

APRIL 27, 1957

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Assembly

It gives me very great pleasure to welcome you, Members of the First Legislative Assembly of Kerala, to the first Session which you are now holding. The occasion enhances my pleasure as it is the first time when I am having the privilege of meeting you since I was called to this office in last November.

The people of Kerala have, for long, desired the formation of their own State. Their desire was fulfilled on November 1 last, when the major part of the former Travancore-Cochin State and parts of Madras State were unified into the new Kerala State. Unfortunately, however, the formation of the new State took place at a time when the former State of Travancore-Cochin was under President's rule. The new Kerala State was also, therefore, brought under President's rule. I join you and the people of Kerala in giving expression to the sense of joy that chapter has now been closed and that you have been able to have the normal constitutional rule restored.

1. The formation of the new State however has created certain problems to which your attention and the attention of the Government will have to be directed. There is, for example, the vexed problem of linguistic minorities in the border areas. While the unification of the areas with the majority of people speaking Malayalam into one State has made it possible for the gradual adoption of Malayalam as the language of administration and education, thus helping the growth and development of the literature and culture of the Malayalam speaking people, it will create difficulties for the Kannada and Tamil speaking populations in the border areas of Kerala; similar problems will naturally face the Malayalam speaking minorities in the border areas of the Madras and Mysore State. This and other similar problems facing the Governments of Kerala, Mysore and Madras will, I am sure, be taken up for consideration and decision by Government; I hope, too, that the Government of Kerala will receive the necessary co-operation of the Governments of Mysore and Madras States in this respect.

2. Another problem which the Government is facing today is that of integration of services. This problem had once arisen in the former Travancore-Cochin State when the services of the former States of Travancore and Cochin had to be integrated; some problems arising out of it still remain unsolved. But far more serious is the new problem which has arisen with the formation of the Kerala State; pay scales and the terms of service of personnel belonging to the former Travancore-Cochin State and of those who have now been allotted from Madras to the new State of Kerala have to be integrated. The Government is seriously considering the various aspects of this problem and I hope they will come to final decisions in the near future. The Government will naturally hold consultations with the organisations of the Government Officers concerned before taking final decisions.

3. Yet another problem facing you as Legislators following the formation of the new State of Kerala is the integration of laws obtaining in the former State of Travancore-Cochin and that part of Madras which has now become part of the Kerala State. While the codification of these laws is, in some cases, connected with the reform of the law itself, there are some laws which require only integration and codification. An example of the former is the enactment of a common law relating to land for the whole State of Kerala; this can be evolved not only by unifying the different laws in force in the three major parts of the State, but also by making important changes in them.

My Government is determined to eliminate the proverbial Law's Delays and to establish a satisfactory and uniform system of laws and legal administration, removing the present discrepancies and anomalies.

Government is also anxious to have a reorientation of Jail Administration and give practical shape to it so as to transform our prisons and prisoners in tune with modern trends.

4. The next problem engaging the attention of the Government is that of administrative reform. Certain measures in this direction were taken during the President's rule in Travancore-Cochin, as well as during the President's rule in the newly formed Kerala State. But these measures are inadequate and the Government is taking steps to follow them up with further and more effective measures.

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The main direction of administrative reform introduced during President's rule in Travancore-Cochin was towards decentralisation of power and responsibility from the Secretariat to the heads of departments and their district representatives, as well as to Collectors and the Revenue Divisional Officers. This, however, is inadequate, since it does not put an end to the red-tapism in the administrative machinery, to the gulf between the Government officers at various levels and the people, and to such other evils of the system that has been handed over to us by the British rulers as well as by the rule of the Maharajas and Dewans obtaining in the former Indian States. My Government considers the reform of this administrative set up as a task of high priority; it therefore proposes to set up a committee composed, on the one hand, of officers with administrative experience, and, on the other, of prominent non-officials capable of contributing to a proper consideration of the problem. The Government hopes to profit by the conclusions arrived at by the various experts in the matter of administrative reform, such as the Appleby Report, as well as the suggestions made by prominent personalities in the public life of the country.

5. Connected with the problem of administrative reform is the expansion of the scope of activities undertaken by the Municipalities, Panchayat Boards and other institutions of Local Self Government. While this would require detailed study before concrete legislation in this direction is undertaken it will be the general policy of the Government to develop Municipalities, Panchayats and other institutions of Local Self Government into autonomous bodies with greater powers and ampler financial resources than they enjoy today.

The necessity for such a strengthening of the institutions of Local Self Government is nowhere felt more than in the execution of plans and projects evolved for the purposes of the Community Projects and National Extension Services. The central idea of the plans and projects is to establish a proper co-relation between the initiative of the executive and the co-operation of the people; co-ordination is also needed between the various development departments, both among themselves as well as with the officers concerned with the Community Projects and N.E.S. Blocks. This object is at present sought to be achieved by entrusting the Collectors with the task of co-ordination at the District level and by appointing the Chief Secretary as the Development Commissioner. Experience, however has proved that this is inadequate. It is necessary to supplement this with measures entrusting a good deal of the work of development to the Panchayats and the Municipalities in order to build up local initiative and strengthen people's co-operation.

6. The execution of plans and projects evolved for the purposes of Community Projects and National Extension Services requires careful study also from another angle. The experience so far gained from the working of these plans and projects shows that it is necessary for our State to take full account of the concrete conditions in this State in giving priorities to the various items of development. For example, in some States, which are relatively backward in the matter of education and communications the opening of schools and roads may have to be given high priority; in our State, however, other items like the provision of pure drinking water in the coastal areas may have to be given higher priority. Within our State itself, priorities may have to be altered as between the coastal regions, the plains, and the high ranges; there may have to be variations even as between the relatively backward areas and the rest of the State.

Taking the State as a whole, development will have to be directed towards certain definite objectives such as:

(a) The starting of a few heavy and large-scale industrial units in the State. The Government will try to see that the proposed second Ship Building Yard, under the consideration of the Centre, is set up in this State. It will also try to see that certain industrial units whose establishment in this State has been under consideration for sometime, are established (e.g., a paper mill, a cycle factory, a rubber tyre factory, etc.).

(b) Provision of all possible types of help to the Medium and Small industries. The question of providing easy credit to the Medium and Small Industries is engaging the attention of the Government, necessary modifications in the mode of functioning of the State Industrial Finance Corporation are being considered.

(c) Devising ways and means of forming and strengthening Industrial Co-operatives for Cottage Industries.

(d) Development of Irrigation and Power.

7. Blessed though Kerala is with heavy rainfall, the tragic course of these torrents, eroding the soil and wasting themselves into the sea, should be arrested and turned into a series of beneficent projects, producing abundant electricity and dependable sources of irrigational and drinking water supply. Even our beautiful backwaters should be banded at appropriate places to subserve the interests of agriculture and deepened and lengthened in places to meet the needs of navigation. The Government is preparing a Master Plan fully to exploit our aforesaid natural resources. While a good deal has been done on the electricity front much more remains to be done. An impressive number of Hydel stations beginning with Pallivasal have already been commissioned wholly or in part. Neriamangalam, Panniar, Sholayar and the splendid Pampa scheme, will be taken up for execution during the current Plan period; some have actually been begun. The Idikki scheme is under investigation and serious endeavours will soon be made to locate and investigate the hydel or purely irrigational possibilities in the Malabar area. Works on the distribution and transmission side are under way; the present surplus power in the Travancore-Cochin area is sought to be transmitted to the Malabar area where the supply position, now dependent on the Pykara system of Madras, is none too good. A proposal immediately to construct the transmission line, linking up the State Power system with the distribution system in the Malabar area will be taken up for execution. Likewise, extensions to other parts of the State are also being put through. The Barapole Project situated in the Mysore State holds out irrigational and power prospects for the deficit North Malabar area and so, this scheme will, in due course, be taken up with the Mysore Government. The Government will also actively pursue the question of making available, as a temporary but immediate measure, additional power to the Malabar area from the Pykara system by giving an equal quantum of power to Madras State, at Shencottah.

In compliance with the Electricity Supply Act (Central Act) an Electricity Board has been constituted on 1-4-1957 and the assets and liabilities of the former Electricity Department of Government have been transferred to it. In a State like Kerala, where all the generation and most of the distribution is with Government, the utility of closing down the Electricity Department and making over its functions to a semi autonomous body, was, for long, a matter of controversy, but as almost all State Governments have fallen in line with this proposal this State has also followed suit. However, the Government will exert the utmost to maximise the production of electricity in the State and to transmit current even to our remote villages. Government is also actively considering nationalisation of existing electrical undertakings run by private agencies.

8. Under "Major Irrigation" my Government proposes to speed up the progress and completion of the many projects now under varying stages of execution. The work on Meenkara has been started and on Cheerakuzhi it will be started shortly. A further dam on Chulliar is also under the active examination of the Government. Kanjirapuzha and Palakuzhi are both promising projects which my Government would strive to execute during the Second Five Year Plan period. Quite a large number of medium and minor Irrigation works are to be taken up by Government with a new impulse; Flood control works are also proposed to be undertaken.

On the navigation side, the backwaters and canals along the Kerala coast may well play a vital role in brightening the economic life of the people. The Government intends to investigate the creation of a continuous navigable canal from one end to the other of Kerala and of course, will thereafter take up execution thereof. Sea erosion will be combated in an energetic way and protective works in parts have been already undertaken.

9. These and other problems connected with the economic development of the State raise the question of the provisions so far made in the Second Five Year Plan for this State. These are, in the opinion of the Government, inadequate.

It is considered that, even on the basis of the proportion of our population to the total population of the country, Kerala is entitled to get almost double the allocation at present made to it. Actually, however, the problem is far more serious. For, the needs of the development in a State depend partly on the density of population in that State; the larger the number of people per square mile, the greater the need for the industrialisation and such measures of intensive cultivation as can be introduced only through a high development of industries, electricity and irrigation. From this point of view, the Government feels that our State is entitled to more than the proportion of its population to the total population of the country, while we have actually got even less than what is proportionate to the population.

The Centre is getting a good deal of income from this State by way of income-tax and customs on the cash crops produced in this State. While a part of such incomes collected by the Centre from such a major cash crop of the country as jute is distributed among the jute producing States, no such practice obtains with regard to the cash crops produced in this State.

For all these reasons, my Government considers it just and proper that the Centre's allocation to this State for development is revised. The Government will, therefore, do its best to secure such a revision. The visit of the Finance Commission to the State is scheduled for the third week of June. The Government will put up a strong case before the Commission for increased allocations to this State from the Centre Government intends to consult important sectors of public opinion in this connection and hope to receive their co-operation and help.

10. The Government is also concerned over the food situation which, at the present moment, is causing a certain amount of anxiety. While the basic reason for the unsatisfactory food situation remains, certain recent developments have created, for the immediate present, certain additional difficulties. These are; **Firstly**, the boiled rice to which the people of our State are accustomed, is not available; the stocks that we are receiving are almost entirely raw rice. **Secondly**, even with regard to raw rice, the price situation is not at all good; the tendency in the areas from where we are getting our supplies is for the prices to rise. Nevertheless, the Government hopes to be able to tide over the difficulties of the coming lean months with the help of the supplies promised by the Central Government.

11. Connected with the problem of food comes the development of agriculture, which, in its turn is connected with the problem of land reforms. As the Planning Commission and the Land Reform Panel appointed by it have made it clear, the development of agriculture and the raising of the levels of agricultural production are inseparably connected with the creation of such a system of ownership, management and utilisation of land as will give the maximum amount of incentive to the actual cultivator. The question of land reforms therefore, is one of high priority in the programme to be fulfilled by the Government. Pending introduction of such reforms Government considered it necessary that the existing rights of parties shall not be prejudiced and therefore an Ordinance was promulgated. During this session a Bill will be introduced for the purpose of replacing the Ordinance.

From the pronouncements made by the Chief Minister and the other Ministers, you must have come to know that the Government was proposing to move a resolution in this session of the Assembly to appoint a committee to go into the question of land reform and propose necessary changes in the existing system. Subsequently, however, the Government revised this proposal and have now decided that draft bills will straightway be prepared by the Government itself. In doing this, the Government will study all the material so far collected by the Land Reform Panel of the Planning Commission, as well as by the Select Committee which studied the bills introduced in the former Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly. The new bills drafted on the basis of such a study of the material will, of course, be placed both before the Assembly as well as before the public; the Select Committee, which will examine the bills, will naturally elicit the opinions of the various sections of the people concerned and make whatever modifications are necessary in the draft. This, it is hoped, would make the process of legislation far more expeditious than was possible under the original proposal.

12. The economic development of our State depends to a large extent, on the development and rational use of our vast forest wealth. Our forests are great national asset not only because of the very valuable timber and other forest produce, but also because their existence and proper utilisation is bound up with soil conservation and other requirements of agricultural development. The Government therefore, is considering a plan for developing the forests as a great national asset, exploiting it for better revenue yielding purposes and for settling the landless poor on the non-revertible areas; this latter (settling the landless poor) will be done without prejudicial justice to the necessity for the preservation of the forests.

13. Government is fully aware that the very existence of the people depends upon industrialisation. The general backwardness of the area, the density of population, the acute problem of unemployment, the pressure on land and the backward agricultural economy of the State point to the imperative need for industrialisation on a more intensive and scientific basis.

As far as the State-owned industries are concerned. Government is anxious to run them on sound economic lines and make them profitable concerns eliminating wastage at all stages of production, preservation and disposal etc. Government is also desirous of making them model industrial concerns affording

chances to the workers to participate in the management of the institutions by the formation of Management Councils representing the management as well as the workers. Industrial progress and peace and the aims of the Government in the formulation of industrial policies which Government hopes to achieve by promoting cordial relationships between the management and the workers, assuring them a fair deal, granting their reasonable demands and settling all disputes between the management and labour by mutual negotiations. In the private sector, Government desires to assure the employers that they will get all reasonable encouragement from the Government. To this end, the Government proposes to:

- (a) Examine the wage rates in Government-owned industrial units, industry by industry, with a view to give the maximum possible rise in the emoluments of workers and employees.
- (b) Examine the problems of management and productivity with a view to eliminate waste, end corruption in management, increase productivity and otherwise making the enterprises more efficient and profit-yielding. This will be done in consultation with all concerned including the trade unions.
- (c) Persuade private capitalists to follow a similar policy in their enterprises of increasing the emoluments of the workers and employees and of associating them in the process of management and production, and to this end, try to have councils of management set up in industrial units with the participation of representatives of trade unions.
- (d) Extend the provision of Minimum Wages to those sectors of the industry to which they are not now applicable as also to agricultural labour.

The promotion of small scale and cottage industries on an intensive basis is also under the active consideration of the Government. The development of handloom industry, Khadi spinning and weaving and other small scale and cottage industries will receive particular attention of the Government. For the promotion of handloom industry and for ameliorating the condition of as many weavers as possible, the organisation of more industrial co-operatives, the establishment of dyeing, calendering and other finishing plants and spinning mills are also engaging the immediate attention of Government.

The policy of the Government is to nationalise Transport and Communication and the Government will work out a phased programme towards implementing this policy. In fact, the necessary survey is almost complete.

14. In the field of education, there are some very important things to be taken up immediately. The foremost among them is the demand to codify the departmental practices of the erstwhile States of Travancore and Cochin and also of Malabar and to put the whole thing into the form of a statute. The problem was already before the former Government. Simultaneously with the integration of departmental practices of the Travancore-Cochin State and the Malabar area, the Government hopes to frame and place before you a bill to give statutory basis for the integrated Educational Code. Equally important is the longstanding proposal to re-organise the Travancore University along democratic lines so that it serves the purpose of a Kerala University bringing all the institutions of collegiate education under its guidance and control. Already there is a bill pending with the Government drafted by the Reforms Committee set up a few years ago and thoroughly examined by all concerned. My Government proposes to finalise the draft bill in the light of the latest available information about the constitution of Universities and place it for your consideration. In the field of primary education, the Government has the idea of further strengthening the basic system by integrating the substantial values of the two different systems already prevailing in this State. As a policy in concurrence with the directive in the Constitution, the Government is glad to announce that the entire responsibility of providing elementary education will be shouldered by the Government and that this policy will be implemented according to a phased programme. There is also the proposal to standardise the salaries of teachers throughout the State eliminating all types of discrimination in service. As to the mode of payment, my Government would like to accept the best from the erstwhile Travancore-Cochin State and the Malabar area. As to the expansion of education, I am happy to announce that preference will be given to the Malabar area. To start with, my Government has decided to open 30 High Schools in the Malabar area in 1957-58. The question of expanding technological education will be taken up by the Government in consultation with the Expert Committees set up by the Government of India.

15. Under the Second Five Year Plan, Co-operation has been announced to be the line of collective effort in the field of production and distribution. To follow up this directive we have to carry the benefits of co-operation to the tiller and worker. The Government therefore proposes to reorganise and strengthen the sector of co-operation weeding out as far as possible the role of middlemen who obstruct the passage of profit and progress to the tillers and workers of the State. This policy of the Government would embrace the entire field of production and distribution.

Our State is reputed for fishing. The fishing industry would provide employment for a considerable section of the population of the State and would form an inexhaustible source of public wealth. The Government proposes to modernise fishing all through the State, utilising the latest available scientific knowledge and equipment and to put it within the reach of the fishing community in the coastal belt.

16. In the field of medical help, it is proposed to set up Headquarters Hospitals in each district. The supply of medicine and hospital equipments for each district will be entrusted to the headquarters hospital.

The Medical Department is faced with serious shortage of medical men and nurses. Measures will be taken to cope with these difficulties. In all hospitals and dispensaries there is overcrowding. A comprehensive scheme is under consideration to improve the condition of these hospitals.

It is proposed to start the Medical College at Kozhikode in May 1957. Present strength will be about 40 and this will be increased to 100. The outpatient department attached to all important hospitals is absolutely inadequate and immediate measures will be taken to rectify this. The institution of a protected water supply to the congested urban areas is the first and foremost consideration of the Public Health Department. Adequate measures will be taken to control Malaria and Filariasis. The question of entertaining Honorary Surgeons into hospitals will be considered so as to cope with the shortage of medical men. The institution of Travelling Medical Units will be another matter for consideration.

17. The Department for the Advancement of Backward Communities is at present confined more or less to the former Travancore-Cochin part of the State. The Government proposes to develop its activities in the former Malabar area as well. Furthermore, the Government realises the need for making its work more efficient and more useful for the backward communities than it is to-day.

During the current Session, as already stated, you will have to consider the Kerala Stay of Eviction Proceedings Bill replacing the Ordinance. Besides, you will be called upon to consider among other matters, the Payment of Salaries and Allowances (Amendment) Bill and the Koodalmanickom Devaswom Proclamation (Amendment) Bill.

The above are some of the lines on which the Government proposes to work in the next few months. Their plans have not yet been fully or concretely worked out in detail. This will naturally take a little time, since the present Government assumed office only three weeks ago. I hope that, with the help and co-operation of you, Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public of the State, the Government will shortly be able to work out its programmes more fully and in greater detail.

It is with this hope that I welcome you to the First Session of Your Legislative Assembly and wish you God-speed in your deliberations.