

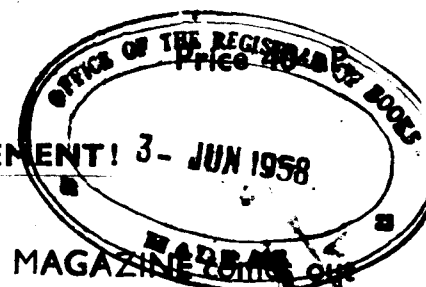
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INDIA

MAGAZINE

1958

481



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The names of characters and places appearing in fictional stories are purely imaginary and any reference to living persons is only coincidental. The Editor does not accept responsibility for the views expressed by contributors.

India Magazine

THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

VOLUME 3 } MARCH 1958 { No. 1

THE MUNDHRA MUDDLE

THE public are now fully aware of the story, thanks to the press, of what is sensationally known as the "Mundhra Deal" or Muddle as it may be called. The Chagla Commission which conducted a public and judicial enquiry, within the limits of the terms of reference, into the "impropriety of the deal" and to fix the responsibility of the various officials connected with the transaction had come out with a masterpiece report, and in the words of the Prime Minister Nehru "the enquiry has established the dignity and majesty of this parliament and of the procedures we follow in maintaining the high standards of public life and administration." The parliament of India discussed the "probe" in all its aspects and a flood of light was thrown on the subject.

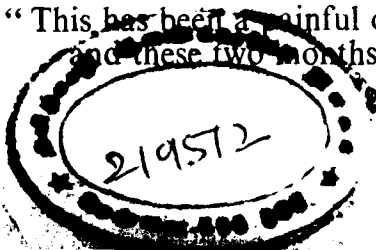
What is the upshot of the whole episode? Let us quote the Prime Minister Nehru again from his speech when he moved his resolution on the Chagla report :—

"This has been a painful ordeal for some of us and these two months have made us sadder,

a little older and perhaps a little wiser. But the experience or little bit of wisdom has been purchased at a fairly considerable cost. For, it has cost us the services of an able and distinguished Finance Minister at a time when we most needed him. But let me say that whatever penalties that we or others have paid or may suffer, this enquiry has demonstrated to India and to the world the democratic way in which we function."

If Sri Nehru feels really that faith in democracy is vindicated, he need not have shed copious tears on the terrible "cost" paid by him or the government in maintaining the best traditions of administration. In every country in Europe and America there had been in the past instances of the worst kind of scandals imaginable, encouraged by responsible governments, and the ablest and the most gifted of the leaders had to quit the government. The public willingly paid that price and acclaimed that the hour of the fall and disgrace of the mightiest ministers was the proudest hour of national glory and strength. The assertion of public opinion against the most powerful individuals or government is a great victory for democracy and nation, and constitutes as it were, an ample safeguard against the tyranny and treachery of the ablest of ministers.

We don't like to be critical of the way in which our Government is dealing with the problems of nationalisation; for an infant government like ours which is successfully grappling with giant—like problems is sometimes likely to go wrong either on account of its own over-enthusiasm or to the machinations of bureaucratic officials. Another thing is, that our national government has not started, like Soviet Russia, with a clean slate purging the corrupt officialdom of the British Raj. It is no dishonour to ministers that doubtful deals take place here and there under their very nose. We had the worst possible dealings in the sphere of the Defence



the sons of the soil as mere serfs and hewers of wood and drawers of water. This is an Imperialistic anachronism which will not and cannot be tolerated in the twentieth century.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET

Like the sales Tax, the Indian Railway is a *Kamadenu* in the real sense of the term. It goes on yielding larger and larger dividends to General revenues and to the Depreciation Reserve Fund after meeting an ever increasing expenditure of all sorts. The ordinary working expenses for 1956-57 were 233.94 crores of rupees and the revised estimate rose to 259.16 crores, while railway users—passengers and merchants—don't get more amenities. Overcrowding and delays in transit are problems for which the Ministry has no solutions. If we look at the income side, it is most gratifying to note that the returns are expanding beyond the most careful expectations of experts who frame the

budget. The budget receipts for 1956-57 were 347.57 crores of rupees, the revised estimate for 57-58 were 384.58 crores and budget estimate for 58-59 is 407.59 crores of rupees. This is a wind fall for the Central Government during the planning period. Incidentally the increasing returns go to prove there was absolutely no need to increase the rates of passenger traffic and freight charges last year. But minister after minister goes on increasing the rates on the plea the Government are in need of larger funds. That may be but if the Railways are viewed as an autonomous administration, it should not be allowed to be exploited beyond measure for purposes of Central revenue. The railways are public utility concerns, they are not monopolistic. The passenger and the general buyer of goods should not be made to pay more money for less benefits. This is a consideration which the Railway Board will do well to remember and deal out justice to the public.

TO OUR READERS AND WRITERS

We invite contributions on a variety of topics: Short stories, Stories for Juniors, humorous articles, articles of historical importance, features written in simple English understandable to the layman, etc. Mss. should be brief and typed as far as possible. We pay at our usual rates for contributions accepted and published. Contributions not accepted will be returned provided the contributor encloses sufficient stamps to cover postage.

Please send your contributions to:

Editor, INDIA MAGAZINE,
460/465, Pycrofts Road, Triplicane, Madras-5.

WAR STORY

They Defied Separation

By RATTAN LAL KHOSA

IT circled over the top of the hospital building with a roaring sound and next moment the building was enveloped in fire—walls crashed. All this happened in the war zone of El Arish; the war initiated by Great Britain against Egypt when the latter nationalized the Suez Canal.

Zohoor, a handsome college student was well built, tall with broad shoulders, shining eyes which gleamed below his broad rectangular forehead and dry hair.

He was alone sitting in a pensive mood. He heaved a sigh. He picked up small stones and threw them in different directions. Soon he saw a girl coming from a distance in the

same direction and towards him.

"Oh! you have come Thahira," murmured Zohoor.

Thahira, well shaped and slim with sparkling eyes, round and expressive face and black hair was nearly of Zohoor's age.

"OF course I have come—but why are you so sad and in a different mood today?" asked Thahira with a break in her voice. The smile over her face evaporated.

"Nothing, it is nothing about."

"You are telling me a lie."

"No, Thahira, I am not sad."

