

and is expecting a production of 3,000 vehicles during the current year, merely from double shift working. Along with increasing production and progressive deletion of imported components, production capacity is now being planned for 6,000 Comets and 1,200 heavy duty engines per annum.

The associated developments which have enabled this or rather have substantially helped in deleting progressively imported components is the establishment of a foundry for quality castings. Castings, however, are not being done by Ashok Leyland but another concern which hopes to build up sufficient capacity not only to supply castings for

Comets and heavy duty engines but undertake high quality castings for other industries also.

The next step on which further progress will depend is the indigenous manufacture of sponge iron which will be very useful not only to foundries but also to steel works, and thus goes the expanding circle, greater dependence among different manufacturing industries and reduction of costs. For sponge iron, we are told, Salem has the right type of ore and Neivveli has lignite and the two could provide the ideal combination for the direct reduction of iron ore to produce this essential raw material for quality castings and other industrial uses.

lords. Second, the rules of every co-operative credit society should debar from membership any person who or any member of whose family is a moneylender or a trader in agricultural produce. It should be compulsory for every member of a credit society to market his produce only through a co-operative. Third, pressure on land must be reduced by a comprehensive scheme of rural industries, not as relief against underemployment during slack seasons, but as a means of providing full employment to a considerable section of landless labour. This will not, of course, have a direct effect upon the leadership. But it would help to make the cultivators' units viable. And by raising the rate of agricultural wages, it would also have the effect of reducing the power of the leaders.

Letter to Editor

Rural Co-operatives out of Context

"THE State as an instrument of the people will be able to break the power village 'Oligarchs' only by formulating rules and procedures clearly, without loopholes and internal contradictions and by ensuring at the same time that the rules and procedures are actually adhered to by all parties concerned."

Thus has the author of 'Rural Co-operatives out of Context' (The Economic Weekly, March 3) concluded his article. It is a simple solution to prescribe, but not so easy to implement. He has not given even a general idea of what the rules should be except that there should be no loopholes.

Fated with the problem of appointing its nominees on a large number of bodies, the only reasonable course open to it will be to select its own officials at the sub-divisional or tehsil levels. Selection of officers above this level will have two disadvantages. First, higher level officials will not have sufficient knowledge of local conditions and second, the work of the co-operatives will be an insignificant part of their duties, so that they will not be able to devote in it adequate time and attention. The appointment of non-official will bring in the very same village leaders as Government nominees.

Thus the best choice open to Government will be to appoint lower level officials on the managements of cooperative bodies. Any

one who is conversant with the working of this level of officials will know that they generally give great weight, to the views of the village leaders in all matters relating to village affairs. And, now, all of a sudden, it is too much to expect these officials to cut down the leaders to size.

Another point made by the author is to equal credit for consumption requirements with that for agricultural operations. This is true as far as it goes. But the credit requirements for social purposes are considerably more than that for consumption or cultivation. It is primarily this credit which the village leader supplies thus strengthening the relationship of master-servant with another of perpetual creditor-debtor. Undoubtedly much of this expenditure is wasteful but it cannot be stopped as long as the leader is ready to lend and the cultivator to borrow.

Under the existing circumstances, there is no doubt that the co-operatives will continue to be instruments in the hands of the village leaders.

This stranglehold can be broken only by radical action. Chronic maladies require desperate remedies. First, the circumstances which confer this leadership' on these persons must be eliminated. To achieve this, comprehensive land reforms (and not piecemeal legislation) should be carried out so that the leaders will no longer be big land-

Finally, a moratorium should be imposed on all agricultural debts other than those due to cooperative bodies. Such a step will have two salutary effects. One, the village moneylender will no longer be prepared to give advances and the volume of funds available with him for his operations will also shrink. Two, the co-operatives will be able to organise a vigorous drive for collection of overdues and make it compulsory for the members to deposit stipulated amounts with the co-operative. This will broaden the finances of the societies.

T R SATAKOPAN

Poona.

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