

MARCH 12, 1960

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Assembly,

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to this, the first session of the Assembly after the mid-term elections. The events leading to those elections and connected matters are still fresh in our memory and do not require repetition. But the significance of all that happened in Kerala in the recent past needs to be re-stated, because the turn of events contains a lesson to all of us in this great Republic. Under our Constitution the will of the people is supreme; in the ultimate analysis Governments have to bow to the wishes of the people; they have to take into account the wishes of the people whom they rule, in adopting fundamental policies that affect their lives. These are the lessons that we learn from the recent happenings in our State.

As an Indian and as the Constitutional head of the State, I feel proud that the recent changes have been brought about in an orderly manner. It is due largely to the good sense and the basically peaceful nature of the people of Kerala. I am sure all of you share my pride. We have reason also to be proud that our Constitution embodies a degree of flexibility that would always ensure that the people's will shall ultimately prevail.

The changes have been made and the people have given their verdict. It is now up to all of us to work together to create a Kerala where the common man comes into his own, where there is safety and security of the property and person of citizens, where human dignity is not allowed to be trampled in the dust. My Government are determined that there shall be no political vendetta. Let us all now join together, all of us, in the immense tasks that await us.

My Chief Minister has recently enunciated the policy of my Government in regard to Law and Order. Put in brief terms, it is that the Rule of Law shall be enforced.

The permanent services of the State have been put to a great deal of strain in the recent past. A Government servant has the right, in common with all other citizens, to exercise his franchise in whatever manner he chooses, but beyond that he should have no open loyalties and in no circumstances should he behave towards the people with partiality or bias. My Chief Minister has recently addressed a letter to all servants of the State of all grades to emphasise this, and my Government feel sure that the Civil Services and the Police and the staff in all branches of the administration will respond to the Chief Minister's call and give devoted and loyal service which is essential for the proper execution of our programmes.

While giving due importance to the necessity of maintaining law and order, my Government realise that it is in the field of economic betterment that they face most urgent problems. To combat hunger, to combat disease, and to provide employment is the primary need. The policies to be adopted by my Government will be designed to achieve these goals, while at the same time ensuring that no citizen is deprived of the freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution. The number of problems awaiting solution is very large: Some are natural and inherent in the conditions of our State due to geographical and demographic factors. Some, unfortunately, are manmade. No Government can hope to solve all these problems overnight; but my Government will endeavour their utmost to solve them. My Government have been in office only for a few days. The programme outlined herein, therefore, represents but a fraction of what they wish to achieve.

The first need, in the circumstances in which my Government have taken office, was to restore normalcy in the State. I am happy to say that this has been in a large measure achieved, but my Government are conscious that eternal vigilance is called for. No disruption of life of the community will be permitted. At the same time, no class of persons will be allowed to dominate or exploit any other class.

The problem of feeding the hungry mouths and providing employment will claim the immediate attention of my Government. Both these problems have special significance in the context of the conditions obtaining in our State. We are compelled to import from outside the State a considerable part of our requirements in foodgrains. Whereas, in other areas, there may be unemployment, this problem is of extreme gravity so far as our State is concerned. Both these problems, in their very nature, do not admit of short term solutions. Further they can be effectively tackled only at the national level. But my Government will take such measures as will provide some immediate relief. In the matter of food, this is necessary both in regard to the quantity as well as the price of rice.

My Government have approached the Central Government to increase the quota of allotments of rice to our State and have every hope of getting a substantial increase in our allotments.

Rice now sold in fair price shops costs round about 56 naye Paise per edangazhi. My Government propose to reduce the price level to 50 naye Paise per edangazhi throughout the State.

The establishment of a large number of manufacturing and processing units is the only solution to the problem of the over-increasing unemployment. For this the first necessity is the existence of a proper climate in the industrial and labour fields. It shall be the first endeavour of my Government to create such conditions. With the natural resources of our State and an intelligent labour population, there is every reason to hope that once the proper climate is created, industrial progress will be achieved in large measure.

The Government of India have decided to locate the Second Ship-building Yard in Cochin. The Ship-building Centre, with ancillary industrial centres springing around, will prove a real boon. The Premier Tyre Factory, for which the foundation stone was recently laid by the Prime Minister at Kalamassery, will provide large-scale employment. A photo-chemical plant with Russian collaboration is to be located in our State. Negotiations are going on for bringing other major industries into the State. A techno-economic survey of the State has been ordered to be done by the National Council for Applied Economic Research. The survey will bring out clearly the industrial potentialities of our State and also suggest industries which can be established either in the public or private sector.

The Second Five Year Plan is entering the final year of its term. The Third Five Year Plan is on the anvil, and the final drafts will be ready in a short while. It shall be the endeavour of my Government to incorporate in the Third Plan such measures as are calculated to increase food production and employment.

Next to food and employment, health is of primary importance. My Government propose to intensify the campaign for control of malaria and filaria. The running of medical institutions would also be brought to a high standard of efficiency.

While it is generally true that due to the limited extent of cultivable area in our State, there is little scope for increasing the extent of the area under food crops, my Government are firmly of the view that the limit of utilisation of cultivable area for plantation crops has not been reached. My Government propose that, subject to the policy of maintaining reserve forests to the fullest extent required, forest area will as far as possible be taken up for the cultivation of rubber and other suitable plantation crops. This will, on the one hand, provide employment for a large population and, on the other, when the crops come into bearing, bring revenue to the State. Plans for this are under preparation.

Similarly, not enough attention has, so far been, paid to the potentialities of the use of compost manure. A special drive will be made for intensifying the production and utilisation of compost manure on a State-wide basis. Again while our large-scale irrigation projects are being pushed through with as much expedition as possible, the field of minor irrigation has been comparatively under neglect. My Government propose that a special drive should be instituted to bring as much area as possible in the next two years, under Minor Irrigation, so that benefits from the supply of water may begin to accrue immediately.

Simultaneously, the production of F.A.C.T. the Fertiliser Factory in Alwaye, is proposed to be increased. Thus, by a three-pronged drive, by the supply of water, compost and nitrogenous fertilisers, it is hoped to achieve a significant increase in food production in the near future.

Forests constitute another source of our rich resources. The income per acre from our forests is the highest in our country. Government will take every step to preserve and develop our forests. The regeneration programme will be a special feature of the forest administration. My Government propose to intensify this programme. It is also proposed to set definite limits for the conversion of forests to cultivation, as it is bad economy to denude forests and cause permanent harm to the land. The question of taking over the private forests in the Malabar area is engaging the earnest attention of my Government.

Fisheries are yet another source of wealth. Increased production of fish offers also partial solution to our food problem. My Government will take steps to increase the availability of fish in all possible ways. Apart from marine and estuarine fisheries, the reservoirs being created by our Irrigation Project will also be used for the development of pisciculture.

Fishermen are among the poorest sections of our people and my Government propose to take special measures for their economic, social and cultural advancement. Measures to bring the fishermen into the co-operative field will be intensified: Regional marketing societies will be formed to provide marketing facilities. A beginning will also be made for setting up housing colonies and the system of maintaining separate schools for fishermen will be restored. Measures will be taken to increase the supply of special gear and power fishing equipment.

Steps will also be taken to intensify poultry keeping, Programmes for the improvement of livestock will be intensified.

Co-operation is an accepted principle of our Constitution and the adoption of the method of co-operation in the execution of Development Projects has many obvious advantages. However, our experience of co-operatives has not been uniformly happy. My Government feel that this is not due to the fault of the principle, but often because of the introduction of extraneous considerations in the working of co-operatives. My Government propose to review the working of co-operatives in every field of developmental activity and to employ such correctives as would ensure that the full benefits of co-operative activity accrue to the primary producer and the worker and the consumer.

Our power potential is not yet developed to the fullest extent. We want power urgently and lack of power is tending to slow down the pace of industrialisation. Cheap and plentiful power is necessary for providing employment to our people. My Government will endeavour to accelerate the execution of power development programmes. The aim will be to put to advantageous use every drop of water we have for the development of power and irrigation. Meanwhile I have pleasure in informing you that the Neriamangalam Project is expected to go into commission before the end of this year.

The importance of large scale industries for employment has been touched upon earlier. My Government will also intensify the drive for the development of small-scale industries, Khadi, village and cottage industries and handloom and coir, etc. Government will provide in an increasing manner financial aid and technical know-how in these fields.

Steps will be taken to intensify the study of Hindi. My Government are of the opinion that due importance should be given to the study of the other oriental languages.

As a further step towards the ideal of free education, the policy of total remission of fees, which obtains up to and including Standard VII will be extended to cover Standard VIII also.

There are no sufficient facilities at present for the education of children of the pre-primary age group. Government accordingly propose to encourage the setting up of nursery schools for such children. The National Cadet Corps and the A.C.C. are important features of our college and school life and they are now being expanded. An Air Wing of the National Cadet Corps is being opened in our State.

It shall be the endeavour of my Government to bring about as great a measure of agreement as possible between the conflicting opinions about certain provisions of the Education Act so that suitable amendments may be made as early as possible.

There is one feature of school life regarding which we could do much more than at present. I refer to the matter of noon-day feeding in schools. My Government propose to restore the system of noon-day feeding as it obtained previously and children will be fed throughout the academic year. But this involves very heavy

expenditure. This can be done only with the help of substantial voluntary contributions by the public. My Government will take steps to mobilise public co-operation for the setting up of a fund to enable this system to be extended to cover the entire State on a permanent basis. I am sure this effort of the Government will receive the enthusiastic response of the people.

Having reached a high level of literacy our aim should be to advance in the field of technical education and training of craftsmen. In both these fields, my Government hope to achieve significant advances in consultation with the Government of India by the establishment of institutions at suitable levels.

My Government propose to reorganise the system of Harijan welfare activities and ensure better attention to this subject and concrete proposals will be placed before you in due course.

The ensuring of just rewards for labour will be an important objective of my Government's policies. I would categorically state that the interests of labour will be fully safeguarded. At the same time my Government expect that labour will realise its duty and help in bringing about a climate of industrial peace leading to the development and prosperity of the State.

My Government propose to continue vigorously the process of democratic decentralisation which has been given a start during President's Rule by our Prime Minister, who inaugurated Panchayat Raj on the 18th January 1960. The necessary legislative measures to give substance to our ideals of village democracy will be placed before you shortly.

A good transport system and good roads are the life blood of economic development. My Government propose to continue the development of the State Transport Services, with the elimination of overlapping competition and provision of better facilities.

The improvement of our roads will be accelerated. The bridge at Aroor is expected to be opened for traffic shortly and that over the Mangalapuzha at Alwaye is fast nearing completion. When these are completed the long felt need for through all weather communication between the northern and southern parts of the State would have been satisfied. Village roads, which have not been attended to hitherto, will be systematically upgraded so that over a period of years, Kerala may have a network of fine roads reaching her villages.

Corruption among the services is a great danger. My Government are determined to root it out, wherever it is found. Further, they will not allow Government servants to be subjected to temptation by political or other interested parties.

The rank and file of the police force are called upon to undergo great strain by long hours of off-duty work. It is right and proper that they may be compensated for their extra duty by a small grant. This had been granted by my previous Government but later withdrawn. My Government propose to restore this and you will find a provision in the Budget for payment of off duty allowance to policemen.

The conditions in our jails call for a great deal of reform. This is a matter that will engage the earnest attention of my Government. While long-term measures of reform are being considered, there are two measures which are proposed to be immediately implemented. My Government propose that literacy classes should be started in all jails and convict establishments, and for this purpose literate and educated prisoners may be utilised on payment of a small token allowance. Similarly, in the Cannanore Central Jail, a part-time Arabic teacher will be appointed to teach Arabic to the Muslim prisoners.

There are certain sections of population which deserve particular attention in a welfare State. These are the very old and the very young. By and large the development and welfare schemes now in vogue do not cater to the special needs of these people. My Government propose to initiate studies for the drawing up of schemes for the special protection of these most vulnerable sections of the community.

Prohibition, excise and abkari are matters that affect our workers not only because of the corrupting influence of drink, but because of the large scale employment provided in toddy tapping. My Government recently reviewed the policy of settlement of toddy shops by negotiation with tappers' co-operatives and found that the tapper was not being benefited. Accordingly the system has been abandoned. Orders being simultaneously issued to ensure that real benefits accrue to the tappers.

As regards legislation, among the bills proposed to be introduced in this Session, will be the following:—

- (1) Kerala Stay of Eviction Act Amendment Bill, 1960.
- (2) The Kerala Co-operative Societies Act (Special Provisions) Bill, 1960.
- (3) The Travancore Town Planning Act Amendment Bill, 1960.
- (4) The General Sales Tax Act Amendment Bill, 1960.
- (5) The Payment of Salaries and Allowances Amendment Bill, 1960.
- (6) The Kerala Municipalities Bill.
- (7) The Kerala Panchayat Bill.

I now come to the end of my address. As I have said in the beginning, my Government have been in office only for a short while and all the various measures they propose have not been outlined above. I now leave you to your labours and wish you all success in your endeavour to build a better Kerala.

JAI HIND.