a very important language. Sindhi may have gone, but a large number of Sindhi speaking people of eminence have come here with their language. Because of that, you know, so far as the Sahitya Akadami is concerned, deliberately we have included English and Sindi in our list, because we were dealing with a practical problem of encouraging the publication of books in languages which we considered to be of importance to India. We had the whole list, of course, of the Eighth Schedule, and we had English and Sindhi. That is all right. It shows our friendly attitude to encourage English not at the expense of the 14 or any other—of course not—but we felt that English had a peculiar importance—not because, if I may say so with all respect, the Anglo-Indian community considered it their mother-tongue, but for wider reasons; because it has been and will continue to be a window to us to all kinds of activities, thinking etc., etc. Therefore, we included it, and one of our chief purposes in the Sahitya Akadami is to translate from one Indian language into other, translate from English into an Indian language, translate from an Indian language into English etc., and quite a number of translations have come out.

Now, therefore, my first point is that the Eighth Schedule is not an exclusive list of Indian languages. It is a list of the more

widespread, if you like, Indian languages, spoken by large numbers of people. There are quite a number which are not included, yet they are very much Indian languages. Secondly, so far as education and other factors are concerned, we lay stress on the mother-tongue, not on the 14 languages but on every other mother-tongue that is in India—certainly on English, certainly on French, certainly on Portuguese and equally certainly on the tribal languages—so that there should be and there is, no burden on the Anglo-Indian community or others who consider English or any other language as their mother tongue.

Now, there is article 347 of the Constitution. It says:

“On a demand being made in that behalf, the President may, if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a State desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by that State, direct that such language shall also be officially recognized throughout that the state or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify.”

“Any language”, not a language of the Eighth Schedule. It is the right of people speaking any language, if they are sufficient in numbers, to request the President to declare it as the officially recognised language for that area. He may do that. And it is obvious that this is not confined to the 14 languages; any language can come under that. It is a different matter whether conditions prevail for any other language to be so included, but the point is that the Constitution definitely provides for not only the 14 languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule only but also other languages. And so far as English is concerned, it is of course mentioned in the Constitution in various places rather specially.

As Shri Anthony himself said, this question of language whenever it comes up rather clouds our vision because of our emotion. There are psychological and other reactions to it, and that is the real reason for this kind of debate; otherwise, I do not think it makes much difference if you add or subtract a language; because

that is not an exclusive list, as I said. It is true that the Indian languages have suffered psychologically and otherwise, yet they have gained a great deal too naturally for contacts with the wider world.

Some Hon. Member, I forget who exactly it was, put the idea that a person who knows English is a superior person to a person who does not know English. Such feeling is still there but that is a bad thing, it is gradually going away.

I am rather partial to English. I consider English important, not, if I may say so, for many of the reasons advanced here—those reasons, I think, are relatively unimportant—but for some entirely different reasons. But I do think that it is a bad thing if in India this feeling persists, that a person who does not know English, he may be a scholar in his own language—is somehow inferior to the other person who knows very imperfect English or whatever it is. That I repeat, is not a good feeling. In fact, I go further. I think it is quite essential that a person, even though he belongs to some rather primitive group must respect his own culture. If you go and deal with some of the tribal folk—the tribal folk of course differ greatly, some of them are highly advanced and some are not—the first thing, I believe, is to make them respect themselves; never make them have contempt for themselves or their people. It is a bad thing. And when I say that about the tribal folk, how much more does it apply to others? There has been this feeling and there has been this separation in India of the so-called English-knowing and the English-speaking people from the masses of humanity in India, whether they are Hindi-speaking or Marathi-speaking or Bengali-speaking or Tamil-speaking. That of course is partly going but it has been there and that has to be very definitely removed. A scholar of Hindi or Tamil is infinitely better than a person who knows indifferent English; obviously he is better. He knows something well.

Take another aspect of it. Remember that the real importance of

English in the past was that it was the medium of instruction. Many of us have grown up learning it as a medium of instruction. We cannot get out of it, but the next generation is getting out of it. The generation after that will be completely out of it. That is the real change that is coming ; not your Schedules and all that. The medium of instruction is Hindi or Tamil or Telgu or Marathi or Gujarati or Bengali or whatever it is. Progressively it is so. I do not wish to force the pace anywhere.

Natural Development Preferred.

My friend Dr. Subbarayan talked about university education with one language as the medium. I do not know. I should like that. But I do not want Parliament or the law to force the pace. I want things to develop naturally, imbibing the good things of the past and the present, because I dislike pressure in the case of language, I dislike imposition—therefore, I dislike Hindi enthusiasts trying to impose Hindi. I dislike it. Well, equally do I dislike the idea of imposing English. I feel all these things should be allowed to grow naturally, giving a certain help and direction now and then and allowing things to be developed.

Now, the major change that has come over India is that the medium of instruction has become—in the schools and high schools—the language of the State. English is used certainly, —a good thing too—and I am all for it especially in the universities. But the medium of instruction in the regional language is a big break linguistically from the past. It does not matter where you put it in, in what Schedule ; or what the Official Language Commission says or does not. The real thing is that the medium of instruction has changed. Therefore, you can only consider English as a secondary language, or if you like, a compulsory secondary language ; if you like, a highly important language, a language which is not the medium of instruction but which is learnt

as a separate foreign language. That has become inevitable and I think it is right.

No Conflict between Urdu and Hindi

There are certain risks and dangers in all this—linguism or the languages developing and becoming rather autarchies or developing certain separateness. There are certain risks. We cannot ignore them and we should deal with them. We should fight that tendency ; but, mind you we cannot fight it by trying to come in the way of the development of the regional languages. That would be wrong. We must encourage their fullest development because it is through such a development that they can come together and come nearer to each other ; not by one language trying to push the other. Take the case of Hindi or Urdu which may be more or less the same with minor differences. It is an amazing thing that some Hindi enthusiasts get angry if somebody speaks of Urdu, not knowing that they cut their own hands and feet by talking against Urdu. Hindi and Urdu do not hinder each other ; they help each other, to the growth of each, and the moment you try to hinder the one, you hinder yourselves from growing. We should get over these difficulties by encouraging the right tendencies and not trying to impose our will on others.

Imposition Resented.

Now, take Hindi. Hindi is at present objected to by many people in the South. Why? Well, because of a feeling of imposition and not because they are against Hindi as such. As a matter of fact I think there are vast number of people in the South learning Hindi and learning it very well. The process is going on, but the moment you talk of any kind of imposition, quite rightly they get angry. And, therefore, all talk of imposition must go. I should go further and tell them, if they do not want to learn Hindi, let them not learn Hindi. Let us gradually, if they want to, make this approach and thereby you would bring them nearer each other.

There are, of course, many other things. I am not discussing the whole question of language, but again I repeat that the big thing that has happened in India is that the medium of instruction has changed from English to the regional languages. Other things are secondary.

Also, it is right and essential for this medium of instruction to change and for our education to be in those languages if we have to deal on a level with the masses of our people. There is no other way. Now, remember, I repeat, I am partial to English, and I will say something about that presently. But I am also partial to our people, the masses of this country; I just cannot forget that we have to carry 400 million people with us and not an elite, a few thousands or even a million or two if you like, and we cannot carry them practically, psychologically, emotionally in any way except through their own language.

It is for all these reasons that, although Mr. Anthony's resolution does not make a mighty difference this way or that way, I do not think it is a wise resolution or a wise step to take. I do not think it will make any difference. It would not help the Anglo-Indian community, but it may very well hinder, not the Anglo-Indian community, but the process he wants to encourage, by bringing in another bitter dispute or some fears and apprehensions. I want to avoid all that. I want natural processes and not resort to any constitutional amendment. Suppose at the time of framing the Constitution, the Constituent Assembly put in English there at that time there it would have remained. Now to go out of our way, to put in any language will obviously open the door to so many other languages coming in. Apart from that, it will open the door to infinite controversy and conflict.

It will be injurious to English in the end, because, in the final analysis, it is no good forgetting that it is the non-English-knowing people who will decide the fate of India—I do not say “Hindi-knowing,” but “non-English knowing”—because they are

the vast majority in this country. How can we escape that? We can help them, we can to some extent mould their thinking and direct them, but the moment you make them feel that you are up against them, then you are lost; you will be swept off, with all your English and everything. Therefore, I do not think it is wise to raise these questions.

I do think that essentially we have to encourage our languages and that our education and our work must be progressively in our languages to keep in touch with the people and to bring them into that emotional contact with what is happening in our Governments and elsewhere. It does not matter. I am speaking in English, it is because I am habituated to it. But I know that the right thing to do is to speak in a language understood by far more people.

Associate Additional Language

Dr. Subbarayana referred to the official language, this, that and the other. Our Constitution has laid it down, for a variety of reasons into which I need not go, that Hindi should develop progressively, not because Hindi is better or more powerful or whatever it may be, than the other languages, but for certain very practical reasons of extent and so on. I believe that this should be done. I believe in also two things. As I just said, there must be no imposition. Secondly, for an indefinite period—I do not know how long—I should have, I would have, English as an associate additional language which can be used, not because of facilities and all that, though there is something in that, but because I do not wish the people of the non-Hindi areas to feel that certain doors of advance are closed to them by being forced to correspond in the Hindi language. They can correspond in English. So, I would have it as an alternate language as long as people require it and the decision for that, I would leave not to the Hindi-knowing people, but to the non-Hindi-knowing people.

I will repeat what I mean. Hindi progressively develops ; I try for that, but I love English to come into the picture to be used as long as people require it.

Importance of English

I should now like to say a few words about English itself. Really the question of Hindi versus English is a very minor issue. It is not the real issue at all, although there is so much argument, if you look at it from my point of view. It is not important, if I may say so, because a number of people know it in India. It is not important because it is the English of Milton and Shakespeare, although that also has to be considered. There are also great poets in other languages—French, German, Russian, Spanish, etc., apart from Asian languages. English is important because it is the major window to the modern world for us. That is why we dare not close that window. If we close it, it is the very peril of our future.

We talk about our Five Year Plan, industrialisation, science and technology. Every door of that is closed if you do not have foreign languages. You need not have English ; you can have French, German or Russian, if you like, but obviously it is infinitely simpler for us to deal with a language we know than to shift over to German or Russian or Spanish. Certainly we want to learn Russian, German, Spanish or whatever it is, because we deal with them in business, trade and science. Every competent scientist today has to know two or three non-Indian languages.

People imagine that by coining a large number of words in Hindi or Bengali or Marathi or Tamil—technical and scientific words—and may be by translating some text-books, the background for scientific teaching is provided. Certainly, for high schools you do it and may be it is right that you should do so, although this business of coining words seems to me to have been carried on to rather absurd limits, making a noble language progressively more and more artificial and ununderstandable. It is terrible and I think the chief

persons guilty are, not all, but some of the Hindi enthusiasts. They make it very difficult really even when we leave out question of literary forms and graces. In my own small way, I too am a lover of languages. It hurts me, it hurts my aesthetic sense, my conception of language, to see artificial monstrosities thrust upon me, put up at cross-roads and stations-huge long words, which nobody understands, not the public at any rate. I really do not know if the man who invented it understands it either. It is a terrible thing and it is more dangerous for the Hindi language than any thing else, because you are tying up Hindi with steel bonds, which will prevent it from growing. The creativeness of a language goes if you impose these things. Language is a delicate flower which grows in beauty. You can feed it in various ways ; you cannot pull, tug or twist it about, and think it will grow.

Scientific Outlook Essential

It is inevitable that in the present stage of our development, with our Five Year Plans, industrialisation, mechanisation, scientific progress and research, you cannot progress by all the Indian languages put together. I say that definitely today and if you want to stick to them only, without foreign languages, you do not go ahead. You may have enough science to teach in high schools; you may even get some books for your elementary university course. All that should be done, but science is not the B.A. or the B.Sc. course. Science today goes into the jet age, atomic energy, space travel, automation and all that. It is a new age and this House should forgive me if I say something, not derogatory to the House, but still rather critical ; and that is, this House does not represent, in numbers I mean, the scientific outlook.

That is to say, we represent more the literary outlook, the lawyers' outlook and so on and so forth. The peasant's outlook too, which is important. I was reading a lecture delivered in the Cambridge University a few months ago by an eminent man. The lecture was called "the two cultures". He was dealing with the

English scene, mind you, not India. And he was saying how in England two cultures had developed which were far apart from each other, which did not understand each other, the two cultures being the literary culture and the scientific culture. And he gave examples. He said in the hall of the big college at Cambridge there were dons sitting—the scientific dons, the mathematical dons and the literary and the classical dons—and they glare at each other; they did not talk to each other; the literary and the classical people, Greek and Latin and all that on the one side and the scientific and the mathematical people on the other side. They looked with contempt at each other. And he said it was extraordinary to find these two cultures developing—the literary man who knew nothing about the modern scientific age and the scientific man who knew nothing about the treasures of literature. If that could happen in a country like England, in a city like Cambridge, in a college gathering, what would you find if you transported yourself to India? We are backward in science. Our Scientists apart, our own thinking is not scientific. We use some of the products of science in industrialisation undoubtedly. We travel by air, we talk about space travel. May be we read some fiction, what is called “scientific-fiction” or space fiction or something. But essentially we are far, far away from this age, the atomic age, in our thinking. If the English literary men who live in a highly industrialised country cannot fit into that mentally, how much more difficult will it be for us who are industrially backward, scientifically backward and in other ways not used to that.

We have some professors teaching science. We have some technologists. They are growing, of course, and there we are on the threshold of an industrial revolution in India. Now that industrial revolution cannot, in the present age—I am not talking of the future ages—be carried out, because we have no literature, no language. We have some books on elementary physics or biology or chemistry, but this higher mathematics and all that is really quite beyond our languages, at the present moment. And you cannot

have an industrial revolution unless people have access to these and are taught these books in various languages. You may translate some. You should. But it is not enough. So, without the knowledge of the foreign language the doors of the new age are closed to you. Inevitably the language which is easier to you is English, to come back to it. There is another aspect. When I talk of the industrial age and all these other scientific developments, and when we talk about language, a totally new language is developing in the world, a language ; if you like, of the elite, the language of the mysterious, the high priests, which average people do not understand. But it is developing with amazing rapidity among the technical people, among the scientific men, a language largely of mathematical formulae. And this is developing at a terrific pace, because it has to keep pace with the development of technology, development of so many other things of science and there surely is going to be I hope, one language in the world, the language of the mathematical formulae. For that we cannot have a separate language ; otherwise, the world is lost.

We talk about one world today in theory because of scientific advance, communications and all that. National boundaries hardly count. And I have no doubt that if the world survives long enough, there will be one world. But these national prejudices come in the way and we cannot ignore them. At any rate, let us go towards that, and not isolate ourselves. In this connection, I would say a small matter which you have decided and I would like to stress on that. It is of the highest importance that you use international numerals progressively—not that you cannot use whatever you like in the private books and things, I have no objection—because that again becomes a symbol of the modern age, of science, of mathematics, of formulae and all that. You cannot introduce all that formulae etc. in the Devanagari numerals. You immediately get into a different world. You have to use it. That at least, let us have in common with the world, common in India to begin with. Then the commonness increases. In conclusion I would venture to say

that it is of the utmost importance that the people grow from their roots. We cannot uproot without doing it enormous injury, any people even the primitive people. We are not a primitive people. We have 5,000 years', 10,000 years' background behind us. How can we uproot ourselves? It is an impossibility. We cannot do it. The language becomes a symbol of continuity. What are languages, even the southern languages? The northern languages are intimately connected with Sanskrit. The southern languages are not connected in that way, but in other ways. Now, everyone knows that Sanskrit was the symbol and the vehicle of our magnificent civilisation in the past. Whenever I think of it I am overwhelmed by the achievements of Sanskrit. It is a tremendous thing. Now we cannot leave it. Let us learn it by all means. But our languages are a continuity, they are part of a cultural tradition derived from Sanskrit. They keep that continuity deep of the dim past through Sanskrit. For us not to lay stress on that, not to encourage them but to cut ourselves away from our own people who though illiterate, have that cultural tradition, will be fatal. We dare not do it. Therefore, we have to develop our languages; we have progressively functioned in those languages and we have to keep in touch with the mass of the people. And to come back to the second point, in the modern scientific jet atomic age, we must have a foreign language to open our windows and we must not close our minds to it.

Soon after the speech delivered by the Leader in the discussion on Mr. Frank Anthony's Resolution, the Report of the Committee of Parliament on Official Language was discussed in Parliament. The debate was initiated by Pantji on 2nd September 1959, Commending the Report to the House, he said:

"The report has been framed with due regard for all interests and especially with due regard for the needs and interests of those who do not speak Hindi today. The Committee has made a special effort to take their difficulties into account and it has tried to frame its proposals in such a way that no inconvenience may be caused and no disadvantage may in any way be caused to the

non-Hindi-speaking people. That was one of the main guiding principles which the Committee placed before itself.

“Not a single member from any non-Hindi areas has appended any note of dissent, or expressed any view, which would be discordant with the proposals contained in the report. They had a hand and share in evolving these proposals and they have unreservedly adopted this report which was the result of our joint labour. This unanimity is the greatest asset and I feel that, in the circumstances in which we are, we must look at these things from a correct perspective.

“Language is a vital force, it is a force for good, it is a bond of unity, but it can also be a force for division, for disintegration. So, while bearing in mind the national requirements and the need of having a common link for binding together all parts of India emotionally, culturally and administratively, we should remember that it is only through the goodwill and through the cooperation, active cooperation, of all sections of the Indian community that we can make rapid advance. If we show any resentment or if in our efforts we try to run fast, we may sometimes fall down and not be able to cover the ground that we may have lost. So, we have throughout adhered to these basic principles.”

Once again it was the speech of the Leader that finally set the language controversy at rest. The following is the full text of that memorable speech :

“After the minor excitements that we experienced a little while ago, it is a little difficult to come back to the calm atmosphere of a debate on language. Although perhaps this debate on language has not been quite as calm as it might have been and there has been some excitement and some passion introduced into it, yet, even while this debate has been going on and important questions have been considered—because the question of language is very important I have had a vague feeling that the debate was slightly out of date

or will soon be out of date. Why do I say so? Because this whole debate, this whole approach is governed by a static conception of India, as if India was not changing and India is not what it is. We carry on in the old way. What is happening in India? Apart from the rest of the world, a new world is growing up. It is coming in upon us with a giant's strides, even though many of us may not quite realise it. In two ways it is coming in upon us, and both ways are such that they will affect the question of language more than, if I may say so with respect, any decision of this House. Rather, the decisions of this House will be governed by those forces.

What are those forces? One is the obvious fact of the growth of democracy, education, or the coming of vast numbers of people into the field of political decision. Whether it is by means of elections or otherwise, all these people come in and a vast number of them, a great majority of them, have no background of a foreign language in them. That is a fact of life. It is not a question of choice. And the more they come in, the more they will change the scene whether it is for good or bad, it is a different matter, and opinions may differ. We who sit here, many of us, belong to a generation which was brought up differently, that is, brought up through the medium of English, through English as a medium of education. Obviously, that is not being repeated even now in India, and will still less be repeated in the future, it is thus that the whole context of this argument is changing.

The second point,—an important one to bear in mind—is that the new world that is growing up in India is going to be a scientific, technological and industrial world. We talk about Five Year Plans and all that; we talk in terms of some project here, some there. But if you look at the whole picture, it is a picture of an entirely and absolutely new world growing up in India. It is the industrialisation of India; it is the industrial revolution coming to India in the middle of the twentieth century, rather belated no doubt and trying to catch up with the developments of the twentieth century

Now, may I ask, what has all that got to do with language ? I say it has everything to do with it. We seem to think of language as something either writing in government files, may be for the primary or secondary schools, or may be for a *mushaira* or *kavi sammelan*. It is all that, of course, I do not deny it; but it is something vast and something basic which moulds the people, and it has moulded all the activities and occupations of the people. If this industrial revolution comes here, as it is coming and it is bound to come, it changes the texture of our life, it changes the texture of thinking and it introduces words without number which you have to use in these new occupations, and all the efforts of Dr. Raghu Vira and Seth Govind Das cannot meet that situation whatever it may be. They may produce volumes after volumes of artificial words, so-called translations. Nobody will accept them, you can take it from me, because that language of science and technology will not come out of your class-room or translator's room, it will arise from the people who are working there.

These are two major developments that, I say, will affect language, because they affect our entire life and the decisions that you may make will really be governed for more by these vast developments than by some technical resolution that you may or may not pass. I just wish to say that this is the background with which I should like the House to approach this question, because, if I may say so with the utmost respect to this House, we, Members of this House, are able men, experienced men, but by and large we do not represent the scientific, technological, industrial world ; "industrial" not in the sense of ownership of industry, but on the engineering side of it.

Impact of Industrial Revolution

This is the world we are entering into, and this revolution is coming on. This revolution, as it has affected other countries, powerfully affects language, thousands and thousands of new words coming every year from technology, science etc. and those people

who suggest to set up some translation bureaux for it, I respectfully say, have no conception of the meaning of those words. Translations of some scientific words and symbols which have grown out of certain contexts and conditions cannot be done so easily as if it is an artificial thing coming out from some slot machine ; it is important to remember that.

Now, having said that and unburdened myself to that extent, I should like to say that this Committee of which my friend and colleague, the Home Minister was the Chairman has done, I think, quite a remarkable piece of work. I do not pretend to agree with every line that they have written and I do not want anybody here to agree with every line that they have written. It was, after all, a very difficult problem, people thinking quite differently being brought together in a large committee and miraculously agreeing, except for one or two or three or two and a half, whatever it may be. It really is remarkable that this measure of agreement was brought about. Of course, when you seek such a measure of agreement you give up something here, something there, which I may like, which many of the Hon. Members may like, I agree. But, broadly speaking, it was rather a remarkable feat—a feat, which I doubt if anyone else except my colleague the Home Minister, could have brought about. I think it is a worthy report.

Now, some days ago or some weeks ago I had occasion to speak in this House on Shri Anthony's resolution on the English language, and it was my good fortune to say something which pleased Shri Anthony as well as some others. I am grateful to him for that. Whatever I said then of course, I hold by it completely—I was not laying down any statute or law. I was but emphasising an approach, a mental approach.

Basic Facts

Let us consider the facts. Apart from our wishes, one of the basic facts today is that the medium of instruction has become the language of the region ; one of the great languages of India,

whether it is Tamil or Telugu or Marathi or Gujerati or Hindi. The basic change that has come over India and is coming over India which will produce a generation utterly unlike the generation to which I belong to, is this, that education will be through an Indian medium and not English. Apart from some people who may consider English as their mother tongue, which is a different matter, that is the basic change.

I do not understand the importance, the relevance or the significance of this argument about Hindi—English etc. I am coming to that. But once you grasp this basic fact that the great regional languages of India are now progressively the media of instruction, then you will appreciate the revolutionary change that is coming over India ; whether for good or bad it is to come, and I think it is a right change, although I realise that there are certain risks and dangers in it ; I mean to say risks and dangers of a certain measure of separatism. I realise that. But you could not put an end to those risks by ignoring a problem; you have to face it.

So the first thing is this major fact, and it is that major fact that produces a certain result on the position of English in India. I want you to realise that it is not a question of Hindi or English, it is a question of the 14 languages—or more than 14, if you like, even though they are not in the Constitution—principally, for education being carried on through that media. That creates a situation which is broadly different from the time when many of us got our education through the medium of English. That is the basic truth. Therefore, English inevitably becomes in India a secondary language. It is no longer the primary language. It does not matter what you may say about it; it becomes that. The House knows very well the importance I attach to English and I shall come to that presently. The basic fact is that the English becomes a secondary language in India. It is not the medium of instruction. It is a language to learn as a secondary language ; may be some learn it as a compulsory secondary language, but it is a language which is a secondary

language which has lost its former place in our educational system except in the case of a few. That is the first basic fact to be remembered.

Binding Link

The second is, obviously we require some kind of common language link and the Constitution has said that Hindi should be that common official language link. Remember it is for official correspondence or whatever it is, official work—between the States. Having found, apart from any decision in the Constitution, that the position of English is bound to go down in that way, it will come up in another way as I would point out. The argument that may be advanced for English to be this kind of official language for India really becomes very weak if you realise the first fact. Today, as some body has said, there are plenty of arguments in favour of English. In fact, the fact is we do much of our work in English as everyone knows, and by a decree you cannot change it, because we have grown up into that. Tomorrow it may not be the case and the day after tomorrow it will still less be the case. These are the facts. You cannot ignore them, whatever your own likes or my likes may be.

Therefore, you have a variety of reasons into which I need not go, but you have that common binding link for the languages of India. You may again criticise Hindi ; it is not good enough ; it has not developed enough. I will for a moment accept all your criticism. Still, the fact remains that no Indian language other than Hindi, would be more suitable. Mind you, I do not say that Hindi is in the slightest degree better than any other Indian language. In fact, I firmly believe that some of the Indian languages are richer in content and have a better literature than Hindi. But that does not take us away from the fact that all the languages have to develop and to influence each other.

Now, the real basic opposition, I take it, comes from a fear

that Hindi, if it comes in, will mean a disparity for the non-Hindi knowing areas. I say undoubtedly it will be a disparity. Let us face that. Let us not try to get over it and say anybody can learn it in a fortnight or in a month or a year. It will be a disparity for a considerable time. I say a rule must be laid down by which we do absolutely nothing which creates a disparity for non-Hindi-speaking areas, in regard to matters like services and other things. Let that be quite clear ; I am personally quite clear about that.

I am perfectly clear in my mind that for any foreseeable time there should be no compulsory bar—compulsory knowledge of Hindi—to the recruitment of people in the services. None at all. If a man does not know one word of Hindi, still, he ought to be able to come in at that stage. But I would certainly have him learn Hindi. Of course, I want him to learn it at an earlier stage too. Very probably he will. I am merely saying that this feeling of disparity should vanish. Shri Frank Anthony said, "Oh, the Prime Minister said that there will be no imposition of language. Therefore there should be no compulsory test in Hindi after coming in." I do not see how that follows. It is not a question of a compulsory test in Hindi. We may very well have compulsory test in English. Do you object to that ? I think every person who comes into the All-India Services ought to pass a compulsory test in English. Will Shri Frank Anthony object to that ? Probably not. I want that wider knowledge.

Suppose, an all-India officer is going to Madras. I would insist on his having a compulsory test in Tamil. These are the normal things that are done for convenience of administration and everything. The man for the all-India service ought to know the language of the place he works in. He normally tries to learn it. Whether he knows it well or not, I do not know. We send people abroad, whatever country we send them, people in the Foreign Service are required, as a compulsory thing, to learn certain foreign

languages. Each person has to choose one or two or sometimes three foreign languages. So you must not look upon it as an imposition. When I said that there should be no imposition of Hindi, what I meant was this. Whether it is Madras, Andhra, Kerala or whatever part it may be, I do not wish to impose a language on that State in the sense in which the State will take it. I know if they have a sense of pressure or imposition they react against it. I do not want that. If the State of Madras says, "We do not want compulsory Hindi," let them not have compulsory Hindi in their schools. As a matter of fact, there are more people learning the language voluntarily than perhaps in any other place in any other way. So, I want to remove this sense of compulsion. I want to remove this idea that they will suffer in service or in the work or whatever it is. I want all these things to develop voluntarily and in a spirit of co-operation and it is for us to adjust ourselves from time to time to these developments. In this matter, as I said on the last occasion, we have to be flexible in our approach, there should be no rigidity.

Now I come to English. I had said that English should be an associate or additional language. What exactly did I mean by it? English cannot be, in India, anything but a secondary language in future. In the nature of things, mass education will be in our own languages. English may be taught as a compulsory language—I hope it will be—to a large number of people; it can not be to everybody but to a large number. It remains as a secondary language. But I say that Hindi, whenever it is feasible, comes into use progressively more and more for the inter-State official work. But English should have a place there, and yet not a limited place. That is to say. That is to say, English can be used by any State in writing to the Government or writing to each other. Remember that this internal State work will be done presumably in the State language. English comes in only on the question of dealings on the all-India scale between States. To that, it should be open to anybody and to any State to do that in English. There is no

limitation on that. We encourage them to do it in Hindi ; if they can do. But there is no limitation. I say there is no limitation of time even to that, except when people generally agree, —and I had said those that very people in the non-Hindi-speaking areas who might be affected should agree.

I would submit to this House and more especially to our colleagues from the Hindi-speaking areas that if there is one thing—there are many forces at work in favour of the spread of Hindi and they are spreading Hindi and it is becoming richer—that is going to come in their way, it is sometimes their over-enthusiasm, and the way they approach this subject which irritates and rightly irritates others. It irritates me. I do not know about the non-Hindi speaking areas.

Then there is another thing. The type of Hindi they produce is really a most extraordinary one. I am not worried about it ; it is only irritating. Because I said that Hindi or any other language that will come up in India will come up from the masses ; not from literary coteries.

Yesterday Acharya Kripalani was talking about Madrasi-English, Bengali-English, Bombay English and all that, which is completely right. But we have, today very much so, a Bengali Hindi, Madrasi Hindi and Bombay Hindi developing. To my ears, it is rather painful to hear. But I put up with it; there it is. But just like there is Bengali Hindi, there is Seth Govind Das's Hindi and Dr. Raghu Virar's Hindi. What Hindi are we going to have really? This business of some kind of slot machine turning out-Hindi words and Hindi phrases, that kind of approach is an artificial, unreal, absurd, fantastic ; it is a laughable approach. You cannot do it. If you try to do it, you will put your mind in some kind of steel-frame which cannot understand anything, or progress at all. It can only recite perhaps some slogans by rote. That is all. It can understand nothing else.

Coming to another aspect of English, the aspect that English

has to be an associate additional secondary language which can be used by anyone who wants to use it in that central sphere, I mean, even though Hindi is the official language, English is used too, and I expect that progressively the use of it will become less and less. It does not make any great difference whether it takes a certain period or double that period, a little more or a little less, I do not mind.

Scientific Terminology

Take another aspect of English to which I attach great importance and that is the technical and scientific terminology. There is no very great difference, although there is some difference, between the terms in English, French German etc. Broadly speaking, the scientific terms approximate, though their endings may be different. That is, there is something which might be called international scientific and technological terms. I am strongly in favour of, not Hindi only, but every language of India, trying to have identical scientific and technical terms. I do not say that every word should be absolutely the same and I do not want well-known words to be rejected. Well-known words, whether Hindi or Tamil, of course will be used. But it is not a question of well-known words, it is a question of this vast ocean of language that is streaming in, the technical language which cannot be reproduced. If you could translate it adequately, even if you did it, even then you do the wrong thing because you would be separated from the rest of the world in regard to those words.

It is necessary for us in the modern world to find as many common points of knowledge as possible. We cannot change and we need not change the literary part of our language. That has developed and will develop. But so far as this unknown region, which is getting more and more known is concerned the scientific, industrial and technological region—we should develop to the best of our ability a common language in India which is also common for international purposes. This is a very important matter—your

absorbing this vast number of technical words in the form, as far as possible, that they are used internationally. It does not matter if they come from Greek or Latin. It does not matter if they come from English. But the point is, it is a body of language which has to advance industrially, technically, technologically and scientifically. You want to advance fast and every obstruction in the way will delay your advance or progress in that direction, which is essential for us to make good.

International Form of Numerals.

As for numerals, it is absolutely essential that we should use the international numerals. We might use any flowery way of writing we like, but in business, in science and technology generally the international form of numerals should be universal in India in all the languages and should be the common factor for foreign languages too. Not that I object to any other form being used, but one should encourage in every serious work—I do not mind novels having anything—in every statistical work, the use of international numerals which immediately puts us on a line with others. You can take a book in almost any language—Russian, German or Japanese. You do not know the language, but it is a statistical book and you can easily understand it, because all the figures are in that form which you know. You understand the numerals, you can use the worlds' statistical tables. In Japan, they have adopted this ; almost everywhere in the world they have adopted this. Immediately the door opens out to the world's numerals, to the world's statistics and everything if you keep your statistics in that way. If you insist on keeping it in a particular way confined to you, you are cut off from the rest of the world. So, these things are obvious.

Language, of course, is a very vital thing. But behind it is something much deeper. It is the reaction, action and reaction and counteraction of two powerful pulls. One is the pull of the past, which is important and which we have to maintain. The other is the pull of the future. The pull of the future means the

pull of what might be called the modern world, of science, etc. I do not think that it would be right for all us to ignore the pull of the past. It is vital to us ; we have grown up in it. For all that India is after 5,000 years, we cannot cut it off. Among other things, that is where language comes in.

I have on a previous day expressed my great admiration of Sanskrit. There are many things, of course, but I do think that there is one thing which can embody the greatness of Indian thought and culture in the past ; it is Sanskrit, which has been built up. We do not talk Sanskrit now, no doubt, but the Indian languages of today have either directly descended from Sanskrit, or the Southern languages have been closely allied with it. The background of thought, of culture, whether it is Tamil, Telgu, Malayalam and what not, is closely allied to the background of thought and culture of the northern languages because of Sanskrit and its effect on the whole of India. I do not say all of it is good; we have to change it; we have to discard something, but these are the roots on which India has grown up. I think if we cut away those roots, it will be very very bad for us; we become superficial human beings. Therefore, with all my admiration of foreign languages or English, I want English to continue for a variety of reasons, as I have said—I can never ask our people to transplant their roots to English roots. It cannot be done and it would not be done under our democratic adult suffrage. It does not matter what you argue about it, but this would not be done. Therefore, it is important. Language comes in as an important and as a continuing link for ages past, and that link has transferred from Sanskrit to our modern Indian languages. That is one thing, the great events of the past and the heritages that we have. The other is the future to which we look forward, a future which may be called, to a large extent influenced by modernism and the like, the modernism of the future, the spirit of the age, call it the *Yuga Dharma*, which is science, which is technology and the like. And I say so with all respect that all the languages of India put together cannot produce it in the

foreseeable future, unless you have recourse to something else, to some other languages—of course, our languages will be growing rapidly and our languages, I hope, will be developed with heavy books and thinking in science—because we have to spend millions and millions. Because, the moment you go to higher regions, it cannot be reproduced by artificial translations and text-books. It is something entirely different.

Therefore, the real conflict in the mind of India today is—language is only a part of it—how to bring out a synthesis from this past, from this heritage of the past to what we want in the present. That is the conflict and it is a basic conflict. I do not know what the ultimate result of this will be.

I referred on the last occasion I spoke here to a lecture delivered by a very well-known author and scientist about the two cultures. He was talking about England and two cultures were literary culture and the culture of modern science. He said there was conflict even in England. If that is so in England, what about this country where we are just barely entering the age of science. We glibly talk in terms of science. We are out of that age. Our minds are out of it. If I use industrial words, a rich man may buy up a textile mill and may make money out of it—rich people go on becoming richer and richer—but he understands nothing about industry. He can buy an expert and make money thereby, but he is not an industrialist; he knows nothing about science.

So, that is the basic conflict in the soul of India and many other countries too—this past that we value and that must be valued and the future that we ought to have if we want we have got, unless we add to it the future, the future of science, of technology and all that. How far we can bring about that synthesis, the future will show. I hope it will, because there is no other way.

Now, in our approach to language, broadly speaking, we should be flexible, because the moment rigidity comes in, difficulties come in, opposition comes in. And if we adopt this approach which is given, I think we shall succeed both on the issue of language and on that basic issue, the synthesis between old and the new.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

Any body who goes through the two speeches of the Prime Minister impartially will find that they embody the best possible solution to the official language controversy in our country. His solution admirably reconciles the conflicting points of view into a synthesis which is practicable as well as just. It grants that the official language of free and democratic India should be Hindi alone, while it leaves the time of the final change-over to the discretion of the non-Hindi speaking people. It is a magnificent gesture. It provides that English would continue to be the associate or additional official language as long as the non-Hindi speaking people desire its continuance; this approach and decision allays the fears of the non-Hindi speaking people lest they should be put to disadvantage in the matter of services or otherwise. But the ultimate goal has not been compromised in any way. In view of this it would be most uncharitable if the Hindi enthusiasts feel that the legitimate interests of Hindi are being ignored. In such an important matter as transition from one language to another in a vast multi-lingual country like ours, the spirit of caution and realism must go hand in hand with a spirit of realistic idealism displayed by the Prime Minister and it is the duty of every patriotic Indian to work for a solution in the same spirit.

The Prime Minister has also once again pointed out what the nature and complexion of Hindi as the official language should be. In fact this point has already been clarified by the Official Language Commission as well as by the Parliamentary Committee. Every thinking person is unanimous that Hindi should be as simple and close to the actual spoken language of the masses as possible. His

observations on this point should act as a warning and as a reminder to those schools of thought among the Hindi speaking people who harp on the theme of linguistic purism and exclusiveness. The dismal failure of Spain, which in the 15th century tried to eliminate Arabic words which had entered into the Spanish language due to centuries of long association with the Moors in Spain; of Bismark who embarked upon a policy of driving out common French words from the German language on the plea of German nationalism and self-respect, of Kamal Atatürk who tried to purge the Turkish language of all Persian and Arabic words on the same plea as well as of Iran whose attitude was similiary motivated against Arabic words, should all serve as serious reminders of the essential folly of such an attitude. It is significant to note that even after partition Gandhiji continued to maintain that Hindi-Hindustani written in both Devanagari and Persian scripts should be the official language of the Union. However, the Constituent Assembly in its wisdom decided on Hindi in Devanagri script. There is no need to go back on that decision which was a unanimous one. But as the Prime Minister has pointed out in his two memorable speeches, and as the Constitution, the Report of the Official Language Commission and that of the Parliamentary Committee on Official Language provide, it is important that the content of this Hindi should reflect the composite culture and multi-lingual complexion of our great country. This is the essence of wisdom.

Some Excerpts from Gandhiji's Writings

English is the language of international commerce; it is the language of diplomacy, and it contains many a rich literary treasure, it gives us an introduction to Western thought and culture. For a few of us, therefore, a knowledge of English is necessary. They can carry on the departments of national commerce and international diplomacy, and for giving to the nation the best of Western literature, thought and science. That would be the legitimate use of English. Whereas today, English has usurped the dearest place in our hearts and dethroned our mother-tongues.

The highest development of the Indian mind must be possible without a knowledge of English. It is doing violence to the manhood and especially the womanhood of India, to encourage our boys and girls to think that an entry into the best society is impossible without a knowledge of English. It is too humiliating a thought to be bearable. To get rid of the infatuation for English is one of the essentials of Swaraj.

Of all the superstitions that affect India, none is so great as that a knowledge of the English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of literly and developing accuracy of thought.

It is unbearable to me that the vernaculars should be crushed and starved as they have been. I cannot tolerate the idea of parents writing to their children, or husbands writing to their wives, not in their own vernaculars but in English . . . I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect or be ashamed of his mother-tongue or to feel that he or she cannot think or express the best thought in his or her own vernacular.

Indian parents who train their children to think and talk in

English from their infancy batray their children and their country. They deprive them of the spiritual and social heritage of the nation, and render them to that extent unfit for the service of the country.

The youth of a nation to remain a nation must receive all instruction, including the highest, in its own vernacular or vernaculars . . . The youth of a nation cannot keep or establish a living contact with the masses unless their knowledge is received and assimilated through a medium understood by the people. Who can calculate the immeasurable loss sustained by the nation, owing to thousands of its young men having been obliged to waste years in mastering a foreign language and its idiom, of which in their daily life they have the least use and in learning which they had to neglect their own mother-tongue and their own literature.

The world is full of many a gem of priceless beauty; but, then, these gems are not all of English setting.

No country can become a nation by producing a race of translators. Think of what would have happened to the English if they had not an authorized version of the Bible.

Children of the nation that receive instruction in a tongue other than their own commit suicide. It robs them of their birth right. A foreign medium means an undue strain upon the youngsters. It robs them of all originality. It stunts their growth and isolates them from their home.

There never was a greater superstition than that a particular language can be incapable of expansion or of expressing abstruse or scientific ideas. A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers.

How dare we rub off from our memory all the years of our infancy? But that is precisely what we do when we commence our higher life through the medium of a foreign tongue.

Different scripts are an unnecessary hindrance to the learning by the people of one province the language of other provinces.

Constitutional Provisions

Official Language

CHAPTER I—Language of the Union.

Official Language of the Union.

343. (1) The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.

The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.

(2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement :

Provided that the President may, during the said period, by order authorise the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language and of the Devanagari forms of numerals in addition to the international form of Indian numerals for any of the official purposes of the Union.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in this article, Parliament may by law provide for the use, after the said period of fifteen years of

(a) the English language, or

(b) the Devanagari form of numerals, for such purposes as may be specified in the law.

Commission and Committee of Parliament on Official language.

344. (1) The President shall, at the expiration of five years from the commencement of this Constitution and thereafter at the expiration of ten years from such commencement, by order constitute a Commission which shall consist of a Chairman and such

other members representing the different languages specified in the Eighth Schedule as the President may appoint, and the order shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Commission to make recommendations to the President as to—

- (a) the progressive use of the Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union ;
- (b) restrictions on the use of the English language for all or any of the official purposes of the Union ;
- (c) the language to be used for all or any of the purposes mentioned in article 348 ;
- (d) the form of numerals to be used for any one or more specified purposes of the Union ;
- (i) any other matter referred to the Commission by the President as regards the official language of the Union and the language for communication between the Union and a State or between one State and another and their use.

(3) In making their recommendations under clause (2), the Commission shall have due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India, and the just claims and the interests of persons belonging to non-Hindi speaking areas in regard to the public services.

(4) There shall be constituted a Committee consisting of thirty members, of whom twenty shall be members of the House of People and ten shall be members of the Council of States in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

(5) It shall be the duty of the Committee to examine the recommendations of the Commission constituted under clause (1) and to report to the President their opinion thereon.

(6) Notwithstanding anything in article 343, the President may, after consideration of the report referred to in clause (5) issue

directions in accordance with the whole or any part of that report.

CHAPTER II—Regional Languages.

Official Language or Language of a State.

345. Subject to the provisions of articles 346 and 347, the Legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State :

Provided that, until the Legislature of the State otherwise provides by law, the English language shall continue to be used for those official purposes within the State for which it was being used immediately before the commencement of this Constitution.

Official language for communication between one State and another or between a State and the Union.

346. The language for the time being authorised for use in the Union for official purposes shall be the official language for communication between one State and another State and between a State and the Union.

Provided that if two or more States agree that the Hindi language should be the official language for communication between such States, that language may be used for such communication.

Special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a State.

347. On a demand being made in that behalf the President may, if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a State desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by the State, direct that such language shall also be officially recognised throughout that State or any part thereof for such purposes as he may specify.

Part XVIII—Official Language—Art. 348.

CHAPTER III—Language of the Supreme Court, High Courts etc.

Language to be used in the Supreme Court and in the High court and for Acts, Bills etc.

348. (1) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Part, until Parliament by law otherwise provides—

(a) all proceedings in the Supreme Court and in every High Court,

(b) the authoritative texts—

(i) of all Bills to be introduced or amendments thereto be moved in either House of Parliament or in the House or either House of the Legislature of a State.

(ii) of all Acts passed by Parliament or the Legislature of a State and of all Ordinances promulgated by the President or the Governor of a State, and

(iii) of all orders, rules, regulations and bye-laws issued under this Constitution or under any law made by Parliament or the Legislature of a State.

shall be in the English language.

(2) Notwithstanding anything in sub-clause (a) of Clause (1), the Governor of a State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorise the use of the Hindi language, or any other language used for any official purposes of the State, in proceedings in the High Court having its principal seat in that State :

Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to any judgment, decree or order passed or made by such High Court.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in sub-clause (b) of clause (1), where the Legislature of a State has prescribed any language other than the English language for use in Bills introduced in, or Acts passed by, the Legislature of a State or in Ordinances promulgated

by the Governor of the State or in any order, rule regulation or bye-law referred to in paragraph (iii) of that sub-clause, a translation of the same in the English language published under the authority of the Governor of the State in the Official Gazette of that State shall be deemed to be the authoritative text thereof in the English language under this article.

Special procedure for enactment of certain laws relating to language.

349. During the period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, no Bill or amendment making provision for the language to be used for any of the purposes mentioned in clause (i) of article 348 shall be introduced or moved in either House of Parliament without the previous sanction of the President, and the President shall not give his sanction to the introduction of any such Bill or the moving of any such amendment except after he has taken into consideration the recommendations of the Commission constituted under clause (I) of article 344 and the report of the Committee constituted under clause (4) of that article.

CHAPTER IV—Special Directives

Language to be used in representations for redress of grievances.

350. Every person shall be entitled to submit a representation for the redress of any grievance to any officer or authority of the Union or a State in any of the languages used in the Union or in the State as the case may be.

Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage.

350A. It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.

Special officer for linguistic minorities.

350B. (1) There shall be a Special Officer for linguistic minorities to be appointed by the President.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under this Constitution and report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct, and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament, and sent to the Governments of the States concerned.

Directive for development of the Hindi language.

351. It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

Resolutions passed by Indian National Congress on Language Policy

BILINGUAL AREAS

(Working Committee Resolution—August 5, 1949)

The question of language has been agitating the public mind and in the opinion of the Working Committee it is desirable to lay down certain principles which may be applied having regard to peculiar circumstances prevailing in particular areas.

The question has to be considered from two points of view, viz., educational and administrative. There is the further question of a State Language for the country as a whole which will be the language also of intercourse between different areas having separate languages.

There are at present provinces or States where more than one language is spoken. Many of these languages are rich and have valuable literatures of their own. They should not only be preserved but further developed and enriched and nothing should be done to act as a handicap to their growth.

In Provinces and States where more than one language prevails, there are areas which indisputably belong to one language or another. Besides such areas there are areas on the fringe where one language gradually slips into another and for purposes of this resolution such areas may be termed bilingual areas.

It is for a Province or State to decide what its language is. In multi-lingual Provinces undisputed areas belonging to the various languages as also the fringe or 'bilingual areas' should be demarcated

and the language of each indicated by the Province or State concerned.

For administrative purposes the language of the Province or the area concerned should be used. In fringe or bilingual areas, if the minority is of a considerable size, *i.e.* 20% of the population, documents which the public at large have to use, such as Government notices, electoral rolls, ration cards etc., should be in both languages. For Court and administrative purposes the language of the Province or area will be used in all public offices. It will be open, however, to any person having another language to submit petitions in his own language, which is officially recognized.

For all-India purpose there will be a State language in which the business of the Union will be conducted. That will be the language of correspondence with the Provincial and State Governments. All records of the Centre will be kept and maintained in that language. It will also serve as the language for inter-provincial and inter-State commerce and correspondence. During a period of transition, which shall not exceed 15 years, English may be used at the Centre and for inter-provincial affairs, provided that the State language will be progressively utilised until it replaces English.

Educational Purposes. At the primary stage a child shall get instruction in his mother-tongue which will be according to the wishes of the guardian or parents of the child. It will ordinarily be the language of the area or the province. But in other places also and particularly in fringe areas and in large cities where people speaking different languages congregate, public primary schools giving instruction in the language of a minority will be opened or sections joined to other primary schools. If there is a reasonable number, say 15 pupils in a class demanding instruction in that language. But even in such schools and sections giving instruction through a minority language, provincial language will be introduced at the middle stage even for children speaking the minority language. Instruction at the secondary stage will ordinarily be given in the Provincial language but where a sufficiently large number of pupils demand it schools may be run on sections attached to other schools in a minority language, provided

that this will be determined having regard to conditions prevailing in the locality, such as, whether there are any existing institutions, Government or private, giving instruction through the minority language, whether the finances of the Provinces can afford such independent schools etc. At the secondary stage study of the All-India State language should be taken up as a second language. At the University stage, the medium of instruction will be the Provincial language.

For the purposes of this resolution Urdu shall be one of the languages concerned.

THE USE OF LANGUAGES

(Working Committee Resolution—17th May, 1953)

The Committee considered and adopted the following resolution regarding the use of languages :

In August 1949, the Working Committee clarified the policy of the Congress in regard to the question of languages in India. The Committee would like to draw the attention of State Governments and Pradesh Congress Committees to its resolution passed on August 5, 1949.

It is the considered policy of the Congress, which has been adopted in the Constitution of India, that Hindi, as the National language of the country, should be encouraged and, at the same time, the great Provincial languages should also be encouraged in their respective areas and should normally be the medium of work in those areas. In regard to education, the medium in the Primary schools should be the mother tongue of the student and every effort should be made to provide facilities for this purpose wherever enough students having a particular language as the mother tongue so desire. Thus, even in an area having a particular language as its basic language, arrangements should be made, wherever possible, for primary schools in other languages, provided a sufficient number of pupils are available.

In the tribal and like areas, education should be imparted in the earlier stages through the language of that area.

The Constitution of India has enumerated the principal languages of India in the Eighth Schedule attached to it. Among these principal languages is Urdu and the Committee trust that due place will be given to it. It must be remembered that Urdu is a language of India, which took birth and shape in India and is spoken and written by a very considerable number of people in India.

EXAMINATIONS FOR ALL-INDIA SERVICES

(Working Committee Resolution—April 5, 1954)

In view of the fact that the Constitution of India has recognised Hindi as the All-India National language and has fixed a period of 15 years for the transition to Hindi for official all-India purpose, it is desirable that progressive steps should be taken to make Hindi the language of examinations for the all-India Services. These steps should be so phased as not to cast any undue burden on the candidates from any part of the country where the regional language is other than Hindi. While Hindi as well as the regional languages must be given every encouragement to develop, it must be remembered that a knowledge of foreign languages, and more especially English, will continue to be essential for persons in the higher services.

2. The Working Committee recommend that progressively examinations for the all-India Services should be held in Hindi, English and the principal regional languages, and candidates may be given the option to use any of these languages for the purpose of examinations. In the event of a candidate choosing Hindi or a regional language for the purpose of his examination, he should pass separately in English also.

All candidates who have been successful in these all-India examinations will have to pass a test in Hindi at an early stage, unless they have already taken Hindi in the examinations previously.

3. The next stage should be a continuation of option to use Hindi, English or the regional languages in the examinations in the manner stated above, but with the addition of a compulsory paper on Hindi for such candidates whose language is other than Hindi, and a compulsory paper in some other Indian language for candidates whose language is Hindi. In both cases, English will be a compulsory subject for those who appear in the examinations in Hindi or the other regional languages.

4. In this way, Hindi should progressively replace English as the language of examinations for the all-India Services.

LANGUAGES AND THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

(Working Committee Resolution—April 5, 1954)

The Congress has repeatedly laid down the policy to be pursued in regard to the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. The Congress Working Committee has passed resolutions on this subject on August 5, 1949 and again, on the 17th May, 1953. The Constitution of India has recognised Hindi as the all-India National Language while it has also indicated other regional languages of national significance. It should be the objective of Government, through the educational system and by other means, to encourage and develop Hindi, both as a regional language and as the all-India National Language for official and other purposes. At the same time, the other regional languages, named in the Constitution, should also be given full encouragement. The object aimed at should be the development of an Indian literature through all these great languages of India, which should therefore have close contacts with each other.

2. While Hindi, as the all-India National language, should be a compulsory subject at various stages in schools and colleges, it is necessary that people in the Hindi-speaking areas should learn at least one other Indian language.

3. It should be remembered that, while English must give place to Hindi in India, a knowledge of foreign languages will continue to be necessary in order to keep in touch with foreign literatures and currents of thought and development of the literature and languages of India. While some study of all the important foreign languages of Europe and Asia is desirable, it will be necessary to encourage especially the study of English, both because of its importance as one of the principal world languages and its past contacts.

4. The medium of instruction at the primary stage must be the mother-tongue of the child in accordance with the wishes of the parent or the guardian of the child. Ordinarily, this will be the language of the area or the State. In tribal areas the medium during the early stages should be the mother-tongue of the people of the area. In large cities and other areas, where there are many people speaking a language or languages other than the regional language, public primary schools should give instruction in the mother-tongue, provided there are a reasonable number of persons demanding such instruction. In bilingual areas, more particularly the border areas between two States, special facilities should be given for primary education in each of the languages of that area.

5. Instruction at the secondary stage should ordinarily be given in the regional language, but other languages may also be used where there are a sufficiently large number of pupils. At the secondary stage, the all-India language, namely, Hindi, should be a compulsory second language.

6. At the University stage, the medium of instruction should be the regional language, though Hindi may also be used. In the Universities while normal teaching will be done in the regional language it should be open to teachers to deliver lectures in Hindi and occasionally even in English. This will facilitate inter-provincial cultural intercourse.

7. In the teaching of scientific and technical subjects the transition from English to Hindi or the regional language should be so

arranged as to be gradual and not to bring down standards. An intervening stage, in regard to some subjects, where both Hindi or the Regional language and English are used as media, may be desirable.

8. As it is desirable to have an adequate knowledge of a foreign language, this should be taken at the high school stage and continued at the University stage.

9. The Working Committee approve generally of the fifteen-year programme which the Education Ministry of Central Government has drawn up in three stages of five years each, so as to complete the replacement of English by Hindi at the end of that period.

SAFEGUARDS FOR LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

(A.I.C.C. Resolution—June 2 & 3, 1956, Bombay)

In November 1955, the Working Committee in its resolution on the Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, which was later endorsed by the A.I.C.C., welcomed the recommendations of the Commission in regard to the various safeguards for linguistic minorities and most of the other administrative measures proposed by the Commission in order to promote the unity of India.

2. These recommendations are an essential part of the scheme of reorganisation. In the heat of the controversies aroused by the competing territorial claims, their significance has, however, not been adequately appreciated and this has to some extent come in the way of an integrated approach and balanced assessment of the scheme.

3. The All India Congress Committee has more than once laid emphasis on the co-existence and simultaneous development of national and regional languages, and any intolerance in this regard would be repugnant to the basic concept of democracy and the unity of India. With whatever measure of thoroughness the linguistic principle might be applied, it will not be possible to carve out an administrative unit without its having an appreciable number of linguistic minorities. The only abiding and just solution of the problem will be found in the elimination of the majority and minority cons-

ciousness by ensuring full and equal opportunities for all sections of the Indian people in the constituent units of the Union of India. For this it is necessary to accord a just and generous treatment to all linguistic minorities in the State so that they may be inspired by consciousness of partnership in a co-operative welfare enterprise. The adoption of the safeguards for linguistic minorities, proposed by the Commission which include.

- (i) constitutional recognition of the right of the linguistic minorities to instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage;
- (ii) liberalisation of the facilities now available for education at the secondary stage;
- (iii) recognition of minority languages for prescribed official purposes;
- (iv) abolition of discriminatory requirements as to residence within the States for purposes of recruitment;
- (v) recognition of minority languages as optional media for examinations regulating entry into the public services of the States; and
- (vi) full recognition of free and equal rights regarding trade, business and enjoyment, possession and disposal of land and other interests, should, in the opinion of the Committee, go a long way in developing such consciousness.

FROM THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

(*January 1957*)

17. Recent amendments to the Constitution have ensured the protection of every language even where it is the language of a majority community. Minorities in India, whether religious or linguistic or other, must have the assurance and the feeling of playing their full part in the varied activities of the country. The Constitution of India is a secular one, but it respects all religions prevalent in India and gives full scope for their functioning. Every attempt must be made to ensure that these assurances are carried out and no minority is made to suffer because it is either a religious or linguistic minority. Secularism does not mean lack of faith but protection of all faiths and the encouragement of spiritual and moral values.

