

wants that instead of all the funds being spent on empirical studies, some funds could usefully be devoted to finance a centre for research in economic theory also.

While the need for research in economic theory will be readily conceded and it will no longer be opposed on the ground that theory has little practical value, one may still enter a caveat. Is the establishment of one more institute the right answer? While something is certainly better than nothing, obviously the right thing to do is to build up the economics faculties of the universities properly so that they may be able to attract and retain those who show most promise and aptitude for

economic theory. The universities cannot retain them any longer. They lack both funds and glamour, and the economics faculties tend to get isolated and too far removed from the main stream. A certain detachment and some measure of isolation is necessary to create the proper atmosphere for the study of theory, but not too much of it for a subject like economics. For revitalising economics faculties not only more funds will be needed, it will also be necessary to establish a two-way traffic between the faculties and the Government departments, institutes of empirical research and international bodies which handle economic problems. An essential first step

would be to raise the status of university teachers, and make it possible for them to work with Government departments and others on short-term assignments, so that they may go back to teaching, enriched by the experience of handling practical problems. We need competent, well-trained economists in large numbers, but are doing nothing in the way of capital formation by putting back the best products into teaching and research. Has any research centre anywhere, purely devoted to theoretical research, made significant contributions to economic theory? Disassociation of theory, application and teaching is no answer to the problem which Professor Das Gupta has in mind.

## Tagore Centenary in Bombay

MAHARASHTRA had the unique honour of being the first State in India to inaugurate the Centenary Celebration of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore by starting it off on the New Year's day of the centenary year. How did Bombay come to have this privilege? The Chief Minister of Maharashtra might think that "it was in the fitness of things that the capital of Maharashtra and the leading city of India should inaugurate the countryside celebrations", but what made this possible was the drive and energy of the organisers and a chance coincidence of circumstances. Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammelan was due to have its annual conference in Bombay at the end of last month and the date of the conference could be easily pushed back by a few days to the New Year. As a literary body of standing, the inaugural conference of which had been presided over by Rabindranath himself in 1922, it got full support from the All-India Tagore Centenary Committee in Delhi, sponsored by the Sahitya Akademi.

A large number of literary luminaries from many countries in the world attended by special invitation and the gathering was truly international. The celebration was held in a decorated pandal at the bra-bourne Stadium. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated with a moving speech in which the accent was naturally on Tagore's idealism and internationalism, in a remi-

niscient vein, he said that he could not even remember his first meeting with Tagore; so great was Gandhiji's influence on him, but his mind was more in tune with Tagore although all his activities were conditioned by Gandhiji. Among other things, Nehru made a pointed reference to Rabindranath's role in vitalising Bengali literature by writing simply and in the spoken language of the people, thus freeing Bengali from the chains of scholasticism. This he did to the disparagement of Hindi which he said suffered from an excessive load of learned word or it was written in a manner which was not understood outside a select circle.

Tagore's mysticism was the principal theme of the Presidential address of Shri Sudhi Ranjan Das, the Vice-Chancellor of the Visva Bharati University founded by Rabindranath. It is unfortunate that Tagore should be known outside Bengal mainly as a mystic. Though the subsequent sessions of the Conference were devoted to several aspects of the contributions of the Poet, his prose writings, only a few of which have been translated, did not receive the attention they deserve, particularly the writings on political and social subjects. The centenary celebrations will be held all over India throughout the year. They will fail in their main purpose, if the trend of the speeches continues in the same rut.

The celebration in Bombay was highly successful and the presence of literary luminaries from every State in India and the world over added lustre to it. There was one discordant note, however, how did the Tagore Centenary Celebrations come to be held under the auspices of the Bombay Durga Bari Samiti? Those who knew Rabindranath's deep aversion to idol worship cannot help feeling a little uneasy at seeing his name associated with that of Durga. Nehru's secularism has displaced Vande Mataram from its pride of place as the National Anthem, even though the song, truncated of the stanzas in which Durga is invoked as the Goddess with ten arms bearing weapons passed Gandhiji's test. How could the Prime Minister of secular India participate in a function held under the auspices of an organisation bearing the name of a Hindu Goddess?

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The Offices of *The Economic Weekly* have been shifted to Sonawala Building, 65, Apollo Street, Bombay-1, with effect from January 1, 1961.

Until our telephone (No 253406) is transferred to the above premises, we are available on telephone No 254312.

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