Agriculture on the one hand, and the newly formed Ministry of Community Projects and National Extension Services on the other, agricultural extension being the vital means of attaining this objective. By making the Minister of Food and Agriculture represent the latter ministry in the Cabinet, unity of policy has been largely assured.

The announcement this week of the separation of the Ministries of Food and Agriculture, as in the past may be unwelcome in that it takes us back to the days when food problem was acute and needed a separate set-up for its proper handling. But it does not presage any weakening of the administration of food and agriculture, as the same Minister continues to be in charge of both Ministries in the Cabinet and there is thus no division and, therefore, weakening of responsibility. On the contrary it is a case of strengthening by subdivision and enabling food to be concentrated and will have the advantage of having a Secretary devoting his undivided attention to food alone.

The explanation of the apparent divergence in the developments relating to commerce and industry on the one hand and food and agriculture on the other have unfortunately to be sought in the present uneasy balance of power within the Cabinet. No one pretends that the Prime Minister is the primus inter pares or that, any of the ministers in the Cabinet are there in their own rights, to say by virtue of their standing in the party or on the strength of their following in Parliament. The shifts in the Cabinet and transfer of portfolios, therefore, follow no principles at all. The present shifts, however, are particularly unfortunate in that they leave Commerce and Industry very poorly represented in the Cabinet to which may be traced, for example, much of the confusion and lack of consistency in the textile policy of the Government. One can see an attempt at working out a policy in food, but none at all in cloth. The unexpected shifts in the latter, moreover, spell dissipation of resources which need to be carefully preserved and directed to the fulfilment of Plan objectives.

Two-Nation Theory

TWO questions arise out of the Pakistan National Assembly's decision to introduce joint electorates in Eastern Pakistan but to hold elections in Western Pakistan on the basis of separate electorates. This dual basis of elections for the two wings of Pakistan has, for the moment, avoided political crisis in that State. But the implications of the decision need to be appreciated. In defending the system of joint electorates, Mr Suhrawardy emphasised the sinister consequences of the system of separate electorates. Such a system of electorates can only be based on the two-nation theory. Mr Suhrawardy had the wisdom to warn the Assembly of the dangers of such a conception. Insistence on a system of separate electorates may, in the long run, force the exodus of four and a half crores of Muslims from India. Rightly, though belatedly, Pakistan's Premier publicly confessed that such an exodus, as a logical sequel to the Pakistani insistence on the two-nation theory, can only drive Pakistan into the seas. This aspect of the two-nation theory is not widely realised either in Karachi or in the capitals of some Western countries.

By accepting a compromise formula, Mr Suhrawardy has been able to secure the support of the Republican Party. But Dr Khan Saheb's recent announcement that the Republican Party is committed to a system of separate electorates poses certain significant problems. To carry Mr Suhrawardy's arguments to their logical conclusion, the two different systems of electorates for the two wings can only lead to the eventual emergence of two nations in Pakistan. Spokesmen of the Muslim League have emphasised this aspect of the Assembly's compromise decision. They have stressed that they will continue to agitate for a system of separate electorates in Eastern Pakistan also.

In his speech before the Assembly, Mr Suhrawardy was in a confessional mood. There are, Mr Suhrawardy admits, political, economic and administrative discriminations against the minority community in Pakistan. Insistence on separate electorates by all the major political parties, with the exception of the Awami League, is a visible reflection of the inferior status of minorities in that State. That is why, the migration of Hindus from Eastern Pakistan continues. One hopes that Mr Suhrawardy's emphatic assurances will minimise the outflow of Hindus from Eastern Pakistan.