

ceipts is accounted for by indirect taxes, mainly excise duties. Direct taxes on income and expenditure add up to only about 15 per cent of the increase. Even allowing for the share of the States, the relative smallness of the contribution from direct taxes to additional revenue in the past five years is striking. As has been commented in these columns, the proposals regarding direct taxation in Shri Morarji Desai's latest budget are totally unimportant from the yield point of view. Then* is, therefore, no immediate prospect of any increase in the relative share of direct taxes despite Government's concern over intensification of inequality in the distribution of personal income. It is a matter for serious thought whether we are doing right in reducing progressively the importance of direct taxes as a means of financing Governmental expenditure. Common sense suggests

that, as a country develops, the yield from direct taxes should increase rapidly as more and more personal incomes rise to the level at which these taxes become payable. Why should it be otherwise with us especially when the re-distributive impact of our taxes is not noticeable?

In the Central budget's capital account, the position in respect of both long-term borrowing and small savings seems to improve continuously. As is well known, the loan figures have to be further processed to get a clearer idea of the volume of genuine private savings transferred annually to Government through the purchase of securities. And as has been observed on an earlier occasion, the new item appearing this year—investment of U S Government counterpart funds further complicates the picture. That apart, from the strict 'ways and

means' point of view, it is obvious that debt operations are today vastly more important than they were at the beginning of the Second Plan. And this makes public debt policy one of far-reaching consequence.

By and large, therefore, it seems that imperfect as it is, the Budget does raise questions which lie uppermost in the field of development financing. Even so, public appreciation of these questions would be greatly enhanced if the form of the budget were adapted in such a way as to mirror clearly emerging eluings in the economic functions of the State. But this depends on our revolutionising the accounting procedures in Government. There is perhaps no vested interest, in the country stronger than that of accountants and auditors; and the longer we delay the reformation of the budget, the more difficult will intelligent planning become.

Pandit Pant

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU, once describing his most steadfast colleague, Pandit Govind Hallabh Pant, said, "Born in the Himalayas, he is as great as a mountain." Truly, there was something lofty, almost Himalayan, about the presence, sweep of mind, largeness of heart, calm heroism of action, range of achievement and matchless patience and sagacity of the late Shri G B Pant. Schooled in a hard environment, assailed by poverty and forced to teach fellow students to pay for his own education, Shri Pant rose to be a national leader next only to Pandit Nehru in significance and in the esteem and love of the people. Wedded to the Congress in ideology and work, dedicated to Government in administration, devoted to Pandit Nehru in personal loyalty and love and ever mindful of the interests of his own State, Uttar Pradesh, Shri Pant had yet that in him which made him tower over the national scene, a huge brooding figure of wisdom, thoughtfulness and patriarchal concern, held alike in awe and affection by every party, group and individual. Indeed, there was no exaggeration when Pandit Nehru hearing of his colleague's death, said, "There is no doubt that he was the biggest man of his generation in India."

As the undisputed leader of Uttar Pradesh and Chief Minister for over

a decade, he gave the State the best years of his life, laying the foundation of its strength and prosperity. The tenancy reforms he introduced there made him a pioneer in this field, and never may that sprawling State know the stability and solidarity that it enjoyed under his firm, but understanding rule. A formidable debater in Opposition in the old Central Assembly, demolishing with unanswerable logic and disarming humour the arguments of the alien administrators of those days, a constructive, persuasive and unifying force in the Constituent Assembly and then at last the second in command in the Government of free India, deputising unobtrusively, almost imperceptibly for Pandit Nehru in almost every sphere of activity and helping him shape major policies and actions, Shri Pant was a parliamentarian without a peer and an administrator who put one in mind of classic examples of the Indian genius for governance, steady, astute and invincible. But what he did for Government or the Congress on the public stage was only a part of the herculean labours he engaged himself in, working behind the scenes most of the time, untying knots, resolving tangles and smoothing differences, bringing hostile groups and individuals together and keeping a ceaseless watch over the flux of affairs, whether within

the administrative field, the organisational side of the Congress or in the country at large.

A valiant fighter for freedom, whether in utterance or in the field of action, and the very soul of devotion and chivalry, he disabled himself for life by trying to protect his friend. Pandu Nehru, in a lathi-charge that marked the Congress boycott of the Simon Commission and offering in the process his expansive frame as a ready target for the blows that fell indiscriminately. This left a permanent injury on him, making both speech and movement a trial to him, painful to observe; and yet if he took on crushing responsibilities and turned out massive work for decades thereafter, working like a giant on a truly gigantic scale, it was because of that spirit of silent, undemonstrative heroism which moved him throughout. If his predecessor in the Home Ministry, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, welded willing and unwilling States together to go down in history as the architect of India's unity, Shri Pant carried out the equally urgent and equally important task of sorting out and reorganising the hastily-gathered jumble of States and giving Indian unity a new meaning and greater assurance of harmony, peace and permanence.