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EDITORIAL

INDIAN ENGINEERING OUTLOOK.

The outlook of Indian Engineering has been considerably widened by the recent change in the political situation. The firm establishment of a vigorous Labour Government with upto-date ideas on social welfare and human values in Great Britain, their agreement to the election of a constituent assembly for the self-government of India, and the formation of an interim government with popular and able representative of the people have given us great hope that post-war engineering schemes will receive their due attention and an unprecedented scope will be found for engineering activities.

Research schemes for the aid of industry are already well afoot. It is proposed to establish a number of Research centres for various industries. The foundation-stone of one of them has already been laid. Commencement of others will shortly take place.

India for sometime past has depended almost entirely on foreign countries for most of the engineering products she needed. This led to a serious handicap during the war when shipping space for their transport became scarce. It is now realised that she must make every effort to place herself in such a position that she will not require foreign aid either for her shipping space or for her engineering requirements. The new, enthusiastic interim government appears to be taking the keenest interest in this direction and it augurs well for Indian Engineers.

Already the "D. V. A. Scheme" for harnessing the water resources and preventing floods of the river Damodar has been taken up in discussions to settle interprovincial responsibilities and finance.

Tenders for the Mor irrigation project are already being called for. New schemes for irrigation in Punjab are being taken on hand. Locomotive manufacture in India is on foot. Construction of large ships has been commenced at Vizagapatam. Arrangements for the establishment of more ship-building yards for construction of large vessels are under consideration.

Town planning schemes and schemes for removal of Bustees of Calcutta have been prepared by the Calcutta Improvement Trust. In this issue we publish the summary of a talk given by Mr. Z. Khan regarding a series of Satellite towns round Calcutta which are being considered by them. The costs of the schemes, being rather high, are likely to raise controversy and therefore require thorough investigation into alternatives prior to their being taken on hand.

The lack of prospects for highly trained Indian technical personnel in the past caused a dearth of candidates for higher technical training and now when prospects have been opened up it seems that the progress of many great schemes may be held up for want of such personnel. It is imperative that larger facilities for training should be provided by all who can do so and wide publicity given to the careers available for candidates. At the same time the need to provide technical education for the ordinary workman must not be lost sight of. Labour in India is in general unskilled and uneducated ; and on account of lack of education its standard of living and wages are low in comparison with that of other countries. A system of education for labour in India is still wanting and is often resisted by labour contractors for fear that increase of education might raise the standard of living and thereby increase the demand for higher wages which would reduce their margin of profit. But it is overlooked that the skill of the Indian workman in proportion to his education is in general remarkably great and, with greater education, that skill could be considerably improved and the quality and quantity of production so raised as to maintain and even increase that margin in a manner profitable to all. Earnest efforts must therefore be made to initiate schemes for the technical education of the ordinary workmen in every locality.

This quarter has seen the growth of disputes between labour and its employers and we have all been affected detrimentally by strikes and lock-outs. Increasing demonstration of dissatisfaction with conditions of employment are noticeable and Trade Unions appear to have gained considerably in strength by concerted action among their members as well as by public sympathy and support.

The ability of profitable concerns to meet the demands of labour has not generally been questioned because of knowledge of large quantities allotted to reserve funds and of the final terms settled as a result of some strikes.

But strikes have not been confined to profitable concerns. Municipal services with limited financial resources have also been compelled to suffer strikes enforcing demand for increase of wages to meet increased cost of living.

It is regrettable that settlement of disputes cannot yet be made without recourse to strikes and lock outs which are harmful and inconvenient to all.
