

Weekly Notes

The Madras Precedent

THE precedent that is being set up in Madras in ministry making may contribute to stability but will not reassure those who feel that this was not the aim or purpose which the farmers of the Constitution had primarily in mind. Stability for the ruling party at the cost of fairness or the rights of other parties to form a government, even if an unstable one, when circumstances gave them an opportunity to do so, may indeed hinder rather than help democracy.

The continuation albeit as a transitional arrangement of a Government which had failed to secure the support of the voters was itself opposed to the tenets of popular government, even though it may not have been unconstitutional according to the letter of the law.

It is true that the head of the State is allowed a measure of discretion and enjoys a latitude in the sense that the correctness of his decisions is left to be judged by results. But in the interval between the declaration of election results and the formation of a government the situation must necessarily remain fluid, and the time taken by him to come to a decision can itself become a factor determining the shape of the government.

Where party alignments are elastic and majorities are a matter of guesswork, days and even hours matter; changing fortunes of parties and speculations about such changes affect party loyalties and affiliations from day to day, if not from hour to hour. Absence of precedence makes the task of the consti-

tutional head doubly difficult in such a fluid situation; but it follows as a corollary that his responsibility is also correspondingly heavy. He cannot afford to give an impression of abetting party alignments.

The manner in which Rajaji was manoeuvred, or manoeuvred himself, into the position of leadership in a legislature in which only a few hours before his name had not even been suggested for membership, goes to show how much a matter of touch and go has the formation of a ministry in Madras. Where independents are amenable to pressures and parties themselves are amorphous, the constitutional head can exercise an influence which is out of all proportion to the function that is delegated to him under the Constitution. There is nothing which directs him to maintain the *status quo*, and to show himself as striving towards that end is to strengthen doubts about the fairness of his decisions.

Indo-Pakistan Land Frontier Trade

PAKISTAN'S exports to India across the land frontiers during the calendar year 1951 stood at Rs 5108 crores, while imports from India amounted to Rs 13.76 crores, resulting in a balance of Rs 37.32 crores in favour of Pakistan, according to the Central Statistical Office, Karachi.

The main item of export from Pakistan was raw jute which accounted for 87.7 per cent of the total land borne trade with India. The quantity of jute exported to India was 446,000 tons valued at Rs 44.81 crores. Other exports of importance were fruits and vegetables, and fish valued at Rs 1.03 crores and Rs 92 lakhs respectively.

Miscellaneous exports from Pakistan by land consisted of rice valued at Rs 82.73 lakhs, wheat Rs 39.64 lakhs, cotton seed Rs 66.34 lakhs, hides and skins Rs 52.48 lakhs, betelnuts Rs 43.56 lakhs, oilcakes Rs 39.32 lakhs, chillies Rs 16.22 lakhs, drugs and medicines Rs 12.64 lakhs.

The main items of import from India were bidis, fruit and vegetables, spices and vegetable oils, valued at Rs 1.93, Rs 1.87, Rs 1.50 and Rs 1.20 crores respectively.

Other major imports during the year consisted of raw tobacco, coal and coke, cotton piecegoods, drugs and medicines, provisions, manufac-

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