

April 28, 1956

Neither France's Open disavowal nor Britain's persuasive tactics have succeeded so far in changing America's foreign policy. President Eisenhower offers America's friendship to Russia on certain conditions. He accepts M Mollet's prescription that it is wise for the Western Powers to seek, by every peaceful means, "to induce the Soviet bloc—genuinely to pursue peaceful purposes in its relations with other nations". But the foreign policy outlined by him is tinged with deep doubts about Russia's intentions. Because President Eisenhower has no faith in Russia's peaceful intentions, he emphasises that military security must remain the first and foremost objective of American foreign policy. America must continue to build her military strength and that of her allies so that the Western Powers can "maintain a collective shield against aggression." President Eisenhower hastens to assure the world that America holds her military strength only to guard against aggression. It is not difficult to appreciate why Russia and some of the Asian nations affected by American-sponsored regional mili-

tary alliances are reluctant to accept these assurances. Admittedly, disarmament is the essential condition of world peace. But recent London deliberations of the UN disarmament sub-committee leave no room for doubt that not Russia, but the Western Powers are reluctant to reach any compromise agreement on disarmament.

No exception will be taken to the President's emphasis on the need for aiding the economic and social progress of the under-developed nations. Nor will there be any quarrel with his appeal to Congress to put America's foreign aid programme on a long-term basis. Economic progress in undeveloped nations will take time. It is, therefore, evident that America and other rich nations will have to formulate a long-term policy for foreign aid. Only under such a long-term plan for economic help can the recipient nations frame their development plans on a long-term basis. Equally welcome is President Eisenhower's awareness of the importance of encouraging the healthy flow of peaceful trade. Not only the Communist bloc, but even Britain resents the "wasteful

restraints" on the free flow of world trade arising out of the American policy of trade embargo on the Communist countries. Since the Geneva "summit" Conference, it has been apparent that NATO should be replaced by an organisation aimed at furthering trade and economic co-operation between the European countries.

It is inevitable that America will have to shoulder the main burden of ensuring freer trade and world prosperity. But the gradual emergence of Russia as a supplier of economic aid poses a problem which will have to be faced soon. To prevent some of the avoidable waste inherent in competitive co-existence, it is desirable that resources should be pooled so that economic aid to foreign countries can be supplied by the United Nations through the various agencies. M Mollet is in favour of supplying economic aid under the auspices of the United Nations. It is doubtful whether America will support any such extension of the activities of the United Nations. But undeveloped countries would prefer economic help under the aegis of the United Nations to economic aid by individual countries.

## Wanted More Technicians

THE importance of an adequate supply of technically trained labour for the rapid expansion of industries visualised under the Second Plan hardly needs to be stressed. Inaugurating the International Technical Education Exhibition in Bombay, Prof. M. S. Thacker, Director of the Council of Scientific and Industries Research, pointed out recently that there is need for a 20 per cent expansion of training facilities in technical and technological institutions if the deficiency in technical personnel is to be met. The problem in particular fields may in fact be much more acute than is indicated by this figure given by Prof Thacker.

Prof. Thacker said that a provision of Rs 50 crores has been made in the Second Plan for the development of technical and technological education. Problems of this kind cannot be solved, however, merely through the allocation of funds. Effective organization is necessary. That is a lesson which the experience of the First Plan as well as

of other countries should already have taught to the planners in India. It is not possible to say off-hand whether Rs 50 crores is an adequate amount to bring about the required expansion in the usual way. Even if it is, however, it is clear that before the buildings are constructed and furnished and before the technical equipment can be set up, a number of years will pass. After that will come the period of training and it is only after this is over that the country will have an augmented supply of trained technicians. Not that all this will necessarily proceed smoothly. The new institutions will have to be staffed and this will actually make the problem of obtaining trained and experienced technical personnel even more difficult in the immediate future.

If the problem is to be successfully solved, however, with a reduction both in the overall costs of the scheme and in the time interval that must elapse before the increased supply of technicians becomes available, an entirely differ-

ent approach will have to be made. Pandit Nehru, speaking on the occasion of the opening of the new building for one of the chain of national laboratories, had deprecated the tendency to be satisfied with new buildings as if that was an objective in itself. It was the work done that mattered, he had pointed out, not the building in which it was done. Obviously he could not have meant that the buildings were unnecessary. What he meant was that stress should be laid upon the full utilisation of whatever facilities were already available and to ensure that new facilities set up for any purpose were also fully utilized.

The question to be asked is whether the facilities in the way of technical training Institutes that we already have are being fully utilized. It hardly needs a very careful study of these facilities to suggest that they are not. The crucial portion of any technical institution is its laboratory and workshop capacity. Invariably, however, these facilities are used

for only a few hours every day. The students of these institutions have to study the theory underlying their particular subjects. Depending upon the course of study, they are frequently also taught subjects of a general educational value. These occupy them for a considerable portion of each working day and the crucial laboratory and workshop facilities remain unutilised during that period.

Even if different classes have their lectures and practicals arranged in such a way that the laboratory and workshop are in use more or less throughout the working day, this is still not enough. For this usually means only that one batch of students of all classes put together uses the equipment. The 'day' over which the equipment is utilised still forms only a fraction of the 24-hour day.

In either of these cases, it should be possible to arrange a more intensive utilisation of laboratory and workshop equipment by the working of shifts of students. Two or even three shifts can be arranged where the equipment is being utilised for a full day already, but where the equipment remains unutilised even during the present working day, because students are otherwise occupied, the number of shifts over which the equipment can be utilised can be even greater. In the former case, it would imply shifts in the teaching of all subjects, thus giving a more intensive utilisation of lecture halls and other facilities also. In the latter case it would mean not only doing this but also extending lecture facilities only or better still, organising an extended use of lecture facilities in other institutions, not necessarily technical institutes at present.

This is about training of new material. What about opportunities of training for those who are already engaged in industry, of the factory hand who has the educational background or the intelligence and ability to use his brains, if an opportunity is given to him to do so? All the while we hear that the most serious gap in our technical personnel is not so much at the top but in the ranks of the supervisory staff. No factories in Bombay, even the best run ones, some of which recruit only matrics or those who have a number of years of regular schooling, have any arrange-

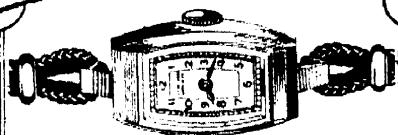
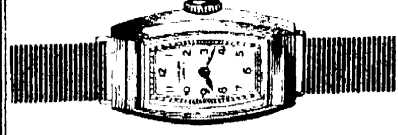

ment worth the name for enabling ambitious and willing workers to get any kind of technical education, which will enable them to use their brains while working with their hands. And that is the best way of acquiring knowledge and making proper use of such knowledge.

Will it not be an unfortunate result of the present arrangement of training when it begins to bear fruit that many who would otherwise have risen from the ranks, would be robbed of their chances of promotion? If this happens, it would not be a welcome change for

The large mass of factory hands. It will remove what little incentive there may be for them to do better and to apply their minds to their job. In the formation of the hard core of industrial skill, which is the backbone of industry, as in other things, we are thoughtlessly ignoring the social waste that is involved in displacing what productive capacity already exists by brand new equipment, the full and proper utilisation of which will itself involve time and labour. As in equipment, so with human material, utilisation of existing capacity must have priority.



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