

4127

INDUSTRIALIZATION AT DISTRICT LEVEL

J.P. Narain Expounds Idea Of Decentralization

Mr Jaya Prakash Narain, the Sarvodaya leader, said in New Delhi on Monday that if the idea of Gram Raj was not translated into practice properly, democracy in the country would either cease to exist or would be deprived of its meaning.

Mr Narain, who was addressing a meeting of the Indian Council of World Affairs, said that the Parliamentary system of government was not suited to Asian climate and the only way to save democracy in this part of the world was to rest it on the slabs of self-governing village communities.

Welcoming the experiment of handing down administrative powers to panchayats in Rajasthan and Andhra, he said that if this task was not executed properly, the country would be faced with a disaster. "Then there may come either chaos or Communism or some form of dictatorship".

Mr Narain said that creation of village panchayats would not usher in Gram Raj unless the spirit of rivalry and bitterness created by party system was syringed out of the community. He suggested revival of the old system of selecting village panchayats either through common agreement or by drawing lots.

Another very important factor, which merited notice, said Mr Narain, was industrialization. It was large-scale industrialization which had caused the death of

(MORE LOCAL NEWS ON PAGE 4)

community life and made life mechanical in many a country. It should be left to village communities to develop industries in response to their needs.

"My idea of democratic industrialization", he added, "is that not less than 60% of the industrial development should be done at the district level. A large portion of the rest should be done at the State level and only 10% at Central level".

Referring to his recent tour abroad Mr Narain said that he had returned home convinced that "all Afro-Asian dictators, from Cairo to Jakarta" were genuinely interested in handing over power to the people as early as possible. The only question before them was how to do it.

India, he said, had a fine record of holding the largest ever general elections in a peaceful manner. "That is an achievement of which I am proud. But if we are to be satisfied only by the people going to the polls once in five years and casting a chit of paper, then we would be fooling ourselves". Democracy, in order to have a deeper meaning, must involve a more active participation by the people.

"So let us take advantage of the umbrella of the system we have so far developed and the leadership of Prime Minister Nehru to build democracy from the bottom", he said. If this was not done in good time, the future of democracy in India would be in peril, he added.