

From South India

Projects in Plenty

DR. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Chairman of the Sir Aurobindo Memorial Committee, told the Press that the International University which the Memorial Convention had decided to put up at Pondicherry would function without reference to the nature of the Government of Pondicherry. It would make no difference he said, if Pondicherry was merged in India. The University might commence work fairly soon, its temporary accommodation was available while permanent buildings were under construction.

The Malabar Tenancy Act is a piece of legislation passed with both the eyes on the ensuing election. It is, admittedly a vote catching mechanism. The Landholders' Association presented a memorandum pointing out that the legislation was discriminatory and deprived the landholder of his established rights without compensation. The Governor was asked to withhold his assent. He seems to have told deputationists that all aspects of the question would be considered by the Government.

"Not Enough"

These two words could very well sum up the journalists' position, here in Madras. The President of the Federation said that in regard to emoluments and service conditions last year showed no progress. The president in his address this year, touched upon many points. Trade unionism and its application in journalism took a fair share of his address. If, for instance, in a country like Britain, where lock-outs and strikes alike have been firmly clamped down under order 3005 for the past ten years a conflict of loyalties could appear as more than a theoretical possibility to the professional journalist because his union is part of a larger union affiliated to the T.U.C., how can we hope, Mr. Raghunath Aiyar asked that mere affirmation, however energetic, that it is a purely professional body will avail the Federation if there is a crisis in the printing industry and its trade union tries to make it obligatory to range itself on the side of workers in that industry if they should go on strike. In the newspaper industry conditions are far from favourable for successful trade unions, especially when there are varying standards of discipline,

work and honoraria.

The President pointed out that the Hornbay Union of journalists had asked for a salary scale more or less modelled on what the S.I.J.F. demanded two years ago. But, he added, the average of that scale was so much more than the average worker in the printing industry got today that there was little chance of the journeyman printer making any serious effort through the trade union movement to help his unwilling employees. But, he warned newspaper proprietors that if they insisted on treating journalism as a trade from which it was lawful, to make the most while the going was good, they should not be surprised if trade unionism gathered momentum in activities which they did not like.

Pallikarani Project

Attempts to plan out garden villages for settling industrial workers in the Pallikarani swamp development scheme should have had good appreciation from Mr. Robert E. Alexander who had been deputed by the United Nations at the request of our Union Government for consultation. Pallikarani is a swamp area about 15 miles south of Madras; the cost of living and the general life of villagers there were recently studied by statistical experts of the Government of India.

More than three years ago the Amalgamations Ltd. a group of companies in Madras, embarked on the Pallikarani scheme—a programme to improve the health and welfare of their employees. The scheme included improving the food supply and the housing conditions of the workers. The Government of India requested technical assistance from the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration. A U.N. soil conservation consultant, came to Madras and prepared a plan for the reclamation of the Pallikarani swamp of about 3,700 acres. The Government of Madras assigned it to the Amalgamations.

The plan envisages new and better environment for 5,000 families of industrial workers. In the first village 230 acres are allotted to provide modern homes and facilities like health services, education and recreation for 1,000 families. The project will be a model for development in other areas.

Building

Building construction in the city is proceeding only slowly due to shortage of steel and other materials, even the quantity allotted is not received in full. Skilled labour, carpenter, blacksmith, cobbler etc. according to the Economic Adviser's index number of daily wages got less: a fall of .6, 1.3, and 3.3 points being reported for the fortnight ending January 1.

Irrigation

Irrigation gets priority, however. The Madras Government's policy has been to concentrate more on small schemes of a local character than on big schemes involving large capital outlay. The Araniyar Reserveir project is a case in point.

11,200 acres (5,500 acres under reservoir and 5,700 under anicut) of the potentially fertile but drought stricken Trivellore and Ponneri taluks of Chingleput district will benefit from this project. In 3,600 acres under the reservoir and 1,045 acres under the anicut a second crop can be raised. The additional quantity of foodgrains expected is 4,000 tons per year.

The project consists of the construction of a reservoir across the Araniyar near Pisattur village in Trivellore taluk of Chingleput District, with right and left side channel taking off from it and also a pick-up anicut at Suratpalle (1.1 miles below the reservoir site) with a channel 14 miles long, (8 miles in Trivellore and 6 miles in Ponneri Taluk). In 4 years the project is to be completed but irrigation can start after two or three years.

The factory building of the T.I. Cycles of India has been completed. About 80 per cent, of the machinery ordered has been received and is being erected. The factory is to start production by the end of this month and the target is 2,500 cycles a week of 5 days. In the initial stages, the factory hopes to produce 100 frames and 100 pairs of wheels each day. In contrast, the factory put up at Sonpet, 20 miles from Delhi, seems to be doing well if the reports are correct. For they are expected to produce 20,000 cycles starting this month. The target is 1 lakh a year. A Japanese mission recently visited S. India to study the possibilities of the cycle industry.

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The Guntur Town Congress Committee has been dissolved, a majority of the members having decided to join the Praja Party.