

*Off the Record***Life Force Overwhelms**

IT is a nice Plan, it covers everything, agriculture industry, employment, administration, education, health and housing. A number of chapters have been devoted to each of these. The chapters are easy reading. They may sometimes tax the reader's patience but never his intelligence.

The Plan begins with an examination of the achievements of the First Plan, explains its approach to and gives an outline of the Second Plan and then goes on to examine the finance, foreign exchange, and employment aspects. Then come the administrative tasks. Finally there are chapters on labour, backward classes and social welfare services, the last being devoted to rehabilitation of displaced persons.

There are two paragraphs by way of conclusion right at the end of this 640 page report in the second of which a caveat is entered by Shri K C Neogy that the magnitude of the Plan is such that it will be difficult to implement it in five years and that, deficit financing on such an excessive scale may prove dangerous. Shri Neogy, it is added, had also drawn attention to the need for balanced development of transport, and production. "Ah the Members of the Planning Commission agreed" reads the concluding sentence, "that these considerations are important and should be constantly kept in view in carrying out the Plan and that these aspects have also been considered fully in appropriate sections of the Plan" (emphasis ours)

The sting is, therefore, in the tail and this one concluding paragraph disposes of the 640 pages of the report. This is the Final Plan, it follows the Draft Outline which in its turn followed the Draft of the Draft Plan-frame which was submitted to the National Development Council in March last year. There can be no finality in planning. The Planning Commission follows the dictum of adventurous living and it left the targets for food and cloth, the main props on which the Indian economy rests, to be decided by a free fight. The target for cloth production and the textile policy generally was not finalised in the report that was published and presented to the Parliament. They

were announced a month after the publication of the Plan. The target for food production was discarded immediately after its publication and has been left to the Food Ministers of the State Governments who are to meet at the end of the month and consider the situation de novo.

Democratic planning is not all backwards and forwards; in the field of industry movements may be lateral, in agriculture, gyrations are not ruled out. But don't think it is planning by the China way, though China too may be thinking of raising her food production target at an identical rate.

As it has turned out, the end of the Plan has become its beginning. What will follow is at the moment anybody's guess. Yet, strange to think that the caveat which Shri K C Neogy has entered was for pruning and not expanding the Plan any further. This, however, is reassuring. The country wants to move forward rather than listen to the voice of caution, goaded on by shall we say? It is vital, for there is nothing in the targets or the econometrics of it to explain or account for the logistics of the present move. This has inspired a correspondent to break into verse as follows:

**Little Planning Wagtail**

(With apologies to John Clare)

Little trotty wagtail, he went in the rain,

And tittering, tottering sideways, he ne'er got straight again.

He planned to get up from below and then to look down from the top,

But he found himself in a muddy hole which even he knew was flop.

Little planning wagtail, so flexible all about,

Even pursued in tri-lok sabha, he hoped to find his way out.

He first wanted thirtysix hundred crores but soon jumped to fortyfour

And then he settled at fortyeight but might even ask for more.

Backward forward wagtail, in a non-linear programme mood,

He rushed into a transport mess, then got frightened about his food

But did he lose his heart? No, wishful thinking came to aid.

There's not much difference between 3 & 8 in appearance,

hence as increment rate!

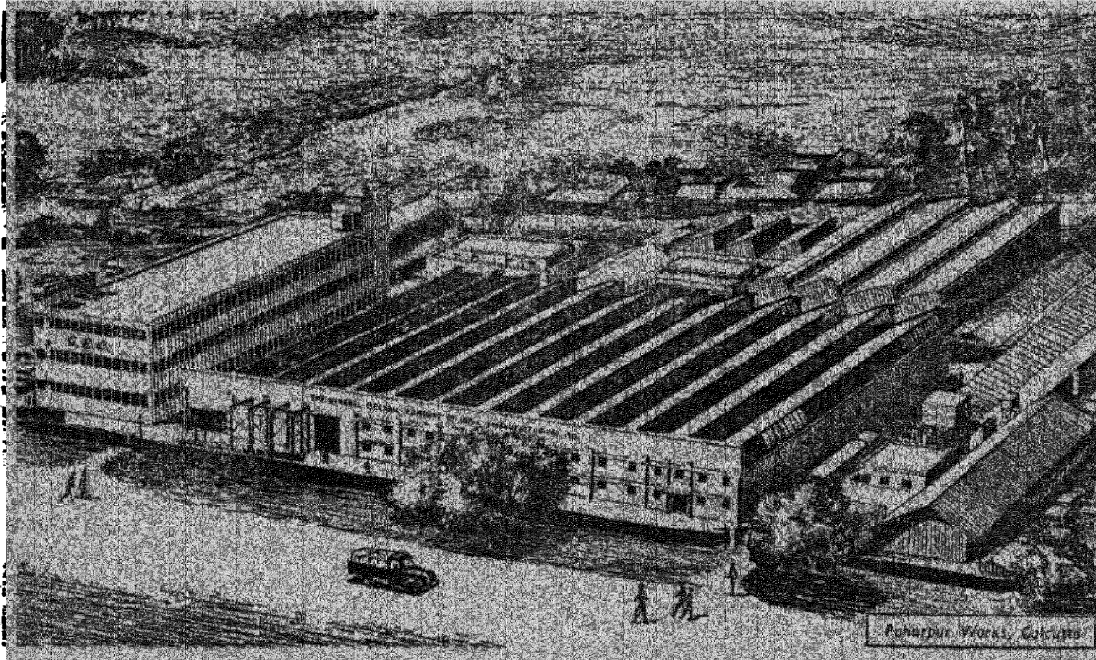
Little trotty wagtail still goes his wilful way.

A "cautious" nag may block his path but the "vital" urge wins the day.

He waddles in the puddle and waggles goes his tail

And chirrup up his wings to dance upon the China rail.

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