

Parliamentary System Of Govt. Unsited To India

"J.P.'s" CALL FOR RECREATING SELF-GOVERNING VILLAGES

By A Staff Reporter

AFTER experimenting with the parliamentary system of government for 12 years, "we are still seriously thinking whether it is serving our purpose". The time has now come when we should face the fact that it is not suited to the country and "we should re-create the institution of self-governing villages to make the base of democracy stronger".

This was the theme of Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan's speech on "Democracy in Asia", at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, on Monday.

He thought that the time was now to build on a stable, enduring foundation while the country still had the benefit of Mr. Nehru's presence and personality.

He made it clear at the outset that democracy, in the sense of the rule of law and democratic and free living, was the only way of life for the people though there might be different forms of it. But the question was whether the Western type of democracy was suited to India.

It had failed in the rest of Asia, he said. It was a matter of regret to him that the question, so vital for the country's future, had not been given any serious thought in the country. Nobody thought it necessary to go to the root of the matter. He had prepared a draft on the future pattern of democracy in India for private circulation to invite serious discussion.

AN OLIGARCHY

Mr. Narayan said the present Government in the country was an oligarchy and it would be wrong to call it democracy. The common people were not at all involved in it and they would be fooling themselves if they thought it was a success merely because people went to the polling booths every five years.

"It should be the concern of us all to make democracy meaningful to every people at all levels of their life and make them participate in it." Else, Mr. Narayan was afraid, after the rule of the "founding fathers", the fate of democracy in India would be different.

He did not know what the consequences would be. Even now, while those leaders were alive, democracy was not working very well. "And when they are removed from the scene what will happen?", he asked.

People were being forced to think somewhat on these lines: We have to be governed by an oligarchy, so why not have an efficient oligarchy, that is dictatorship?

POOR QUALITY

He was sad to say that most of those who entered the political field after freedom were of poor quality and standards. They were merely concerned with power and position rather than the interests of the country. There was a general deterioration in the moral standards of the people and it was most marked in the political field. Its effect had been felt in all fields of national activity.

He was certain that they could not build the nation by means of Con-

stitutional agencies. And, as for the political parties, they were only concerned with power.

The solution, according to him, was to build on the basis of the lakhs of villages in the country. "We should build a political system which is based upon communities."

They should make the village communities self-governing. Mr. Narayan suggested. Political leaders all over Asia were thinking along similar lines but it was a matter of utmost regret that India was not taking the initiative in that direction.

India, he said, could have given a lead and solved the problem of democracy in a manner which would be a model for others.

DECENTRALISATION

Mr. Narayan was glad about the experiment in democratic decentralisation recently launched in Andhra and Rajasthan. "But," he warned, "we will be faced with a disaster if democracy from below also fails." He had said democracy from above had already failed in India. In that event, Mr. Narayan felt, the result would be chaos, communism or dictatorship.

If the experiment in Andhra and Rajasthan was to succeed, too much power and initiative should not remain in New Delhi.

He was not happy either about the gram panchayats which would cover the whole country shortly. They would again have to face elections as today which disrupted the life of the community, brought caste considerations to the fore and created much violence. He wanted to do away with the system of elections altogether.

How then were they to change the face of the country? The initiative could not come from the villagers as they had none left. He referred here to Gandhiji's suggestion that the Congress should disband itself and become a voluntary "sevak" organisation. And, then, with leaders like Mr. Nehru, the country would be able to get somewhere.

CASTE DECIDES THE CHOICE OF VOTERS

'J.P.'s Remark

By A Staff Reporter

"The most effective party in our country is caste," according to Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan.

Every party, without exception, tried to exploit the caste system and the voters were most anxious to find out the caste of the candidates, rather than their programme, he told a meeting organised by the Indian Council of World Affairs at Sapru House on Monday.

CONVENTION ON TIBET

'J.P.' Outlines Objectives

By A Staff Reporter

An Afro-Asian convention on Tibet, under the chairmanship of Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan, will be held in New Delhi from February 18 to 21 next to mobilise world support for Tibet. The convention will discuss the possibility of collaboration among these countries "to protect their freedom from encroachment from any quarter."

This was stated by Mr. Narayan at a press conference in New Delhi on Monday.

He said 200 invitations had been sent to 30 nations and already four of them had accepted. The response from most of them, as indicated by Mr. H. R. Pardiwala and Mr. Samar Guha, member of the preparatory bureau of the convention who had returned from a tour of various Asian-African countries, was favourable.

Mr. Pardiwala said that they had not yet decided whether to invite the Dalai Lama to attend the convention or not. It is proposed to invite the Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet and other prominent persons to the inaugural session which will be open to the public.

PURELY NON-OFFICIAL

Mr. Narayan said the conference would be purely non-official. In some countries, like Japan, Burma and Indonesia, committees on Tibet had already been formed.

He said the convention would also consider the colonial problem as a whole. The scope of the convention, he added, had been widened on the suggestion of some West Asian countries. But its main objective would be to highlight the problem of Tibet, Mr. Narayan stated. "We want that Tibet should have the right of self-determination," he said.