

I have twice visited the great locomotive works at Chittaranjan in West Bengal which went into production in 1950. Around the locomotive works has been built a company town which would be a credit to the Aluminum Company of Canada - and that is high praise as anyone who has been to Arvida knows.

I have seen the fertilizer works at Sindri which were constructed three years ago. The month I visited Sindri it had reached its target of 1,000 tons of ammonium sulphate a day. This fertilizer is not piling up in warehouses. It is being used by the farmers of India to increase agricultural production. Perhaps the best index of the pace of agricultural reform in India is the use of fertilizers. It is going up so rapidly that India is planning to build three fertilizer plants of the same size as Sindri during the second five-year plan which starts next year.

I have paid two visits to the Mayurakshi multi-purpose project in the hills on the borders of West Bengal and Bihar where twenty million dollars of Canadian Colombo Plan aid has gone. The first time I went I saw thousands of Santal villagers, men and women, moving in single file up and down ramps carrying material to the dams and rubble out. It was my first sight of the Indian method of construction which Le Corbusier has described as using men like innumerable ants.

I thought then of the miracle of Colombo Plan aid. We gave the Indian Government fifteen million dollars worth of wheat. The Indian Government sold the wheat to Indian consumers. With the rupees it got for the wheat it paid Santal villagers and masonry workers from Madras and engineers from Calcutta to build the Mayurakshi dam. When the dam is finished it will irrigate 600,000 acres of land and increase the rice crops on this land by hundreds of thousands of tons a year. This is the magical process by which Canadian wheat is turned into Indian rice. The increased yield of foodstuffs as a result of irrigation from Mayurakshi will be so great that each grain of wheat we gave India will every two or three years produce a grain of rice.

I cannot describe all the evidences I have seen of development in India: the projects of the Demodar Valley Corporation; the research institutes where new high yielding strains of jute and cotton and wheat and corn are being developed; the new engineering schools called technological institutes where students are given a practical as well as a theoretical training; the fisheries projects.

Most important of all, I have seen signs in some of the community projects I've visited - and I must have visited about eight - that the first positions are being carried in a frontal attack on inefficient agricultural methods. This is the most important thing which is happening in India. If India is to double its agricultural production in the next twenty-five years, as it must, it has to introduce dynamic elements into what has been a static village economy. It has to arouse the villager from the lethargy of centuries and release his immense latent energies.

This task can, I am sure, be accomplished. The reason it can be accomplished is that the Indian villager though poor and stubborn and illiterate is shrewd and intelligent and possesses dignity and independence. He is poverty stricken but he is no slum dweller ashamed of living in a slum. He is proud to show to a stranger the house and the village where his ancestors have lived for countless centuries. The peasant of India is not the residue left in an old agricultural community when most of those with enterprise have migrated to the cities or abroad. The peasant is the yeoman of India. He is the backbone of the country. The job of improving conditions in the villages is not therefore a social welfare job. It is an advertising job. The peasant must be sold the idea of using better seed, new methods of cultivation, improved implements.