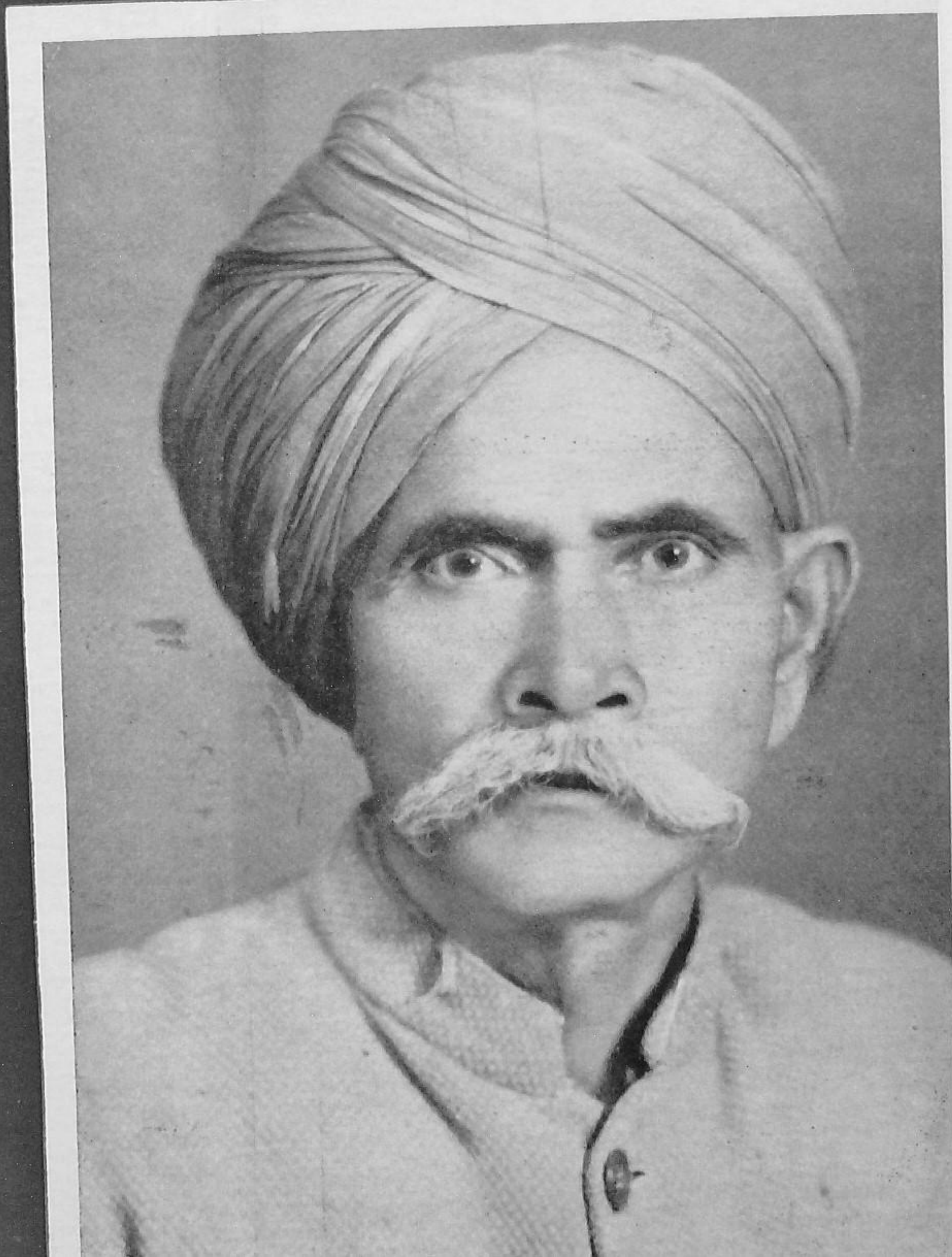


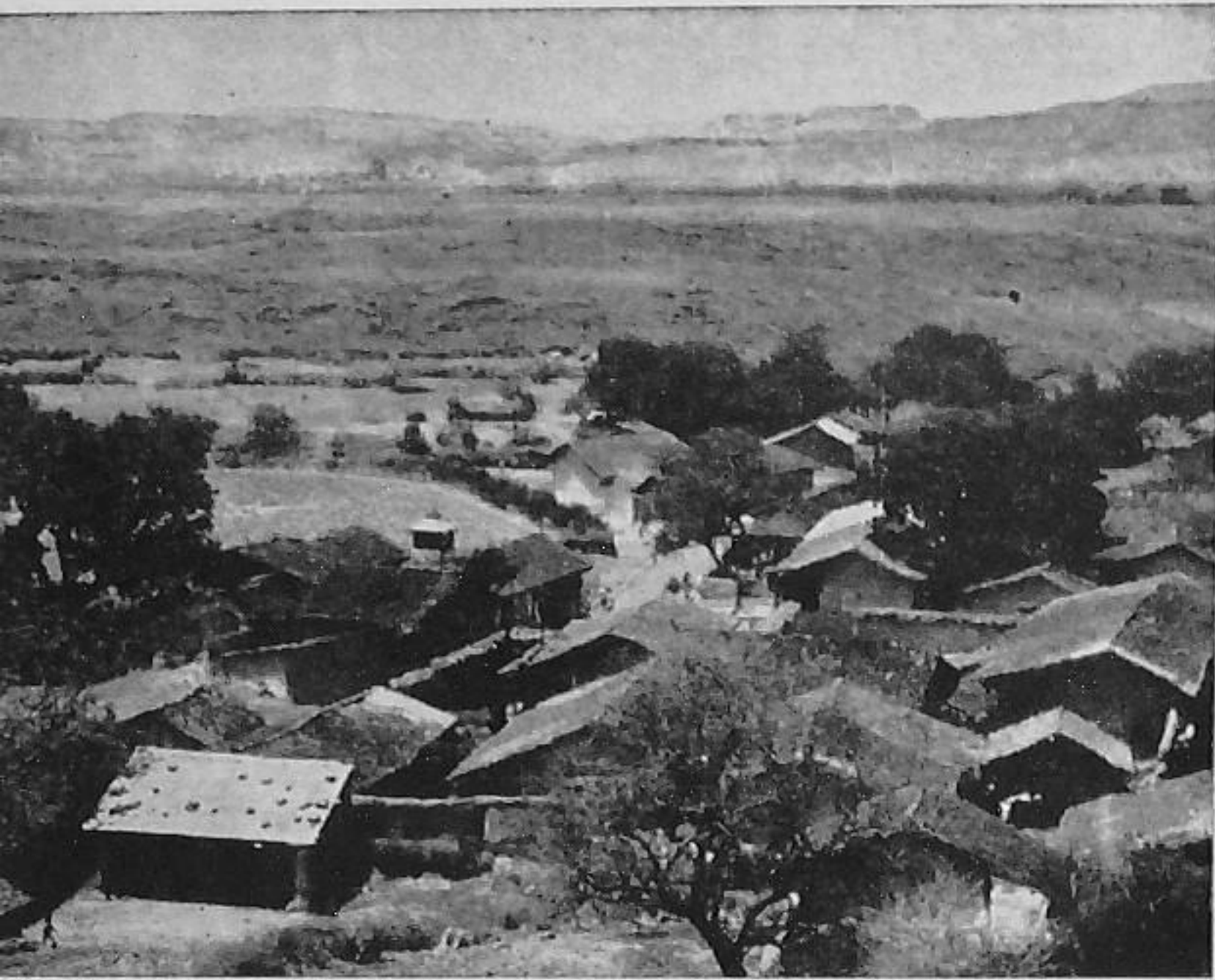
Panchayati Raj

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
19 SEP 1962
RURAL EXTENSION
SEPTEMBER 1962

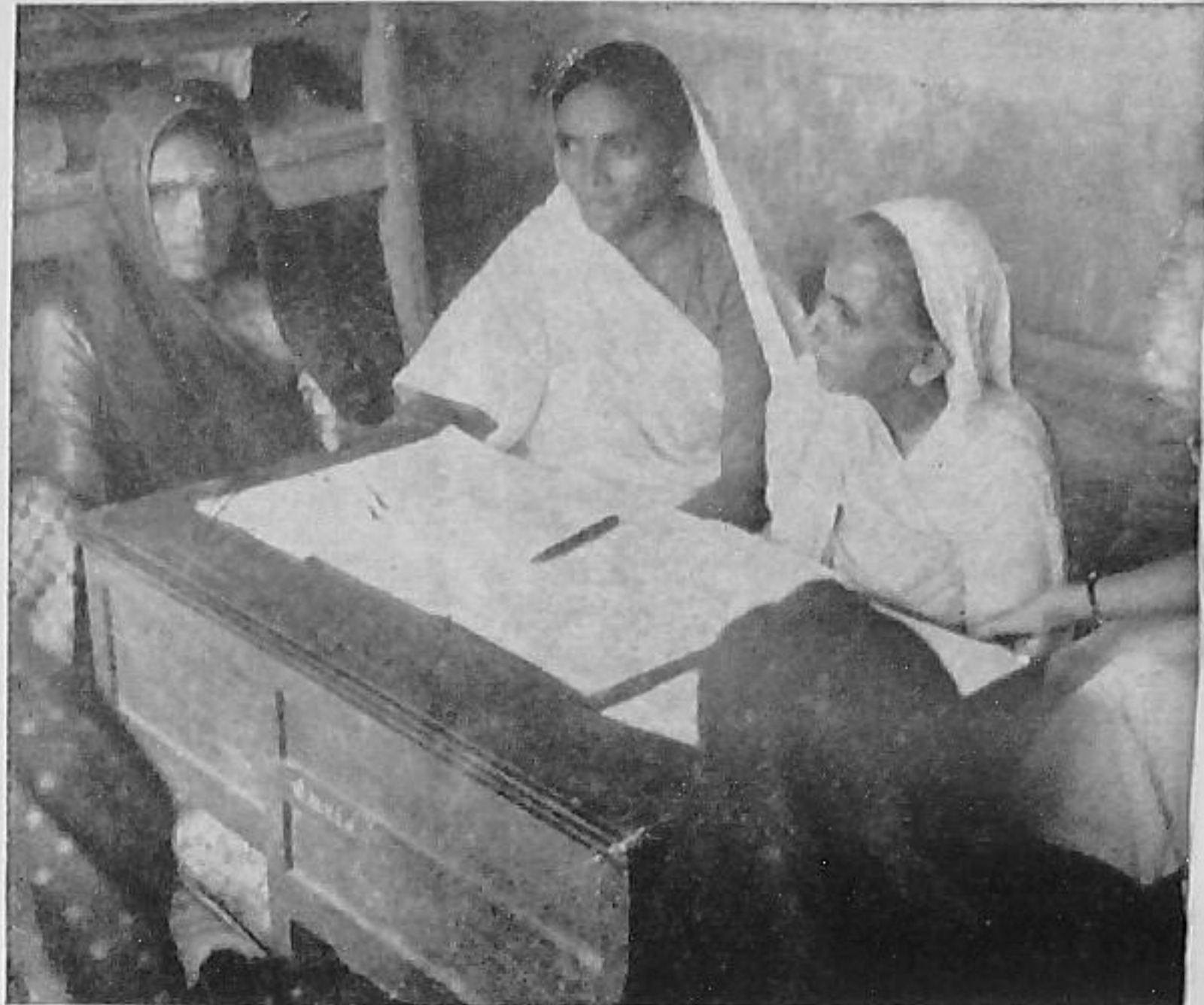
SHRI NATHI SINGH is the country's first Pradhan to be honoured with the title "Padma Shri". This high recognition has been conferred on him because Gram Sabha Arhera (Uttar Pradesh) under his charge, prepared the Village Production Plan as a result of which it succeeded in producing wheat at the rate of 35 mds. per acre.



ALL WOMEN'S PANCHAYAT IN PIPARLA

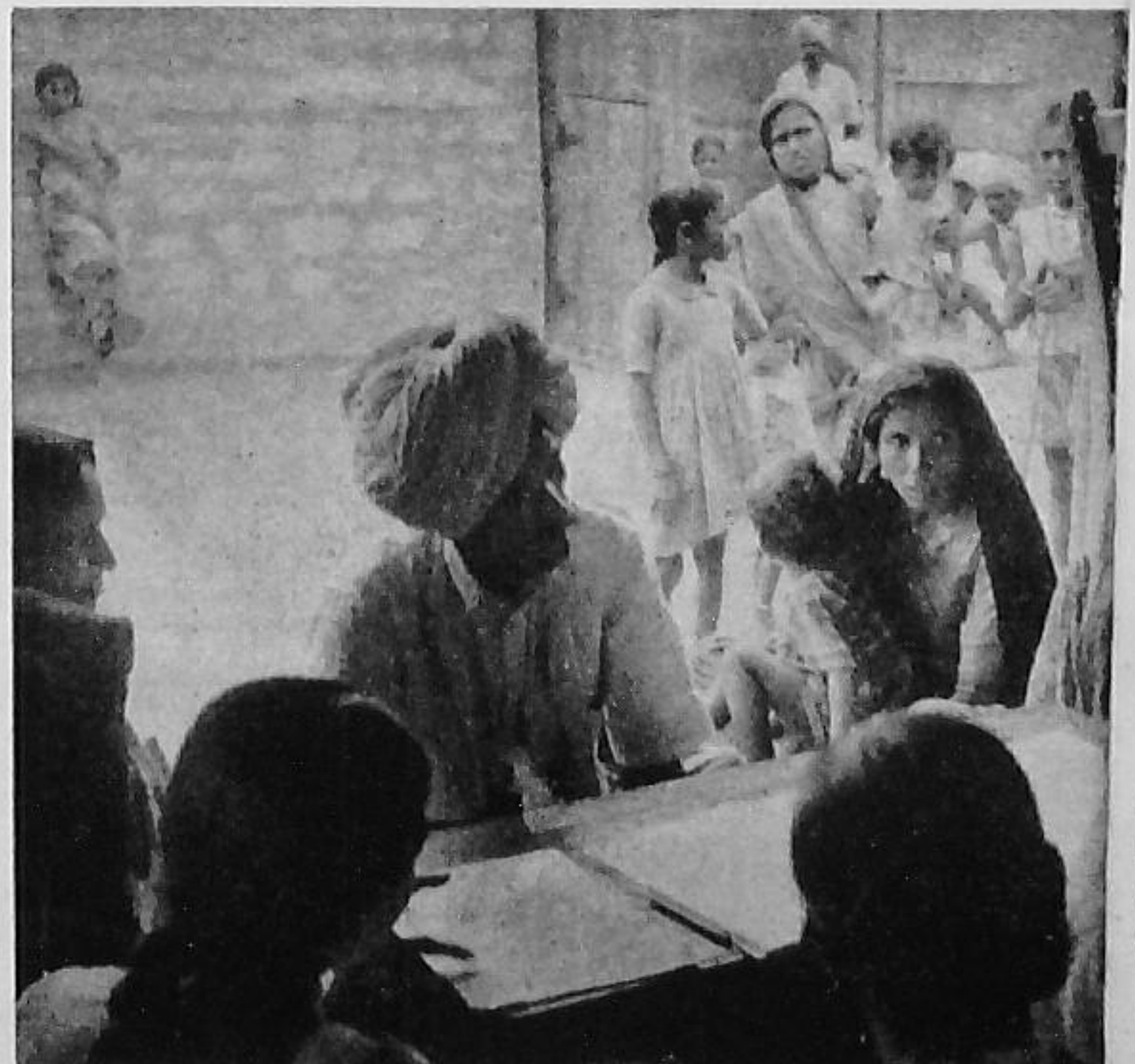


A view of Piparla village which is situated on the road from Bhavnagar to Palitana in Gujarat.



The All Women's Panchayat in session. In the centre is Ujamben who is the Sarpanch of the Panchayat.

"Mother and Child Care" has been given high priority by the new Panchayat. A nurse measuring the height of an infant as part of its physical check-up.



As the Panchayat meets, a cultivator comes with his problems and discusses them with the members.

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LETTERS

HELPING THE WEAKER SECTIONS



Vol. III SEPTEMBER 1962 No. 6
BHADRA-1884

CONTENTS

LETTERS	1
PRADHAN HONoured WITH PADMA SHRI	3
GUDIPALLI—TELANGANA'S BEST PANCHAYAT	5
WOMEN AT THE HELM IN PIPARLA	7
PARLIAMENT MEMBERS IN A STUDY CAMP	8
AROUND THE STATES	13
FROM THE CENTRE	15

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Sir,

BETTER LATE than never. Fortunately, it has now been recognised that under the C.D. Programme the weaker sections have not benefited to the extent that they should have. Various Study Teams have gone into the causes which have led to their present predicament and suggested ways and means to remedy the situation. Very valuable reports have come and gone. Now under the Panchayati Raj pattern, the weaker sections have been made a special responsibility of the Panchayats. But what about the net results so far achieved? Their position has anything but improved.

We have only been tinkering with the problem and not tackling it at the root. It will be living in a fool's paradise to expect that the present village leadership which has come to power under the Panchayati Raj will do much for them. It is a hard fact that most of the persons elected to the Panchayati Raj bodies belong to the landed class who have been suppressing them for a long time. These leaders are not prone to hard work. They cannot bear the idea that their erstwhile agricultural labourers should become full-fledged agriculturists under the land reform measures. In that case, who would plough their fields and rear the cattle? This nightmare constantly haunts them and they remain always ready to meet the challenge from whatever quarters it comes. Hence, whenever any efforts are made, the village leadership in a compact block goes completely in opposition. As soon as an effort is made to allot lands to a few landless tenants, numerous applications with the signatures or thumb impressions of the whole village comes next day before the officer and copies are sent everywhere as if some calamity has befallen. The land then becomes the pasture; burial ground; cremation spot; common ground for the rest of the cattle and what not. If the allottees are strong enough to resist this wave of anger, they are met on other fronts. The virgin land cannot be shared. The allottee cannot get taccavi, seeds, fertilisers etc. as he has nothing to mortgage. He cannot receive help from the village,—not a single pie even at the highest rate of interest. If a band of zealous young workers, overcoming these difficulties succeed in getting a piece of land and sowing the crop, they should never expect to harvest it. Some day the cattle may graze the standing crops at night and ultimately they have to succumb to their master for they have neither money nor evidence to invoke justice. Driven from agriculture to industry, they find the prospects there still more bleak. They cannot get any loan from the Government for

starting an industry, because they are not looked upon as 'creditworthy' persons in terms of the loans Act. What are they to do under such circumstances?

No officer can dare invite the wrath of the Panchayat Samiti Pradhan or other influential village leaders by becoming bold enough to help the weaker sections. And if someone tries to help them from behind the curtain, he should not be surprised if one day is sacked,—demoted or transferred, on the basis of complaints by influential persons.

Yours etc.

Narendra Sahai Saxena
11.5.62
Sagod,
Rajasthan.

* * *

FERTILISERS—A PROBLEM

Sir,

IN UTTAR PRADESH, as perhaps in other States too, definite targets for the distribution of fertilisers have been laid down for every gram sevak. The achievement of the targets is beset with some difficulties. In sugar-cane areas, the cultivators prefer to take fertilisers from the cane societies rather than the Service Co-operatives because the former gives more facilities than the latter. In a cane society, the charges per bag of fertilisers are less; the rates of interest charged are also less, and the recovery is made in comparatively easy instalments. In the first place, a conscientious V.L.W. does not like to urge

the cultivators to buy fertilisers from the Service Co-operatives since such a transaction is disadvantageous to the latter. But even if, suppressing his own conscience, he tries to persuade them to go in for their fertilisers requirements to the Service Co-operative, they do not listen to him. The result is that the target falls far short of achievement. For no fault of his, the poor gram sevak is scolded in staff-meetings, charge-sheeted and adverse entries are made in his character roll by his superior officers. What is he to do under such circumstances?

Theoretically speaking, the duty of a gram sevak is to educate the villagers and create in them an urge to take to improved practices. What does it matter if the cultivators make use of the fertilisers from A store or B store? It is a wrong yardstick to measure the performance of the gram sevak by the quantity of fertilisers lifted by the cultivators from the Service Co-operative only. In fact, his correct assessment can be made only on the basis of the total quantity of fertilisers that a cultivator makes use of. To facilitate matters, it would be better if a single agency is entrusted with the task of storing and distributing the fertilisers in a block area.

Yours etc.

Radhey Shyam Tiwari,
V.L.W.
20.7.62
Block Behjam (Kheri),
U.P.

* * *

RURAL HOUSING SCHEME

Sir,

IN DRAFTING rural housing schemes, it is not realised that more elbow room is essential for rural houses than in urban areas. I came across a scheme where plots of only two gunthas had been allotted for each house even though land was available in plenty there. More land is required for rural houses because there is no public sanitary system in villages and waste water either accumulated or drained in open drains gives off stench. Each house has to have appendages like cattle-shed, shed for storing fuel wood and fodder. Suitable latrines have to be built. About 20 ft. of ground is to be left as front-yard, and more place has to be earmarked for manure pits. Moreover, every house in the village has to have a kitchen-garden close enough to the dwelling so that all or any of the family members can work in it during their spare time. A kitchen-garden quickly digests the house-hold refuse and waste-water and thus helps to keep the place clean. In addition it provides fresh nutritious vegetables. The rural housing scheme should take all these factors into consideration while providing for improved types of houses.

15.6.62 Yours faithfully,
Via Londa. V.D. Malgavkar
P.O. Jaglbet

* * *

PRADHAN HONoured WITH "PADMA SHRI"

SHRI NATHI SINGH, a model farmer of village Arhera in Uttar Pradesh, is country's first Pradhan to be honoured with the title of Padma Shri this year. Indirectly, it is an honour to the Panchayati Raj leadership and to farming which have been brought on a par with the time-honoured professions of art, literature, philosophy, social service and the like.

If one were asked to pinpoint the outstanding quality for which this high honour has been conferred on Shri Nathi Singh, it would be somewhat puzzling to give a reply. But one thing is clear: that it is not for model farming alone that the high recognition has gone to him. There are perhaps many a Krishi Pandit in our country who are more than a match to him. His speciality lies in that he has shown a way of producing more foodgrains on a community basis rather than as an individual. In this, his quality of leadership as Pradhan of his Gram Sabha has played its part.

Sixty-six year old Nathi Singh is a very modest and gentle-natured person who has all the qualities of the older generation to which he belongs. But there is a difference. He is a progressive farmer and is ever keen to learn and adopt all new things that lead to better results in farming. Owner of 66

acres of land, he has taken to improved farming practices like sowing by dribbling, bunding, use of improved seeds, chemical fertilisers, pesticides and insecticides for the protection of the crops against diseases. His farm output has more than doubled. As a result, his economic condition has gone up considerably. He has now purchased a tractor. Having entrusted the care of his farm to his only son, he is now free to devote his time to his public duties as a Pradhan. The work that interests him most is increasing food production by the village body as a whole. His sole aim is to see that the food crop yield of his village is highest not only in the Block, that is Fatehpur Sikri in Agra District but in the entire State of U.P. Towards this end he has bent all his energies, age-old wisdom and experience in farming. His efforts have met with success to a large extent.

It makes an interesting study how Shri Nathi Singh got inspired to work for collective efforts by the Gram Sabha to produce more foodgrains. It was the year 1959, Shri Janki Prashad a Gram Sahayak and Chairman of the Co-operative Society of his village had gone to visit the World Agriculture Fair. On returning to the village, he was full of new ideas about improved farming. Soon after, there was a seminar of

progressive farmers held at Loni where Janki Prashad expressed his view on the subject. Other Gram Sahayaks, too, narrated their experiences. The seminar led to a healthy spirit of rivalry amongst the participants who threw challenges and counter challenges to produce more. Janki Prashad, on returning to his village conferred with Shri Nathi Singh and expressed his desire to throw a challenge to other progressive farmers of the block to produce more. The latter who had been listening to him patiently replied, "I appreciate your feelings. But how will that help us in achieving our goal of self-sufficiency in foodgrains for the whole country?" Janki Prashad retorted, "It is progressive farmers like us who have to set the example for others to emulate." The old Pradhan thoughtfully remarked, "There is no doubt that such individual efforts would produce a healthy effect. But to achieve substantial results in a short time, we would have to make efforts on a more wide-spread basis." Interrupting, Janki Prashad remarked, "I do not quite see your point. How can...?" Nathi Singh replied, "Have patience. I am coming to that. We must have a production plan for the whole village approved by the Gram Sabha. In this plan, every cultivator will be

assigned a specific target of food production. To promote the movement we can throw a challenge to the other Gram Sabhas. In this way, every village would try to catch up with the others. This will help the drive for increased food production in a more effective way." Janki Prashad added, "So, you mean to say that the challenge for more food production should be given on a village to village basis and not by individual farmers." Yes, "That is exactly what I mean. I have great faith in the collective efforts of the village people as a whole", replied Nathi Singh.

At night, a meeting of the Gram Sabha was held to discuss the subject. Everybody welcomed the Pradhan's idea. There was some discussion over the fixation of the target for wheat production. Some of the enthusiastic young farmers held that the target should be not less than 50 mds. per acre. But after lot of discussion, it was agreed that in the present circumstances all might not be able to reach that high target. Consequently, it was unanimously decided that the whole village should endeavour to produce not less than 35 mds. of wheat per acre.

A few days later, the meeting of the Block Development Committee was held on 22nd April. As the subject of increasing food production was being discussed in the committee, Shri Nathi Singh got up and in a voice of modesty mixed with firmness, remarked, "My Gram Sabha has de-

cidied to produce at least 35 maunds of wheat per acre for the whole village this year. I call upon other Gram Sabhas to compete with us in this noble task." Everyone was taken aback at this unexpected challenge on behalf of the whole village and least of all from a modest man like Shri Nathi Singh. The members were looking at each other when one of them got up and accepted the challenge. He was followed by some others. Excitement ran high. The Block Development Committee passed a resolution on the subject. The matter was of such far-reaching consequences that it did not remain confined to the limits of the block only. As the news reached the development officials, at the state headquarters, they took it up on a State level basis, urging all the Gram Sabhas in the State to take up the challenge. Posters and a leaflet embodying the challenge of the Gram Sabha of Arhera were distributed to all the 72424 Gram Sabhas of the State. The idea of Shri Nathi Singh soon assumed the form of a State-wide movement.

Ever since Nathi Singh had first thrown the challenge on behalf of the Gram Sabha in the Block Development Committee meeting, he knew no rest and he bent all his energies towards realising the solemn pledge that he had given. He looked worried during the day and could not sleep even at night. One day, he called a meeting of the whole Gram Sabha and out-poured his heart before them.

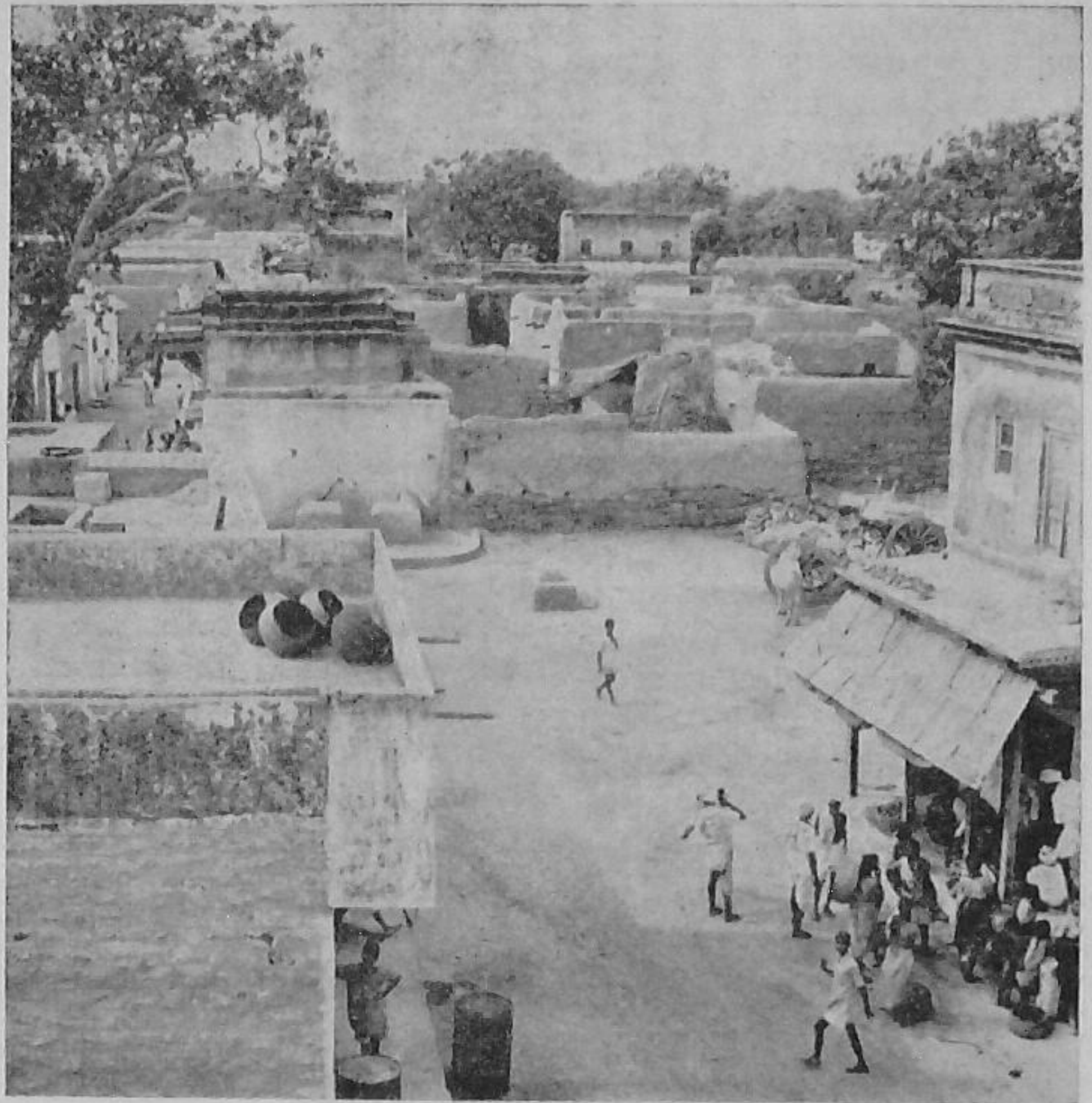
He said, "Brothers; I have made a commitment on behalf of all of you. My honour is now in your hands. It is upto you to save it or dash to the ground....." The old man was so choked with emotion that he could not go further. But these few words had such an electrifying effect on the villagers that they all took a vow to keep up the commitment at all costs. Nathi Singh heaved a sigh of relief. Half the battle was won. The villagers had been awakened to the need of achieving the fixed target of food production. But lot of work remained to be done. First and foremost, most of the cultivators had to be trained in the improved farming practices like bunding and sowing by the dribbling method which reduces the rate of consumption of wheat seed from 50 seers to 10 seers per acre as also increases the crop yield. Supplies of improved seeds, chemical fertilisers, insecticides and other improved agricultural implements had to be ensured in adequate quantities and in time. In this work, the co-operation of the block staff and the Co-operative Society was most essential. There were a few genuine doubters like Shri Ghamandi Singh who thought that there were a number of difficulties in their way and that it was not possible to achieve success. Luckily, however, every concerned person, whether an official or a non-official, rose to the occasion and carried out the duties assigned to him so

(Continued on page 6)

GUDIPALLI—Telangana's Best Panchayat

GUDIPALLI is the best Panchayat not only of Nalgonda district but of the entire Telangana region consisting of 9 districts in Andhra Pradesh. It was a proud day in the life of Shri G. V. Narasimha Reddy Sarpanch when he came to know of this happy news. His joy knew no bounds when he was informed that his Panchayat was now entitled to receive Rs. 15,000 as prize. When asked, Shri Reddy modestly replied. "It is not the past achievements of the Panchayat which fill me with joy so much as the bright prospects of the future." What does that mean? asked someone from the crowd. Prompt came the reply, "I and my other colleagues in the Panchayat have been keen to provide electricity, a veterinary hospital, pacca streets and piped water supply in the village. With the prize money, we can now solve some of our problems." Continuing, he remarked, "I know the money is very limited as compared to our needs. But something is better than nothing. We will place the whole matter before the Gram Sabha and be guided by it as to what amenities are to be given top priority."

Gudipalli is a small village having a population of 2500 in Devargonda Panchayat Samithi, about 20 miles in the south of Nalgonda. A visitor to the village is struck



A panoramic view of village Gudipalli

by the extraordinary zeal for planning and development displayed not only by the members of the Panchayat but also the Gram Sabha. The latter helps the Panchayat in drawing up an integrated plan of development for the village and preparing the budget estimates. Government grant-in-aid in the budget of the Gram Panchayat for the year 1961-62 was Rs. 3,200. The Panchayat utilised its powers of taxation and collected Rs. 6,424 which constituted 95 per cent of the total taxes levied,

The village panchayat has paid special attention towards agricultural development. It prepared its annual village production plan in which emphasis is laid on food production. A village tank and a *kunta* were repaired as a result of which irrigation facilities have been extended to over 300 acres in the village. The Panchayat has introduced improved agricultural implements, sprayers, dusters and other modern equipment required to protect crops against pests and diseases. The Panchayat

maintains 20 compost pits of its own from which it derives an income of Rs. 80 per annum. Besides, it maintains a pedigree bull to improve the breed of the cattle. A Co-operative Society consisting of 70 members has been set up with a view to provide credit to the farmers on easy terms. Loans amounting to Rs. 13,000 have already been advanced to the members for agricultural purposes.

It is rural health and sanitation which has been given the pride of place in its programme by the Panchayat. The villagers have contributed Rs. 7,000 in cash and 2 acres of land for the construction of a primary health centre with six beds. Special mention is deserved by Mr. Ramavat Bhadra, member of a Scheduled tribe and Mr. Venkatesham, a potter who have each contributed Rs. 100 for the Health Centre. Another person Mr. Samutrala Mariah donated Rs. 1,000 for the Centre.

The first thing that the Panchayat took in its hands was the improvement of the drinking water facility. Twelve sanitary drinking water wells were constructed, —the people's contribution in these works being Rs. 3,500. Eight public latrines were constructed and lamp posts were provided in all the streets.

The village was without a link with the main road. The Panchayat, therefore, turned its attention towards this urgent task and with villagers' shramdan valuing at Rs. 3,000, an approach road

was soon constructed. A Government bus is now plying regularly upto the village.

The Panchayat has given due attention towards the important task of educating the children. Previously, there used to be a primary school only. Through the people's efforts, it has now been raised to a High School standard. The villagers have contributed Rs. 4,000 towards the purchase of science apparatus and construction of sheds for the new classes.

A panchayat ghar built at a cost of Rs. 7,500 serves as the office of the Panchayat as well as a Centre for commu-

nity activities. It has been provided with a community radio set. The Panchayat has been making earnest efforts to revive the traditional folk arts. A Bhajan Mandli formed recently is proving very popular. The Yuvak Mandal is the main spirit behind it. The Mandal has won laurels in a number of village tournaments held by the Samithi.

The Panchayat has served as the best champion of the weaker sections of the community. It has helped the construction of no less than 11 drinking water wells for Harijans and other backward classes.

PRADHAN HONOURED WITH "PADMA SHRI"

(Continued from page 4)

religiously that things went off very well. There was Shri Janki Prashad, Chairman of the Co-operative Society who saw to it that all the necessary supplies and equipment were made available in time. Gram Savak Jaitmal Singh and the Gram Sahayaks used to visit the houses of every cultivator at 4 A.M. in order to appraise them of the sowing method by dribbling. They rendered all other practical assistance required on the field. Meetings of the Gram Sabha were held from time to time, to discuss the problems and to take stock of the achievements.

At last, the harvests were ready. An assessment of the average yield was made, which came out to be 39 mds.

per acre. Everybody was overjoyed at the success. Ghamandi Singh who had been the greatest doubter of the scheme made ample amends by achieving an average yield of 88 mds. of wheat per acre in his fields. Everybody patted him on the back. The Gram Sabha won a prize of Rs. 1,000 from the State Government. But a more enduring reward was that the village had almost doubled its food production. It became self-sufficient in improved seeds. The economic condition of the farmers improved so much that not one of them was under debt any longer. A nice school-building was built and the streets of the entire village were paved.

WOMEN AT THE HELM IN PIPARLA

"Where women are adored, there the Gods rejoice," so said Manu, our ancient law-giver. In Piparla, they have gone a step further; they have put their women in authority. Women have been made responsible for the welfare and development of the entire village.

A tiny hamlet, ringed by the Shatrunjay hills, astride the road from the port town of Bhavnagar to the temple city of Palitana in Gujarat State, Piparla has a population of 568 with a total area of 3,308 acres. Of this, 812 acres are under the plough and 278 acres are grazing land. The village has 450 heads of cattle. Apart from agriculture, the other main occupation is cattle-breeding. A few women also do the traditional embroidery work.

Today Piparla has an all-women Panchayat. The women were elected in June 1962 by the unanimous vote of the village folk assembled in Gram Sabha.

Since its inception nearly ten years ago, the Panchayat of Piparla has had a few distinctions. Not one of the four elections held so far, including the recent one, has been contested.

As the election time draws near, the people of Piparla put their heads together and in open meetings, resembling the Janapada Sabha of yore, draw up a list

of its Panches, discarding those who failed to prove good and substituting in their place others who showed promise of service. On the eve of the recent Panchayat election, fresh thinking was brought to bear on the subject how best and fast their village could advance. They felt a new path had to be struck, and their work had to be given a new direction and drive.

Just back from a women's camp (mahila shibir) in the adjoining town of Songadh, where they imbibed new ideas, the women of the village were active participants in the discussions which spread over many a summer evening. It was then that the idea struck roots. How if we hand over the reins of the Panchayat to our women? The hand that rocks the cradle (and tends the cows) might as well determine the future of the village for the next three or four years. The more the villagers thought of it, the more they liked it. Indeed, as a former Sarpanch of Piparla explained, many of the Panchayat activities are basically women's activities, emanating from them and concerned with them. Cleanliness in the home and in the street, the village well and the entire question of pure drinking water, child health and care, maternity welfare, primary education, and a host of other activities are essen-

tially a women's, not a man's job. If they could be entrusted with the running of the Panchayat, better days may be in store for Piparla. So the idea was translated into action. Out of the seven members, all unanimously elected, one is a Harijan lady, four are from the herd-keeper and Koli castes—considered backward—and two are Brahmins.

If what has happened in the first few weeks of the elections of the seven women Panches is any index of the future, their hopes are to be fulfilled much sooner than imagined. Under the leadership of Ujamben, a widow who is proud of her 12 Gir cows, the all-women Panchayat has resolved to give the village pure drinking water, a milk centre for the school children, a mother-and-child care centre, a hand-operated water pump for a garden in the school, smokeless chulhas, a balwadi, manure pits, etc.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Not merely resolved. The compost pits have already been dug and the village got rid of the dumps of cow-dung. A milk centre has been opened where under the UNICEF-aided rural health programme, young children are given half a pound of milk every day. The Panchayat has also arranged to run a mother and child-care centre.

(Continued on page 12)

PARLIAMENT MEMBER

(By our special

DEMOCRACY in all its aspects—political, economic and social—was the subject of a very interesting and stimulating discussion in a two-day Study Camp held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, on 23rd and 24th June. It was in the fitness of things that the Study Camp should have been organised by the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation which is now more or less a “Ministry of democratic development.” And who could be better exponents of the philosophy of democracy in India than the M.Ps—the elected representatives of the highest democratic body of the biggest democracy in the world? Little wonder, therefore, that as many as 112 M.Ps turned up to take part in the Study Camp.

As was expected, the Study Camp, consisting of such a large number of experienced public leaders did not follow the pattern of class-room lecturing. Everyone present there,—whether officials or non-officials had something to contribute. There was little difference between the teacher and the taught. It was a sort of collective thinking which led to the clarification of some of the most complicated problems that have been agitating the minds of the leaders of the country and

those in charge in the Ministry. The M.Ps were the best people to propagate the philosophy of democracy and to make it work through the Panchayati Raj bodies. The Minister Shri S. K. Dey had precisely this aim in view when addressing the M.Ps, he remarked, “Our work will not begin to have ended until we have been able to transmit the collective impulses and the collective understanding of the growth of democracy and community development in this country down to the village level and to the extent that they begin to push us instead of our having to push them.”

POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

With Shri H. C. Mathur (Rajasthan) in the Chair, the first subject that came up for discussion was on political democracy, that is: whether the parliamentary system was suited for Panchayati Raj and if so what steps could be taken to eradicate or minimise the evil results flowing from contested elections. Shri S. K. Dey, while giving his own views on the subject was in favour of a uniform system being followed in elections to democratic bodies at various levels from the Panchayat to the Lok Sabha. According to him, either the parliamentary system prevalent at the National and State levels



Shri S. K. Dey, Union Minister of Community Development, inaugurating a two-day study camp of M.Ps.

should travel down to the lowest unit or a system of elections being followed in the Panchayati Raj bodies should be adopted with necessary modifications and adjustments at the top levels also. In this connection, he referred to a document prepared by the AVARD, which being a compilation of speeches delivered on the subject of Panchayat, clearly showed how the makers of the Constitution themselves felt that the Panchayats were not given their due place. He was sure that ultimately these

RS IN A STUDY CAMP

correspondent)



*Development, Panchayati Raj & Co-operation
M. Ps at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.*

changes will be introduced but he wanted these to come about as a result of organised and enlightened pressure from below. The Community Development Ministry cannot and should not work out anything from the top. He appealed to the members present to initiate the process leading to such far-reaching changes.

Shri P. R. Chakravarty (Bihar) was of the view that politics could not be eliminated from Panchayati Raj institutions. He recommended

the Mysore pattern of direct elections to the Taluk Development Boards. He did not favour the ex-officio membership of the Sarpanches on the Panchayat Samitis, as these persons representing small areas cannot put forth practical programmes for implementation at the block level. He was supported by Shri Srirama Reddy (Mysore) who referred to the corrupt practices prevalent in the case of indirect elections and wanted direct elections to all these bodies including Zila Parishad. Many other members spoke in favour of having direct elections to the Panchayati Raj bodies.

However, Shri Man Singh Patel (Gujarat) pointed out the advantages of indirect elections to Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads. According to him, the indirect elections help the small man from a small Panchayat to represent his area on the Panchayat Samiti; otherwise there is a risk of a large number of poor villages going unrepresented in the higher body.

Shri B. B. Mehrotra (Uttar Pradesh) also favoured indirect elections by which the Sarpanch becomes a member of the Panchayat Samiti automatically. He felt that direct elections will be very expen-

sive and will keep out the poor people.

Shri L. M. Singhvi (Rajasthan) while admitting that Panchayati Raj has not been given the pride of place in the Constitution but only mentioned in the directive principles, said that it was premature to talk of amending the Constitution. He was also of the view that Panchayati Raj institutions could not be the basis of our political structure just yet. Welcoming the steps taken by the Ministry to non-officialise the Panchayati Raj institutions, he emphasised the need for educating the people and pointed out that it must be done without delay. Despite malpractices in indirect elections, he favoured them and commended the Rajasthan pattern for adoption by other States. While admitting that politics cannot be kept out of the Panchayati Raj bodies, he emphasised the need to mobilise public opinion in favour of it and wanted other political parties to follow the lead given by the Congress party in this regard. He also mentioned that all persons elected to the Panchayati Raj bodies should be debarred from seeking elections as M.Ps. and M.L.As. and in case they wanted to do so they should resign from the Panchayati Raj bodies at

least 6 months before such elections. Pointing out that State Ministers were interfering with the affairs of these bodies and were passing orders of a quasi-judicial nature based on political considerations, he wanted the establishment of an independent Statutory Commission.

Shri B. Dwivedi (Orissa) called for a uniform approach to the problems of Panchayati Raj and wanted a comparative study of the various Acts and Rules to be made towards this end. He wanted a study to be undertaken as to how far the Gram Sabha has helped the village Panchayat in its task. He was of the view that party politics cannot be kept out of Panchayati Raj bodies.

There seemed to be consensus of opinion on the following issues:

(a) It is desirable that party politics, in the bad sense of the term, be kept out but this may not be quite possible and, therefore, some healthy conventions must be progressively built up;

(b) Direct elections are preferable to indirect elections. However some persons wanted broad-based indirect elections to Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads by making all the Panches as electorate for Panchayat Samiti and Panchayat Samiti members as electorate for the Zila Parishad; and

(c) Elections to these bodies should be conducted by an independent body similar to the Election Commission.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

In the afternoon, Shri Digamber Singh (Uttar Pradesh) occupied the chair. The discussion took place on the subject of economic democracy. The ideal of achieving economic justice and establishing socialist pattern through the co-operative sector was welcomed by every member. They pointed out the various hurdles which obstructed the growth of the co-operative movement and pleaded for their early removal. Some of the suggestions made for improving the working of the co-operatives are as follows:

1. The provisions of co-operative laws are not helpful in so far as the advancing of loans to non-agriculturists is concerned.

2. Public opinion has not been taken into confidence while revising the policy regarding the organisation of primary societies.

3. There is still too much official interference in the working of the co-operatives. Nomination is still being done by the Government on the board of directors of the State partnered Co-operative Institutions and more often than not persons so nominated have little experience and knowledge of co-operation.

4. The rates of interest charged by co-operatives from the ultimate borrower are high. The high rates can be reduced by making the Reserve Bank of India money directly available to the Central Co-operative Banks.

5. The commission charged by marketing societies for arranging the sale of agricultural produce should be reduced.

6. More medium-term loans should be made available through the co-operatives.

7. Co-operation should be included in the concurrent list if a uniform and co-ordinated development is to be achieved in the co-operative sector.

8. Some of the co-operative societies have been effecting bogus transactions on the licences issued to them. It is high time that such malpractices were put an end to.

9. The State Trading Corporation should operate in an increasing manner through co-operative institutions so far as distribution is concerned.

10. Audit of Co-operative Societies should not be entrusted to the Registrar but to an independent body of auditors.

11. There is lot of misunderstanding about co-operative farming in the minds of the farmers who look upon it as the 'Chinese Way' and, therefore, hesitate to adopt it. Intensive educative propaganda should be undertaken to remove these unfounded fears.

12. Recognition should be accorded to distinctive achievements in the co-operative sphere in the same way as recognition is given to outstanding performance in the field of agricultural production.

In the end, Shri M. R. Bhide, Secretary, explained some of the points raised by the members. The decision taken regarding the size of the primary units provided that these should be economically viable. He pointed out that although the per capita deposits at the primary level had gone down, in absolute terms, there was a substantial increase in the last few years. Regarding the rate of interest charged by co-operatives from the ultimate borrower, he did not consider this to be on the high side. As regards share capital participation, the Government of India had favoured indirect participation, but unfortunately most of the States had decided in favour of direct participation.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

'Social Democracy' was the subject of discussion on the following day. Shri A. C. Guha occupied the chair.

To start with, Shri H. C. Mathur (Rajasthan) pointed out the need for a massive programme to eradicate the evils of communalism, casteism, groupism etc., now that all the political parties are agreed on this.

Prof. Wadia (Rajya Sabha) tracing the growth of the concept of caste, said that there should now be no room for caste especially in our concept of political democracy, but unfortunately political democracy had given a fresh lease of life to caste. He emphasised the role that education should play in eradicating that evil but pointed out that

the present educational system is too secular resulting in loss of fundamental spiritual values.

Shri Shree Narayan Das (Bihar) stressed the need for scientific education and for inculcating the scientific outlook in the minds of young people.

Shri J. P. Jyotishi (Madhya Pradesh) emphasised the need for social education for the people and wanted that at least 3 hours should be set apart daily for broadcast by the All India Radio of programmes suitable for villages. These programmes may be in the evening when the villagers will be able to listen to them. He also wanted the traditional media of songs and bhajans to be utilised for this purpose.

Shri D. N. Narayan (Maharashtra) wanted that at least one worker in each Community Development Block must be exclusively entrusted with the work relating to Harijans. He wanted inter-caste marriages to be encouraged and preference given to persons who have married outside their caste while selecting the block staff. He suggested that the National Integration Council should chalk out a programme useful for the villages which can be entrusted to the block staff for implementation.

Shri L. M. Singhvi (Rajasthan) pressed for a massive programme of social education and recommended the use of recorded speeches, literature, art etc. The village

fairs and festivals must also be used for the purpose. There should be a separate publicity staff for social education in each district. He recommended the establishment of Gyan Mandirs on the lines of Vigyan Mandirs of the Ministry of Scientific Research & Cultural Affairs. He also wanted a committee to be set up to recommend action to be taken against caste councils and wanted another committee to be appointed to determine the especially backward classes who should get preference in the development programmes.

Winding up the discussion, Shri A. C. Guha Chairman, expressed the opinion that on the whole, we are losing our spiritual values. He said that the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation, has the responsibility for changing the mental attitude and psychology of the people. He was of the view that instead of adopting a negative attitude by condemning communalism, casteism, groupism etc. we must adopt a positive approach and foster in the young minds the national outlook.



WOMEN AT THE HELM IN PIPARLA

(Continued from page 7)

The village well has been provided with a platform and a soak pit has been built to store waste water. A water pump is being put up in the village school. One or two houses have already been equipped with smokeless chulhas and before long the streak of grey and black smoke above the tiled roof will cease to attract the notice of the curious.

The women members are facing their task with a sense of mission and with confidence, yet with characteristic humility. Ujamben, the Sarpanch, is a much respected elderly lady who carries her 58 years lightly. Despite her preoccupation with her dozen cows, she finds time and enthusiasm for this new job.

So also the other members who have children to look after and the males to attend upon. The Harijan member, Sonaben, is accompanied at the Panchayat meetings by her four-year-old daughter who quietly watches mother confabulating with the six others—Brahmins, Maldharis (herdkeeper), Kolis—a microscopic representation of the womanhood of Piparla.

AUSPICIOUS START

Appropriately for women, the meeting starts with the watering of the *Tulsi* plant in front of the Panchayat office by the Sarpanch, the other member going around in devotion.

A spirit of co-operation and partnership has been generated in the village. The former office-holders, some of whom initiated the idea of the women Panchayat, are extending all co-operation in carrying out the projects taken in hand by their successors. The official agencies are naturally vying with each other in helping this experiment to succeed.

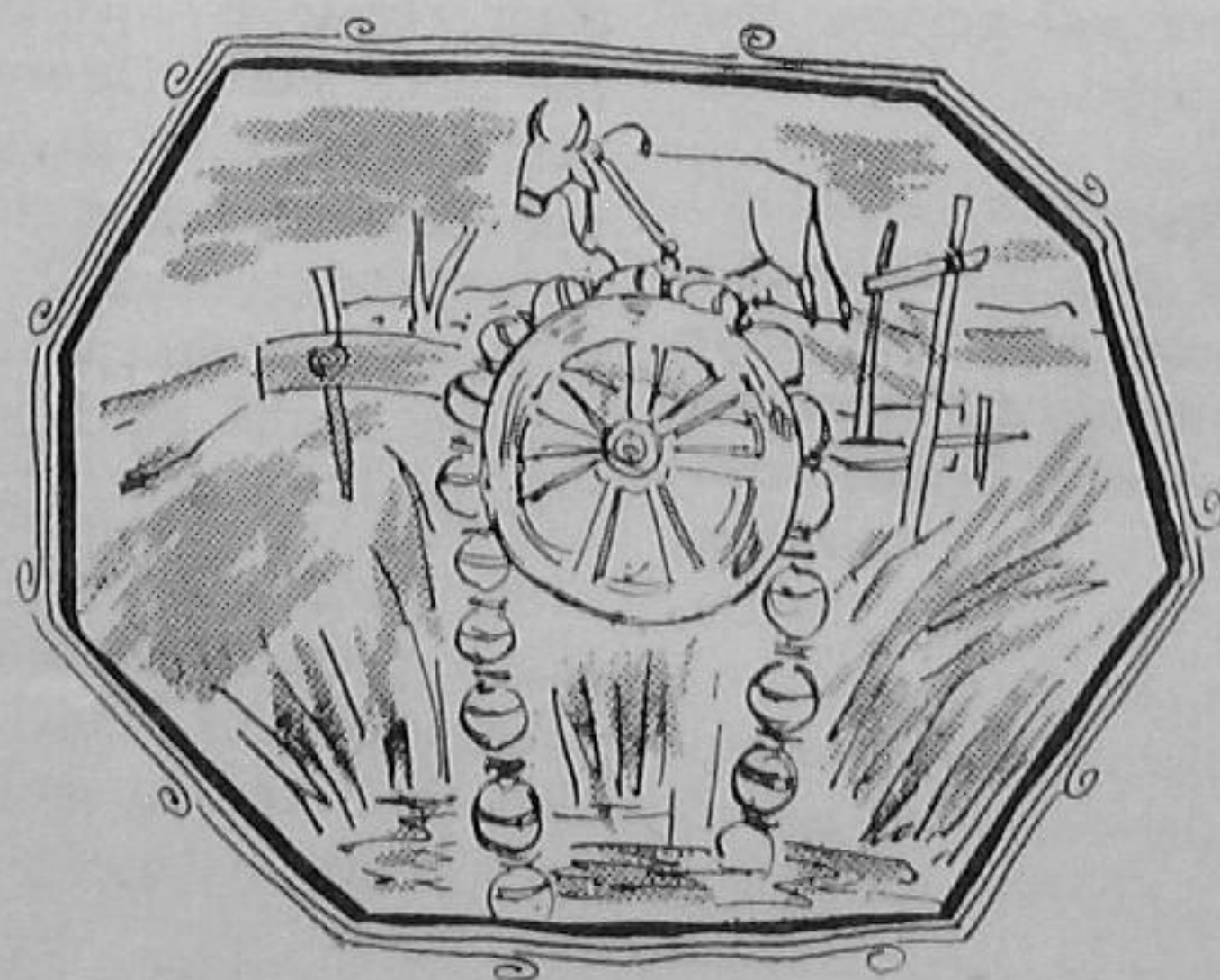
While this strident beginning augurs well for the future of the Panchayat, the women Panches would need the sympathy and assistance of all elements in carrying the programme through. Not unoften, the early promise is not fully maintained after the initial novelty has worn off and the enthusiasm yields place to inertia and dissension. In the case of Piparla, however, its past record of concord is in its favour. The women Panches are also alive to the difficulties they would be faced with and the limi-

tations under which they function. They discourage extravagant demands and proposals.

CURIOUS NEIGHBOURS

But Piparla is being watched. Its neighbours are looking over the shoulder,—curious how the folks next door are going to fare, with their women in command of the situation. One of the young cowherds has complained that their friends in the adjoining villages are taunting them—"You are strange fellows, under your women's thumb!" They were however, pacified by a village elder's advice: "Next time you meet the young fellows across the hill, ask them, 'who really rules the roost in your house, your father or your mother, you or your wife?'"

Yes, Piparla and its experiment, the fulfilment of its promise will be watched, not merely by its next-door neighbours but a year or two from now, it will be worthwhile for anyone to visit it.



AROUND THE STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

MID-DAY MEALS

THE GOVERNMENT of India has approved the proposal of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to provide mid-day meals for children in primary schools. In the first instance, meals will be provided for 2,00,000 children. The number of children fed will increase by 2,00,000 every year and will reach 8,00,000 by the end of the Third Five Year Plan. The total cost of the scheme is estimated at Rs. 5.9 crores. CARE has given assistance to this programme in the form of food stuffs valued at Rs. 5.6 crores.

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MYSORE

INCREASING REMUNERATIVE ASSETS

THE MYSORE Government has issued a notification vesting local properties, such as, open sites, Gavatana areas, common lands like grazing lands, trees, wells, fishing tanks, stone and lime quarries, etc. in village panchayats. A scheme has also been introduced to assist the village panchayats in developing remunerative assets. It is hoped that with these resources becoming available to the panchayats, they will become more and more self-reliant in the coming years.

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OPEN-AIR THEATRES

THE STATE Government proposes to establish six open-air theatres during the current financial year. The necessary sanction has already been accorded.

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COMMITTEE FOR GRAM SEVIKA TRAINING CENTRES

A STATE level co-ordination Committee for Gram Sevika Training Centres was constituted by the Mysore Government during the quarter ending March 1962.

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LOANS FOR IRRIGATION AND RECLAMATION

THERE IS very keen demand for loans for purposes of minor irrigation works and reclamation in the State. A sum of Rs. 21 lakhs was advanced as loans to cultivators out of block funds during 1961-62.

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MADHYA PRADESH

TRAINING FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

THE SECOND phase of Panchayati Raj training programme in the State started during May 1962. Three Panchayati Raj training camps were organised in each Division of the State. Besides, two Panchayati Raj Orientation Training camps were organised in each district. The training camps for panches were also continued in the blocks.

* * *

POPULARISING CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS

THE STATE Government has taken various measures to popularise the use of chemical fertilizers. Special instructions have been issued to the Collectors and the BDOs on the subject. Sufficient stock is being placed in the 'Fertilizers Centres' which have been opened at the rate of one in every VLW-Circle. Further, the subsidy on sale of fertilizers has been increased. The State Co-operative department has undertaken the responsibility to arrange the necessary transport for carrying fertilizers to the villages.

* * *

FAMILY PLANNING TRAINING

A TRAINING scheme for family planning was introduced in the block areas and 3-days training camps, one for males and another for females, were organised in all the blocks of the State. Each camp consisted of about 50 persons.

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MAHARASHTRA

SIZE OF CO-OPERATIVE FARMS

THE GOVERNMENT of Maharashtra has modified the earlier orders relating to the disposal of Government waste lands in so far as they relate to the minimum acreage of Government land to be granted to a co-operative

society and has directed that the minimum area in such cases should be 50 to 60 acres and not 90 to 100 acres as fixed earlier.

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AMENDING CO-OPERATIVE LAWS

A COMMITTEE to consider various provisions made in the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies, Act, 1960 and the Rules thereunder, and to suggest suitable amendments thereto, has been constituted by the Executive Committee of the Maharashtra State Co-operative Union. The findings of the committee will be placed before the State Co-operative Conference, to be held at Aurangabad in the first week of September.

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PUNJAB

PROGRESS OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

THE STATE has 170 co-operatives per one lakh of population as against 89 co-operatives in Gujarat which gets second position. In all, there were 32,169 co-operative societies in Punjab by the end of June, 1961, bringing 94 per cent of the villages under the fold of the movement. Their membership and working capital has gone up to 20.5 lakhs and Rs. 75 crores respectively. About 11,000 service co-operatives with a membership of 8.48 lakhs and working capital of Rs. 14.6 crores were functioning at the end of June, 1961. The number of co-operative farming societies

stood at 1,010 having 19,409 members and Rs. 1.58 crores working capital. Nine hundred and forty-one labour co-operatives with a membership of 85,058 and a working capital of Rs. 88.12 lakhs were engaged in execution of public works, eliminating the contractors. The co-operatives executed works of the value of Rs. 1.60 crores during the year ending June, 1961.

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RAJASTHAN

TRAINING CAMPS FOR GRAM SAHAYAKS

TRAINING camps of 5-days' duration were held in eight Panchayat Samiti Adhyan Kendras of the State during May 1962, to impart refresher training to those extension officers who will be responsible for conducting the Gram Sahayaks' Training Camps.

GRAM SABHAS DISCUSS VILLAGE PRODUCTION PLANS

MEETING of Gram Sabhas were organised in almost all the Panchayat Samitis during May 1962 to discuss village production plans. The meetings also reviewed the progress and fixed targets for the current year.

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B.D.Os. PROMOTED

32 B.D.Os. were promoted to the Rajasthan Administrative Service in appreciation of their service. It is expected that this would serve as an incentive to the workers in the programme.

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TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF CO-OPERATIVES

110 ORDINARY members of different co-operative societies of Tripura were trained by the State Educational Unit of Co-operative Union during May 1962.

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UTTAR PRADESH

TRAINING OF BLOCK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

50,000 MEMBERS of Block Committees were trained at the seventeen non-official Training Centres in the State by March 1962.

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TRAINING OF PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES

850 PANCHAYAT Secretaries have completed their training in the 17 training centres in U.P. The next session has started from 30th June with a similar number of secretaries enrolled for training.

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CROP COMPETITION SCHEME

CROP COMPETITIONS are becoming very popular in the State. 281 Gram Sabhas participated in the crop competition scheme during Rabi 1961-62. The highest yields reported in the 1960-61 competitions were 105 mds. for paddy, 67½ mds. for wheat, 627 mds. for potato, 29 mds. for Bajra and 45 mds. for Jowar.

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FROM THE CENTRE

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STUDY AND RESEARCH

THE FIRST meeting of the National Council of Study and Research in Community Development and Panchayati Raj was held in New Delhi recently. Shri S. K. Dey, addressing the Council said that the training and education programme of Panchayati Raj personnel should ultimately pass into the hands of institutions manned by representatives of the people.

He pointed out that Government had been trying to increasingly entrust this vital task to non-official institutions. No official agency, whatever its ability, could by itself undertake such a comprehensive task. They had necessarily to share the responsibility with individuals and groups of people. Shri Dey said that it was inevitable that the character of the training and education programme of panchayati Raj would undergo rapid, progressive changes. The initiative would flow more and more to the people themselves. In the meantime they had to pass through an intermediary stage when responsibility would be shared by government and the people. The Minister said that the National Council would be responsible for guiding the Ministry on the training programme, for ensuring by intimate personal contact that the programmes were being implemented in the field and

for making it possible for government to progressively delegate the responsibility for training to institutions further below. During the two-day session, the Council felt that primary school teachers should be given training in Community Development work near the villages themselves. At present, instructors in the primary teachers' training colleges are being given orientation training. Members of the Council wanted direct training to be given to village teachers. The Council also welcomed the various steps taken for the training of youth and women workers. It set up three committees to look after the National Institute, Panchayati Raj Training Centres and the training centres of youth and women workers. The Council also agreed to the setting up of teams at the national and State levels for giving academic guidance to the various training centres.

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WORLD CO-OPERATIVE BANK ADVOCATED

THE SETTING up of an International Co-operative Bank on the lines of the World Bank was advocated by Shri S. D. Misra, Union Deputy Minister, while addressing the Fortieth International Co-operative Day in New Delhi. He said that such a venture was necessary if co-operatives in underdeveloped countries were to

get adequate aid for their growth. He also commended the idea of having an International Co-operative Marketing Federation for helping national marketing organisations in the export-import field. He said that though India had made striking progress in the field of agricultural credit, the concept of co-operation had to spread to other fields like housing and industries.

* * *

PANCHAYATS TO TAKE INITIATIVE

TWENTY-TWO village panchayats of Hissar District in the Punjab have resolved to formulate a comprehensive "plan for progress". At a largely attended meeting in the village of Harita, the representatives of the panchayats enthusiastically agreed to the suggestion of Shri B. S. Murthy, Union Deputy Minister, that the process of ending their age-long backwardness could be speeded if the people themselves took the initiative in submitting a plan for action to government.

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SHARE CAPITAL OF MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES

THE NATIONAL Co-operative Development and Warehousing Board has suggested to State Governments a number of measures for building up the share capital of co-operative marketing societies. One of the suggestions is that every village

society should be enrolled as member and should thus contribute to the share capital of the primary marketing society. This, it is pointed out, will mean that a primary marketing society will ordinarily have about 100 village societies as its members and this should give them a share capital of about Rs. 10,000.

The Board has further suggested that there should be a drive for encouraging individual cultivators to become members of the primary marketing society.

Another suggestion for building up the share capital is that as in the case of a co-operative credit institution, the share holding of a cultivator member in a primary marketing society should bear some proportion to the amount of pledge loan that may be obtained by him from the marketing society.

The idea of persuading members to put back the whole or a part of the bonus distributed to them in the marketing society as additional share capital has also been commended to the States.

It has further been suggested that there should be compulsory contribution to the share capital from the members of the marketing society and such contribution should be related as a percentage to the turn-over of the members' sale.

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CO-OPERATIVE FARMING BOARD RECONSTITUTED

THE NATIONAL Co-operative Farming Advisory Board

has now been reconstituted for a further period of two years. The term of the Board, which was set up on the recommendation of the Working Group on Co-operative Farming, expired at the end of June.

The Board has been charged with the task of planning and promoting the programme of co-operative farming on a voluntary basis, reviewing the progress in the field, suggesting measures for enlisting people's participation in the programme, fostering their initiative and leadership, assessing the requirements and recommending the pattern of financial assistance. The Board will also seek to co-ordinate interstate development and experience and help State Governments and State Boards in formulating their schemes and programmes.

The Chairman of the reconstituted Board is the Minister for Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation. Among its members are four members of parliament, five non-officials connected with co-operative farming, representatives of the Planning Commission and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

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JOB CHART FOR FISHERIES EXTENSION OFFICERS

WITH A VIEW to develop fisheries in rural areas in a systematic way, the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayat Raj and Co-operation has circulated a model

"job chart" for Fisheries Extension Officers working in Community Development blocks. The chart specifies in a comprehensive manner the various steps to be undertaken for the improvement and expansion of fisheries in villages. The Extension Officers have been asked to make a survey of the fisheries resources of the blocks and to determine their potentialities. Among the other functions assigned to the Extension Officers are to assist and advise fishermen in introducing improved fishing gear, to establish and operate properly constructed and equipped fish farms, to improve the handling, distribution and marketing of fish, to conduct educational and instructional programmes on the food value of fish, to develop programmes of co-operative fishing and marketing and to educate fishermen in the use of ice and refrigeration.

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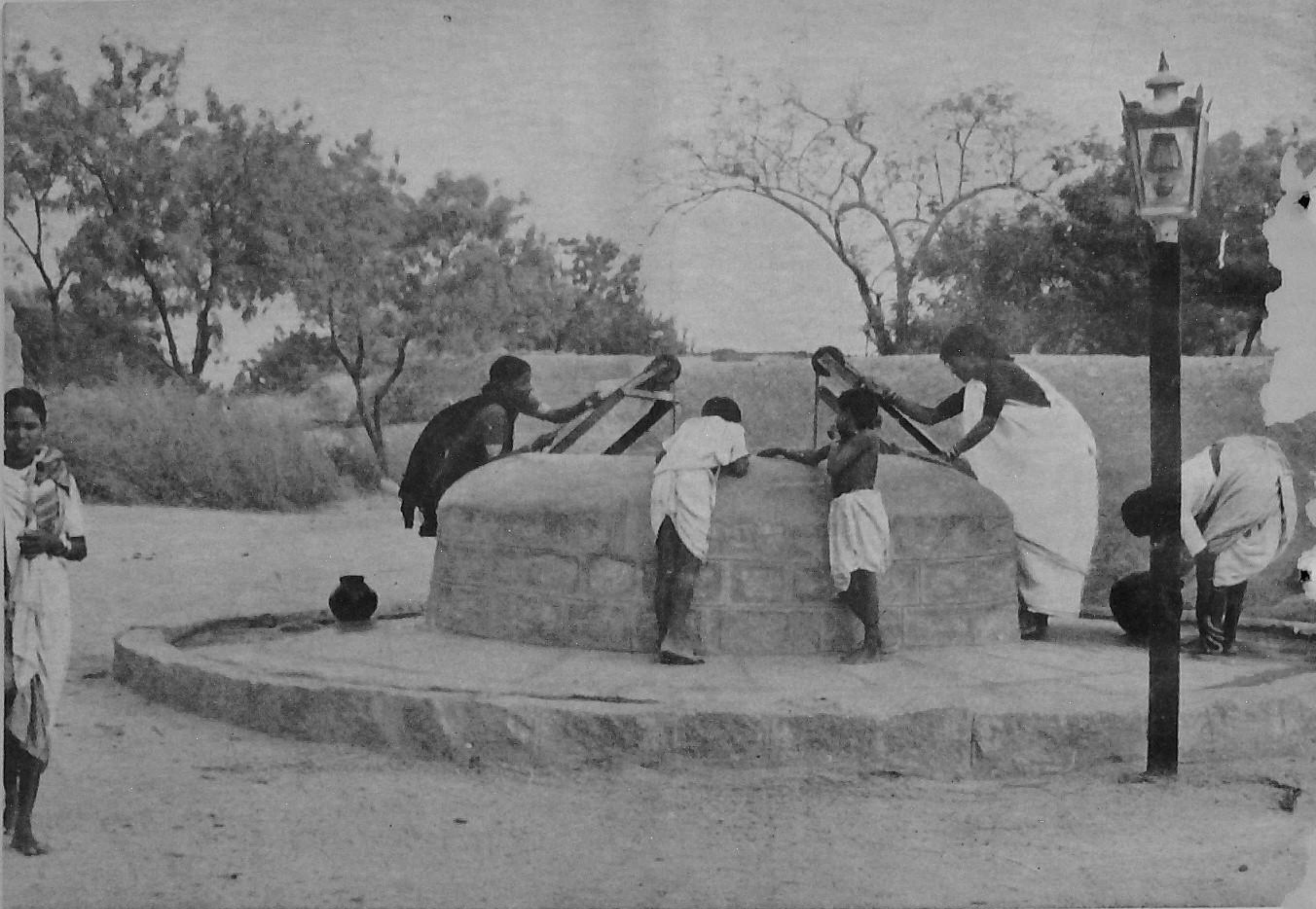
M.Ps. TO STUDY CO-OPERATIVE FARMING SOCIETIES

THE WORKING of co-operative farming societies in four States—Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Mysore—will be studied by groups of Members of Parliament during the third week of July and again in September. It may be recalled that three hundred co-operative farming societies were organised in pilot areas in 1961-62. Five hundred societies were started in non-pilot areas during the same period.

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The Colourful Skyline





Gudipalli, the best Panchayat of Telangana in Andhra Pradesh, has constructed through people's contribution many drinking-water wells and street lights like the ones in the picture above.