

A BLACK DAY

June 2, 1964, will go down in India's history as a black day. For the seventeenth time in fourteen years, the Constitution was amended on that day. It represented a retreat of seventeen steps away from the human values and fundamental rights guaranteed to the people of India, the taking of seventeen steps nearer a totalitarian society.

Greatly embarrassed and frustrated when the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill failed to obtain the sanction of Parliament when it was introduced during the tag-end of the last Budget Session, the Congress Government contrived to convene, at considerable expense to the exchequer, a special session of Parliament on May 27 with the specific purpose of obtaining Parliament's rubber-stamp to a hated, obnoxious and perverse measure. To prevent a repetition of what Mr. Masani described in his speech as a 'dragging of feet' by Congressmen, a three-line whip was issued to members of that Party to be present and vote for that Bill.

The Session was preceded by the observance of Kisan Day on Sunday, May 24, on which the opposition of the peasants to this measure was expressed all over the country.

The result of the Parliamentary debate was a foregone conclusion and any hopes entertained that, in the context of the Prime Minister's passing away, the matter would be kept pending till a new Government had taken over, were belied when the caretaker administration persisted in ramming the Bill through Parliament.

The prospects of the brute majority assenting to the Bill did not deter Swatantra members in both Houses of Parliament from fighting the Bill every inch of the way. No sooner was it introduced in the Lok Sabha on May 27 than the Party's Leader in the House, Prof. N. G. Ranga, made a statement opposing the introduction of the Bill. He described it as 'unconstitutional, immoral and illegal.' Maintaining that it was destructive of the fundamental rights of the people and derogatory to the dignity and status of the Supreme Court, Prof. Ranga said that the Bill should be referred to eminent jurists at home and abroad to find out whether it was in conformity with democratic practice. He demanded that there should be a free vote. This demand, of course, was not found acceptable. Thereupon, to record the Party's fundamental objection to the Bill, members

of our Group, after dividing the House on the motion to admit the Bill, walked out of the House in protest.

At the resumed discussion on June 1, on the motion for consideration, the Swatantra Group moved an amendment seeking to circulate the Bill for eliciting public opinion.

Speaking during the debate, Mr. Masani, attacking the Bill as an immoral measure, said that the Swatantra Party would stand by the peasants in resisting it.

He said that the motive of the Bill was to deprive small landholders of their possessions and drive them into cooperative or collective farming. The Government had failed to induce farmers to take to joint cooperative farming voluntarily. Now it could threaten the small landowner that his land would be acquired without payment of compensation at market rates if he did not join a cooperative and thereby compel him to take to a course which he did not like.

Mr. Masani said that it was a measure 'which only Communists can support and is not becoming of a democracy like India.' The small landowner was the backbone of a free society and if he was deprived of his possession the country would be converted into a totalitarian State, he said.

The Bill had failed to get through in the last session because of the 'dragging of feet' by Congressmen. "I do not know whether this dragging of feet was conscious or came from the subconscious antagonism of Congressmen to the measure," he said.

The Government by bringing the Bill again was trying to restore the damaged prestige of those in the Congress who had failed to muster sufficient support. And this was being done at the cost of the public exchequer.

Mr. Masani said that the Bill was "inauspicious" and he had hoped that, after it fell through last time, the Government would sense the mood of the country and not bring it forward again. Mr. Masani questioned the competence of the Lok Sabha as now constituted to adopt the Amendment without a mandate from the electorate. He also characterised it as a breach of faith with Parliament and people violating as it did a solemn assurance given on June 1, 1951, by the then Law Minister, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Dr. B. N. Singh in his speech argued that the

measure would have a disastrous impact on the peasants, who constituted an overwhelming majority of the population. The Bill would pave the way for "collectivisation" of land which had failed in China.

Private property, he said, had become a "red rag" to the Congress, blinded by its faith in socialism. Such measures would only result in the ruling party signing its "death warrant". Dr. Singh said it was possible that the peasants of India, like those of France and America, would rise in revolt and assert their rights which the Bill sought to crush.

The following day the Bill was adopted by the Lok Sabha.

The Swatantra Group divided the House on all clauses of the Bill and the final voting figures were 381 for and 27 against.

During the third reading, Prof. Ranga said that June 2 would go down in history as the "blackest" day in the constitutional career of Parliament and the country. He was highly critical of the "cavalier" manner in which the ruling party had been proceeding with this legislation.

He said the Bill was a backdoor method to introduce cooperative and collective farming. The Government was arming itself with "arbitrary" powers to deprive the peasants of their agricultural property. The word "estate" was also sought to be given an arbitrary definition. Having "miserably" failed to introduce cooperative farming, the Government now wanted to "coerce" the peasant to accept this policy.

The Bill was also an indirect attack on the Supreme Court and the Constitution. "If you destroy and paralyse the Supreme Court, you will be destroying the Constitution," he said.

Prof. Ranga assailed the Government for not having reclaimed and distributed millions of acres of waste land among the landless.

Apart from Swatantra opposition, Acharya Kripalani and Dr. L. M. Singhvi, independent members, also opposed the Bill and spoke against its adoption.

With the same unseemly haste, the Bill was sent up to the Rajya Sabha for its consideration and approval and once again Swatantra M.P.s in that House fought it. Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, Leader of the Group in the Rajya Sabha said that it struck at the very root of democratic Government, unless of course we consider the Soviet Government as democratic.

Mr. Patel also took objection to the issue of Party whip for voting on an important constitutional amendment.

The Swatantra spokesman said the Bill set at naught the Congress assurance that the ryots would have the right to hold and acquire property.

It also took away, under the pretext of reforms, the normal protection given to the villager.

It was mainly because of "this sense of uncertainty" in the minds of peasants that agricultural production was showing a gradual decrease.

If the real object of the Bill was introduction of collective farming, then it would in no way help

increased production as had been proved in Russia where 50 years of collective farming had proved a failure.

Prof. Ruthnaswamy, the Party's Deputy Leader in the House, described peasant proprietors as "Defenders of political liberty" and charged the Government with "eroding" the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

Within less than twenty-four hours after it had been introduced in the Upper House, the Amendment was adopted.

On June 3, the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of the Party's groups in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha waited in deputation on the President requesting that the President should not give his assent to the measure.

The Party will shortly put out a publication on the 17th Amendment and the efforts made by the Party to resist its enactment both within the House and outside.

SWATANTRA TRIBUTE TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Rajaji, and other leaders of the Party have joined in paying tributes to the late Prime Minister.

A combined meeting of the Bombay and Maharashtra Units' Executives adopted a resolution of condolence.

In Mysore, the General Secretary of our State Unit participated in an all-Party meeting and expressed his sense of grief.

We give below some extracts:

Rajaji

"Eleven years younger than me, eleven times more important for the nation, and eleven hundred times more beloved of the nation, Shri Nehru has suddenly departed from our midst and I remain alive to hear the sad news from Delhi — and bear the shock...."

The old guard-room is completely empty now.

I am unable yet to gather my wits. I have been fighting Shri Nehru all these ten years over what I consider faults in public policies. But I knew all along that he alone could get them corrected. No one else would dare do it, and he is gone, leaving me weaker than before in my fight. But fighting apart, a beloved friend is gone, the most civilised person among us all. Not many among us are civilised yet. God save our people."

(Statement made on May 27, 1964)

Prof. N. G. Ranga

"The passing away of Mr. Nehru is a loss that the whole nation mourns together. His passing away marks the end of an era and the beginning of another. Though many of his policies proved to be controver-

sial, he made it possible for democratic processes to be maintained. Let us carry on that tradition."
(In a statement on May 28, 1964)

Mr. K. M. Munshi

"He shaped every aspect of our national life, particularly political and economic, ushering an era of modernity. Though he wielded power greater than that of any dictator, he never forswore democratic principles, nor did he abandon the humanistic outlook, whatever the provocations."

(At a condolence meeting of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on May 29).

Mr. M. R. Masani

"At a time like this, one's mind turns away from the controversies of recent years to earlier memories of warm friendship and comradeship in a common cause way back in the thirties. It is particularly sad that Jawaharlal Nehru should have been taken away just when he was about to engage in a move to restore amity and friendship between the peoples of our sub-continent."

(In a statement on May 28, 1964)

Sir H. P. Mody

"Mr. Nehru was a dictator who was essentially a democrat who ruled not through force but by ruling the minds of the people."

(At an all-Party meeting in Bombay on May 29, 1964)

THE NEW PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

The *Hindu* of June 3 carries a report of Rajaji's comments on the election of Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri as Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, in the course of which Rajaji says:

"...it is the concern of the Congress Party. I am bothered only about the fact the Congress Party is ruling and not about who that party puts up as Prime Minister.... Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri will be a good Premier only to the extent that he develops and maintains respect for Opposition parties as well as his own and independent opinion, and controls his Congress brethren guiding them so as not to allow the oligarchic mentality to grow among them. What has happened over the Seventeenth Amendment (miscalled the Nineteenth) makes me fear that we have little reason to hope for wisdom or humility or healthy elasticity in the new Government. But things may yet happen."

The *Indian Express*, also of June 3, reported Rajaji further: "It remained to be seen whether the new Prime Minister and the new Cabinet would have the

courage to effect changes when found necessary. If the new Cabinet hoped that all policies of Nehru were good, it would create difficulties. Loyalty to Nehru did not mean persisting in his policies blindly."

Addressing a public meeting in Bangalore on June 9 on the subject "The End of an Epoch" Mr. M. R. Masani observed that it was particularly sad that the Prime Minister should have been removed from the scene just as he was about to engage in a major effort at achieving amity between India and Pakistan. The hopes of millions throughout the sub-continent had been aroused by the announcement that Prime Minister Nehru and Ayub Khan were to meet in the third week of June. These hopes should not be allowed to die. He welcomed the recent statements by President Ayub and Lal Bahadur Shastri and hoped that the two would pick up the thread that had fallen from Mr. Nehru's hands.

Among the changes that might be expected to unfold in the months and years to come, Mr. Masani mentioned the following: (1) Federalism would function better and States Rights would come into their own. These trends would be strengthened if in 1967 the Congress Party's monopoly over State Governments was broken. (2) There might be greater realism in our international policies. The Age of Innocence had come to an end with the collapse of Panchsheela. Greater attention was likely to be paid to our relations with our neighbours in South and Southeast Asia. (3) Sounder economic priorities were likely to gain favour and agriculture would receive the attention due to it in place of an obsession with heavy industry. The next year's Budget would give an indication as to how far such a trend may be expected to mature. (4) The Cabinet system of Government, where there was joint responsibility and the Prime Minister was *primus inter pares*, would have a better opportunity to function. (5) A period of political realignments was ahead of the country and a better political balance was likely to emerge.

These changes, observed Mr. Masani, could not be expected to take place automatically. These trends have to be fostered and strengthened. This was both an opportunity and a challenge to the Swatantra Party.

PARLIAMENTARY BOARD MEETS

The decision to convene a special session of Parliament from May 27 to June 5 necessitated an urgent meeting of the Party's Parliamentary Board which met in Madras on Saturday and Sunday, May 16 and 17. The major item of discussion was the Constitution (19th Amendment) Bill to adopt which Parliament had been specially convened. The Parliamentary Board gave guidance to members of our Party in Parliament urging upon them to continue to resist tooth and nail this perverse measure.

The Board also considered the stand members of

our Party in Parliament should take if during the special session a discussion on Kashmir arose. Arising out of its deliberations, a resolution on India-Pakistan relations was adopted unanimously (See Annexure A).

Commenting on the Parliamentary Board's resolution on Indo-Pakistan relations *Mysindia* of May 24 observed: 'It was courageous of the Swatantra Party Parliamentary Board to pass the resolution which it published on Monday from Madras. It will probably lose the party many votes — it is reported that some of Mr. Masani's electors are demanding his resignation. But the Board was right to ignore popularity and make a pronouncement which may perhaps strengthen those in Delhi who are working for a settlement of the dispute.'

Another resolution on the problem of refugees from East Pakistan was also adopted unanimously (Annexure B).

SWATANTRA FORUM

The Swatantra Forum made its debut in Calcutta at a well-attended and splendidly organised meeting in Calcutta on May 2. The speaker was Mr. Masani, the subject — 'Time for a Change'. It is estimated that over a thousand people jam packed the Hall. A report received from the Convenor of the Forum, Mr.

Cushrow Irani mentions that the meeting was a great success and the speech was well received.

Special Swatantra enamelled badges were made and sold in advance to finance the meeting. Lady volunteers put in a lot of hard work selling copies of Party literature for a total of Rs. 136.45 at the meeting. The booklet entitled *Budget & You* put out by the Central Office was sold out at the meeting. Over 150 copies of the Party's *Statement of Policy* were distributed to people who asked for them. Six notebooks were placed in different parts of the Hall in charge of volunteers so that whoever was interested in contacting the sponsors of the Forum could do so by writing down their names and addresses.

On May 3, Mr. Masani declared open the office of the Forum at 21 A, Canning Street.

An unprecedented gathering was present at a meeting of the Calcutta Rotary Club addressed by Mr. Masani. He spoke on the Budget.

A dinner organised by Mr. R. P. Patodia, a prominent member of our Party in the City, was eminently successful.

Mr. Irani writes: "Mr. Masani's visit has given the Swatantra Forum great encouragement and support and from our point of view his visit was a success. We are now engaged in consolidating all the progress made during his visit."

NEWS FROM STATE PARTIES

Since the Bangalore Convention there have been signs of a trend towards purposive functioning of the Party in certain States. To encourage such trends and to give guidance in regard to effective organisation, the General Secretary participated in meetings of the Executive Committee of Rajasthan in Jaipur on April 6, of the Orissa Executive in Bhubaneswar on May 4, of the U.P. Executive in Lucknow on May 31, of the Mysore Executive in Bangalore on June 10, and of the Gujarat Executive in Ahmedabad on April 1 and again at Vallabh Vidyanagar on May 26.

The discussions at these meetings, in which the General Secretary participated, have been helpful in engendering greater confidence among Party workers as a result of a plan of work at Constituency level being made the basis of Party activity in the months to come.

State Units throughout the country observed Kisan Day on May 24 to record opposition to the 17th Amendment. A resume of the volume of protest will be found in Annexure C.

ANDHRA

Eluru was the venue of the second Convention of the Andhra Unit of our Party on May 4. A resolution opposing the concept of democratic socialism as propagated by the Bhubaneswar Session of the Congress was unanimously adopted. The resolution said: "The convention carefully examined the gradual deterioration in the policies of the Congress Party from cooperative commonwealth to the aim of Socialist pattern of society at Avadi and to democratic socialism at Bhubaneswar. The Swatantra Party feels that the Congress is perversely persisting in policies that have proved a failure. This Convention is of the opinion that democratic socialism is nothing but a deceptive slogan which leads to the dictatorship of the ruling party. Democracy and

socialism cannot accommodate and flourish together. Democratic socialism is not a reality but only a convenient slogan for establishing State monopoly of the entire national economy which invariably leads to the dictatorship of the ruling party. Therefore, this convention warns the people to be alert and vigilant to the dangerous implications of democratic socialism and requests them to reject the plans of the Congress."

In a reference to planning the Convention pointed out that the Party was not opposed to planning as such but felt that the present approach needed to be replaced by the following:

A proper order of priorities starting with increase in production and the provision of elementary necessities.

A reallocation of the role of State and free enter-

prise so that the State may perform its proper functions.

The incentive of legitimate gain under conditions of competition among the producers.

Reducing to a minimum Governmental contracts and regulations to foster economic expansion and minimising corruption.

Prof. Ranga inaugurated the convention, which was presided over by Mr. G. K. Sundaram, Vice President of the Tamilnad Unit.

Rajaji, who was present, also spoke to the delegates. He affirmed that he would live to see the defeat of the Congress. He attacked the Congress government for renewing the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill.

Among others who spoke were Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddi, Vice President of the Andhra Unit, and Mr. K. Bappaiah, Chairman of the Reception Committee.

BOMBAY

Group meetings of the Party were held between 1st and 8th May at Santa Cruz, Dadar, Kalbadevi and Malad which were addressed by the Unit's General Secretary, Mr. Madhu Mehta. Apart from discussing problems of Party organisation, Mr. Mehta explained the Party's stand vis-a-vis the forthcoming Municipal elections.

The Colaba Unit organised a symposium on May 15 under the chairmanship of Mr. R. V. Murthy on 'Civic Affairs'.

DELHI

A meeting of the Swatantra Club was held on 4th May in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Mrs. Rekhi. Shri Dahyabhai V. Patel, M. P. spoke on "The Present Problems in India".

Shri Dahyabhai Patel strongly criticised the Kashmir Policy of the Congress Government. Our Government he said, was responsible for the Kashmir muddle.

Mr. Patel said that the Government had failed to deal with the problem of refugees. High prices, inflation and failures of Central Government projects could not be dealt with by administering additional doses of deficit financing as the Government was doing, he said.

GUJARAT

The Executive Committee of the Gujarat Unit met at Ahmedabad on April 1. The Party's General Secretary, Mr. M. R. Masani, was also present. The meeting surveyed the Party's progress in the State, took note of its present position and chalked out its future course of action.

The President of the State Unit, Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel, toured Banaskantha and met Party workers. He attended a mass meeting at Sarkhej in Daskroi District and went on to Baroda district where the Party's candidate had earlier defeated a former deputy minister in the elections to the Jilla Panchayat. The State President also toured Broach district where again another Party candidate was victorious in the Jilla Panchayat elections. Under the presidentship of Mr. Nagindas Gandhi, a former leader of the opposition in the Gujarat Assembly, Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel addressed a mass meeting at Kapadwanj in Kaira district.

The State Unit reports that in the Gujarat Assembly our MLA's have by and large given a good account of themselves in the recent session. The Party's MLA from Kutch, Mr. Moravia protested against the Government's Annavari (a levy) and when it was not heeded by the Government he went on fast. When the Government as a result of his protest decided to postpone collection of the levy till a rechecking, Mr. Moravia broke his fast.

A Swatantra MLA Mr. Jashbhai Patel has been appointed on a Committee to inquire into leakage of question papers.

Grain merchants in Ahmedabad conferred with the State President on the Government's food licensing order to secure the Party's cooperation in opposing the order.

A drive to enrol workers and members for the Party has begun in right earnest in the State.

The Ahmedabad city unit held a meeting on May 3 under the presidentship of Barrister B. K. Amin. Discussions on how to reactivate Party work in the city took place.

The Bhavnagar district unit of our Party writes of a campaign launched by it demanding the resignation of the Gujarat government for its failure to hold the price line. The campaign includes the collection of 10,000 signatures to a memorandum to be presented to the Government of that State.

Simultaneously members of our Party are cooperating with a movement launched by the popular Gujarati daily, *Jai Hind* to collect signatures for its 'English from Standard V' movement.

The Jasdan Taluka Unit of the Party has presented an annual report of its activities for the period ending May 1. The report claims legitimate pride for the manner in which the people of Jasdan overwhelmingly voted for Mr. Masani during the by-election last May. The report also mentions that the Swatantra Party has a commanding majority on the Committee of the Land Mortgage Bank. The Party's candidates were similarly successful in obtaining a majority in the Jasdan panchayat elections.

RAJASTHAN

The grand old man of our Party in Nagaur district, Shri Bulaki Das Acharya, continues tirelessly to wage

war on Congress misrule in his district. For example, recently in the course of a letter to the General Secretary, he mentions the food grains scarcity in his area and the efforts he made to alleviate distress by writing to the Chief Minister drawing his attention to such conditions. He followed up with a telegram to the Congress MLA who represents Nagaur district in the State Assembly. This is what his telegram said: "Grain Dealers licensing order causing havoc on people dealers not taking license closed their shops

govt. not opening enough shops with adequate stock people groaning under starvation wired chief minister sending copy by post but to no effect solicit your immediate intervention as you represent Nagaur."

Some action was taken, eight food grain shops were opened in Nagaur by Government and, as demanded by him, four kilos of wheat per head are now being distributed to the local population.

Annexure 'A'

Resolution of Parliamentary Board on Relations with Pakistan

The Swatantra Party has always stood for Indo-Pakistan amity and good understanding as essential for the security of the country and for the progress and prosperity of both countries. The General Council of the Swatantra Party at a meeting in December 1959 recorded its opinion that measures for ensuring the country's security and defence should include the settlement of outstanding issues with Pakistan and serious consideration of the offer made by Pakistan for the joint defence of the subcontinent.

2. In March 1960 the National Convention of the Party adopted a resolution reaffirming the desirability of forging bonds of cooperation with neighbouring Asian nations and recorded its disapproval of the unresponsive attitude of the Government to the proposals and approaches of Pakistan.

3. In February 1963, the General Council of the Party recorded and published its opinion that the "Prime Minister should be left free to achieve friendship and understanding with Pakistan on such terms as he thinks fit, so as to enable the defence of the Sub-Continent to be secured against Communist aggression."

4. The Parliamentary Board reiterates this view. It welcomes the release of Sheikh Abdullah who had been kept in prison for many years as an undertrial prisoner on charges which have now been withdrawn as a preliminary to his acquittal. The Parliamentary Board is glad to note that the Prime Minister and Sheikh Abdullah have held long parleys over the Kashmir problem and on India-Pakistan relationship. The Board notes with satisfaction that the Prime Minister has encouraged Sheikh Abdullah to accept President Ayub Khan's invitation to meet him. The solution of the Kashmir problem should be such as to reduce if not end Indo-Pakistan ill-feeling, and such as to promote good understanding and amity between the two countries, and therefore the solution should not be such as to amount to a defeat for the one or the other, while it should provide an honourable status for the people of Kashmir. The Board is glad that Mr. Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah are also of this view.

5. Neither the Party nor any of its members propose, as has been wrongly alleged in some quarters, that Kashmir should be handed over to Pakistan as part of a pact of amity between India and Pakistan. But public opinion in Kashmir today can only be met by a fair and conciliatory attitude. It is common ground that Kashmir cannot be held by compulsion against the wishes of its people.

6. This Board is of the view that, whether the accession of Kashmir to India be considered in the light of the statements made by India's Representatives before the Security Council in February-March 1948 as provisional or, as a result of what has happened later, a completed accession to India, it should not stand in the way of a re-consideration and re-adjustment in order to attain Indo-Pakistan amity, thereby strengthening India's security against foreign aggression and helping the progress and prosperity of both India and Pakistan.

7. No decision in politics, particularly when it relates to matters which involve India's security against foreign aggression, should be deemed final or irrevocable, so as to prevent re-thinking and revision for advancing the welfare and security of the country.

8. The causes of the present state of feeling in Pakistan as well as in India are no doubt mutual mistrust and fear; but these psychological causes produce effects which become causes again for further effects. This process goes on with increasingly vicious force. The circle must be cut at some crucial, effective point, if we are bent on achieving amity as the primary requisite for organising the security and welfare of the Sub-continent. This requires courage, sacrifice and determined resistance to the forces both in Pakistan and India which contribute to the maintenance of ill-will and mutual fear. The Prime Minister and the Congress Party who have contributed not a little, both positively and negatively, to this unfortunate state of things should take full advantage of the present opportunity for reconciliation and not allow any further drift.

Annexure 'B'

Resolution of Parliamentary Board on refugees from East Pakistan

The Parliamentary Board expresses its grief at the horrible and barbarous outbreak of violence against minorities both in East Pakistan and in India. It deplores the continuance of these conditions in East Pakistan, resulting in a continuous stream of refugees

of all minority communities entering India. The Board trusts that every possible step will be taken by our Government to deal with sympathy with these unfortunate and destitute people and to help in their rehabilitation.

Annexure 'C'

Kisan Day

In response to the Party's call, State Units throughout the country observed Sunday, May 24, as Kisan Day to protest against the reintroduction of the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill.

We give below reports received from some of our Units on their observance of the Day.

BOMBAY

A public meeting organised by the Regional Unit adopted a resolution stating that the move to revive the 17th Amendment in the form of the 19th Amendment when the 17th Amendment had failed to secure the requisite majority in the Lok Sabha was a violation of Constitutional propriety and was highly reprehensible.

GUJARAT

A meeting was organised at Anand on the 26th. It was presided over by the Khedut Leader of Anand, Mr. Ambalal Patel, and addressed by State Unit President, Bhailalbhaj Patel. Among others who addressed the meeting were Mr. M. R. Masani, Mr. Mathradas Mehta, Mr. Narendrasinh Mahida and Mr. Dharamsinh Patel.

A public meeting was held at Morvi on the 27th under the Presidentship of Mr. N. B. Mankad, Joint Secretary of the Rajkot District Unit.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Shaktijumarsinh said that instead of promoting Ramrajya, the Government has become despotic and corrupt.

DELHI

Over two thousand posters explaining the fact that a defeated amendment was now being brought again under a different name were displayed by the Party in the city and the surrounding villages of Delhi.

A meeting was held on the 23rd at Palam Village. Col. Pasricha, the President of the Delhi unit, and Mr. A. C. Bisaria, its General Secretary, addressed the gathering.

MADHYA PRADESH

Meetings were held in the villages of Kaluhera, Harigarh, Panbihar and Borkheri and were addressed among others by Mr. Udai Singh, Mr. Bhaironsinghji,

Mr. Ishwar Singh and Mr. Kalyansinghji.

From Indore we have received a leaflet issued by Mr. N. C. Zamindar for distribution on May 24 explaining the evils of the 17th Amendment and giving a brief report of the Kisan Sammelan held in Delhi on March 30.

MADRAS

Party Units in Madras State were very active that day. Addressing a public meeting in Madras City, Rajaji said that if the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was passed by Parliament it would be 'a breach of assurance' given by the Government that the provisions of the Zamindari Abolition Act would not be extended to cover ryotwari landholders. Rajaji added that when Dr. Ambedkar piloted the Zamindari Abolition Act he gave an assurance on behalf of the Government that the provisions of the Act would not be extended to cover ryotwari areas. Criticising the attempt to extend the definition of the word 'estate' to mean every piece of land, small or big, as was being done under the 19th Amendment, Rajaji described the Amendment as legislation by definition which he said was a dangerous process.

Pointing out that under the Constitution, every member of Parliament was free to vote as he liked, he said that it should be considered illegal for a party to exercise coercive methods and issue whips to its members giving directions to vote one way or the other.

Prof. N. G. Ranga and Prof. Ruthnaswamy, who presided, also spoke at this meeting.

The Kumbakonam Constituency Unit in a resolution condemned in strong terms the persistent efforts by Government to extinguish fundamental rights by introducing the 19th Amendment Bill.

The Coimbatore District Agriculturists Conference protested against the introduction of the Bill and unanimously resolved to demand its withdrawal.

From Trichy comes the report of a meeting held under the presidentship of Mr. P. A. Pillai, President of the Town Unit. Among others who spoke at the meeting were Mr. Avadhani, Dr. Kalamegham and Mr. Ramadoss Barathy. A resolution calling upon members of Parliament to refuse to vote on this Amendment was unanimously adopted.

The Tanjore District Peasants Conference meeting

at Nagapattinam similarly adopted a resolution denouncing the move to get this Bill enacted.

The Party Unit in Tenkasi Constituency organised a cycle procession which went round Shencottah with placards and slogans. Meetings were held in other areas of the constituency as well.

MYSORE

Bangalore was the venue of a public meeting under the presidentship of Mr. K. R. Karanth. Mr. D. V. Gundappa was the principal speaker and Mr. V. T. Sreenivasan delivered the welcome speech. Mr. Sreenivasan warned the people of the disastrous effects the Constitution Bill would have if it was enacted. "If people will not heed the warning and continue to be indifferent to their own fate a day will come when it will be too late to break the chains which will hold them as slaves of the State," he said.

In his speech, Mr. D. V. Gundappa speculated on the reasons that led to the defeat of the 17th Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha. He expressed his view that several Congress Members of Parliament, convinced that the Amendment would deal a death blow to peasant proprietorship, had deliberately stayed away at the time of the division. He felt that once the Bill was passed there was every possibility of the Congress Government blackmailing the ryots by exempting their lands from compulsory acquisition in exchange for support at the next General Elections. The whole thing he said was unjust, immoral and not in consonance with the concept of Dharma.

Mr. Karanth, who until recently was a member of the Praja Socialist Party gave reasons for his having resigned from that Party. He said that whether he had been a member of the PSP or not, he had always held the view that the 17th Amendment now called the 19th Amendment would seal the doom of ryotwari landholders in India. While concluding he said, "I have come to the conclusion that our people appear to have lost their capacity to resist misrule and wrong doing on the part of our rulers. They are willing to take anything lying down. That is not the case in England. If anything the least bit out of the way happens or threatens to happen, public opinion expresses itself so forcibly that there is no chance for any harm to occur to the body politic. In other words, nobody in authority, however highly placed, dare transgress the high standards and conventions that govern public life in that country."

A meeting held in the Town Hall of Mysore City

under the presidentship of Mr. V. Lingappaiah strongly denounced the attempt to ram this measure through an emergency session of Parliament.

The ryots of Hassan District in Mysore conducted meetings, organised a signature campaign, went in procession to taluk headquarters and presented protest petitions to their respective tehsildars. A meeting was held in the district headquarters under the chairmanship of Mr. S. V. Pattabhy. Speakers at this meeting included Mr. N. K. Ganapaiah and Mr. Shivappa.

A memorandum was also submitted by the peasants of Hassan District to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

Several meetings were held in Coorg. In his capacity as President of the Party Unit in that district, Mr. G. M. Manjanathya telegraphically communicated the wishes of the people of Coorg to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha that the 19th Amendment Bill be dropped.

ORISSA

A report received from the district unit of our Party in Kalahandi in Orissa mentions that in the Nawapara constituency of the district, over a thousand kisans from various villages assembled and marched in peaceful procession through the main roads of the town. Later converging into a meeting, a resolution opposing the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was unanimously adopted.

RAJASTHAN

The Dungarpur Municipal Board unanimously passed a resolution opposing the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill. A copy of the resolution was forwarded to the Secretary, Lok Sabha.

Five public meetings at Potlam, Sahada, Gangapur, Pur and Banera were held that day. The Vice President of the State Unit, Smt. Gayatri Devi, addressed a meeting in Bhilwara where she explained to the peasants who had gathered the sinister implications of the Bill.

WEST BENGAL

Despite the absence of a State Unit of our Party in West Bengal, we have received information of Party supporters having held public meetings in Burdwan, Birbhum, Malda and West Dinajpur. A resolution endorsing the Party's opposition to the 17th Amendment was adopted at a meeting held in the Araidanga village of Malda district.

(For Private Circulation)