

Guarantee Of Fundamental Rights To The Press

PLEA TO INCLUDE CLAUSE IN DRAFT CONSTITUTION

From Our Staff Correspondent

BANGALORE, May 17.

A RESOLUTION urging the Constituent Assembly to include a clause in the new Constitution guaranting fundamental rights to the press, was passed by the All-India Newspapers Editors Conference during its eighth annual session here today.

The Conference appointed a sub-committee consisting of Mr. Deshbandhu Gupta, Mr. Ramnath Goenka, Mr. Suresh Majumdar and Mr. K. Srinivasan (secretary) to meet the President of the Constituent Assembly and the Drafting Committee in this connection.

The Conference adopted another resolution amending its constitution regarding membership to facilitate the admission of Editors in the States as members to the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference. Any periodical in the Indian Union, publication of which is duly registered under law, may be enrolled as a member on submitting an application endorsed on behalf of the local branch or by the President.

This is considered a further step in the democratisation of the A-I.N.E.C. by bringing into its fold Editors of newspapers in the States which have acceded to the Indian Union, a privilege which the Editors did not hitherto possess.

The Conference also resolved that membership fee should be increased and formed a sub-committee to go into the question and report to the Standing Committee, the opinion of the members of the A-I.N.E.C.

CODE FOR JOURNALISTS

A number of other resolutions was passed by the Conference, including the following: "The A-I.N.E.C. is of the opinion that steps should be taken immediately to draw up a code of professional conduct for journalists and devise suitable machinery for any breaches of the code." A sub-committee was appointed consisting of Mr. C. R. Sreenivasan, Dr. Sachin Sen, Mr. Devadas Gandhi and Mr. A. D. Mani as convener, to go into the matter and submit their report by September 1. The Conference authorised the Standing Committee to take appropriate action on the report.

"This Conference while claiming the fullest latitude of discussion to the press in all matters of public interest, views with grave concern the growing tendency among certain sections of the press to overstep the bounds of legitimate criticism and to indulge in scurrilous and offensive language, thereby lowering the readers' tastes and corrupting the public mind."

"The Conference also notes with regret that there are sections of the press indulging in gross distortion of facts and deliberate suppression of news. It, therefore, calls upon the Standing Committee and Press Advisory Committees to pay special attention to this problem and take necessary steps to check such tendencies, and uphold the prestige and honour of the journalistic profession."

"The A-I.N.E.C. directs the secretary of the Conference to collect information from member-newspapers relating to service conditions and staff emoluments and place the same before the next meeting of the Standing Committee to enable them to make their recommendations to members on the standards to be maintained in these respects, taking note of suggestions made by the president in his address and journalists association in the country."

"The A-I.N.E.C. appoints a sub-committee consisting of Mr. A. D. Mani, Mr. K. P. Narayanan and Mr. V. D. Dhawale to prepare a scheme for the establishment of All-India In-

stitute of Journalism for giving higher training to journalists, and report to the Standing Committee within three months."

Earlier, the Conference adopted a resolution expressing its sorrow at the demise of Mr. S. A. Brelvi and placed on record his services to the profession. A similar resolution on the death of Mr. B. G. Horniman, Mr. K. Punniiah and Mr. G. A. Natesan and Mr. K. P. Khadilkar was adopted.

The Conference by another resolution welcomed the election of Mr. Devadas Gandhi to the United Nations Sub-Commission of Freedom of Information of the Press and the opportunity afforded thereby to the Indian press to render its contribution to the cause entrusted to the Sub-Commission.

The Conference concluded this evening. Members of the A-I.N.E.C. and the Reception Committee were entertained to tea by the President, Bangalore City Municipality, Mr. R. Subbanna, at the Municipal offices.

The A.P.I. adds: The Conference noted with grave concern the tendency of provincial governments to augment their resources by imposing taxes on newspapers, on circulation and advertisements. The Conference regarded any tax on newspaper industry as essentially a tax on knowledge and urged that the sales tax should not be applied to newspapers as such tax cannot be passed on to the consumer. Furthermore the incidence of this tax operates unevenly between big and small newspapers and is calculated to strangle new enterprise.

The A-I.N.E.C., therefore, emphatically protested against the attempt to tax newspapers and requested provincial governments to abandon these taxes.

The following have been elected to the Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference: Messrs. Joachim Alva, H. R. Moharaj, Ramnath Goenka, Deshbandhu Gupta, Devdas Gandhi, S. Sadanand, Tushar Kanti Ghosh, A. D. Mani, B. Sen Gupta, Sambu Prasad, Kasturi Srinivasan, K. Srinivasan, P. D. Dhawale, Suresh Muzumdar, G. V. Krupanidhi, B. P. Misra, A. N. Sivaraman, H. M. Joshi, Dr. Sachin Sen, Mr. Harris and Mr. Srikant Thakore.