

much better than that of China: what matters is the percentage of improvement by itself. And, equally, there is no guarantee that major political and social changes would be avoided merely by attaining a high rate of economic growth in the country. Indeed, it is difficult to see how such changes can occur without an almost revolutionary overhaul of social institutions in India; and it would be surprising if this were not accompanied by equally important political changes. This, of course, does not mean that the democratic institutions so highly valued in India would or should disappear from the scene. But it might well mean instability in the sense of Congress being deprived of its pre-eminent position in the political sphere. It can be argued that, far from being inimical to the interests of democracy, such a change might make it more efficient.

Meanwhile, the Conference leads one to hope that the traditional argument for aid to India of what Mr Nixon has called the 'defensive' type will in the future become less of an irritating element in Indo-US relationship. There is another area in which a shift in emphasis would have been helpful; in regard to this, unfortunately, the Washington Conference does not seem to have got far. This is the old question of private and public investment and the importance of private foreign investment. Mr Nixon conceded the need of Government loans to assist India; but he appeared to argue how it would be much more beneficial to underdeveloped countries if private capital could come in large amounts. There is no doubt that if private foreign investment in underdeveloped countries became larger than heretofore, there would be so much more of resources available for development. But it does not seem realistic to expect a tremendous increase in the flow of private foreign investment to underdeveloped countries; nor would it be true to say that such an influx would be free from political implications while Governmental loans invariably carried such implications.

What is equally surprising is the seeming anxiety on the part of Indian participants in the conference to assure the other delegates that the private sector in India is large and is not being cribbed by the growth of the public sector. It

would appear from Press reports that even Shri Asoka Mehta has been at pains to justify the public sector's programme in India in terms which are somewhat perplexing. To compare the expansion of the public sector in an underdeveloped country with enlarged Governmental spending at a time of depression in a developed country is misleading. For the main purpose of the former is to lay the foundation for a major structural change in the economy whereas the latter is concerned with preserving the existing structure. It may be that Shri Asoka Mehta has been quoted wrongly or out of context. But this is the sort of argument which has an apologetic air about it and does not do anybody any good in the long run. Very much similar is the argument that if one took into account agriculture, small-scale industry, retail trade and so on, the private sector in India would be many times larger than the public sector. This would only confound people's appreciation of what is sought to be achieved in India. In any event, agriculture

has nowhere been considered a major area for the exercise of private enterprise; it certainly is not so in India. Over and above this, we are apparently planning to convert the agrarian sector into a huge co-operative organisation. Against this background, it is difficult to see what special purpose could be served by trying to convince Americans that our economy is, in fact, much more of a private enterprise type than they think.

All this notwithstanding, the Conference makes one hopeful of longer and more systematic support for India's development programmes in the coming years. This is no small gain. For, however much we may dislike it, our dependence on supplementary resources from abroad will be considerable; and as likely as not it will continue to be so for many more years. One wishes that some attempt had been made at the Conference to dispel the notion that by the mid-sixties India would have fully overcome its balance of payments difficulties. But one cannot expect a two-day conference to achieve everything.

A Summit of Our Own

MR CHESTER BOWLES is, surely, a good friend of this country; and there is no reason to doubt that when he calls for a 'summit meeting' between India and Pakistan, in order to 'break through the accumulated bitterness' between the two countries, he does so from the best of motives. He realises (as who does not) that the present state of continual tension between India and Pakistan is the cause of a heavy drain on their meagre financial resources, which need desperately to be diverted to more constructive projects. But his reasoning and conclusions are as questionable as his motives are not.

The first thing to consider is: what are the causes of the Indo-Pakistan tension? Generally, it is assumed that these can be reduced to two—the conflict over Kashmir and the canal waters dispute; and it is suggested, by Mr Bowles as also others that once these two disputes are put out of the way, the road will be open for Mr Nehru and General Ayub Khan to rush into each other's arms. This is a facile assumption; and it springs from the failure of such observers to realise that the Kashmir and Canal waters disputes are the

result, not the cause, of Pakistani hostility towards this country.

If Karachi's feelings towards New Delhi had been basically friendly, aggression on Kashmir would never have occurred; or having occurred, would have been vacated early enough. All thinking people in this country know that the solution of the Kashmir and canal water disputes would leave the core of Pakistani hostility towards India untouched. Some new excuse would be found for keeping up the tension... a tension which, it is pertinent to note, has well served the successive rulers of Pakistan in keeping the attention of their people off their own domestic failures; and a tension which has been artificially built up over the years by means of a sustained and virulent campaign through the Pakistani press and radio.

Mr Bowles, failing to grasp all this, goes on to suggest that the climate for an Indo-Pakistani 'summit' now exists, having been brought about by the twin factors of a possible settlement of the canal waters dispute and 'the friendly and conciliatory attitude of President Ayub Khan'. Apart from the fact that the canal waters dispute has still not

been finally settled, what evidence does Mr Bowles have of the 'friendly and conciliatory attitude' which he speaks of? As far as India itself is concerned, the latest evidence of it is provided by the shooting down of the unarmed Canberra jet which had strayed into Pakistan territory. It is also provided by the border incidents, which have perhaps never been as frequent as now.

But Mr Bowles has a third reason for assuming that a Delhi-Karachi 'summit' would be both desirable and possible at this stage. This reason is the same as what is uppermost in General Ayub Khan's mind when he calls for joint Indo-Pakistani defence of the Indian sub-continent. It is the recent trouble in Tibet, and the role of Communist China in Lhasa. But this is the most absurd reason of all. Do General Ayub and Mr Bowles seriously believe that India is so frightened of alleged Chinese 'expansionism' that it will suddenly drop its faith in Panch Shila and non-alignment, and immediately seek the 'protection' of a military pact with Pakistan? Do they really imagine that India, in order to lessen the burden of its armaments in relation to Pakistan's military strength, will take on the far greater burden (in fact, the impossible burden) of an arms race with China?

And if there is a military alliance between Pakistan and India, what precisely is to happen on the two sides of the cease-fire line in Kashmir? Are joint Indo-Pakistani forces to man the positions on both sides? The proposition gets more and more ridiculous as one examines it.

In a way it is amazing that a person like Mr Chester Bowles, who has done much in the past to explain Indian policy to the American people, should now show himself to be so sadly ignorant of the fundamentals of Mr Nehru's stand. What this country wants is nothing more complex than living at peace and harmony with its neighbours—and, for that matter, with countries farther afield too. That is why Mr Nehru has been so restrained in his utterances on Tibet. We do not want, and cannot afford, a hostile China; and we have made it quite clear by our actions that we wish to do our little best, as and when the opportunity for it arises, to facilitate an understanding between

Tibet and China. At the same time, our sympathies with Tibet have been clearly expressed. The same fundamental desire to live in amity with our neighbours also explains our normal restraint towards Pakistan, often in the face of grave provocation.

Now what would be the first and immediate effect of entering into a defence pact with Pakistan (even if

that were possible)? Alienation of China, and, of course, of the entire Communist bloc. For, such a pact would obviously be directed against China and would be quickly recognised in Peking as such. A contingency like this could never be countenanced in this country.

Both Mr Bowles and General Ayub should ponder a simple but important fact: that, the aggression

1958—344.68 CRORES BUSINESS 9.6 LAKHS POLICIES



**a million people say
"yes"
to Life Insurance -
a new achievement in
1958**

In the 12 months of 1958, about 10 lakhs of new insurance policies were bought from the Life Insurance Corporation of India. In financial terms they represent a total of

Rs. 344.68 Crores

worth of New Business. To put it mildly, this is a record far outstripping the previous all-time high of Rs. 283 Crores in 1957 when 8 lakhs of new policies were written.

Life Insurance Corporation of India

1958—344.68 CRORES BUSINESS 9.6 LAKHS POLICIES

of Kashmir and the thousand-and-one border incidents notwithstanding, India has still never contemplated a military alliance against Pakistan. What provocation is there for such a pact against China?

This does not mean that India does not want to be friendly with Pakistan: it only means that India does not want to be friendly with Pakistan at the cost of its friendship with China. It does not mean, either, that India would not welcome a lessening of tensions with Pakistan: it only means that the tensions cannot, in our opinion, be lessened on the basis Mr Bowles and General Ayub suggest. And, finally, it does not mean that, having said their ill-considered say, these gentlemen can now withdraw with a shrug of the shoulders and the parting remark, "Well, we've

done our best. What more can anyone do?"

Both America and Pakistan can do a lot. Mr. Bowles's real quest in the interests of Indo-Pakistani relations should be to dissuade his own Government from placing guns in the hands of trigger-happy Pakistanis. And let the United States stop pretending that these guns are for use against Russia; for, Russia has nuclear weapons so advanced and deadly that these guns would be wholly ineffective against them. It is only against India that the arms aid is directed: if not by U S A, at least by Pakistan.

Let Mr Bowles plead with his Government to give as much economic aid to Pakistan as it can. We will be happy to have a prosperous neighbour next door; for, a prosperous neighbour means a con-

tented and friendly neighbour. The withdrawal of the arms aid from Pakistan would also release India from the necessity of spending a considerable part of its national resources on defence, and thus expedite the task of national construction which alone can, in the long run, provide that guarantee against China which Mr Bowles so keenly wants. Any threat that this country faces from China is ideological, not military; and this threat can only be met with results in the economic sphere.

General Ayub's part in the easing of Indo-Pakistan tensions would be that of stopping the border raids at once and entering a no-war pact with India. With these two things accomplished, he could ask for a really profitable summit with Mr Nehru,

Ganga Bridge

AN important barrier to the industrial development of the northern areas of Bihar was broken last week when the Prime Minister declared open the Rs 16-crore rail-cum-road Ganga Bridge at Mokameh. For many decades, the want of a bridge over the 516-mile stretch of the Ganga between the Malaviya Bridge at Varanasi and the Hardinge Bridge near Paksey (now in East Pakistan) had obstructed the movement of men and materials between the areas to the south and north of the river. The new bridge, by making possible a continuous flow of rail and road traffic to north Bihar, north Bengal, Assam and Nepal, opens up the prospect of rapid industrial development in this region.

Some flow of traffic over this stretch of the river was, of course, organised in the form of transshipment by boats and steamers and by the wagon ferries of the railways. The difficulties involved were, however, tremendous because of the nature of the river itself. The tonnage that could be transhipped across the river at any time always remained an uncertain figure and the costs were heavy. The very ghats at which the transshipment was to take place had to be frequently shifted at heavy cost and with complete dislocation of transshipment work. In spite of the imposition of all kinds of restriction on the booking of traffic, heavy accumulation of goods at rail heads

are common, with delays and increased pilferage as natural results. No wonder railway officials have heaved a sigh of relief at what one of them has described as the end of a nightmare, the happy cracking of a bottleneck.

These and other difficulties, such as diversions over longer routes, have been completely eliminated with the opening of the two and a half mile Mokameh bridge. The choice of site was determined by a number of considerations, the advice of Shri M Visveswaraya having finally clinched the issue. The bridge being a rail-cum-road bridge, a substantial volume of road traffic will also flow across the bridge. The rail link across the river is broad gauge (single line) with the transshipment yard and sheds located on the north side of the river, thus increasing the capacity of the bridge for rail traffic. The railway system in north Bihar being metre gauge, transshipment cannot be avoided. It is hoped, however, that traffic from points close to Barauni, which is the broad gauge rail head on the north side of the river, will come directly to Barauni by road, thus making transshipment at the break of gauge point unnecessary. The construction of the bridge has been an engineering feat, the north channel of the river at this point being completely blocked and the bridge constructed of a length of only two and a half miles against the five or six miles

that would otherwise have been necessary at a cost thrice that actually incurred. That the bridge was constructed well within the estimated cost and nine months ahead of schedule is a tribute to those in charge of the project.

It augurs well for the development of the backward region, north of the Ganga that the opening of the bridge coincides with plans for establishment of an oil refinery at Barauni and also a State-owned thermal power station based on coal transported over the new bridge. Now that the transport bottleneck to this region has been broken, opportunity should be taken to survey its resources and plan for its development on sound lines.

Vigil

Independent Political Weekly

Subscription :

Six Months : Rs 6/-

Annual : Rs 12/-

Single Copy : 25 nP

Published Every Saturday

From :

**2, S. N. Bannerjee Road
Calcutta - 18**