

WOMEN'S CHARTER OF RIGHTS

Memorandum By Committee

From Our Own Correspondent

KARACHI, December 22: A memorandum submitted by the All-India Women's Conference to the Central and Provincial Governments, containing a charter of their demands on fundamental rights, economic security, health services, educational needs, social service ministries and social legislation which should form an integral part of the free Constitution of India will be the main subject of discussion at the Akola session of the Conference, under the presidency of Lady Rama Rao.

The Committee which prepared the memorandum comprised Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Mrs. Hannah Sen, Mrs. Renuka Ray and Mrs. Kitty Shiva Rao, and was appointed by the last conference at Hyderabad (Sd.).

The signatories pointed out that, with the establishment of popular governments both in the Provinces and in the Centre, it should be possible to give permanency and stability to the economic and social programme outlined by the Conference from time to time. The memorandum was prepared in order to give the Constituent Assembly a comprehensive picture of Indian women's needs.

Touching on fundamental rights, the memorandum says that on the basis that all citizens shall be equal before law irrespective of sex or religion, cast, or creed, the Conference urges that franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage; that no disability shall attach to women in regard to public employment, office of power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling; that every citizen shall be entitled to economic and social security, full facilities for education, medical aid and adequate standard of living.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The memorandum says that India's future economic system should be governed entirely by the principle of social justice which shall guarantee the minimum and essential needs of the people. The conference, therefore, calls upon the respective Governments to initiate, encourage and safeguard production, especially with reference to such industries as will transform and rebuild rural economy.

As regards education, the Conference urges the introduction of universal, free and compulsory basic education and progressively free misery and higher education. In regard to denominational educational institutions and sectional religious teaching, the Conference is emphatically against any form of state aid.

The health services, the memorandum suggests, should be organised in preventive and curative sections. While preventive health services should provide adequate housing and sanitary conditions of work, India must get through necessary legislation for the establishment of a network of physical culture institutes.

A large salaried medical service of both men and women with 2,00,000 doctors of whom 69,000 shall be women should be raised, says the memorandum. Special training should be given to those who take rural social service.

A Social Service Ministry at the Centre with the corresponding minis-

tries in the provinces is the urgent need, the memorandum points out. Among its functions are mentioned the mobilisation of human resources, and initiate, encourage and safeguard of women and children and industrial and rural workers. The conference strongly recommends that as far as possible women should be employed in this branch of national administration.

Equalisation of position of man and woman in society in regard to inheritance, marriage, divorce, guardianship and adoption is to be done by legislation. Inter-marriages between members of different religions, groups and communities shall be legalised.

With regard to the proposed Hindu Code, the conference has approved of only those provisions which aim at giving women the same legal status as men, but has registered its dissatisfaction with other provisions which promote a status of legal inequality.