

India plans for the future.

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INDIA PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

India is no different from many other countries in having two sets of problems to solve, political and economic. Of the political problem, all that need be said in the present context is that a political setting, suited to the genius of the people and accepted by them, is essential to the successful solution of long-term economic problems. But, great though the need is that these problems should be worked out by a government accountable to the people of India for what it does, the task of clearing the ground cannot wait upon the final solution, whatever it may be, of India's political difficulties. Therefore, planning for a healthier and wealthier post-war India goes rapidly ahead. ||

The great task of developing to the utmost the national resources for the betterment of the people, set by the Planning and Development Department of the Government of India, has been tackled with a will, with the Central Government, the Provincial Governments, the States, and various political and social welfare organisations all contributing to the general over-all economic and social plan.

Progress already made is shown in the many schemes of industrial and economic expansion, and in the reports and recommendations of expert investigators already published by the Central Government, the more important of which are summarised below.

Increasing National Wealth. The ultimate object of all such planning must be to raise the standard of living of the people as a whole, and to provide employment for all. In some countries, this may involve concentration on industrial ||



development ; in others, the emphasis must be on agricultural development. In India, with a population of 400 millions, scattered over 700,000 villages with relatively few channels of communication, largely dependent on agriculture but with some established industries and much raw material, planning for the future must take many forms, all of which must be co-ordinated and welded into short-term and long-term programmes.

Until the wealth of the country is increased, the money will not be available for social services. Therefore, the resources at present available must be devoted to economic development, both agricultural and industrial, so as to produce that wealth.

It is of particular importance to increase the purchasing power of the villager so as to absorb the products of industry.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural development has a prominent place in the plans of the Government of India.

The proposals placed before them by a special committee contemplate the capital expenditure of £750,000,000 in order to increase production by 100 per cent. in fifteen years. Emphasis is laid on the production of more food—a 10 per cent. increase in cereals, 100 per cent. in vegetables, 250 per cent. in fats and oils, 300 per cent. in milk, etc. This will be done by bringing more land under cultivation and by increasing out-turn. This, in turn, means more irrigation, whether by canals, wells, or tanks ; more manures—natural and artificial ; better seed ; and propaganda to induce the cultivators to adopt new methods and new ideas. Seed farms in every district, experimental farms, consolidation of holdings, co-operative farming and marketing—all are part of the same problem of more and better production.

Concurrent problems are the conservation and development of forests—an increase in the total area by 20 to 25 per cent. to prevent erosion and to supply India's increasing demands for fuel and timber. This involves placing another 100,000 square miles under forest, utilising wherever possible land suitable for nothing else.

ELECTRIC POWER

India to-day uses in a year as much electrical energy as the U.S.A. generates in a week. Over 42 per cent. of this energy is used in the cities of Bombay and Calcutta, while, if Ahmedabad and Cawnpore are included, over half of India's supply of electricity is absorbed in four cities containing less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the population of the country. The scope for expansion is, therefore, unlimited. As a first step, plans have been drawn up for the creation of large-scale power stations located in the main industrial areas, and the construction of a main transmission system, with smaller secondary lines attached to it for tapping agricultural and other outlying areas. The first steps to be taken include the placing of orders for new plant to the value of nearly £40 million.

ARTIFICIAL FERTILISERS

A factory for the manufacture of 350,000 tons of sulphate of ammonia annually is to be erected shortly in Bihar—part of the short-term policy of the Government of India to increase supplies of artificial fertilisers, essential to additional foodgrains production. A Mission has been in the United Kingdom recently negotiating the purchase of plant and its erection.

The Government are also considering the erection of a second factory, in Central India, capable of producing a further 100,000 tons of sulphate of ammonia annually.

These activities have followed the visit to India of a Technical Mission from the United Kingdom to advise the Government of India on methods of increasing the supply of artificial fertilisers, of which India can use at least three million tons per annum. Of the principal plant food materials of which the soils of India are deficient, by far the most important is nitrogen. Sulphate of ammonia, which contains 21 to 22 per cent. of nitrogen, is therefore the chemical fertiliser of most interest to India.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT

Roads and Railways. India's 41,000 miles of railways and 276,000 miles of roads do not go far when spread over an area of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million square miles. A twenty-year programme

for building 400,000 miles of main roads at a capital cost of £337 million has been put forward, while every Province will undertake the task of improving subsidiary roads to link up the villages with the towns.

Locomotives. The workshops of the East India Railway at Singbhum in Bengal have been taken over by the firm of Tatas, with a view to making locomotives and boilers there. Production will begin in about 18 months with an output of 50 locomotives a year. Other workshops will be opened, and within five years India should be producing her full requirements.

Waterways. How to make the fullest possible use of India's thousands of miles of waterways is to be investigated by a new Commission to be set up by the Government of India in their post-war planning organisation. The Central Waterways Irrigation and Navigation Commission will examine the potentialities of all India's rivers, and it will co-ordinate development plans where the rivers pass through more than one Province or State. The Commission will advise the Central, Provincial, and State Governments, on their waterways problems, and will conduct surveys and investigations with a view to securing planned utilisation of India's water resources. It will press forward schemes for their conservation and regulation.

Civil Aviation. Plans for the development of air transport in the post-war period have been prepared by the Posts and Air Department of the Government of India. These provide for services on the basis of one daily return service between the principal cities of India and of those of the adjoining countries of Ceylon, Burma and Afghanistan. The total mileage of the air routes planned exceeds 11,000. The capital investment of operating organisations is estimated at £2,150,000, and the annual cost of operation at over £1,875,000.

A plan for the development of external air services from India to the U.K., to the Near East, to China, and to East Africa, has also been prepared. It will involve a capital investment of operating companies of about £2,000,000, and an annual operating cost of an equal amount.

The plans prepared provide for a total of 111 aerodromes and landing-grounds. The total cost of the construction of new aerodromes, the adaptation of existing aerodromes for civil air transport, and the construction of allied works, such as airport buildings, hotels, rest-houses, quarters, aerodrome and air route lighting, and radio station buildings, is estimated to cost about £12,000,000. The equipment and installation of radio stations is estimated to cost about £450,000.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Government of India have proposed a number of schemes to encourage and promote the rapid industrialisation of the country.

Perhaps the most important is a proposal for the transfer from the Provincial to the Central sphere of jurisdiction of responsibility for the development of twenty different industries regarded as essential in the national interest. These plans are of long standing, and those so far made are not on the basis of nationalisation. But, if the Government of India decide that any particular industry is of national importance, and if private capital is not forthcoming to promote such an industry, then the Government will run it themselves.

These industries include aircraft, tractors, chemicals and dyes, iron and steel, transport vehicles, electrical machinery, machine tools, etc. Shipbuilding, and the manufacture of locomotives, will be carried out by the State as well as by private enterprise.

It would be the Government's policy to assist industries in various ways, such as by subsidies, loans at reduced interest, the guarantee of dividends, and the purchase of their products. And there would be a larger measure of Government control, especially for industries receiving Government assistance, and those controlling scarce natural resources, or those which develop monopolistic tendencies.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

All planning will be co-ordinated, and new discoveries and methods adapted to the national use. To achieve this, a five-year programme of development of scientific and industrial research is outlined by the Industrial Research

Planning Committee, appointed in 1944, whose important survey and recommendations have just been published. Research in India is still in its infancy, says the Committee, and does not represent the bare minimum, judged either by international standards or by the actual requirements of the country in the present state of industrial development. The Committee recommends the immediate establishment of a National Research Council authorised to initiate its plan. This envisages :—

The building and equipping of a national chemical and a national physical laboratory ;

The establishment of certain specialised research institutes ;

The all-round strengthening of existing research organisations ;

The training of research personnel by the award of scholarships tenable in India and abroad ;

The setting up of a network of research laboratories in the Provinces and major States, particularly to deal with local problems ;

A grant of Rs.6 crores (£4,500,000) to cover the cost of the scheme for the first five years.

Earlier this year, Professor A. V. Hill, Secretary of the Royal Society, presented a report on his visit to India, at the invitation of the Government of India, to discuss and advise on scientific, technical and research problems. In this, Professor Hill, too, makes striking proposals for the improvement of scientific research, some practicable immediately, others forming part of long-range planning. Taken together the two reports form a notable contribution to scientific planning.

Sir Shanti Bhatnagar, head of the Indian Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, who visited this country and the United States recently with a group of distinguished Indian scientists, has pointed out that it is impossible to give too much emphasis to the part scientific research can play towards human betterment in the fields of Indian industry, agriculture, transport, and public health. He announced that the Government of India are considering opening, on a permanent basis, " central scientific offices for

mutual co-operation " in London and Washington, and possibly in Moscow, in the near future.

EDUCATION

Side by side with economic development, the social services will be built up and expanded. First, education, perhaps the most difficult of all the problems the Government of India have set out to solve. Mr. John Sargent, the Educational Adviser, has prepared a scheme which calls for an expenditure in British India alone of £235 millions, when fully established at the end of the fortieth year. The scheme provides for universal and compulsory free education for all children between the ages of six and fourteen. This would require 1,800,000 teachers for the instruction of 52 million pupils. One child in every five would be eligible for high school education, while 240,000 would attend universities. Technical education would be greatly expanded to meet the needs of five classes of industrial workers, from the unskilled to the managerial class, while adult education also would be provided. Altogether, 2,000,000 non-graduate and 180,000 graduate teachers would be required, and their training would involve the establishment of many new training schools and colleges. 7,500 school medical officers and 15,000 nurses are to be provided to run an efficient school medical service.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Publication is awaited of the Report of the Bhole Committee, appointed in August, 1943, to carry out the huge task of surveying the whole field of public health in India.

Foreign experts have co-operated with heads of public health departments, leading medical men and research workers in India, to present the Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Joseph Bhole, and its five sub-committees, with comprehensive pictures of India's present health organisation and that of the future.

Recommendations are expected to aim at drastic improvements in health and medical relief services generally—with particular emphasis on health education and health propaganda—nutrition, industrial welfare, nursing services, the health of women and children, and childbirth.

The estimated cost of implementing the recommendations over the first five years, would be about seven times the current expenditure per head of the population on the same services, and thereafter, fourteen times.

FINDING THE MAN-POWER

Industrialisation requires artisans and technical personnel of all kinds for workshops and factories. During the war years, tens of thousands of Indians have been trained in the hundreds of technical schools set up to provide skilled workers for the ordnance factories and engineering workshops turning out munitions of all kinds. Thousands more have learned to become expert tradesmen in the many mechanised services of the Army. This skilled labour will be available for the needs of industry, and, to ensure that it is properly distributed, a network of labour exchanges will be established throughout the country, each exchange being in the charge of a trained manager—many of them ex-Servicemen—who has either been trained in England himself, or who has received his training from men who have.

FINDING THE MONEY

With the taxable capacity of India fully utilised, and with borrowing continued at a high level, the total resources available for reconstruction in the first five years will, it is hoped, approximate to £750,000,000 apart from private investment.

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