

What could this sensible plan be? We could have returned to the position as on January 26, not before or after; Hindi had been recognised as the official language in association with English. A categorical assurance could have been given that no change would be countenanced without reference to a high-powered, fully representative, permanent language commission; this language commission could have been entrusted with the task of coping with all the many problems related to the use of mother tongues, the build-up of the link language and the relevance of the proposal (still to be enunciated) for a single Roman script. An attempt could have been made to rally the people on a sane and thoughtful policy, despite the activity of the extremists.

But when the national leadership refuses to lead — is, in fact, led — then there is no hope. Language becomes a matter of politics, of whipping up emotions, isolating this or that leader, a weapon of blackmail. This is exactly how the language question has been used by the leading members of the Working Committee,

by members of Shasta's Cabinet, by the Chief Ministers and by the Members of Parliament. The see-saw debate at the level of what is now never referred to as the 'High Command' provides ample evidence of this snuster, unprincipled manouevring. Will the obvious lesson be learned or will we stumble from one absurd position to another until we are cornered by an assortment of adventurers who are determined to wreck the dynamic, growing consensus which Jawaharlal Nehru attempted to forge as the foundation of our democratic, secular, socialist society?

No Time for "Linguistics"

It is time to ask ourselves this question, for unless the sane, thinking elements in our political life assert their will, the battle will be lost. This mobilisation against the fanatical linguistic lobbyists, the opportunist elite groups which in their narrow-mindedness are prepared to sacrifice the unity of India, would soon strengthen the healthy instincts of the people, particularly if the mobilisation cuts across party labels. Politi-

cal workers can no longer ignore this paramount task. The events of the past few days have made this abundantly clear.

Everyone is scanning the gloom-enshrouded political horizon for the signs of an alternative focus of ability, coherence and power. With economic policy being kicked around among the Finance Ministry, the Planning Commission and various chambers of commerce, local, foreign and international, with foreign policy dependent on our submission to the manipulations and pressures generated by the interests of the dominant nations, particularly those in the West, with defence policy based on the divided favours of Moscow, London and Washington, we cannot continue to be diverted on a diet of linguistics, jingoism and that handy standby, opportunist pragmatism, which covers the entire field of internal policy.

And so in this mood we await (the Budget, the Kerala election result, the Kairon murder enquiry, the details of the CBI report on affairs in Onssa, and what have you . . .

Letter from South

Three Faces of Linguism

TAMILNAD, and to a far lesser extent Andhra, have gone through days without splendour, without, love. These have been the days of death. Revival will come but the shock will not pass soon nor easily. Few could have imagined that so much hate lurked beneath.

The basic impulse was frustration. And those who feel that frustration most keenly are those who have felt the possibility of opportunity, who have not given themselves a vision but known all the lure of lucrative careers within an underdeveloped country. In the forefront of the anti-Hindi agitation in Tamilnad as well as in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra were the students of the medical and engineering colleges. These are certainly the students who have done best in their examinations and for whom job opportunities are the greatest. Why should they be the foremost vehicles of hate?

It would take one too far afield if one attempted to describe the corruption, the slackness and the stagnation that creates the atmosphere in most of our medical colleges and engineer-

ing institutions. The majority of the teachers provide anything but an edifying example. One has only to talk frankly to the students to discover a situation quite close to horror and shame. Even worse is the aim with which most of the students have taken to these particular branches of study. There is a nakedness about the search for the highest possible income. It is a fairly frequent phenomenon that the studies are being paid for out of dowries already given or promised. The tragedy is that this conversion into a commodity amuses, perhaps annoys, but seldom angers the student.

Combined with those who feel that they have a reasonable chance of getting into one or another of the central services, quite a formidable number of better students gets formed. This is the social base of the slogan "English-ever, Hindi-never". And in India as it has developed since Independence this social base has an importance quite out of proportion to its actual numbers or even significance for the evolution of the Indian nation.

It has to be stressed that this social base does not love English but it

hates Hindi as an obstacle to its scramble for the goods of life?. This social base is not distinguished by any genuine urge for westernisation, or moved by the beauties and possibilities of English. Its approach to language is purely instrumentalist. This is the ugliest face of linguism even if some of the worse acts of carnage and burning would be beyond the capacity of this group.

Increasingly Rajaji is emerging as the astute leader of this group. Its ambitions and orientations coincide almost perfectly with the combination of discourses on the Ramayana and belief in the U S as the saviour which Rajaji passes off as the distilled wisdom of eighty years. Mediaevalisation of private life with Anglicisation of public activity—that is the India of this group's and his dreams.

But linguism has another face. There is a powerful segment of opinion in Tamilnad and Andhra, to mention the two States most affected by the recent upheaval, that rightly senses danger in the move from Delhi to make Hindi take over from English. This would be

quite as fatal to the burgeoning of their own languages as the domination of English has proved to be. It may be that Tamil is a fairly developed language with a distinguished modern literary tradition. It has not become, however, the vehicle of the more intricate and subtle thoughts of modern man, whose make-up includes a large portion of science, sociology, economics and the more intellectually demanding aspects of politics. It is still largely—as are most other Indian languages—a language of the vaguer feelings, of the looser emotions and is not bound tight yet by the rigorous demands of intellect.

To develop into that dimension, a language has to confront the task of conveying all the achievements of modern thought directly and without allies. It is fantastic to expect, it to develop and then take over this task. It is the taking up of this task that develops it. Anything or anybody who comes in the way of this challenge being accepted is rightly to be regarded the enemy of the language.

It is true that a good percentage of intellectuals doubt whether this challenge can be accepted at all, betraying a sense of self-respect that appals quite as much as it amuses. Yet there are many good people and true who consider that any attempt to rush through Hindi before regional linguistic development has had a chance is an enemy to be fought.

Wise Move in Andhra

It is significant that observers in Coimbatore as well as in Kakinada reported that many among the crowd who attacked the trains or burnt the post offices believed that from January 26, 1965 Hindi was to replace Tamil and Telugu as rapidly as possible. It is, of course, true that they had no anger against English which remains the main barrier to India's linguistic growth. But Hindi was seen as a new threat.

It was very wise, therefore, on the part of the Chief Minister of Andhra, Brahmananda Reddy, to quickly accept the plea of the Communist opposition to hold a meeting of the leaders of all parties and then announce that a crash programme would be undertaken to establish the supremacy of Telugu in the State. Any honest attempt to implement this programme would immediately encounter the resistance of the present supremacy of English. This attitude was far removed from the stand taken by the Union Steel Minister, Sanjeeva Reddy. This

worthy member of the 'Syndicate' who is believed to aspire to displacing Nanda as the first step towards the Prime Minister's job, made the most reckless pro-English statements that Andhra has heard since the demise of the Justice Party,

Genuine Apprehension

The third face of linguism is a genuine apprehension as to the possibility of linguistic national integration on the basis of Hindi as the official language. There is the fear that the ramifications of any all-India official language are such that the Hindi-speaking people would inevitably evolve into ruling people in India. However hard a Tamilian or an Andhra might try he could never hope to be as at ease in Hindi as somebody whose mother-tongue it was. There is little hope that a time would ever come when, as had happened with English, a Tamilian or an Andhra or a Bengali would know Hindi better than his own language. The idea is that English,

From the London End

Advice from the Governor

A MAJOR controversy on the role of the nationalised Bank of England has been started by the political implications of Governor Lord Cromer's outspoken and obviously unveiled speech to a gathering of bankers in Edinburgh last week in which he stated quite categorically that Britain should defer public spending in order to preserve monetary stability. After referring to his negotiations for the renewal for three months of the 53,000 million credit granted to Britain last November, he said that he could take no pride in the fact that these credits had been renewed. Rather, he was inclined "to look askance at the fact that we, in the United Kingdom, should have run our affairs in such a way that we need to seek short-term banking accommodation abroad". He went on to say that if at home central and local governments subordinate costs to other considerations in an attempt to meet "the desires as well as the needs of the citizen," and if, at the same time, the Government shoulders overseas commitments with insufficient regard to the nation's earning performance, "then one day there has to be a reckoning with the rest of the world... We got uncomfortably close to that day of reckoning last November".

The political implications of this

at any rate, would be equally disadvantageous for *all* the linguistic nationalities of India.

It is recognised that at present command over English is largely a matter of class privilege. But there could be a policy of scholarships and special merit clauses which could cut at the roots of this privilege and make proficiency in English vertically dispersed. It is argued that already wider social strata are able to command English than was the case fifteen years ago. A greater dose of egalitarianism in education could considerably hasten the process.

Whatever the final outcome the immediate needs of the situation, almost universally accepted, are that what is called the 'Nehru assurance' should be given statutory form and a big push should be given to the development of the different regional languages. This alone could turn the tide of hate and bring back the pendulum to a point of sanity.

speech are quite clear coming at a time when a major tussle is going on between the Treasury and George Brown's Department for Economic Affairs over the question whether the forthcoming budget should work for disinflation or expansion. The Treasury has taken a cautious view whereas the Ministry of Economic Affairs is pushing for expansion. The clear meaning of Lord Cromer's speech was that the Government could certainly not expect the approval of either the City of London or foreign bankers unless it adopted a deflationary policy by slashing public spending. That this might mean the abandonment of many of the proposals outlined by the Labour Government in the Queen's Speech, seems to have been a matter of no moment to the Governor of the Bank of England.

Whatever the advice Lord Cromer may give to the Government in private, it is surely not his place to speak up in public and dictate the lines on which the British Government should conduct its financial policy. It is therefore, not surprising that this public pronouncement at this particular time should have caused a political storm and should have led to demands, particularly from the Labour Party's Left Wing, that Lord Cromer should go and that it should be made quite