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Dacoit menace

Sir.—The Sarvodaya leader Jaya-prakash Narayan has been negotiating for the surrender of several dacoit-gangs operating in the region of Madhya Pradesh, adjoining Rajasthan and U.P. Similar efforts were made by Acharya Vinoba in 1960. Nineteen dacoits had surrendered at that time, but it seems it did not help appreciably in the overall situation.

A high-level conference has just been held in New Delhi and certain decisions have been taken on Mr Narayan's suggestion. The Sarvodaya leader is confident, while the government is sceptical and hesitant. No problem can be dealt with superficially, at least not successfully. If there is a cancerous growth on the body, it needs both external treatment as well as deep internal therapy.

The dacoit menace existing in the Chambal valley since decades, has deep-rooted causes. Land-hunger, lack of employment, personal feuds, may be a few of the reasons

Readers' views

which have forced men to embark on this perilous path.

Mr Jayaprakash Narayan has to seriously consider all these questions (he may have already done so), before inducing these men to surrender. The dacoits who surrender are to be dealt with according to the prevailing and relevant laws. How are their families to be looked after?

Will the families be given land to till or will any other arrangements be made to re-settle them? To make dacoits surrender with goodwill and idealistic talk and then to forget about them, will make the situation worse. Practical considerations are as important as idealism.

We do not know what happened to the 19 dacoits who had surrendered in 1960. Whether they are well settled in life and in what form the re-habilitation has taken place?

This sort of publicity is needed and only actual results will really inspire these misguided men to turn to the right path and towards constructive thinking.

BOMBAY.

SAVITRI RAJAJ,