

THE ECONOMIC WEEKLY

Vol XVII No 23 June 5, 1965

EDITORIALS

- The Right Lead 911
Odd Man Out Again 912

WEEKLY NOTES

- Tariff Preference — Too Much
Money or Too Little? — No
Bounty for Cement-Makers —
From Port to Consumer —
Coal Folly — No Sympathy
from India — World Bank's
Smile 913

LETTER TO EDITOR

- PL 480 Transactions 916

FROM THE LONDON END

- More Debate on International
Liquidity 917

A CALCUTTA DIARY

- The Darjeeling Exodus
— Flibbertigibbet 919

AN AMERICAN LETTER

- The Economy at Midyear 920

BOOK REVIEW

- Growth of a Bureaucracy
— Arthagnani 921

SPECIAL ARTICLES

- Has the Farmer Benefited from
High Prices? A Comparison
of Trends in Harvest and An-
nual Prices
— N K Thingalaya 923
Bechtel Plan for Fertilisers
— Ajoy Gupta 927
Distribution of Public Health
and Education Services
— N Bhattacharya
B Dey 929

AROUND BOMBAY MARKETS

- The Rally Continues 933

BUSINESS NOTES

- Svadeshi Mills — Jyoti — Syn-
thetics and Chemicals — In-
dian Copper — New India In-
dustries — Madras Motor and
General Insurance 934

CURRENT STATISTICS

937

The Right Lead

FOR the first time the Congress Working Committee struck the right note on the language problem when at its meeting in New Delhi this week it did not content itself with arbitrating between English and Hindi and concentrated instead on marking out for the regional languages their rightful place in the future language scheme for the country. To allay the immediate apprehensions of non-Hindi regions, it has suggested that the purpose for which use of English, in addition to Hindi, will be compulsory at the Centre and in inter-State dealings should be specifically laid down in the proposed amendment to the Official Language Act. Bilingualism of this sort is presumably to continue without any particular time-limit till such time as the change to exclusive use of Hindi can be made by common consent.

More important are the Working Committee's recommendations relating to regional languages. It is made "obligatory" for all States to introduce the three-language formula in their educational curriculum, extend it to the university stage and apply it strictly. The regional language of each State will become the medium of administration as well as of instruction, including at the university stage, as early as possible. Efforts are to be made simultaneously to improve the standard of teaching of Hindi in the schools and colleges while English would continue to be taught "as a language which has to play an important role". Along with their adoption as medium of instruction in schools and colleges, all UPSC examinations will be conducted, besides in English and Hindi, in the 14 regional languages specified in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

These recommendations at last impart some internal consistency to the Government's language policy. At present, while the changeover to the regional language as the medium of instruction in schools has been substantially completed all over the country, instruction in colleges continues to be in English in all the States, with one or two partial exceptions. Fresh entrants to colleges thus come up against a veritable language barrier, a circumstance which must be reckoned as among the main causes of the deterioration of college education. This inconsistency is itself in a way the result of the other glaringly illogical aspect of the language policy which while directing that students be taught in the regional languages in schools and colleges, expects them to take examinations in English only for entry into Government service. The belief that English education offers better economic opportunities, therefore, has continued and with justification. Inevitably, in colleges which offer students a choice of instruction in either English or the regional language, the majority opt for English. In Madras, which was a pioneer in introducing instruction in the regional language at the university level, Tamil medium colleges are actually starved for students. In Gujarat, another State which has introduced the regional language medium in colleges, the situation is somewhat different but equally unhappy. Here the changeover to the regional language has been almost entirely achieved through administrative fiat, but complaints are getting steadily more insistent that students from the State have been faring poorly at UPSC examinations and the pressure for reinstating English is getting stronger.

The experience so far makes it clear that however much one may decry the craze for English education, so long as better job opportunities, real or fancied, are offered by it, it will not be successfully snuffed out. Here the substitution of Hindi for English as the medium for public service examinations would have left the position unchanged for the majority of the country's college educated who receive instruction in languages other than Hindi. If proficiency in Hindi becomes a precondition for success as that in English has been hitherto, it will not be enough to study Hindi as just one of many subjects, which is what the three-language formula requires, and the tendency will be to opt for institutions which teach in Hindi, whatever one's mother tongue may be.

THE ECONOMIC WEEKLY

Co-operative Insurance Building,
Sir P M Road, Bombay-1.

Grams: ECONWEEK
Telephone : 253406

Annual Subscription: Rs 36

Foreign : 70s or \$ 10.