

India

At New Delhi we were also received in the Governor General's palace, that is the one that was erected when New Delhi was being provided as the new capital. I got the impression, and told Prime Minister Nehru, that it was a good thing it had been done before the Minister of Public Works had to get an appropriation from Parliament to provide it, because it was done on a scale for which it might be difficult to get appropriations in a democratic assembly. Perhaps it is a good thing. There are already 360 million people in India and the population is increasing all the time. It may be a good thing the palace was provided on that scale, with seventy-odd acres of gardens around it, for that set the scale for all the establishments of this new capital.

There is a lot of land there that does not look very attractive for agricultural purposes, so they are going to have plenty of space to develop their new capital to meet the requirements of these hundreds of millions of population. There is a possibility, perhaps even a probability, that they will get back to a state of prosperity which enabled the red forts to be built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, devoted a lot of time to me, for which I am very grateful. Our conversations were, of course, very frank and very intimate. I am not going to be guilty of any breaches of confidence, but he was at great pains to explain to me his views of the historical development of the political regimes and economies and the cultural developments of the successive civilizations of these old countries, and the results of the ferments that are now taking hold among those hundreds of millions of people.

I should like to mention one or two things I saw. I saw the Qutab Minar, a great tower almost 300 feet high, I think, of huge blocks of cut rock and marble. One wonders how that was done thousands of years ago. We have no record of the cranes or other equipment they used to do those things in those days. But the blocks were raised to great heights and put together with some kind of cement or mortar that our contractors do not use in these days.

Alongside of the Qutab Minar there is the "iron tower", the "iron pillar". It is two hundred feet high. I am told it has been there for hundreds of years, and that it is practically pure iron - over 99 per cent pure iron. It is not oxidized; it has not suffered at all through all those years, and I am told that we just cannot do those things today. We cannot produce iron of that purity. And that is just one of the other things that lead me to believe that human nature has not changed through all these long centuries, and that we should not be over-proud of our achievements at the present time. I say that because there have been achievements in the past that we cannot equal today. We have much that we can pass on in industrial know-how to those great nations of the East, but there has been developed there long before our era much that could be used by us in our own lives.