

has asked for the representation of the debt payments and the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Finance has left for negotiations.

A delicate question that is bound to come up before the Government of India sooner or later concerns the position of Indians in Burma in relation to the Land Nationalisation Act. With the enforcement of the law, a large number of Indians have been deprived of their landed property. By law, the Burmese Government is bound to pay appropriate compensation for land taken over. Land values are steadily going up in Burma. But the rate of compensation, on the other hand, is steadily coming down, much to the anxiety of the affected Indians.

Representations made to the Government of India by such persons have been of no avail, the Government being in a very embarrassing position. Under the existing relationship, it will not be easy for the Indian Government to make representations regarding an issue which relates to the internal affairs of Burma. It cannot be denied at the same time that India has a natural interest in the welfare of her emigrants abroad. Anyhow, it is obvious that an ultimate solution will lie

in Burma's sense of fairness towards the dispossessed Indians.

Political Escapism

C A N U T E-L I K E. some Congress leaders are trying hard at this late hour to order back the rising tide of linguistic aspiration and zeal. Their royal predecessor in this desperate enterprise had this much to be said in his favour that the waves which he sought to push back were not of his making. Even this extenuating argument cannot apply to those Congressmen who are today campaigning as vigorously against the formation of linguistic States as they once campaigned in support of it.

The principle underlying linguistic States is either sound or unsound: it cannot be both, and it cannot be sound in one case and not so sound in another. Nor can it be unsound now and grow to be sound ten or fifteen years hence, as some opponents of linguistic States are trying to make out. The leadership of this group has now gone to Shri S K .Patil. President of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, who has announced the creation of a "National Unity Platform" to mobilise public opinion against what has

been called "the gathering momentum of linguistic disintegration that threatens the country today." A regular crusade on a non-party basis has been promised.

Shorn of the accompanying verbal froth and foam, the intention of the proposed Unity Platform appears to be to get a final decision on the issue postponed for the next ten or fifteen years, so that for the duration at least public attention may be properly and fully focussed on the economic problems facing the country. One might wish that the inclination of the public for an agitation were something that could be switched on and off at will. But experience speaks otherwise; and on the linguistic issue at least, public feeling holds no promise of abatement....not after the creation of Andhra, anyway.

Andhra was the turning-point; and having taken a decision for good or bad then, it will not do to think of a retreat or diversion now. Indeed, there is less harm, the temporary distraction notwithstanding, in pursuing the line then taken to its logical end and selling the problem once for all than in trying to wriggle out of it or seeking comfort in a postponement. The latter course represents political escapism

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