

### A. INDIA. — Provincial Administrations. - New East Punjab Cabinet. - Cabinet Changes in Bombay and Madras. - Forthcoming Elections in West Bengal.

Recent Cabinet changes in the Indian Provinces are summarized below.

**East Punjab:** Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Finance Minister in the Government of Mr. Bhimsen Sachar, was elected Leader of the Congress Party in the East Punjab Assembly on Oct. 17. Mr. Sachar, whose policies had aroused dissatisfaction amongst Assembly members, having resigned the party leadership earlier the same day. The following day Mr. Sachar also resigned as Premier, whereupon the Governor asked Dr. Bhargava to form a new Cabinet. This was announced on Oct. 29, when it was announced that, in addition to Dr. Bhargava, the new Government would consist of Mr. P. S. Azad, Mr. L. S. Sethi (general secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee), Sardar Narotam Singh (Parliamentary Secretary in the last East Punjab Government), and Sardar Gurbachan Singh (Development Minister in the previous Cabinet). The new Government comprises two Hindus, two Sikhs, and a *Harijan*.

**Bombay:** It was announced on Aug. 9 that the Provincial Government had been expanded to 12 Ministers by the inclusion of Dr. B. K. Phalton and the Raja of Phalton, representing the Gujerat and States, which have been merged with Bombay Province.

**Madras:** Mr. J. L. P. Roche-Victoria, one of the three Indian members of the Madras Legislative Council, was sworn in as a member of the Madras Provincial Government on June 1, taking over the Food and Fisheries portfolios. At the same time the following reallocation of portfolios was announced: Dr. T. S. Rajan, Health, Religious Endowments, and Re-settlement of Refugees; Mr. K. M. Menon, Education, Legal Courts, and Forests; Mr. A. B. Shetty, Agriculture and Veterinary; Mr. B. Srinivasan, Cottage Industries and *Harijans*; Mr. N. Reddi, Housing, and Forests.

Following the return of Dr. Roy, Premier of West Bengal, on his visit to Europe, the situation in that Province arising out of the dissensions within the Provincial Congress Committee was discussed at meetings which took place in New Delhi on Sept. 12 between Dr. Roy and three other West Bengal Ministers, and Mr. Rajagopalachari (Governor-General of India), Pandit Nehru, and Dr. Kalam Azad (Minister of Home Affairs and a member of the Congress Party's Central Executive Board). On the following day Dr. Roy (who had previously been given a vote of confidence by the Congress members of the Legislative Assembly) announced in a press statement that the West Bengal Government had agreed to accept Nehru's proposal for a general election in West Bengal.

It was stated that the election was likely to be held at the end of the year, and that the Central Government's plan was to hold it on the basis of a joint electorate with reservation of seats for Moslems, Scheduled Castes, the number of seats to be allotted to them being in proportion to their numbers. The franchise would be limited as in the case of immigrants from East Bengal (Pakistan) would be included in the electoral rolls if they had their names on the 1935 list and had resided in West Bengal for six months.

On Oct. 26 Dr. Roy published the correspondence between himself and Pandit Nehru in connexion with certain charges made against the West Bengal Ministry by Mr. J. C. Gupta, a member of the local Congress Party, which had formed the subject of complaints to Pandit Nehru during the latter's visit to Calcutta, and which Dr. Roy, in his letter to Pandit Nehru, rejected as completely unfounded.

The Congress Working Committee decided on Oct. 5 that the present West Bengal Ministry should continue, subject to such changes as Dr. Roy might make, and that the present Provincial Congress Committee and its executive should also continue to function until the elections.—(*Hindustan Times*, Oct. 10; *The Hindu*, Madras - *The Statesman*, Calcutta - *Indian Express*, London) (Prev. rep. Provincial Cabinets, 9981 D; West Bengal, 10187 A.)

### UNITED KINGDOM. — Disbanding of the Women's Land Army in 1950.

The Government's decision to disband the Women's Land Army in November 1950 was announced on Oct. 31 by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Tom Williams), who pointed out that the supply of regular workers in agriculture had steadily increased, that prospects of further recruitment seemed "generally satisfactory", and that concurrently the strength of the W.L.A. had fallen from 54,000 in September 1945 to 15,000 in September 1949; at the same time he expressed the hope that as many members of the W.L.A. as possible would be able to remain permanently in agriculture.

The Women's Land Army, with Lady Denman as its head, was formed in June 1939, had over 1,000 members at the outbreak of war, and by 1943 had grown to 77,000, its strength at the end of the war, as stated by Mr. Williams, being 54,000. The present 15,000 members of the W.L.A., about 200 have been continuously in agriculture since 1939.—(*Times* - *Telegraph* - *Manchester Guardian*) (7200 F; 7052 C.)

### C. EIRE. — Comprehensive Social Security Scheme.

Details of a comprehensive scheme of social security to replace all existing welfare and insurance schemes, and intended to cover all employed persons over 16, with certain exceptions, were published by the Irish Government as a White Paper on Oct. 25. It was stated that the proposals would for the first time bring agricultural and forestry workers into national insurance, and would include domestic servants within the scope of unemployment benefit, but that no decision had yet been taken regarding the inclusion in the scheme of Civil Servants, Civic Guards, teachers, members of the Defence Forces, and possibly certain employees of local authorities. Details are summarized below:

(1) **Contributions:** Men and women covered by the scheme will normally contribute at the rates of 3s. 6d. and 2s. 2d. respectively, with similar contributions by employers for each person employed. In addition, the State will contribute £4,000,000 to the scheme. Persons whose earnings do not exceed £3. 10s. weekly will contribute 2s. 6d. (men) and 1s. 2d. (women), the employer's contributions, however, remaining as above.

(2) **Disability Benefit:** For contributors at the higher rates, disability benefit during sickness will be at the basic weekly rate of 24s. for single persons over 18, with an additional 12s. for a married man with a dependent wife, and 7s. for each of two children up to the age of 16. Contributors at the lower rates will receive Disability Benefit at the rate of 18s. weekly for single persons, plus, in the case of married men, 9s. for a dependent wife and 5s. for each of two children.

(3) **Unemployment Benefit:** This will be at the same rates for each group as Disability Benefits.

(4) **Widows and Orphans:** Widows will receive pensions of 24s. weekly, plus 7s. weekly for each of two children. Orphans' pensions will be 10s. weekly.

(5) **Maternity Benefit:** An insured woman will receive a lump sum grant of £5, plus a weekly benefit of 24s. for six weeks before and six weeks after confinement. Wives of insured persons will receive a lump sum grant of £5, plus a weekly benefit of 20s. for four weeks after confinement.

(6) **Retirement Pensions:** These will be paid to men at 65 and women at 60, and will be at the rate of 24s. weekly, with an additional 12s. for a wife or husband.

(7) **Death Grants:** Grants will also be provided on the death of a contributor or a member of his family, the amounts varying from £5 for a child under 3 to £20 for a person over 18.

The existing additional benefits under National Health Insurance will be continued; persons in insured employment will have their contributions credited for benefits under the scheme; and present recipients of sickness, disablement, or unemployment benefits or contributory widows' pensions will have their benefits brought as far as possible up to the new levels.

The White Paper estimated total expenditure on the scheme in the first year as £10,500,000 (including £1,200,000 for administration and medical expenses), bringing State expenditure on social services up to £22,000,000 annually. Probable expenditure on the scheme in the fifth year was put at £12,600,000.—(*Irish Times* - *Irish Press* - *Irish Independent*) (Prev. rep. Ministry of Social Welfare, 8296 C.)

### D. GERMANY. — British Zone. - Asylum granted to Czechoslovak Reparations Mission.

It was announced by British H.Q. in Berlin on Nov. 16 that it had been decided to grant political asylum in the British zone to the entire staff of the Czechoslovak Reparations Mission in Germany, consisting of seven officials, together with their wives and children, following a request from Dr. Leopold Rozboril, the leader of the Mission. Dr. Rozboril, in a press statement the same day, said that he and his colleagues had decided that it was no longer possible to serve the Czechoslovak Government, with whose political views they were in fundamental disagreement, that they believed in a political system allowing the individual freedom of conscience, and that they had accordingly decided to seek asylum from the British authorities. The headquarters of the Reparations Mission are at Bad Salzungen, in the British zone.—(*Times* - *Daily Telegraph*) (Prev. rep. Political Refugees, 9445 A.)

### E. ANTARCTICA. — Renewal of Anglo-Argentine-Chilean Agreement on Limitation of Warship Movements.

The agreement between Great Britain, Argentina, and Chile reached on Jan. 18, 1949, not to send warships south of latitude 60 degrees during the Antarctic summer season, except for customary routine movements, was renewed on Nov. 18 with respect to the Antarctic season 1949-50. The announcement said that the three Governments had decided to renew the agreement so as to "avoid any misunderstanding in the Antarctic" which might affect friendly relations between them, and that the U.S. Government had been kept informed. (Times) (Prev. rep. 9756 C.)