

Report on India-China Border

Subhash Chandra Sarker

A cursory glance through the 567-page volume containing the reports of the Indian and Chinese officials which has been released by the Ministry of External Affairs is enough to convince even the most optimistic souls of the extreme intractability of the problem that has arisen in the form of a dispute between India and China over the boundary between the two countries. The two teams of officials had met in accordance with the joint communique issued from New Delhi on April 25, 1960 by the Prime Ministers of India and China. The terms of reference laid down by the joint communique were, inter alia, that the officials of the two Governments would "meet and examine, check and study all historical documents, records, accounts, maps and other material relevant to the boundary question, on which each side relied in support of its stand and draw up a report for submission to the two Governments." If the intention behind setting up the joint examination had been to promote agreement (there could hardly be any other justifiable purpose for that), this has certainly not been fulfilled, by judging from the contents of the Report which is before us.* In reality there is not one but two reports—one drafted by the Indian officials and the other by the Chinese officials—contradicting each other on all the important and material points. The reports undoubtedly bear testimony to the diligence and perseverance, of the officials to uphold the stand of their respective Governments. This constitutes both the strength and weakness, the usefulness and the deficiency of the volume under consideration.

The very nature of the assignment to a considerable degree predetermined the outcome; it tended to rule out an agreed report. Officials in general are not expected to publicly arraign their own Governments—with the formulation of whose policies they are often closely associated.

*Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India) *Report of the Officials of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question*, New Delhi, February 1961. Pp 12 + 342+ 213 Rs 3.00

On the other hand conduct of government would become impossible if officials went about denouncing the Government in public. After the sharp and protracted series of exchanges between the Governments of India and China on the boundary question denoting their inflexible and contradictory standpoints, it hardly would appeal to reason to expect that the officials of the two countries would be able to produce an agreed draft which was more likely than not to involve giving up the claims of one of the parties. It is to be remembered that the officials were asked to determine facts. It is not quite charitable to suppose that the Governments had been arguing without having first ascertained the facts from their respective officials. But facts of a situation over a period of time could not be so contradictory as the statements of the Governments of India and China were, without either being wrong. The prospects did not become any brighter when on both the sides, it was the same groups of officials, who had been assisting their Governments in forming their opinions, were called upon to take up that reexamination.

Too Much of Mutual Distrust

It is making too heavy a demand on their capacity for self-criticism to expect them to recant before an international audience. Not that the position would have been very much better, had a different set of personnel been selected, unless there was a corresponding change in the procedure followed. The boldness and dispassionate spirit with which officials can work in the secrecy of their own ministerial archives is difficult to maintain when they have to deal with a contentious subject under the challenging gaze of a foreign Government. Inevitably a spirit of contest and self-righteousness clouds the atmosphere, which militates against any effort at an objective assessment. On the other hand if the Governments so desired, they could have asked their officials to re-evaluate their materials and apprise them of the outcome of such re-assessment. The note thus prepared could then have been exchanged and examined by each other and perhaps at that stage, a joint sifting of the

officials of the two Governments could have been held to a greater advantage.

That such a procedure was not followed has proved particularly unfortunate. The reports that have come out are not such as could provide the basis for further discussions. The utterly unaccommodating and belligerent spirit in which the officials approached their task was reflected in the protracted controversy over the points that should form the agenda of discussions. Even on this procedural matter, two separate reports have been produced. The extreme rigidity in the Chinese stand found expression even in the statements leading to the adoption of the agenda as summarised by the Chinese. The Chinese officials object that "It is the Indian side) advocated the discussion of only one question, namely where does the Sino-Indian boundary lie." This stand, according to the Chinese, was not justified. If the Chinese were unwilling to fix the agenda in such unexceptionably precise terms, one wonders why did they ever agree to a joint meeting of officials at all. Did the dispute not relate precisely to the exact location of the boundary line? Even when the wranglings over the points to be discussed were overcome, there arose a difference as to how they were to be discussed. The Indian side wanted that all evidence under all the three heads—(Basis in Treaties and Agreements; Basis in Traditions and Customs; and Basis in Administration and Jurisdiction—should be completed for one sector (the boundary was divided into three sectors—Western, Middle and Eastern) before proceeding to the consideration of another sector. To this, also, the Chinese objected.

This much from the long, long list of differences has an important bearing on the outcome of the joint parleys. There was too much of mutual distrust between the two sides to enable them to come to any agreement, even if they had sincerely wanted to, though there is room for doubt even on this point. One cannot pronounce a judgment on such contradictory evidence, particularly when one happens to be a

party to the dispute. Yet even the most dispassionate commentator would also find it a little difficult to understand the Chinese insistence on claiming on the one hand that the boundary between India and China had never been delimited and maintaining, on the other, almost at the same breath that whatever the Chinese were saying was the truth and nothing but the truth and that here could be no doubt about the Chinese alignments. According to the report of the Chinese officials. "The Chinese side pointed out that the unfortunate incidents and other unfortunate happenings which occurred in the past along the border could not be explained away by the lack of precise knowledge about the Chinese alignment by the Indian personnel." (p. CR-6) Again, according to them, "the occurrence of the border clashes or friction was mainly caused by the intentional pressing forward by armed Indian personnel in an attempt to change the *status quo* of the boundary." (*Ibid*) In other words, the Chinese did not care much for delimitation: Whether delimited or not the boundary as claimed by the Chinese must by definition be the right one. That was the gist of the Chinese stand.

Defects in Maps

These impudent assertions about Indian aggressiveness can hardly be reconciled with the utter reluctance with which the Chinese had proceeded to discuss the alignments of the boundary. Apart from being impudent, the Chinese had resorted to practices which are hardly to be commended. The Indian officials' report mentions that in some cases "the translation and examination of the photostats supplied by the Chinese side showed that the passages cited by the Chinese in their statement and said to be taken from specified documents actually were not to be found in the full texts contained in the photostats" (p. 260). As has been pointed out by the Indian officials, the Chinese have themselves recognised the defects of their own maps — formally in the case of the border between China and Burma. The formal delimitation of the China-Burma boundary in a recent treaty amounted to an unqualified admission that an area of about 25,000 square miles of Burmese territory had been earlier incorrectly shown in the official Chinese maps as parts of China.

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The most shocking disclosure of Chinese bad faith was their reluctance to discuss questions pertaining to the boundary of Kashmir State of India west of the Karakoram Pass and to the northern boundaries of Sikkim and Bhutan. The Chinese officials brazenly aver, "the western sector of the Sino-Indian boundary *as mutually understood by the two sides* starts from the Karakoram Pass eastwards." (Italics added. See page 11 of the first section of the report which has three sets of pagination). To foist such "mutual understanding" on India against the categorical assertion of India's sovereignty over these areas is another Chinese trickery. According to them, "in view of the present actual situation in Kashmir, it was also inappropriate for the two sides — China and India — to discuss the boundary west of the Karakoram Pass between China's Sinkiang and Kashmir." That has not, however, precluded China from starting negotiations with Pakistan, although the Soviet Union, China's proclaimed leader of the Socialist camp, has officially recognised that the entire area of Kashmir including the portion lying west of Karakoram Pass belongs to India. With the Chinese taking such an antagonistic attitude, there was little scope for agreement.

The submission or the publication of the report of the officials is no step forward in the direction of a resolution of the conflict. The secretive character of the regime in China does not allow much information to come out of that country, particularly when the Government is apprehensive of the repercussions of such disclosure on ideological or political grounds. Some observers had noted a lack of emphasis in the Chinese domestic propaganda on the border dispute. Yet later reports definitely indicate a change, and an activation of anti-Indian propaganda, both at home and abroad. Apparently, a turn in the tide of public opinion elsewhere has shaken the self-confidence which the Chinese had had by virtue of their physical occupation of—much of the territories concerned. This sudden activation of the propaganda campaign against India may also imply a realization by the Chinese of the weakness of their stand.

Confidence Demonstrated

In the past, it was always the Indians who had protested against wrong Chinese maps with the Chinese Communists replying that they had been following old Kuomintang maps which they had no opportunity to revise. Never for once had the Chinese Communists considered

it necessary to protest against any Indian map official or otherwise. Nor was it until late 1959 that the Chinese Government had stated that it viewed the entire length of the India-China boundary as undefined. By taking the initiative in bringing out the reports of the two teams of officials, the Government of India has at least demonstrated its confidence in the correctness of its own stand.

L I C Business in 1960

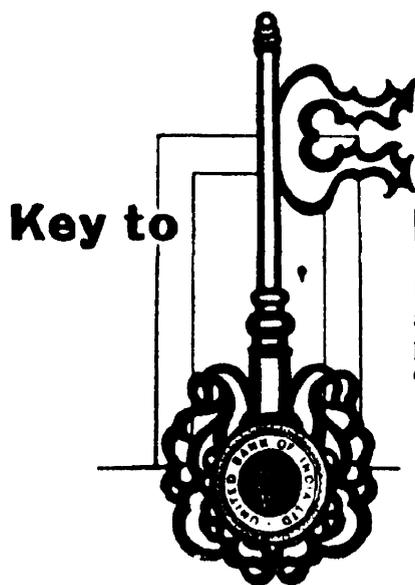
THE total amount of business completed by the Life Insurance Corporation during the calendar year 1960 is provisionally estimated at Rs 111.12 crores.

Zone-wise figures are :

Northern Zone	Rs	62.40	crores
Central Zone	RS	57.27	crores
Eastern Zone	Rs	86.86	crores
Southern Zone	Rs	107.41	crores
Western Zone	Rs	97.18	crores

The total amount of business completed in foreign countries amounted to Rs 7.96 crores during 1960.

The Finance Minister, Shri Morarji Desai, gave these figures in the Lok Sabha. The final figures of completed business during 1960 will be available by the end of this month.



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Bulsar Chemical Plant

A CONTRACT worth about £1,30,000 for the design and construction of a chemical plant in India has been placed with Humphrey & (Glasgow Ltd of London, a firm of international contracting engineers. The plant is to be built at Bulsar, 120 miles from Bombay, as an extension to the existing che-

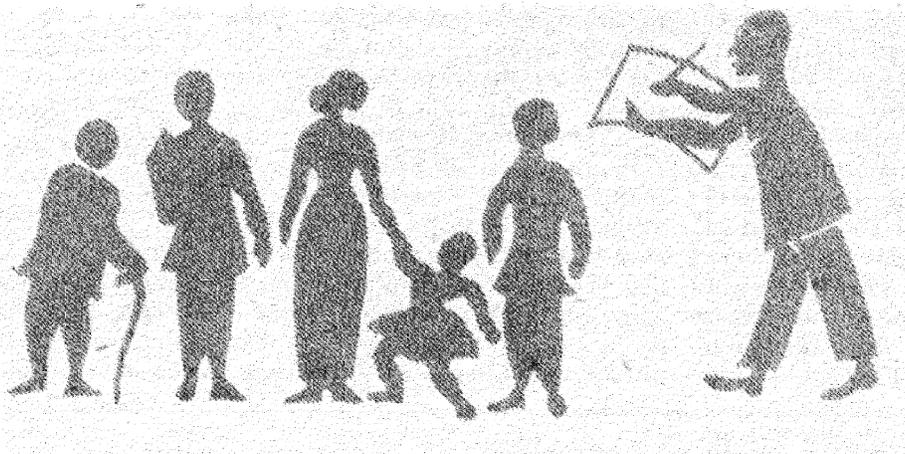
mical works of the Indian company, Amul Products Ltd.

British technicians will supervise the erection of the factory and British experts will come to India to supervise the initial operations, remaining on to train Indian staff. Nearly 50 per cent of the equipment and material for the factory is expected to be Indian-made. The

remainder will be supplied from Britain. Design work is now in progress, and it is expected the factory will be operating in 1963. It will produce chemical products based on naphthalene for use in the preparation of dyestuffs. The manufacturing programme includes a range of 24 different products but these can be extended to meet other demands.

CENSUS 1961

10 February—5 March



Between these dates every person will be counted in our country, in cities or in the remote villages, in the hills or in forests, at sea or on shore.

The counting will start on 10 February and end at sunrise on 1 March. To make doubly sure that every one has been included in the Census, there will be a revisional count between 1 and 5 March. Make sure that the entire family is counted, from the oldest to the youngest.

The enumerator has a heavy responsibility. Please help him in his task.

All census information will be strictly confidential and fully protected.

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