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The Rotary Club Speech.

Press report from 'The Times Of India' on Wednesday, January 14, 1959.

Dangerous Trends In Country, Warns M.P.

MRM on Tuesday questioned the 'ostrich like' complacency of certain national leaders who asserted that there was no danger of dictatorship in India.

MRM, who was addressing a luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club of Bombay at the Green's Hotel on the 'Growth Of Our Parliamentary Democracy' observed that the military dictatorships in Burma, Iraq, Pakistan and Sudan had moved in to fill a vacuum that had already existed.

The ingredients that made up such a vacuum according to him were the sapping of the spiritual and moral foundations of society through the spread of corrosive materialism, and all pervading indiscipline, a gulf between profession and practice, a growing cynicism and a contempt for all politicians and the absence of an alternative government.

He ~~said~~ said that all these trends existed in India in an incipient form. Unless they were checked and reversed the possibility of a situation similar to that in the neighbouring countries could not be ruled out, he warned.

Individual Citizenship

In that context, MRM said there was an urgent call to perform the obligations of individual citizenship. There was widespread grumbling about the govt. politicians and officials. The amount of 'grass roots' voluntary activity, which was the bedrock of American democracy was lacking in India.

"We had instead a pathetic dependence on the govt. to do for us things which we should get together and do for ourselves" he deplored.

"There was a two-fold imbalance," MRM said, "In Our policy an imbalance between Govt. and the opposition and an ideological imbalance." There were no less than four parties wedded to socialism or state capitalism but not one adhering to liberal or conservative principals. In this connection, MRM referred to the views of persons like C. Rajagopalachari and Jayaprakesh Narayan, who agreed that India's most urgent need was the establishment of a conservative party.

Landed Peasantry

MRM himself would prefer a "liberal" or "centre party" standing for ordered progress. But whatever the label, such an idea would defend the interest of the landed peasantry. The middle class and the businessmen which were threatened by the current drift to over centralised and bureaucratised state capitalism. Such an idea would give heart to the moderates in the Congress Party, who were today "intimidated" by leftist slogans. "It would stop "the growing polarisation" between ~~an~~ an disintegrating Congress and the Communists, with a possible repetition of the Chinese pattern," he added.

MRM was critical of industry and business for shirking their obligations. "How effective was the voice of business in our public life," he asked. "Business should put its house in order and show a greater capacity to stand up in defence, of the way of life in which it believed. A class that would not fight to defend its legitimate rights would be wiped out, whether it was the peasantry, middle class or businessmen," he said.

Rotarian S.M. Kini, President of the Rotary Club of Bombay, earlier, welcomed MRM. Rotarian A.R. Wadia proposed a vote of thanks.

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