

FEBRUARY 24, 1961

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Assembly,

It gives me very great pleasure to welcome you to the Budget Session of the Assembly for 1961.

This is the first time I have the privilege of addressing you. The year that has elapsed has been one of strenuous effort and of substantial achievement. My predecessor, in his address, had indicated measures over a wide field that my Government had proposed to take to improve administration and accelerate our progress towards prosperity. I shall, in a few moments, attempt a brief review of the major successes we have had in these efforts. But to my mind, the greatest achievement of my Government during the year that has gone by has been the successful formulation of the Third Five Year Plan.

The details of the Plan that has been finally settled after discussions with the Planning Commission are well known to you and need no repetition on my part here. I would however like to express my satisfaction, which I am sure all of you fully share, at the size of the Plan which is about twice that of the Second Plan. With the importance given in it to Agricultural Production and Irrigation and Power, its due fulfilment is bound to result in great changes in our economic and social structure. I am sure all of you will co-operate in making the implementation of the Plan a success.

In one respect however the picture of the Third Five Year Plan for Kerala is still incomplete. My Government have, on more than one occasion, emphasized the crying need for establishment of large-scale industries by the Central Government in the Public Sector in Kerala not only for the direct employment they will provide, or even for the economic prosperity that the expenditure of large sums of money will bring to localized areas of the State, but also in order that this may help in getting a large number of small-scale ancillary industries established as also in attracting private industries to follow the public sector into the State in larger numbers than in the past. My Government have been urging on the Government of India the necessity for locating the Heavy Electrical Plant and other Heavy Industries in Kerala and have also indicated suitable sites for the same. In view of the leeway to be made by Kerala in this matter, I am sure the Government of India will realise the need to establish these units in Kerala, where not only are large numbers of trained workers available, but conditions are otherwise ideal for setting up of large units.

Among the other highlights of achievement during the past year are the solution of the thorny problem of the Education Act and the amendment of the Agrarian Relations Bill.

Before I proceed to review the progress achieved last year and discuss our plans for the future, I would also like to refer to the closure of the Palai Central Bank, following action by the Reserve Bank of India. The result of the closure of the Bank has brought in its wake anxious days for other Kerala Banks compelling many of them to seek refuge in moratoria. Also the sudden withdrawal of an important credit source has created difficulties for industry and trade.

Another event of an equally serious nature in the past year has been the invalidation of our Land Tax Act by the Supreme Court. Action was taken to remove the defects pointed out by the Supreme Court by the issue of an Ordinance, which you will be called upon to replace by suitable legislation in a few days.

In his address last year my predecessor had emphasised the need for restoration of the rule of law. This I am happy to state has been achieved.

The first and foremost requirement for the successful implementation of the Plan is to have an efficient administrative machinery. My Chief Minister on assuming office last year addressed a letter to all the servants of the State of all grades to discharge their responsibilities and duties without fear or favour without partiality or bias. I am glad to state that this appeal has had a good effect and I hope the good work will be continued and loyal devoted service rendered by the civil service in all branches of administration in the years to come. Good progress has been made in the integration of services, a matter in which the Government and the officers are deeply interested.

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My predecessor had indicated my Government's determination to stamp out corruption in the Services. I am happy to notice that this promise has been largely fulfilled and by strict and stringent action against corrupt officials, it has been possible to tone up administration generally and to eradicate corruption to a large extent.

A review of our performance in the Second Plan period shows that we may close the period by spending about Rs. 80 crores out of the allotment of Rs. 87 crores. The causes that contributed to this shortfall are well known. The administrative changes consequent on States Reorganisation, the shortage of essential raw materials and recently the crisis that has affected our Banking system are some of the causes that contributed to this shortfall.

The food situation has shown marked improvement. As against a quantity of 162,000 tons distributed through the fair price shops in 1959, a quantity of 206,000 tons of rice was distributed during 1960. This increased availability, together with the decision taken by my Government to supply rice at a uniform subsidised rate of 50 naye paise per Edangazhi throughout the State has benefited the poorer sections of the population. The expenditure on subsidy in 1960-61 is expected to be Rs. 1.45 crores. Although this is a very heavy burden, Government consider it necessary to continue the subsidy for the present.

My Government are fully aware that subsidised sale of foodgrains brought from outside provides no long term solution to our food problem. That solution lies only in increased production. To this end, due importance has been given in our Third Plan to Agriculture, in which field the allotment is 600 per cent of what it was in the Second Plan. Our aim is to increase the irrigated areas by over 3 lakhs acres and to produce an extra five lakh tons of rice per annum by the end of the Third Plan period.

An important measure my Government propose in the field of agricultural production is the introduction of the Package programme under which, in selected areas with assured water supply, all the requirements for growing of crops such as credit, fertilisers and manures, technical advice, etc., would be made available in order to effect a substantial increase in the production of foodgrains and other crops and to contribute materially to the increase in overall production which we desire.

The targets for increased agricultural production in the Third Five Year Plan period can only be achieved through a system of healthy co-operatives to channelise credit and supplies. The target of 750 service co-operatives in the current year will be achieved.

My Government enunciated their industrial policy in a statement on 3-6-1960 clearly laying down the principles for promotion of industries in the State while ensuring a fair deal to labour. The objective of creation of a proper climate and atmosphere in the industrial field of the State has been to a great extent achieved. As a result of this and as a result of the policy of Government of actively assisting industrialists to establish new units in Kerala, there has been an increase in proposals put forward by responsible entrepreneurs. In this connection I am happy to note that friends of Kerala outside the State have been evincing keen interest in this matter. Some months back a Kerala Economic Conference was held in New Delhi. Recently I had occasion to inaugurate a Kerala Development Conference in Bombay, where I made an exhortation to the industrialists outside the State to come to Kerala and start new industries.

My Government have decided to set up a Kerala Industrial Development Corporation which will, apart from collaboration with private industrialists, also be able to start industries in the State Sector in suitable cases. Government have also decided to form a State Small Industries Corporation.

The working of the Coir Co-operative Societies has been reviewed and after a careful evaluation of the conditions of the Coir Co-operatives the pattern of coir co-operatives has been reorganised in order to ensure that the full benefits of co-operative activity should ensure to the workers.

In answer to the long felt need of the Handloom Co-operatives for an Apex Society, an Act has been passed to enable the existing three Central Societies to be amalgamated into an Apex Society and steps are in progress for the implementation of the Act. The Government have also reconstituted the Khadi Board, making it more representative and broad based.

Industrial progress goes hand in hand with enlightened labour legislation and quick and effective settlement of disputes. The policy of settling disputes by voluntary negotiation, conciliation, adjudication and arbitration is being vigorously pursued. The Kerala Minimum Wages (Amendment) Act, 1960 and the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1960 are being brought into force. Industrial Relations Committees have been constituted by Government for several important industries. At a meeting of the Industrial Relations Board which I had the pleasure of inaugurating, the representatives of labour and management agreed to observe industrial peace.

The Techno Economic Survey of the State undertaken by the National Council of Applied Economic Research has been completed and their report is expected shortly.

During the Third Five Year Plan period it is proposed to raise 25,000 acres of teak plantations, 15,000 acres of softwood plantations and 15,000 acres of Eucalyptus plantations. Cultivation of medicinal plants for the proposed Phytochemical plant at Neriampalam has been started. A Forest School to impart training to Forest Guards will be set up. A Bill for the acquisition of private forests will be placed before you in due course.

The allotment for Fisheries in the Third Five Year Plan period is Rs. 450 lakhs against the allotment of Rs. 93 lakhs in the Second Plan period. This large allotment has been made with a view to giving due importance to development of Fisheries and advancing the interest of fishermen.

The proposals in regard to large-scale rubber cultivation are being implemented.

In the Public Health field, a smallpox eradication unit was set up in Kozhikode in October 1960 as a pilot project. This pilot project scheme will be completed by March 1961 and would thereafter be converted into a State-wide programme for eradication of smallpox.

For patients suffering from tuberculosis, in addition to the augmentation of the number of beds, it is proposed to open rehabilitation centres.

My Government have approved a new approach towards fighting leprosy. The establishment of survey, education and treatment centres in selected hospitals and dispensaries and opening of rehabilitation centres at short distances from sanatoria, to relieve congestion in the existing sanatoria and also in the interests of the community, are being arranged. Three hundred acres of land have been acquired for a rehabilitation centre near Noornad wherein it is proposed to put up residential quarters and provide suitable work for the patients.

My Government are taking steps to increase the availability of milk and dairy products. It is proposed to start a cattle farm in the High Ranges where cross-bred cattle of high yielding capacity can be produced. The capacity of the pasteurisation plant at Kozhikode will be expanded with assistance from the UNICEF. The plant at Trivandrum is expected to go into production in the next few weeks.

My Government have decided to start a third Medical College and in preparation of this, admission to the pre-medical course has been suitably increased during the last year.

Arrangements have been made to start two University Centres, one at Kozhikode and the other at Ernakulam.

Although the ideal of universal primary education between the ages of 6 and 11 has been achieved in many areas of our State without compulsion, it is a fact that a large number of our boys and girls of this age-group is still out of schools. This has to be remedied and if we are to achieve the objectives of equality of opportunity stressed in our Constitution it needs to be ensured that no young person whatever his family or social circumstances, is allowed to be kept away from schools. Steps are being taken to this end.

My Government have decided that more attention should be paid to the education of children in the pre-primary age-group. Model pre-primary schools will be established in different parts of the State and the establishment of such schools by private agencies will also be encouraged.

Efforts are being made to extend noon-day feeding throughout.

A system of merit scholarships will be introduced to ensure that no meritorious boy or girl has to give up studies due to penury. My Government hold that it is only by ensuring the best education for the fittest that the future generation can be built up. To this end a Public School for training of future leaders selected on the basis of merit, will be established. Special measures will be taken to improve the study of English. The study of Hindi, the National language of the Country, will be extended to our Technical schools and colleges.

The strength of some of our schools is over two and three thousand. The management of such large bodies of young people is far beyond the capacity of one Headmaster or one Headmistress. It is proposed to bring down the size of schools by bifurcation of schools and by separating the primary classes and girls' sections wherever possible and necessary.

It has been decided that the Yogic system of physical culture should be taught in our schools and for this purpose Yogicasanas are being included in the curriculum of schools and colleges for Physical Education.

It is proposed to encourage the ancient art of Kalary Payattu by a suitable grant under Sports and Games.

Memorials will be established for our great National poets and writers. A beginning will be made in the coming year in respect of Thunchath Ezhuthassan, Kunjan Nambiar, Kumaran Asan, etc.

Greater emphasis will be given to technical and technological education. A new Regional Engineering College will be started in Kozhikode during the coming year and the existing Colleges and Polytechnics will be expanded.

Implementing the policy of looking after the welfare of the very young and the very old, the old-age pension scheme has been brought into operation. In the actual working of the scheme it was found that in the peculiar circumstances in our State, the rules as framed would not allow a large number of persons who are in real need to benefit by it. Accordingly, my Government have amended the rules, liberalising the same in order that all old persons in real need may benefit.

Another section of the population deserving special attention at the hands of the State are destitute widows. It has been decided to start "Widows' Homes" and "Abala Mandirams" in the district headquarters during the next year.

My Government are anxious that there should be no shortfalls in schemes for the welfare of Harijans and Scheduled Tribes. The administrative machinery has been strengthened. In addition to extending aid in the existing pattern, three tribal blocks will be started in the State.

My Government propose that more facilities for vocational training should be given to inmates of jails to make their rehabilitation easy. It has been decided to start a rubber plantation at Nettukaltheri Reserve, Nedumangad Taluk, where selected prisoners of good conduct will be settled in an 'open prison' to be established shortly.

The probation service has been extended throughout the State. A shelter for waifs and strays has been started in Kozhikode and Care Homes for disabled children at Quilon and Trichur, and Children's Club and Parks in all the district headquarters. Remand Homes has been established at Trivandrum and Kozhikode. My Government propose to bring before you legislation to provide for relief and rehabilitation of destitutes and children.

In the field of communications, two major bridges, which had constituted irksome bottlenecks to in our transport system, the Aroor Bridge and the Mangalapuzha Bridge at Alwaye on the Periyar river were completed and opened to traffic. A large number of other main bridges have also been completed and the pace of completion of others speeded up.

Progress has also been satisfactorily maintained in the fields of Irrigation and Power. The physical target for Major Irrigation in the Second Plan of 112,000 acres has been attained.

In the field of Power, it has been a matter of satisfaction that during the last year my Government had been able to solve the pending disputes in regard to Sholayar waters and also to obtain clearance for the Pamba-Kakki Scheme. Work on both the schemes is in full swing and accelerated targets have been set to minimise the delay in availability of power. Meanwhile, one of the generators in Neriamangalam have been commissioned and two more will be commissioned shortly.

In the field of Public Health Engineering, Urban Water Supply Schemes in Quilon, Kottayam, Trichur and Palghat are nearing completion and are expected to be commissioned during the next year.

The Kerala Panchayat Act has been passed to provide the basic structure for the formation of Panchayati Raj and Government have taken steps for the delimitation of Panchayats. It is hoped that the new Panchayats will come into being in the next financial year.

My Government propose to intensify the drive for development of Tourism. It is proposed to organise the celebration of Onam, the National festival, as an occasion for attracting tourists.

It now remains for me to deal with our legislative programme. The last year has been a very busy year for you during which you have dealt with 54 Bills out of which 42 Bills have already become Law, among which are the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill, the Kerala Panchayat Bill and the Kerala Education (Amendment) Bill already referred to as measures of great importance for the onward progress for our State towards planned prosperity. The coming year also bids fair to be a very busy and crowded one. The following are some of the important Bills that you may be required to deal with in the coming year:—

- (1) The Kerala Private Forest Acquisition Bill, 1961;
- (2) The Kerala Co-operative Societies Bill, 1961;
- (3) The Periyar State Park Bill, 1961;
- (4) The Kerala Buildings (Leasing and Rent Control) Amendment Bill, 1961;
- (5) The Valiamma Thampuram Kovilakom and the Palace Fund (Partition) Bill;
- (6) The Kerala Hackney Carriage Bill;
- (7) The Kerala Town and Country Planning Bill;
- (8) The Kerala State Aid to Industries Bill;
- (9) The Kerala Ancient Monument and Archaeological Sites and Remains Bill;
- (10) The Kerala Relief Undertakings (Special Provisions) Bill;
- (11) The Kerala Children's Bill;
- (12) The Kerala Land Tax Bill;
- (13) The Agricultural Income-tax (Amendment) Bill; and
- (14) The Municipal Laws Amendment Bill.

I have now come to the end of my address. I would take this opportunity of making an earnest appeal to the leaders of the political parties, irrespective of their affiliations, to consider that the economic prosperity and progress of Kerala can only be achieved by unity of purpose, persistency in action and assistance that all could render in the fulfilment of the Third Plan. The first priority should be given to the problem of unemployment, and I do hope that if all sections are united in this great endeavour, much can be secured.

I would like to conclude by expressing the hope with which I am sure all of you are in agreement, that the progress of Kerala in the path of planned prosperity may go forward unimpeded.

“JAI HIND”