

# ABOLITION OF ZAMINDARI

## Shadow Boxing by Congress

THE abolition of zamindaris has been engaging the attention of both the Central and Provincial governments for some time now. Those of the provinces, such as Madras, Bihar and the U. P., who had been keen and enthusiastic about an early implementation of the programme were told politely to go slow by the government of India last October to strengthen the Centre's anti-inflationary drive. There was no suggestion of interfering with the Princes in anyway. The latter could go ahead, within the limits of their own budgets. It was only hinted that the Provinces should not depend on financial assistance from the Centre for the immediate implementation of measure like zamindari abolition or prohibition which the Centre would like to be postponed.

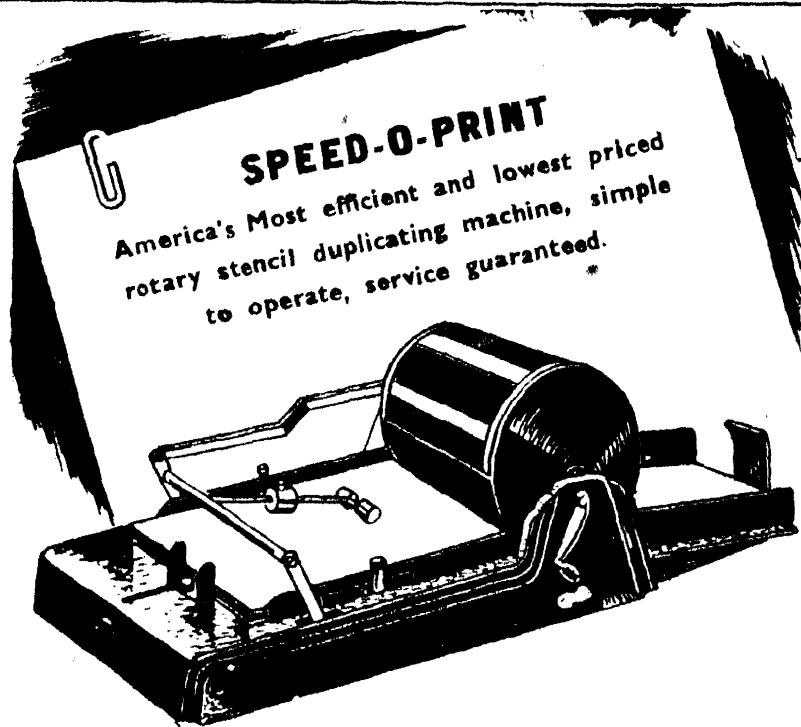
In view of this, the decision of the Working Committee of the Congress, directing the provincial governments to go ahead with their plans for the abolition of zamindaris, comes as a great surprise. Moreover, it is curious in the extreme that the Working Committee should want the provincial governments to execute their plans in consultation with the Government of India, knowing full well the views of the Government of India in the matter and also the circumstances that led to it.

Looking at these developments one cannot but feel that there does exist some blind spot somewhere,—the light in which the Government and the Congress executive view these things is not the same. Could it be that the next General Election has started casting its shadow so far in advance? For the Congress, as a party, the fulfilment of election pledges is a necessity with the general election fixed for 1950.

attempts must be made to consolidate their position from now on. The Government, however, are forced to take a more realistic and practical view of things.

The immediate question is not the retention or abolition of zamindaris but that of the compensation payable to the zamindars. In this matter, Government have to be firm. Whether the amount of compensation is Rs. 17.5 crores as in Madras, or Rs. 150 crores as in Bihar, cash disbursements of such large amount is not to be thought of. The work-

ing committee has suggested apart from non-negotiable bonds a cash payment in Bihar, spread over 40 years and in Madras, a similar cash payment spread over 5 or 10 years. Should this be done, it would directly defeat the larger purposes of the Government. On the other hand, the proposals of the U. P. Committee on the abolition of zamindaris appear to be commendable. The committee have decided on non-negotiable bonds with certain facilities for the zamindars, their main object being the prevention of the movement of capital away from the village. Thus the money may be utilised in co-operative societies or banks.



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