

For

Immediate Programme

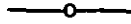


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Rupee One

OUR IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME



Price Re. 1

Published by
THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE
JANTAR MANTAR ROAD
NEW DELHI

SECOND (CHEAPER) EDITION

September, 1950

PRINTED AT
THE MADRAS PUBLISHING HOUSE (1945) LTD., MADRAS 2

FOREWORD

For some time past the economic situation of the country was causing grave anxiety. In fact, there were signs of a developing economic crisis—high prices, low production and increasing unemployment.

Though ours is an agricultural country and crores of rupees were spent on what is known as "Grow More Food Campaign", there was a yawning gap between the demand for and the supply of food. Huge imports on this account and our inability to boost up exports in foreign markets had an adverse effect on our balance of payments. To restore it, our rupee had to be devalued in terms of gold. Devaluation brought in its train further complications. Due to non-devaluation of the Pakistan rupee, two of our important textile industries—cotton and jute—had to face shortage of raw materials. And the programme of self-sufficiency in agricultural production became triangular in character. The country must grow more food, cotton and jute which meant replanning of targets and change in emphasis in the programme of production.

In the manufacturing industries, overheads were high with a keen demand for rationalisation. In spite of savings campaigns, investment market was as dull as before. On top of all this, the imperfect administration of Controls—a legacy of the war-time economy, was a constant source of irritation to the producers and no less to the consumers. More than ever before, the need was felt for an integrated examination of the economy of the country, fixation of priorities and formulation of an economic programme with an eye to our real resources and the aspirations of the people.

The Working Committee on 19-1-1950, after a careful appraisal of the economic situation of the country, in a one thousand word resolution, recommended the immediate appointment of a National Planning Commission by the Government. And the recommendation was acted upon forthwith.

On the appointment of the National Planning Commission, the Congress Working Committee appointed the Economic Planning Sub-Committee to draw up an immediate and a five-year programme.

I am one of those who are convinced of the fact that the economic development of this country should be on the basis of decentralised co-operative planning. I have always believed that the constructive workers and the constructive institutions created by the Congress under Gandhiji's leadership can make substantial contribution to the formulation and more to the implementation of such a plan. Arrangements were therefore made for a meeting of representative constructive workers of the country with the leaders of the Congress for the purpose of drawing up an Immediate

Programme. There were two conferences in the Government House ; the second one, attended also by the members of the Congress Planning Sub-Committee, suggested an Immediate Economic Programme to the Government. Needless to say that the programme which is embodied in the resolutions of the Planning Conference and the Memorandum of the Economic Planning Sub-Committee bears a close impression of the programme finalised in the conference of constructive workers in the Government House.

The Provincial Congress Committees and the State Governments were consulted by the Economic Planning Sub-Committee at all stages and I acknowledge with thanks their contributions in the form of illuminating notes and memoranda. The various Ministries of the Government of India helped us with available materials and data. So that the programme might be finalised through joint deliberation and exchange of ideas among the heads of our State Governments, Provincial Congress Committees and members of the Planning Sub-Committee, it was decided to request the Congress President to convene a Planning Conference. The members of the National Planning Commission were good enough to attend the final meetings of the Sub-Committee which adopted the draft Memorandum and also the meetings of the Steering Committee of the Planning Conference which considered the draft resolutions. Their presence was very helpful, but they were in no way responsible for the decisions contained in the Memorandum and the resolutions, for which the members of the Planning Sub-Committee and planning Conference are solely responsible.

The Working Committee on 1-5-50 considered the resolutions passed by the Conference of Chief Ministers and Presidents of the P.C.Cs. and the Memorandum of the Planning Sub-Committee and directed the Governments, States and Union, to take immediate steps with a view to giving effect to this programme, to the maximum extent feasible. It further directed the Congress Committees and Congressmen to educate the people on the basic principles of the plan in order to create an urge for self-help and self-advancement and to activate the masses.

This programme—essentially practical and intended to achieve maximum results bearing in mind the material and capital resources, capacity and character of our people, their immediate needs and requirements and the basic principles of a decentralised co-operative planned economy—constitutes a challenge to the constructive genius of our nation and the revolutionary fervour of the Congress Organisation. Freedom must create conditions for each individual to feel that at last he has got an opportunity to work for the salvation of his own self and the country. The success or failure of this programme might make or mar the future

of the country. Any delay or lack of enthusiasm on our part to implement this Immediate Programme would discredit the very idea of democratic planning and might pave the way for dictatorship, either of the left or of the right.

Before I conclude I have to discharge the pleasant task of thanking the Chairman of the Sub-Committee who, in spite of his many pre-occupations, could make time to give thought and direction to the work of the Sub-Committee. Much of the little that has been achieved is due to the personal interest he could take in all its phases.

The problems which this Sub-Committee had to tackle were difficult and complicated. The task was as important as it was urgent. The members of the Economic and Political Research Department, A.I.C.C. had to work very hard continuously since the date of appointment of the Sub-Committee by the Working Committee. The brunt, however, had to be borne by Shri K. Mitra, Secretary to the Department, who worked throughout with indefatigable zeal and energy. I wish to record my warmest appreciation of the work of Shri Mitra and his colleagues in the department.

New Delhi,
17 May 1950.

SHANKARRAO DEO,
Convener.

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