

A POINT OF VIEW MINOO MASANI

154

Planning and the Politician

The failure of the Second and Third Five Year Plans to achieve their target and the economic mess into which the country has been landed by the pattern of planning introduced by Mr Jawaharlal Nehru two decades back have induced a great deal of widespread heart searching on the subject.

The Administrative Reforms Commission set up by the Union Government made a study of this subject and on April 29, 1967, Mr K Hanumanthaiya, Chairman of the Commission, submitted their Report

on the machinery for planning to the Prime Minister. Very briefly, what the Administrative Reform Commission have said in their Report is that the National Planning Commission has come to be dominated by ministers and politicians under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. This, in the view of the Committee, has helped the Planning Commission to become a parallel or super-Government diluting in some measure the responsibility of the Cabinet to Parliament and through Parliament to the people. The Planning Commission has

intruded into the plane of policy which should be reserved for the Parliamentary executive. The Commission also found that the staff of the Planning Commission had grown to monstrous proportions and needs to be pruned drastically.

In the light of these findings, the A.R.C. have made their recommendations. The Planning Commission should henceforth be an advisory body composed of experts. The role of the Planning Commission should be confined from now on to planning and evaluation and it should stop involving itself in decision making and executive functions. In order that this change in the character of the Planning Commission may be made, the A.R.C. has recommended that, while the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister may be closely associated with the work of the Planning Commission, neither of them nor any other minister should be Chairman or member of the Planning Commission.

Considering that Mr Hanumanthaiya, the Chairman of the A.R.C., is the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha, one would have thought that these proposals of the A.R.C. would be given effect to with alacrity.

For myself and my colleagues who have, since 1962, been advocating the dissolution of the Planning Commission and its replacement by an expert advisory body, the recommendations of the A.R.C. constitute a vindication of our repudiation of the Soviet pattern of planning which Mr Jawaharlal Nehru had imposed on this country.

When, however, the Prime Minister made a statement in Parliament on 17th July on the subject, there was consternation when it was found that even these modest and constructive proposals made by their own nominees had been turned down by the Congress Cabinet in New Delhi. While paying lip-sympathy to the emphasis placed by the A.R.C. on the advisory functions of the Planning Commission, Government flatly turned down the crucial proposal that neither the Prime Minister nor the Finance Minister nor any other politician in office should be a member of the Commission. On the contrary, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister announced their intention of dominating the Commission and its work by continuing to be Chairman and member respectively, and held out the further threat that, though other Union Cabinet ministers would not be formally associated as members, the Prime Minister would, whenever she thought it necessary, invite them to participate in the deliberations of the Planning Commission.

The basic significance of this rejection of the A.R.C. recommendations is that the politicians in office

refuse to allow the process of planning to escape from their clutches and to be pursued on scientific, economic and non-partisan lines. It is precisely this domination of half-baked Marxists in the process of planning that has made it the object of derision that it has increasingly become in our country. It would seem from this that the Bourbons of the Congress Party have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing as a result of their resounding defeat in the recent General Elections.

In a federal country such as ours, planning affects the working of the State Governments as much as it does that at the Centre. The attempt to monopolise the planning mechanism by the Union Government is against the spirit of the Constitution. The amusing thing is that, in order to meet this object, the Prime Minister has thought it fit to invite the only Communist Chief Minister in India, Mr. E. M. S. Namboodripad, to join the Planning Commission as a part-time member. The Leader of the Left Communist Party, which in any other democracy would have been outlawed long ago, has condescended to say that he will consider the offer and give his answer in due course! At almost the same time, the nomination of another Communist, Mr. Mohan Kumaramangalam, has been announced as a member of the Committee appointed by the Union Government to investigate into the licensing system.

From all this it is clear that the ruinous pattern of planning and economic policy from which this country has suffered for two decades will continue with an even greater emphasis in the statist direction and that we must now be reconciled to economic stagnation, rising prices and intense food shortage in the months to come as a consequence.

All this has happened before elsewhere. President Sukarno of Indonesia and Mr Nkrumah of Ghana, both of whom were close friends of Mr Jawaharlal Nehru, behaved in precisely the same manner in driving their countries along the Statist and Communist path despite the wishes of their people. The result was that Nkrumah was overthrown and Sukarno is today a puppet President stripped of his powers.

The question that faces us is: must this country also go through a violent political change! Fortunately, we have a functioning parliament democracy, a multi-party system and a free press, which neither Indonesia nor Ghana possessed during the last few years. We have a live Opposition. Nor is the conscience of all Congressmen yet dead. It is therefore to be hoped that we shall be able to solve our problems democratically peacefully and within the ambit of our Constitution.



**YES,
THEY NEED AND
EXPECT
FROM YOU—
ADEQUATE
PROTECTION**

LET
THE BANK OF INDIA
LTD. PROTECT THE
INTERESTS OF YOUR
FAMILY—
through the
EXECUTOR & TRUSTEE
DEPARTMENT.

The Bank can act on
your behalf as

- Executor and/or Trustee under a Will
- Trustee under a Deed of settlement
- Trustee under a Trust Deed securing Mortgage Debentures
- Custodian Trustee of a Will or a Settlement
- Trustee for Life Insurance Policies under the Married Women's Property Act, 1874.

**THE
BANK OF INDIA
LTD.**

T. D. KANSARA
General Manager



6/1968A

SNAPPY SIDELIGHTS

A NIGHT OUT IN BEIRUT

While on a recent visit to Beirut, Mrs. Nura Swaminathan, Director of J. Walter Thompson Co. Bombay, is seen with Mr. K. L. Ramchandrar, Manager, Air-India and Mrs. Ramchandrar, seen in the centre



SOCIETY WEDDING

Amidst a large gathering of friends, business associates, and members of the diplomatic corps, the wedding of Flying Officer Gerald Richard Swiggum of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and Sue, lovely daughter of Mr and Mrs I. J. Syer of Bombay was solemnized at All Saints Church, Malabar Hill. The bride looked charming in a full length white up-pure lace dress and carried a trailing bouquet of yellow rose buds and tuberose. Mrs. Andrew Allen, the Matron of Honour—in a vivid yellow full-length dress added a splash of colour. Best Man, Capt. Glen Dennis of the Australian Military Forces, came from Kashmir specially for the wedding.

The reception was held at the Bombay residence of H. H. the Maharani of Jamnagar.



WHEN THEY WERE IN BANGALORE

When Mr. J. J. Khambatta, Asst. General Manager, Central Bank of India, Bombay, and Mrs. Khambatta, were in Bangalore recently, a large dinner party was held at the Bangalore Club by Mr. B. S. Sidhwa, Agent, Central Bank, Bangalore, and a Committee of hosts. Grouped together on this occasion are Mr. John Webb, Mrs. Khambatta, Mrs. Sidhwa, Mr. Sidhwa, Miss Homai Sidhwa, Miss Farida Irani and Mr. Khambatta.



WE WISH THEM HAPPINESS

Lovely Susan Elizabeth Syer and her handsome groom Flying Officer Gerald Richard Swiggum are seen with Vicar Lewis Wilkinson soon after their wedding service.



FANCY DRESS BALL

"Resemblance to any living person is purely coincidental" said Raja Bhinga at the Fancy Dress Ball held in Nainital. He is flanked by Rani Sahiba Bhinga and Mrs. Kamini Vaide, Dance Secretary, of the Boat House Club, Nainital.



Beautiful hair is Halo's affair!

Ordinary shampoos dull your hair, because they contain soap. Halo is soapless...it cannot dull or dry your hair! Halo lathers richly—in soft or hard water; gives you a beauty shampoo, which leaves your hair silky soft, yet easy to manage.

Promise yourself a perfect shampoo! Get Halo today!

Soaping dulls hair—Halo glorifies it!

