

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XV. No. 2

AHMEDABAD, SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 1951

TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Prevention of Public Loss

I am not a lover of penal laws, nor have faith left in the present administrative machinery for their honest execution. But since it is already vested with considerable powers of taking persons into custody in view of the tremendous amount of corruption, and grossly negligent and inefficient management of public affairs involving a loss of large amounts of public money and property, I am almost tempted to recommend a law whereby it would be compulsory to take into preventive detention any minister, Government officer, contractor, or practitioners of law, medicine etc., or trustees and managers of trusts, charitable associations, joint stock companies, firms, co-operative societies etc. against whom there is a reasonable doubt of being corrupt or abettors of corruption, or who have not detected or prevented in time a gross irregularity, inefficiency, negligence, or embezzlement perpetrated in any department under them thereby causing to the Government or the public or a trust and its beneficiaries a heavy loss, until such person clears his character by showing that the loss occurred in spite of his having done his best to prevent it, or that he was not responsible for it.

A loss should be considered heavy enough, if it exceeds the annual salary of the suspected person, or Rs 10,000/- whichever is less, or causes loss of or damage to life.

If the person is unable to clear his character, the detention may be converted into conviction with a sentence of imprisonment which may extend to seven years with or without fine.

Wardha, 23-2-'51

Prompt Action Necessary

Rapid establishment of Coco-Cola factories in the various towns of India appears to have been contemplated. It is regarded to be an injurious stuff, not at all necessary even for medicinal purposes like alcohol or opium. A protest was made as soon as the foundation ceremony of its first factory in Delhi was announced. It has not been heeded. Like *vanaspati* the industry will be allowed to grow until crores of rupees will be invested in it, and hundreds of agents with their several hundred

employees will be made to depend upon it. Then it will become very difficult to eradicate the evil. The advocates of control have here an open and beneficial field for action. It will be supported by all lovers of the well-being of the people. This is a matter in which any direct action of the public even of Satyagraha type would be not free from danger. Government must stop this industry before one gets to start. It is a step which Government alone can take without any danger to public peace. Government cannot both irritate moulders of healthy public opinion and expect their co-operation in its policies.

Wardha, 14-2-'51

Free Supply of "Harijan" Papers

A kind and appreciative reader writes in the course of a letter:

"I would also take the liberty of putting one more suggestion. I think the *Harijan* should be more popularized. It is my firm conviction that once a person takes to reading this paper, he will continue to read it. If you can find a way to introduce this paper in the various school and college libraries, it would do immense good to the students. When I was studying in the St. Xavier's College, Bombay, this paper was introduced and the Principal, staff and students were very fond of reading this paper and at a later date, we had to get two copies of the paper. You can also send this paper to various other public institutions. . . . If possible, you should send this paper to various educational boarding houses even free of charge, — and I shall be glad to send my humble donation, if any fund is required to do so.

"At the end, I would be falling in my duty if I do not send you my hearty congratulations, for maintaining a high standard after the death of the Mahatma and Mahadev Desai."

These papers, as the reader knows, are not sustained by advertisements or public donations. They have therefore to be self-supporting. Hence only limited copies can be distributed free. If, however, appreciative readers place, as the above one offers to do, a sum at the disposal of the Manager, *Harijan* Papers, to enable him to supply free copies to deserving institutions or even individuals unable to pay their subscriptions, they are supplied by him accordingly. The donor is also at liberty to choose his own donees.

I am grateful to the correspondent for his compliments at the end of the letter.

Wardha, 21-2-'51

K. G. M.

THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT AND
THE A. I. S. A.

II
Government Khadi Stocks

Press Note

"6. When the A.I.S.A. was managing the centres, it used to send the *khadi* produced in the centres to their sales branches in the various towns and cities all over the province. With the conversion of the centres into self-sufficiency centres these outlets were not available to them and as no effective measures were taken to increase local consumption, the stocks began to accumulate. The A.I.S.A. Sales Organization also appears to have felt the cutting off of the supplies, which it used to get from these centres. It was at the request of the A.I.S.A. that the Government first supplied 5000 dhoties to the A.I.S.A. in 1947. Supplies were made in subsequent years also at the request of the A.I.S.A. This no doubt helped to relieve the centres of some of the accumulated stock but it does not justify the allegation that the Government were concerned only with the disposal of their stock and not with promoting the self-sufficiency aspect of the scheme. The Government believe that the A.I.S.A.'s need for the stocks was no less urgent than the Government's need to reduce the accumulated stocks. The Government sold the stock to the A.I.S.A. at the cost of production plus only 3½ per cent towards overhead charges, though their actual overhead expenditure was higher. The A.I.S.A.'s prices for the same varieties were higher and the A.I.S.A. seems to have sold off the stock at its own prices, thus making a profit."

A. I. S. A.

(x) The Government allege that supplies to the A.I.S.A. were made at our request and in our interest also. This is not in keeping with the facts. The A.I.S.A. was not willing to take up the stocks from the Government because such a course was liable to divert the Government's attention from self-sufficiency and to open an easy outlet for disposal of their product outside the intensive areas. There is enough record with us to prove that the Government repeatedly tried to induce the A.I.S.A. to relieve them of their stocks. We shall be content here with giving two instances.

(xi) The following is a quotation from the official report of the conference held on 10-7-47: "The Hon. Prime Minister remarked that the Government were not a business concern and the A.I.S.A. which has long been in the business line should agree to absorb the surplus stocks. Shri Jajuji, explaining the position of the A.I.S.A., said that if the Government took up the *khadi* work as their own, the A.I.S.A. was at their service with its experience. But that if the Government thought that *khadi* is the concern of the A.I.S.A. and not their own the A.I.S.A. could not take the responsibility."

(xii) The following part of the letter from the Secretary to the Government to the A.I.S.A. dated 4th Oct., 1949 throws light on many points: "As urged by the representative of the A.I.S.A. this Government have decided to reconsider the questions of cancelling mill-cloth licences issued in the four Intensive *Khadi* centres and initiating legislation to prevent handloom-cloth produced in the above 4 centres from being sold within the centres and allowing it to be taken outside the centres for sale. Also steps will be taken to distribute as far as possible *khadi* produced in the Intensive *Khadi* centres in the centres of production, the surplus, if any, being taken up by the Government departments. As regards the issue of licences I am to state that the licences have been issued to the private producers and dealers in Andhra Desh only and that the licences issued will be cancelled in the areas where the A.I.S.A. want to extend

their activities after giving the necessary warning to the licensees in advance. I am also to add that no licence will be issued in Tamilnad. In the circumstances I am to request that the A.I.S.A. may take up a substantial quantity of surplus stock of *khadi* now held up in the Government Intensive *Khadi* Centres as early as possible."

(xiii) The words in the circumstances and as early as possible are significant. Having regard to what happened afterwards, was not the promise of reconsideration, the result of which was already settled in the Government's mind, a bait to trap the A.I.S.A. to take up the stocks?

(xiv) The Government's insinuation of profiteering by the A.I.S.A. is without any foundation. As against the margin of 3½ per cent allowed, the A.I.S.A. had to sell the stuff at less than 3 per cent, besides bearing expenses of transport. The A.I.S.A. had thus to incur a loss. But this 3½ per cent was fixed having regard to the same margin which was allowed to the A.I.S.A. at the time of handing over the centres to the Government with the then existing stocks, at the beginning of the scheme. The Provincial Textile Commissioner in his Memo No. R.C.No. 122419/K/47 dated the 19th July, 1947, wrote: "It has been agreed that the sale may be made on the conditions that were applied when the A.I.S.A.'s stocks were transferred to Government, namely, the stocks should be handed over to the A.I.S.A. at cost of production plus 3½ per cent thereon."

Return of Centres

Press Note

"7. The Government have already carefully considered the A.I.S.A.'s request for the return of the centres. It was not for working the centres that the Intensive *Khadi* Scheme was framed but it was for working the scheme that the centres were taken. The Intensive *Khadi* Scheme forms an integral part of the Government's Rural Welfare Scheme. The Government have incurred a considerable expenditure in connection with the scheme in those centres. The Government cannot abandon the scheme merely because the A.I.S.A. now wishes to work the centres.

"As regards the Secretary's complaint that the contact, which the A.I.S.A. had with the centres, has been cut off, the Government can only observe that this was a consequence invited upon itself by the A.I.S.A., when it decided to withdraw from the Scheme.

"In the earlier part of his statement, the Secretary himself has admitted that the A.I.S.A. did not achieve much success in self-sufficiency, when it was managing the Centres, but had to send a substantial part of the *khadi* produced in the centres to cities and distant places for sale. The *khadi* work that it was doing was thus commercial. There is nothing to show that if the Government abandon the Scheme and return the Centres to the A.I.S.A., it will be in any better position to promote self-sufficiency, unaided by the Government."

A. I. S. A.

(xv) The Government have twitted the A.I.S.A. as being commercial. It never claimed that its work in the centres, before the scheme, was on a self-sufficiency basis. As regards the general policy of the A.I.S.A., the Government may be ignorant of it but *khadi*-lovers know full well that for about the last five years the Association is bending all its energies towards self-sufficiency and, therefore, is transferring its commercial work to certified parties. The Association is in fact being blamed by many that it is wrong in not vigorously extending its own commercial *khadi* work also.

(xvi) The Government have not denied the talk, we mentioned in our former statement, which the A.I.S.A. Provincial secretaries had with the then Chief Minister in Sept. 1946 when there was an implied assurance given

that the centres will be returned to the A. I. S. A. in the circumstances, which have now arisen. We assert that the Government's refusal to return the centres cannot be morally justified. It is the old autocratic way of doing things, which we had so much experience of, under the British Rule. The Government are always almighty. 'The king can do no wrong.'

Soft Corner for Uncertified Dealers

Press Note

"8. The Secretary has alleged in the statement that the Government appeared to have a soft corner for uncertified dealers, and that was perhaps the reason why they did not enforce the provisions of the Madras Khadi (Development) Order, 1949, strictly enough. The allegation is entirely incorrect. The main object of the Order was to control private trade in *khadi* by a system of licensing, with a view to ensure the genuineness of the *khadi* produced and at the same time not to allow private producers working with a profit motive to compete with the A. I. S. A. or Government in areas where they were working their *khadi* schemes on self-sufficiency lines. There is now not a single uncertified *khadi*-dealer in the whole of the Tamilnad. In the Andhra area, the A. I. S. A. itself agreed to the licensing of a small number of private producers and dealers and licences have been issued accordingly. There is no case of contravention of the provisions of the Order brought to Government's notice, on which action has not been taken. More than 20 prosecutions have been launched and several dealers have been convicted and fined; one dealer has even been sentenced to R. I. for two months."

A. I. S. A.

(xvii) We have enough material with us to prove that the Government had a soft corner for the uncertified *khadi*-dealers. The Press Note speaks of steps taken during the latter half of 1949 and thereafter, while we spoke about the period before that. The scheme, which itself contained a clause to eliminate the uncertified dealers, was inaugurated on 2nd Oct., 1946. Why did the Government not take steps till 1949? They should have explained the delay.

(xviii) The Government bring in the question of licences and say that the A. I. S. A. itself agreed to the licensing of private producers and dealers in Andhra Desh. They say their number is small. We are informed, it is 199 in Andhra alone. Can even a quarter of this number be said to be small? The number of A. I. S. A.'s certificate-holders for the whole of India is not more than 127. We admit that our Andhra Branch Secretary took part in the first meeting of the Committee of many others who decided the issue of licences. He said he was there as Regional Khadi Officer in response to a personal D. O. and not as the Secretary of the branch, which fact was made clear to the officer concerned. We, however, consider it an error on his part. As soon as we came to know of the matter we made it clear to the Government that that policy was wrong. And the quotation given above (vide para xii above) describes the response of the Government to it. Under similar circumstances our Tamilnad Branch Secretary opposed such a step of the Government for Tamnad and therefore no licences were issued there.

(xix) But in this respect we are inclined to blame the Congress Working Committee more than the Madras Government. The former has passed a resolution authorizing the Provincial Congress Committees and the Provincial Governments to certify *khadi* dealers. It has, by this, unwittingly hit at the purity of *khadi* and greatly damaged its cause. It is however fortunate that no P. C. C. has yet issued any certificate, nor has any Provincial Government, except the Madras State, have done so. On the contrary the Orissa, the Madhya Bharat, the Punjab and the Assam Governments are doing their *khadi* work under the A. I. S. A. certificate,

fully appreciating that such a course alone can safeguard the purity of *khadi* and advance its cause. We presume that the Congress Working Committee has also stayed its hand in the matter, subsequently apprehending the evil effects which the giving effect to its resolution is sure to have on *khadi*.

Government's Decision Welcomed

Press Note

"9. The Government have also introduced a system of grants-in-aid to private institutions engaged in constructive work, including *khadi* work in the villages.

"The Government's desire to encourage *khadi* in all possible ways is exemplified also in the decision they took in 1948 that only *khadi* should be used for all the cloth requirements of the State. The Police and one or two other Departments have alone been exempted from the order. The Government have commended to local bodies also the use of *khadi* in preference to other cloth as far as possible and they are aware that a good number of local bodies are following the lead given by the Government in the matter.

"In conclusion, the Government wish to emphasize that in spite of the A. I. S. A.'s declining to cooperate with them, they propose to work their Khadi Scheme as vigorously as possible."

A. I. S. A.

(xx) The Government deserve thanks for their decision of 1948 to use *khadi* only for all the cloth requirement of the State. The public will be interested to know the extent of effect given to the decision. One may however enquire whether it has not to do anything with the utilization of the surplus stocks of the Intensive Khadi areas. We are glad the Madras Government have decided to carry on the *Khadi* Scheme, by which we understand them to mean the Self-sufficiency Intensive *Khadi* Scheme. None will be happier than the A. I. S. A. if the Government succeed. All *khadi*-lovers will watch with interest the progress of the Scheme. We wish them success.

KRISHNADAS GANDHI,
Secretary, A. I. S. A., Sevagram

Thanks

Albert Reinbold, Heidelberg, *Saudhausen* (Germany), sends his kind regards to all his correspondents; every one will be answered within the next few weeks and requests not to send any more dictionaries.

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HARIJAN

March 10

1951

PLANS AND PROTESTS

I have received the following for publication :

"The following two resolutions were adopted at the West Bengal Constructive Workers' Conference, which met in the village of Balarampur (Dist. Midnapur) on the 17th and 18th of February under the presidency of Shri G. Ramachandran, Secretary of the All India Village Industries Association, Wardha. More than 250 constructive workers were present including Dr Prafullachandra Ghosh.

"1. This Conference is clearly of the view that, no more time should be lost by those who have faith in the Constructive Programme as laid down by and which has grown up under Gandhiji to unite and speak with one voice on vital matters affecting National Planning so that, the patterns of development might conform, as far as possible, to those envisaged by Gandhiji.

"In order to do this, regional conferences of constructive workers should be held without delay leading up to an All India Conference to take steps to,

- (1) consolidate, deepen and extend all constructive work already going on;
- (2) undertake further experimentation and research to make constructive work more efficient and real and to reach out to the growing needs of the people under present conditions;
- (3) draw up an overall plan of national reconstruction for creating a casteless and classless society through non-violent methods and educate the people regarding the same; and
- (4) educate the voters, 80 per cent of whom are in the villages, to vote for only those who would take the pledge of service of villages along lines laid down by Gandhiji.

"2. This Conference is distressed and pained at the manner in which the Central and various State Governments are dealing with vital items of the Constructive Programme and specially feels called upon to raise its voice of protest against their policies or lack of policies in regard to *Khadi*, Village Industries, Basic Education, *Go-seva* etc. Unless these items of constructive work are strengthened and spread throughout the country the position of the masses in the villages will undoubtedly deteriorate further and Governments will continue to lose the moral backing of the people without which no Government can function effectively.

"The Conference therefore demands that the Central and State Governments should set up appropriate machinery in close co-operation with non-official agencies like the A. I. S. A., the A. I. V. I. A., the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, the *Go-seva* Sangh etc., to give the necessary care and attention to Constructive Work and to strengthen and spread it further in the country."

The resolutions show the mood of not a few constructive workers. There is much truth in what they say. I would, however, urge them not to waste their breath and time in doing the same things, for which the Government, the Congress bodies, and organizations like World Peace Committees etc. are criticized: namely, drawing up too many plans, holding conferences here, there and everywhere, passing resolutions of

protests, educating voters, making demands without a clear idea of what they would do in case the demands, as may be predicted, are ignored.

Careful and diligent study must precede plans. A definite programme which workers and people can be asked to work out on their own strength and initiative must be thought out before conferences are convened. Before making a demand, the mind must be made up about the step to be taken to create a sanction behind it. The conferences must be business meetings, and not merely for making vigorous speeches and passing strongly-worded resolutions. It is unnecessary to do energetic work for creating or publicizing dissatisfaction against the present state of affairs. Its existence may be taken for granted. Those in charge of Government affairs are not ignorant of it. And several of them feel themselves embarrassed, and seek a way out of the situation. They do not want to be told that they are in a difficult marshy forest. They themselves have been seeking a way out and, if possible, some one who will inspire confidence in them that he will lead them out. If constructive workers or their *sanghs* can do this, their conferences would be fruitful.

Asking voters "to vote for only those who would take the pledge of service of villages along lines laid down by Gandhiji" will not carry them very far. We are used to take pledges easily, and since they are easily taken, they are as easily forgotten. Where is the constructive worker who does not repeat every day Vinoba's verses of eleven pledges? Where is the Congressman, who has not taken the pledge contained in that long document which used to be read *en masse* on each 26th of January since 1930? Every day hundreds of witnesses are examined in law courts under the vow "to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth", but how many of them do not treat it as exhausted after they have answered the first question, "What is your name?"? A pledge taken for obtaining political power is treated less seriously than even the pledge of a witness in law courts. Constructive workers must not waste their energy after this type of propaganda. If half a dozen politicians among constructive workers cannot feel at ease without this type of activity, let them do it. But I would not advise the workers in general to spend their time, money and energy after this pursuit. What the nation wants is men actually possessed of strong and pure character and faith and not merely people bound over under a pledge comparable with some of the sections of the Criminal Procedure Code.

I would wholeheartedly ask them to concentrate on items (1) & (2) of Resolution 1.

Let us clearly understand what we have to achieve. We need not aspire to take possession of the Government machinery. We must build

up a parallel machinery. It will be of a different type from the Government machinery. The people themselves will have begun to run it. It will not ask the Government machinery to disappear while it serves some purpose, but the strength of the popular machinery must be such as to make the Government literally its agent, and never able to work against the interests of the masses. The Government machinery must feel itself immensely powerful to resist forces against the nation, but as against the nation itself and its popular machinery, it must feel quite subordinate to it. The Government machinery is weak enough even today. But in the absence of the parallel constructive machinery of the people, it yields to bullies, and itself bullies the people. Let constructive organizations therefore make themselves strong by actual work and make it impossible for bullies to stay.

Secondly, the popular machinery must be capable of supplying good, honest, capable and trained servants of high and pure personal character to the Government machinery. This does not necessarily mean that it will train office-bearers and servants in every department. But it will mould the moral character of the people sufficiently high, to ensure that dishonest and corrupt people cannot flourish in the Government. As Shri Arvanavakam loves to put it, through every item of the constructive programme, the one great object to be achieved is the *Nai Talim* of the entire nation in general, and of the rising generation in particular.

Wardha, 26-2-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

ANTI-PROHIBITIONISTS' FALLACIES

[The following letter was written to the editor of the *Times of India* but has not been published by him:]

Sir,—The anti-prohibitionists in your columns have made statements which must not pass unchallenged. For instance, the doctors say that 'persons need a drink to work well the next day.' But the official book on 'Health Education' issued by the Ministry of Education for the use of teachers in England states, 'the habitual drinking of beer, wine and spirits may tend to weaken the muscles of the heart and of the body generally, and so diminish the power and capacity to work.' The Royal Commission 1929-'31 declared in its report in so many words: 'The use of alcohol as an aid to work is physiologically unsound.' During the first world war Mr Lloyd George set up a Liquor Control Board which made an inquiry through scientific examiners and came to the conclusion that 'a moderate use of alcohol lessens the efficiency of the workman by about 15 per cent.'

M. says that alcohol has no direct effect upon sexual activity. But Dr Sanger found that among 2,000 fallen women, 82.5 per cent were addicted to drink, 46.5 per cent had drinking mothers and 61.5 per cent had drinking fathers.

And Dr David Starr Jordan says, 'Thousands of thousands of boys step from the saloon to the brothel—not a long step—to be poisoned for life with the most loathsome of diseases, the red plague, of which no one was ever certainly cured.'

Further on he says, 'Alcohol does not harm even a nursing mother or an unborn child.' But Prof. D. F. Fraser Harris, M. D., D. Sc., wrote: 'Where pathology speaks with no uncertain voice is in regard to the baneful influence of alcohol in the reproductive process. Possibly one of the most fruitful sources of the birth of infants who will later become imbecile is the alcoholic sperms of the father. The sperms are either dead or so seriously devitalized that as fertilizing agents for the ovum they are biochemically imperfect. It needs very little physiological knowledge to realize how disastrous for the foetus is an alcoholized state of the maternal blood, seeing that the period of this influence is relatively so prolonged.'

Again he says, 'The excessive use of alcohol does not cause heart or other organic damage.' But as a result of the study of two million policy-holders in American insurance companies it was found that the death rate from Bright's disease and pneumonia was above the normal in drinking groups and among 'moderate' drinkers the death rate from cirrhosis of the liver was five times the normal. And Prof. Bollinger found in his investigation of 5,700 bodies that "every sixteenth male in Munich dies of 'Munich bur heart' and that one rarely finds in Munich a faultless heart and a normal kidney in an adult man."

Certainly the anti-prohibitionists do not wish that India should be afflicted like England where seven hundred million pounds a year are worse than wasted on drink and 25,000 people a year are convicted of drunkenness.

V. G. D.

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GANDHIJI'S CHOICE OF AN INSPIRING NAME

My contact with Thakkarbapa was through the Harijan Industrial School (since named Thakkarbapa Vidyalaya), Madras. It was started in 1933-34 on the personal initiative of Shri S. Ganesan and with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi. In February 1945, the Central Harijan Sevak Sangh took it over on Gandhiji's suggestion. The administration was entrusted to a local nominated committee with Shri V. Bhashyam Iyengar as its president. I was pushed in as its Secretary in May 1936, when Gandhiji was at Madras for a few hours, on his way to Mysore. From then I came under the iron discipline of Thakkarbapa, regarding the finances and administration of the institution. The school was a residential one for imparting industrial education in artisan crafts to about 50 Harijan boys at the time. It provides free boarding and instruction. We had to organize and run the classes and find a substantial portion of the finances locally. We also received grants from the Central Harijan Sevak Sangh. It was a job to satisfy the meticulously detailed scrutiny of Thakkarbapa. My contact with him at the time was mostly through correspondence. I must confess to a sense of irksomeness, in the beginning, at having to submit monthly reports and statements, and explanations arising therefrom. I had a feeling that Bapa lacked appreciation of, and sympathy for the difficulties of a part-time honorary worker like me — wedded to a jealous profession like that of law. It was only later, when I came into direct personal contact with him during his occasional visits to Madras, that I realized the soft and appreciative heart that lay under his stiffness. As I look back, I feel that my correspondence with him must have been a source of additional worry and trouble for him. But he must have been bravely bearing similar worries from all over. He would, in his later days, when I used to plead with him about some matter or other on behalf of the school, remark in good humour, "Oh! You are a lawyer. I cannot argue with you. I can only bargain." It was under him that I learnt the first principle of public service. It consists in scrupulous care and integrity in handling finances, and intelligent and meticulous attention to the details of the work, without getting overwhelmed by it.

He was on a visit to Madras for a few days. I think it was in 1941. I was anxious to avail of his presence for the purpose of making collections for the school — a perennial problem. I took him round to some prospective donors. It was not altogether encouraging. He put us to shame by his energy and perseverance. I was feeling worried at having to put him to trouble and strain. To avoid further strain and to save time, I fixed up with his permission, a small gathering of sympathizers and friends to meet him before he left, so that they might be inspired and exhorted to make and raise contributions. I

provided light refreshments — without any previous thought. He wrote to me from the next halt in his tour a personal confidential letter. He enquired what the refreshments cost and who bore the expense. I hastened to reply that the expense was very moderate and that I bore it. If I remember aright, I enclosed with my letter the vouchers therefor standing in my personal name. By that time he had formed a liking for me and had full confidence. There was therefore no question of any suspicion. But it is indicative of the very high standard of rectitude that he was scrupulous about, as regards himself and his workers. It might also have hurt him to feel that any expense at all should have been incurred to relieve him from the strain of going round for collection.

The school was located in an old *kachcha* building. It was proposed that the school should have its own buildings. We secured a site after a good deal of effort. We were fortunate in getting Gandhiji to agree to lay the foundation stone. The function was fixed up. Thakkarbapa was also good enough to come all the way. It was the morning of Friday, 1st February 1946. The site was a short distance from the quarters fixed up for Gandhiji. He preferred to walk. I was escorting him and was alone by his side. I took the opportunity to convey to him the desire of my co-workers and myself that when laying the foundation he might give an inspiring name to the institution. The function was performed. Gandhiji was in a very happy mood when laying the foundation, and as part of it he insisted on building with his own hand, a portion of the wall to the height of two or three feet laying brick over brick and spreading cement in between. He was remarking at the time with hilarious laughter that he wanted to make good his claim to be an expert mason (we have preserved in the school a snap-shot of this scene). On his return to the dais he made a short speech. He mentioned that he was asked to give the institution an inspiring name and that he was thinking of it for the last few minutes. He wound up by saying "What more inspiring name can I give than to call it 'Thakkarbapa Vidyalaya'?" (amidst great applause). Bapa was on the dais by his side. He blushed heavily like a young maiden and looked at us with reproaching eyes. After the function, he came to me and rated me as the mischief-maker. He said he would not have come all the way if he had any inkling of the conspiracy. I could only protest my innocence.

In Thakkarbapa we had an intensely human personality moving with us and eating with us as we did, and guiding us in our faltering steps and moulding us by his iron, yet appreciative, discipline.

His co-workers have been orphaned. May he continue to inspire us from his abiding place, merged in the Eternal Divinity, which he had realized in his lifetime, by his identification with down-trodden humanity.

10-2-51

B. JAGANNATH DAS

THE SIEGE OF ENGLISH

Recently there was a news item in the papers telling us that a committee of the Government of India had passed strictures on high Government officers with English education. The Committee deemed it necessary to criticize them for the language and style of the remarks passed by these officials on papers and documents of Government business. The committee says: The officials seem to think that by their corrections and additions they improve the drafts and notes from the point of view of language and style. But by doing so they make the drafts and notes unnecessarily lengthy. The lengthy preambles, literary passages, and unnecessary quotations and extracts that are put in can easily be dispensed with.

It is only the people who have been all along fighting for Swaraj that are wont to pass such strictures, because they are not well-versed in English. Otherwise the old masters of these officers would surely have congratulated them for their drafts and notes that would have graced their own English literature. They were trained for their old masters, and as such should they not be appreciated and complimented rather than criticized? Instead of doing any such thing the Committee lays it down that they should write in a direct and clear style. But were they ever taught to do so? The one clear, and straight thing then was to win Swaraj for the country. But these officers were expected to frame all their drafts and notes without allowing this factor to creep in. How then was it possible for them to adopt a clear and direct style? Had they time to spare from their duties they would have straightway produced literary pieces and served the English language directly. But knowing that something is better than nothing, they tried to bring in as much literary grace as possible into whatever they happened to write. This only shows their practical wisdom.

The members of the committee should know that these officers are past any improvement, having been used to the habit of indulging in literary flourishes in English. It is impossible to get out of the present sad condition without beginning to carry on the country's administration in the language of the people forthwith. Instead of doing this the Government of India have shown the weakness of giving English a further lease of fifteen years and hindered the newly growing strength of Swaraj. Under these circumstances how can the officers be expected to pay heed to our complaints? English has besieged us on all sides; and so long as we do not dislodge it from wherever we are confronted by it, there will be no scope for the strength of the nation to develop. English is no doubt a valuable thing; but we cannot afford to give it such undue importance, nor can we allow its use on such a scale as to allow it to kill the very life out of us. Education alone is the proper agency to begin this work. It alone can change the atmos-

phere and bring about a revolution. But if education itself becomes helpless, who will give strength to the people? Will Ministers of Education please consider this?

(Translated from Gujarati)

M. P. DESAI

HISTORY OF VANASPATI PRICE CONTROL

The people in their efforts and enthusiasm to get a ban imposed on *vanaspati* or to get it coloured, have ignored an important fact regarding it.

There has been a continuous rise in the rates of *vanaspati* for some years past. No section of the people has said a word against it. This increase affects not only *vanaspati* alone but also groundnut oil which is consumed by the people of India to the tune of about 1,000 million lb. per year. It thus helps the exploitation of the poor, who do not consume *vanaspati* at all, to the extent of Rs 25 crores per annum.

Time and again Government have granted the demands of the *vanaspati* producers for raising its price and gave further fillip to the inflationary forces. People have silently acquiesced in it.

The ground generally advanced for raising the price is that the prices of groundnut oil have gone on increasing. Strictly speaking, there is no justification to demand higher prices for *vanaspati* even on this plea. But the real facts are just the reverse. It has been the rise in *vanaspati* prices that have led to higher prices of groundnut oil.

Tabular Statement of Comparative rise in Prices of Vanaspati and Groundnut Oil

| Dates when rates of <i>Vanaspati</i> prices were raised | Increased rates per lb. | Pre-raise rates of groundnut oil per md.* | Post-raise rates of groundnut oil per md. | Rs | Date | Rate |
|---|-------------------------|---|---|---------|------|------|
| 23- 6-'47 | from 0-11-3 to 0-13-3 | 18-0-0 | 23- 7-'47 | 21- 2-0 | | |
| 2-12-'48 | 0-14-0 | 20-0-0 | 14-12-'48 | 20-10-0 | | |
| 1- 3-'49 | 0-14-6 | 20-0-0 | 21- 3-'49 | 21- 4-0 | | |
| 5- 7-'49 | 0-15-3 | 21-0-0 | 5- 8-'49 | 22- 6-0 | | |
| | | | 15- 9-'49 | 23- 8-0 | | |
| | | | 15-10-'49 | 25- 0-0 | | |
| 1- 5-'50 | 1- 0-0 | 22-4-0 | 27- 5-'50 | 23-11-0 | | |
| 3- 8-'50 | 1- 0-9 | 24-0-0 | 23- 8-'50 | 25- 0-0 | | |

It will be noticed from the above table that the rise in the rates of *vanaspati* was necessarily followed by a rise in those of groundnut oil. And on the plea of the rise in oil prices the *vanaspati* producers have made a demand for further increase in the rates of *vanaspati* and Government have gone on granting their demands.

Unreasonable Profits

At times either on account of an abundant supply of groundnut during its season or for other reasons, the high prices of groundnut oil that followed in the wake of rise in *vanaspati* prices have come down rather disproportionately. It should then have been the duty of *vanaspati* producers to lower the rates of *vanaspati* proportionately. But *vanaspati* producers have

*A maund=28 lbs.

at no time in the history of the industry shown any sense of moral responsibility by reducing their rates. Nor have the Government asked them to do so. Consequently, when the prices of groundnut oil fall, they get a splendid opportunity to pocket huge supplementary profits, and thus profiteering gets an open field to thrive. Then, *vanaspati* producers sometimes hoard stocks of groundnut oil sufficient to last for four months. This creates a scarcity of oil in the market resulting once again in the rise of the rates of groundnut oil.

Comparative Statement of Increase in Rates of Groundnut Oil and Vanaspati During the Last Three Years

| Date | Rates of groundnut oil per md. in rupees | Ceiling rate of <i>vanaspati</i> per lb. |
|-----------|--|--|
| 10- 3-'47 | 21- 8-0 | 0-11-3 |
| 10- 7-'47 | 20- 3-0 | 0-13-6 |
| 10-11-'47 | 16-11-0 | 0-13-6 |
| 10- 3-'48 | 17- 1-0 | 0-13-6 |
| 10- 7-'48 | 19-14-0 | 0-13-6 |
| 10-11-'48 | 20- 3-0 | 0-13-6 |
| 10- 3-'49 | 21- 0-0 | 0-14-6 |
| 10- 7-'49 | 21- 2-0 | 0-15-3 |
| 10-11-'49 | 20-12-0 | 0-15-3 |
| 10- 3-'50 | 22- 0-0 | 0-15-3 |
| 10-11-'50 | 22- 8-0 | 1- 0-9 |

Let us make a close study of this table. On 10-3-1947, groundnut oil was sold at Rs 21-8-0 per maund; and *vanaspati* at 0-11-3 per lb. On 10-11-1947 groundnut oil was sold at Rs 16-11-0 per maund but *vanaspati* sold at 0-13-6 per lb. Again on 10-11-1949 the rate for groundnut oil was 20-12-0 per maund and *vanaspati* was sold at 0-15-3 per lb. It is thus clear that though groundnut oil has decreased by 12 annas per maund, the people have to pay 0-4-0 more per lb. of *vanaspati*. Not only that, but it affects the crude-oil market also in the same proportion (4 annas per lb.).

Thus the people are drained to the extent of Rs 25 crores per year. The aim of reducing prices is not achieved and inflationary tendencies are encouraged. The rise in prices of groundnut oil prevents its export and thus causes a loss of foreign exchange to the nation.

Since the last increase in rates of *vanaspati*, the prices of groundnut oil have gone up and it was rumoured that *vanaspati* producers had put in a fresh demand for further increase in their rates. But the prices of groundnut having gone down on account of the commencement of the season, they gave up their demand. But people must not sit passively. Along with the efforts for getting *vanaspati* banned or coloured, they should also agitate for reducing the rates of *vanaspati*, as long as that product is allowed to be made.

Rates of oil and oilseeds depend upon prices of *vanaspati*. In the interest of foreign exchange, and in the general interest of the country, a

strong agitation should be carried on for the reduction in the rate of *vanaspati*. It is hoped that the people and the Government will take up the question.

Bombay

(Translated from Gujarati)

"SALESMAN"

(Note: Supposing that *vanaspati* manufacture has to be allowed, the question whether its price should be reduced *pari passu* groundnut oil, as also whether the price of the oil should be allowed to rise in proportion to that of *vanaspati* must be examined from a different standpoint. The price of a commodity would have to follow to a certain extent the policy of the nation with regard to its manufacture. If the manufacture is to be encouraged the policy would be to sell the product cheap, even if the cost is high; if the policy is to discourage it, the product must be sold at a premium, even if the cost is less. But the surplus profit must not enrich the producer, but should go to the Government for the benefit of the nation. Thus, groundnut oil should always be available as cheaply as possible, because it is the food of the poor. If the price is insufficient to provide adequate returns to the oil-pressing industry, it should be paid a subsidy to be recovered from the high price of *vanaspati*; but groundnut oil must not be allowed to become costly. In the same way, since the *ghee* industry must be encouraged in the interest of the cattle and health of the nation, it is necessary that *ghee* must not become prohibitively costly. *Vanaspati* must not therefore be allowed to so compete with *ghee*, as to drive the latter out. For this reason, too, it must be sold at a premium, but the extra price must go to the Treasury for subsidizing the *ghee* industry.

The defect of the present system is that it enables *vanaspati* to thrive at the cost of simple oil, *ghee* and milch-cattle, without any benefit even to the consumers of *vanaspati*. All the demerits of an exploiting industry run for private profit are present here.

14-2-'51

— K. G. M.)

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