

4173

TIMES OF INDIA

28 DEC 1973

JP to convene talks on state autonomy

MADRAS, December 27.

THE Sarvodaya leader, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, said here today that he proposed to convene a conference of representatives of various sections of society on the issue of autonomy for states.

Addressing a press conference, he said that whenever the autonomy issue was raised, there was a cry that it was against the unity of the

country. The issue, he felt, should be dispassionately considered.

Mr. Narayan, who spent a week in Thiruvavur area of the Thanjavur district to study the implementation of land reforms, said that they were being regularly evaded. "Our legal procedure also seems to be so clumsy and ill-conceived that the law-breakers who belong usually to the well-to-do classes are able to have justice denied to the poor and the weak."

He said it was painful to find that a few landlords had managed by one trick or another not only to deny the temples of their rightful income but also to deny the landless people their right to temple lands. A drastic remedy was called for.

Mr. Narayan suggested that the state should take over all the temple lands, cancelling all the pattas, and re-settle the lands with landless labourers and marginal cultivators. If there were legal bars to taking over of all proprietary and tenancy rights, an ordinance or law to that effect must be passed. Charitable and social service institutions run by the temples should be taken over by the state and run by mixed committees of officers and non-official citizens having no interest in land and preferably engaged in social service.—U.N.I.

"People fed up with parties"

MADRAS, December 26: The Sarvodaya leader, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, today suggested an alternative form of government to be constituted by people elected to the assembly without the aid of political parties.

"The people are fed up with political parties and they are ready for any viable alternative," Mr. Narayan told a public meeting organised by the Madras students' Gandhi forum.

The alternative system of electing such candidates would involve active participation of gram sabhas without interference of any political party.

Mr. Narayan

28/12