

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

	SUN.	MOON.
Friday	13	22 40 47
Saturday	14	23 38 45
Sunday	15	24 36 43
Monday	16	25 34 41
Tuesday	17	26 32 39
Wednesday	18	27 30 37
Thursday	19	28 28 35
Friday	20	29 26 33
Saturday	21	30 24 31
Sunday	22	31 22 29

PHASES OF THE MOON

Monday December 13 Last quarter 18 27

WEATHER IN SOUTH INDIA

MADRAS, Dec. 12.
Daily weather report for Madras Presidency and Mysore:
Weather has been dry except for light showers in Madras and Mangalore. Night temperatures have been markedly above normal in the eastern half of the Region. Forecast until the evening of Dec. 13: A few showers in East Tamilnad and South Mysore.

Lowest temperatures at night:
Mysore, Hassan, Kolar, Salem, Nalgonda, Madras District, 45-48; Bangalore, 45-48; Bangalore and Vizagapatam districts, 45-48.
Outlook for the next three days: Fair generally.

METTUP WATER LEVEL

Reservoir full on Dec. 11.



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1946.

A SOVEREIGN BODY

The unanimous election of Dr. Rajendra Prasad as permanent Chairman of the Constituent Assembly is not only proof of the universal confidence reposed in him and the singular esteem in which he is held. It is of happy augury for the successful conclusion of the extraordinarily difficult task which the Assembly has set its hand to. If any one man in India can hope to reconcile the wide differences, doctrinal, personal and temperamental, that have so long delayed a united and victorious march to freedom, it is this gentle, wise and patient son of Bihar who harbours no ill-will against a soul on earth and to whose genius for persuasion the magnificent simile of *The Ramayana* may be fittingly applied, that "when he speaks the foe with sword uplifted and about to strike stays his hand." In the brief reply he made to the felicitations showered upon him from all quarters, Dr. Rajendra Prasad made a feeling reference to the abstention of the Muslim League representatives and expressed the hope that they would soon be induced to come in. "I am hoping also," he said, "that you would do your best to achieve this great objective." Coming from such a man these are no empty words. Readers of *India Division*, his monumental work on the implications of Pakistan, will know with what scrupulous fairness he has set out the pros and cons and how genuinely anxious he has shown himself for a settlement, on the basis of a free and united India, to which the Muslims would give their willing consent. Mr. Jinnah and other leaders of the Muslim League should realise that a lasting solution of the communal problem can be found only by mutual agreement and the effort in this direction, on which the Constituent Assembly is embarked, has started under the best possible auspices with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as pilot.

In his very first utterance the Chairman struck the right key. He referred to the fact that "this Assembly has been born with certain limitations" and went on to add, "We may not forget, disregard or ignore these limitations in the course of our proceedings and in arriving at our decisions." All the more significant is his assertion, "But I know, too, that in spite of these limitations the Assembly is a self-governing, self-determining, independent body in whose proceedings no outside authority can interfere and whose decisions no one outside can upset, alter or modify." The Assembly is, in spite of the peculiar conditions of its origin, a sovereign body because, as Sir N. Gopalaswami Iyengar justly observed, "The Constituent Assembly derived its authority, not from the fact that its authors were three members of His Majesty's Government, but from the fact that the proposals made therein had been accepted by the people of this country." Any outside authority, however exalted, cannot claim the right to tell the Assembly how it should achieve its task or regulate the manner of its working. The British Government, by its recent statement after the failure of the London talks, has given a demonstration of the enormously mischievous effect that such interference may have. In his statement in the House of Lords on Wednesday, the Secretary of State maintained that what his Government was now doing was merely to interpret the Cabinet Mission's plan. And he reiterated a point made for the first time in the British Government's recent statement, which said that "the intention of the Mission was that the decisions of Sections should be taken by a majority vote" and that this is "what the Cabinet Mission

have always said was their intention." That is as it may be. But so far as the public is concerned, there is not a scrap of evidence to show that it was ever told that this was the Cabinet Mission's intention. The one statement made by the Mission before it left India, by way of interpretation and elaboration, was that of May 25 in which all that the Mission said was that it did not agree with the interpretation put by the Congress on Para 15 of the Statement of May 16, "to the effect that the Provinces can in the first instance make the choice whether or not to belong to the Section in which they are placed." This, as we pointed out the other day, is a very different thing from maintaining, as the British Government does now, that the voting in the Sections shall be by a majority vote. Voting is a question of procedure which is a matter purely for the Constituent Assembly to decide as it may consider best.

Lord Pethick-Lawrence expounds the rationale of Grouping as being "that there would be an opportunity, by the adoption of a particular procedure in the Constituent Assembly, for the Provinces to form Groups for the administration of such subjects as it was decided should be dealt with in common." The important thing in the view of the British Government is, thus, that an opportunity to form Groups should be provided—and not to impose on the Provinces, compulsorily herded into the Sections, a Provincial Constitution which may not be to their liking. But that may nevertheless happen under the Cabinet Mission's plan. The Mission's reply to this is that "individual Provinces would be free to opt out after the first elections under the new Constitution." But they are stubbornly silent when confronted with the question, which has been repeatedly asked: "What guarantee is there that the Sections would not rig up the Provincial Constitutions in such a way as to make it impossible for the will of the people of any Province to express itself through its gerrymandered legislature?" The Secretary of State says that the Muslim League considers voting by a majority in the Sections is an essential part of the Plan "because if the agreement of all Provinces within a Section is required for the framing of a Group Constitution it is probable that the opposition of some of the smaller Provinces will prevent the Group Constitution being framed." If the concrete cases that are likely to happen are examined it will be seen that in the Section into which only two Provinces, Bengal and Assam, will go, there will be no point in forming a Group if one Province, even if it be the smaller one, stands out. You simply cannot have a Group, if Assam objects, unless you coerce Assam. In the Section comprising the Punjab and other Provinces, if one Province should oppose Grouping, a Group may yet be formed comprising other consenting Provinces without any inescapable necessity arising for coercing the dissenting Province; while if a majority of the Provinces in the Section do not want Grouping there would be no point in compulsorily impounding them together. We fully endorse Lord Pethick-Lawrence's emphasis on the need for framing a Constitution which, "because it is based on consent, will be welcomed by all and worked in a co-operative spirit." To coerce any Province to do what it does not want to do is not the best way of achieving this end. The British Government can help best by impressing it on every Party that it is for Indians to come to a settlement among themselves by making the fullest use of the forum provided by the Constituent Assembly.

INCREASE IN RICE RATINGS
POSTPONEMENT IN SOME DISTRICTS LIKELY
MADRAS, Dec. 12.
The ways and means of replenishing food stocks in the districts which have been affected by the dislocation of communications due to recent rains, were discussed at a conference of food officials held at the Secretariat this afternoon.
A number of general administrative matters also came up for consideration. It is understood that on account of the delay caused in the building up of necessary stocks in seven or eight districts affected by floods, there may be some delay in giving effect to the increase in rice portion of the food ration, announced recently from eight to ten ounces. The period of postponement, it is believed, may not exceed a fortnight.

STATES PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 12.

The meeting of the Standing Committee of the All-India States People's Conference, announced for December 26, has now been postponed to December 28 and the two subsequent days.—A.P.I.

BHOPAL RULER MEETS VICEROY

NEW DELHI, Dec. 12.

The Viceroy to-day granted an interview to the Nawab of Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes.—A.P.I.

MR. T. PRAKASAM

MADRAS, Dec. 12.

Mr. T. Prakasam, Prime Minister, returned to Madras from Delhi this evening by air.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

DECLARATION OF OBJECTIVES

SEVERAL AMENDMENTS

TABLED

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

NEW DELHI, Dec. 12.

Notice of over 25 amendments have been received by the President's office to Mr. Nehru's main resolution before the Constituent Assembly defining the objectives of the permanent constitution of India. The majority of these amendments seek to emphasise the need for safeguarding the interests of workers and peasants. Some are designed to eliminate one feature, namely the vesting of residuary powers in the provinces. One amendment standing in Dr. M. R. Jayakar's name, the demand for the expediency of bringing up such a resolution before the Constituent Assembly in the absence of the Muslim League and Indian States representatives.

Pandit Nehru will move his resolution to-morrow and the final stages of the debate will be reached only after his return from East Bengal. By that time Lord Wavell will be back from London, and also Sir Stafford Cripps. The debate in the House of Commons on Monday and Mr. Jinnah's promised statement before leaving London at the end of this week will remove a good deal of uncertainty which is prevalent at this stage. There are, of course, some who suggest that adoption of such a resolution as Pandit Nehru's, which would give the Muslim League and States into the Constituent Assembly much more difficult than it is. Congress leaders on the other hand contend that there is nothing in its terms to which anyone can with reason take exception. The objectives of the Muslim League cannot be different from those defined in the resolution and in fact the draft takes careful note of both of Muslim sentiment and the basic details of the Cabinet Mission's long-term plan.

PRINCES' ATTITUDE

The Standing Committee of the States People's Conference, which met during Christmas and a later stage of the Constituent Assembly is expected to appoint its Negotiating Committee to discuss with the Nawab of Bhopal the terms and conditions of States' participation in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly. States do not seem to be anxious to hasten their negotiations. They want to see whether the Constituent Assembly and what purpose. They will examine the implications of Pandit Nehru's resolution which the Constituent Assembly will almost certainly adopt.

Pandit Nehru during his recent visit to London made a sharp attack on the Political Department. It is believed in some quarters that it is only a prelude to demanding large-scale changes, including the replacement of the present Political Adviser to the Crown Representative by an Indian who will not be outside the influence, and even control of the Government of India.

Pandit Nehru's complaint that the Interim Government has nothing to do with the Political Department is considered significant. It is no secret that during summer sessions the Prime Minister took the extraordinary step of informing the Viceroy that they would prefer a British Officer as Political Adviser to an Indian. Since the assumption of office by the Interim Government, it has been to dawn on several of their Highnesses that after all even the Defence Department is under an Indian, and treaty obligations to the extent that they relate to the maintenance of troops for the protection of States are entirely under the influence of the Interim Government. Nevertheless mention of "Responsible Government" in the resolution has caused a shock to some of the States. What sovereignty derived from the people signifies.

Congress leaders will feel their way. It is possible that the Congress Working Committee may decide to meet at some suitable place in East Bengal in the last week of December and review the situation in Gandhiji's presence with his advice.

DR. JAYAKAR'S SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION

The Associated Press adds:—

Forty amendments tabled to-day propose drastic changes and even wholesale substitution of Pandit Nehru's resolution on the transfer of power to be discussed by the Constituent Assembly to-morrow morning. One of the two substitute resolutions is in the name of Mr. Somnath Lahiri, the Communist member, and runs to 1,500 words. Dr. R. Jayakar heads the list with the other substitute resolution which is a brief one and reads:—

"This Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve that the constitution to be prepared by this Assembly for the future Government of India shall be for a free and democratic sovereign State; but with a view to securing, in the interim, the peace and stability, the operation of the Muslim League and the Indian States, and thereby intensifying the firmness of this resolve, this Assembly postpones the further consideration of this question to a later date, to enable the representatives of these two bodies to participate, if they so choose, in the deliberations of this Assembly."

COMMUNIST AMENDMENT

Mr. Lahiri's substitute resolution declares India to be an independent country and calls upon the Indian members of the Interim Government "who are nominees of the two main popular parties and of the minorities, together enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of our people, to act as the Provisional Government of India and to take over all banks, industrial and transport concerns, plantations, mines, etc. owned by British capital and nationalise them. The Government is asked to pass legislation to enforce a common living wage, recognise trade unions and nationalise the railways. People are called upon to be vigilant and report acts of intrusiveness and sabotage carried out by bureaucrats and officials in the interest of their former master so that such cases are speedily exposed and the culprits punished."

In order to resolve Congress-League differences, the resolution calls for the setting up of a Boundary Commission to redemarcate existing provinces and States into linguistically and culturally homogeneous units, and second, plebiscite of the entire adult population of the constituent States to determine whether they will join the Indian Union or form a separate State. The resolution asks for the establishment in Indian States of popular interim Governments which should call a Constituent Assembly which in turn should elect delegates to the All-India Constituent Assembly.

Smaller amendments include two by Mr. Shibban Lal Saksena, (Leftist from U. P.) who opposes the vesting of residuary powers in the units and advocates

(Continued on Page 5)

FRAMING INDIA'S CONSTITUTION

"CABINET PLAN ONLY SOLUTION"

CRIPPS' APPEAL TO PARTIES

CHURCHILL'S ATTACK ON INTERIM GOVT.

LONDON, Dec. 12.

The hope that despite mutual suspicions and fears, the Congress and the Muslim League might eventually find themselves side by side in the Constituent Assembly and in the Sections was expressed by Sir Stafford Cripps when he opened a two-day debate on India in the House of Commons to-day.

"We are convinced now as we have never been," added Sir Stafford, "that it is only by such co-operation that a satisfactory new constitution for India can be hammered out."

The debate opened shortly before 10-00 G.M.T. at 30 m.p.h. with the House crowded in every part and Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League and Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, leader of Indian Delegation to the United Nations, were among a number of Indians who listened to the debate from the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery.

Sir Stafford Cripps also told the House that after careful re-examination of the scheme put forward in May last the Government was convinced that it was not only a fair and reasonable scheme, "I can see no other way," he added, "by which the disaster of civil strife can be avoided."

Sir Stafford Cripps concluded by expressing the conviction that it was essential that all parties in India should call a halt to the violent propaganda that has stirred the people during the last few months.

Mr. Winston Churchill, leader of the Opposition, who followed Sir Stafford Cripps, associated himself with Sir Stafford's appeal for peace and called for a halt to the violent propaganda. "All facts and all omissions," declared Mr. Churchill, "point to a revival in an acute and violent form of internal hatreds and quarrels, which have long lain dormant under the mild incompetence of liberal-minded British rule. It is a revival which would be a complete failure to agree."

"Agreement in India which was the basis of all our policy and declarations was an indispensable condition. Instead, there had been strife and bloodshed and a demand for 'transfer of power' to come."

Mr. Churchill, on behalf of the Opposition, disclaimed all responsibility for the Labour Government's present policy and charged it, through inviting the Congress to form an Interim Government, with precipitating a series of events which culminated in India since the mutiny of 1857.

Mr. Churchill, alluding to his insistence upon a debate, said it would be a pity if the British Empire in India passed out of life into history without the House of Commons taking any interest in the affair.

For the Liberals, Mr. Clement Davies, said that there had been no wars more horrible in Europe in the past than those caused by religious differences. That should be a warning to the Indian people to do their utmost to bring in a settlement, remembering responsibility not only for a particular party but for India as a whole.

Sir Stanley Reed (Conservative), formerly the Editor of *The Times* of India, said that the Government had approached this great problem with wisdom and diffidence. On the broad outlines of their policy he gave them cordial support.

DETAILS OF DEBATE

CRIPPS' TRIBUTE TO INTERIM GOVT.

The first full-dress debate on India in the present Parliament opened in a packed House of Commons to-day with a speech by Sir Stafford Cripps.

Notable listeners included Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League. There were several ladies in bright Indian costumes sitting in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery.

The debate began by moving the motion which stood in the names of the Prime Minister, Mr. Clement Attlee, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. A. V. Alexander and Mr. J. H. Thomas, and read:—

"That this House takes note of the statement on India made on December 11 by the Prime Minister and expresses its hope that the present difficulties between Indian parties will be forthcoming."

Declaring that Britain had now for over a century been the greatest power in the world, Sir Stafford Cripps said: "We have been largely responsible for shaping her destiny and destiny has been shaped by her. Whether we have conducted ourselves well or ill, we have carried the responsibility in a large measure and to-day we find that India and the rest of the world are looking to us with the most grave problem that arises out of that historical development."

"Do not let us underestimate the difficulty of its solution," he continued, "and suggested that but for the intransigence of this or that Indian party the matter could be easily solved. That, I do not know. In the present situation, however, every one who has shared in the responsibility for the past of India must likewise share in the responsibility for the future. It is not a matter of who shares the responsibility and that is why we are all of us most anxious to find a way out of these present difficulties."

The time had now come, said Sir Stafford Cripps, when Britain wanted to hand over power to the Indian people. The difficulty was not to hand over power, but to hand over it in a way which would be a fair and equitable settlement. There were two principles, both democratically sound but which were very hard to match together in a single process. The first was the right of the Indian people to determine their own future without any veto or prohibition from any minority. The second was the right of the Indian people to determine their own future without suppression by the majority.

The only way in which these two rights can be worked out is in a democratic assembly where there is give and take. We know in this House of Commons a degree of give and take which is not to be found in any other assembly. I believe, in India to-day is that the principal bodies have not shown themselves prepared to trust one another or to work together in a democratic manner. There is a deep-seated antagonism, accentuated by the approach of handing over of power, has been separating those who alone can determine the future of India from those who are girding at the facts of history. We must try to overcome or get round them."

"VIOLENT PROPAGANDA" DEPRECATED

Loud cheers greeted a tribute by Sir Stafford Cripps to the Viceroy of Sir Lord Wavell for his "hard and unceasing labour" in the past few months. Recalling the events which had led up to this event, Sir Stafford Cripps said: "The Government is functioning satisfactorily to-day and we are all of us glad to say, no major difficulties in the Government itself. Unfortunately, however, the Government is not functioning in the country by the supporters of the two parties. It is difficult, as members of the assembly know, it is impossible in maintaining unity within the constituent assembly if an active and bitter struggle is proceeding throughout the country between parties. Sir Stafford Cripps declared that the position had of course been made far worse by the outbreak of violence on a large scale throughout the country. He was right to say, Sir Stafford added, that the leaders on both sides had roundly condemned these disturbances and had tried by

visiting the areas and otherwise to influence their followers to a more calm and less violent frame of mind.

Referring to the riots, Sir Stafford Cripps said: "The terrible toll of casualties and the index of the intensity of the communal feeling that has come into being and though it will be deplored by everyone, it has the interest of the Government. It is a stark and naked fact, it settles nothing. Indeed, it only makes settlement more difficult, but it is a fact of which we must be aware."

Sir Stafford Cripps recalled that riots broke out in Calcutta after the Muslim League decision to set aside August 16 as "Direct Action Day." These riots, he said, shocked the whole world by their intensity. He referred to the death-roll of some 10,000 Indians and Muslims and the outbreaks in Eastern Bengal, when gangs of Muslim hooligans carried the reign of terror to those parts with the result that 50,000 evacuees were driven out and some 200 deaths caused. This was accompanied by abduction, rape and forced conversions and a result which was a disaster which was already bad enough.

Violence and murder broke out in Bihar and spread to the United Provinces. It was not possible to give the casualties in Bihar with any accuracy, but Sir Stafford Cripps said that many were women and children. It was probably not an exaggeration to put the death toll at 5,000. It was estimated that since September 1945 there had been 10,000 deaths in the United Provinces.

Referring to the visit of Indian leaders to London, Sir Stafford Cripps said that it was hoped that even at that eleventh hour the calm atmosphere of London would lead to a settlement. The Muslim League, he said, at these meetings on both sides, stated that they genuinely desired co-operation in the constituent assembly and that they realised that some agreement between the Muslim League and Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, leader of Indian Delegation to the United Nations, were among a number of Indians who listened to the debate from the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery.

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REMOVING DISTRUST AND SUSPICION

GANDHIJI'S MISSION IN EAST BENGAL

"HAVE COME TO PUT 'AHIMSA' TO TEST"

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

SRIRAMPUR, Dec. 11.

"I claim that I am as much a friend of the Muslims as of the Hindus in this part of the world. I have come here to put my *ahimsa* to an acid test in this atmosphere of rank distrust and suspicion," said Gandhiji replying to a question put by your correspondent.

The question was: "Don't you think that Bengal Ministers may regard your very presence here as an oppression and that whatever they may do out of their own sense of justice may be regarded by the outside world as being done under pressure of your presence? Can this accord with your doctrine of *ahimsa*?"

Gandhiji replied: "In the first place, your assumption is gratuitous. But if it is not, and the assurance was to accord with the facts, your deduction would be correct and my stay here would not be consistent with *ahimsa*. Fortunately, I have come here to put my *ahimsa* to an acid test in this atmosphere of rank distrust and suspicion. I claim that I am as much a friend of the Muslims as of the Hindus in this part of the world. You may recall my visit to Champaran in the very early period of my return to the motherland. There were suspicious eyes in Champaran and a swoon which was unmistakable. I was not a very good friend of the Muslims as of the Hindus in this part of the world. You may recall my visit to Champaran in the very early period of my return to the motherland. There were suspicious eyes in Champaran and a swoon which was unmistakable. I was not a very good friend of the Muslims as of the Hindus in this part of the world. 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