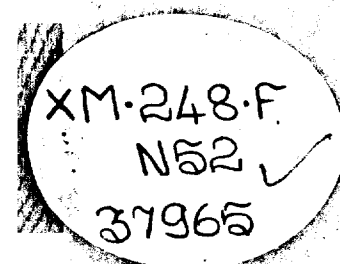


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Faridabad

An Experiment in Self Help

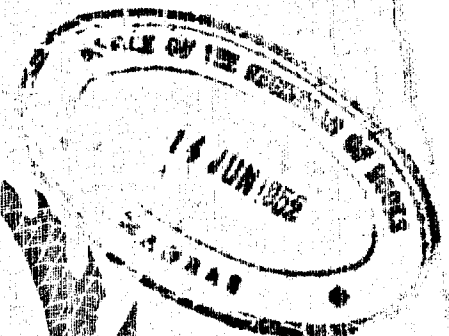
The Indian Co-operative union Ltd.
Queen's way
New Delhi.



Faridabad

An Experiment in Self Help

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FARIDABAD ³

THE STORY OF THE BIRTH OF A TOWNSHIP

The Indian Co-operative Union was inaugurated on the 15th April, 1948, by a small band of workers with faith in the co-operative way of life and inspired by a desire to expand and strengthen the co-operative movement, particularly by breaking new ground through pioneering experimental projects and introducing the co-operative technique in fresh fields of activity. It works through a Board of Management elected by the members in which the representatives of 80 societies form not less than two-thirds.

The immediate and pressing task which faced the country at that time was that of rehabilitating those uprooted by the partition of India. The Union decided to make a courageous effort in this direction through co-operative institutions and the co-operative way. It began by sponsoring and aiding co-operative societies in the procurement of land, loans, grants, permits for raw materials, premises and such other initial facilities. Now it also distributes to them various essential materials, particularly controlled articles such as steel, cloth, yarn and sewing machines to women's societies.

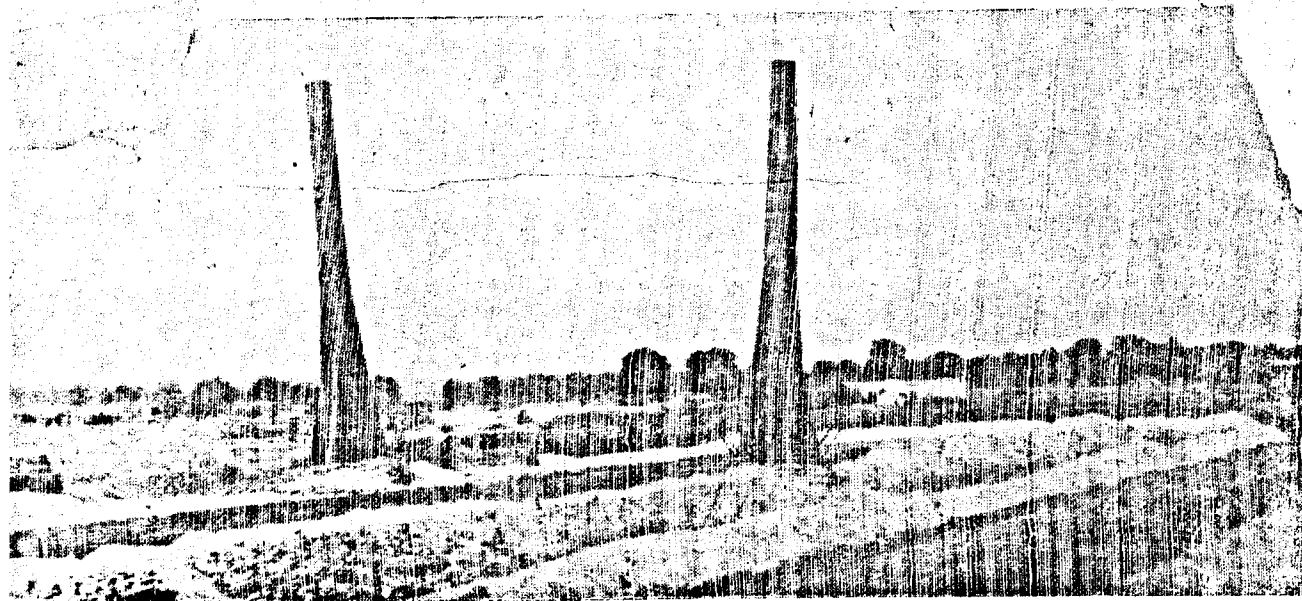
The Union has organised or has affiliated to it 20 agricultural multipurpose co-operatives, 5 dairy co-operatives, 64 industrial co-operatives, including 12 women societies, 36 consumer co-operative stores and 22 transport so-



BREAKING THE EARTH

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BRICK KILN

cieties, making a total of 147; of these 95 are in Delhi Province and 52 in Faridabad and other places. Many of these are refugee co-operatives, but some are non-refugee.

The Union has been able to persuade nearly 500 agricultural families to adopt co-operation in cultivation through joint farming and some through joint ownership of land, that is collective farming.

The Union works according to plan, which includes long and short term agricultural schemes with targets for each farm, so that the maximum yield is procured; at the same time land is rested periodically and fed scientifically. An agricultural adviser is maintained on the staff to execute and supervise it. Some attempt at development is also made through the introduction of improved equipment and methods, especially small irrigation schemes. For the proper care of the animals that the societies maintain for work and milking purposes, the Union has also a veterinary adviser on the staff.

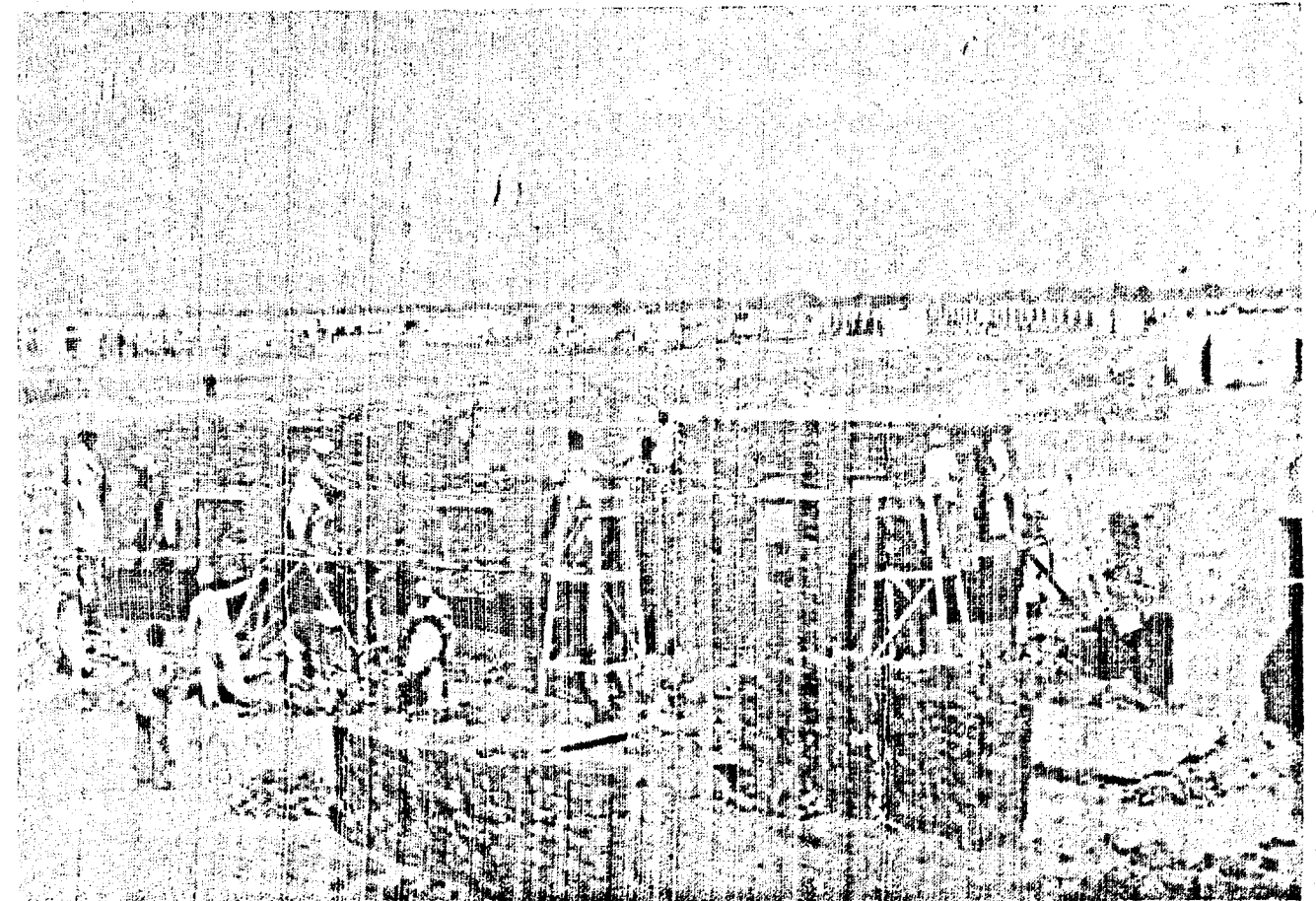
Among the Union's affiliated societies, the industrial number the largest, composed mainly of refugees. They have shown considerable initiative and enterprise, as is evident from the variety of goods they produce from steel, wood, donnuts and yarn, such as steel boxes, furniture, doors and windows, buttons, socks etc.

The women societies numbering 12 form an important part of the Union, specialising in embroidery, knitting, tailoring, pickles, preserves, etc.

page two

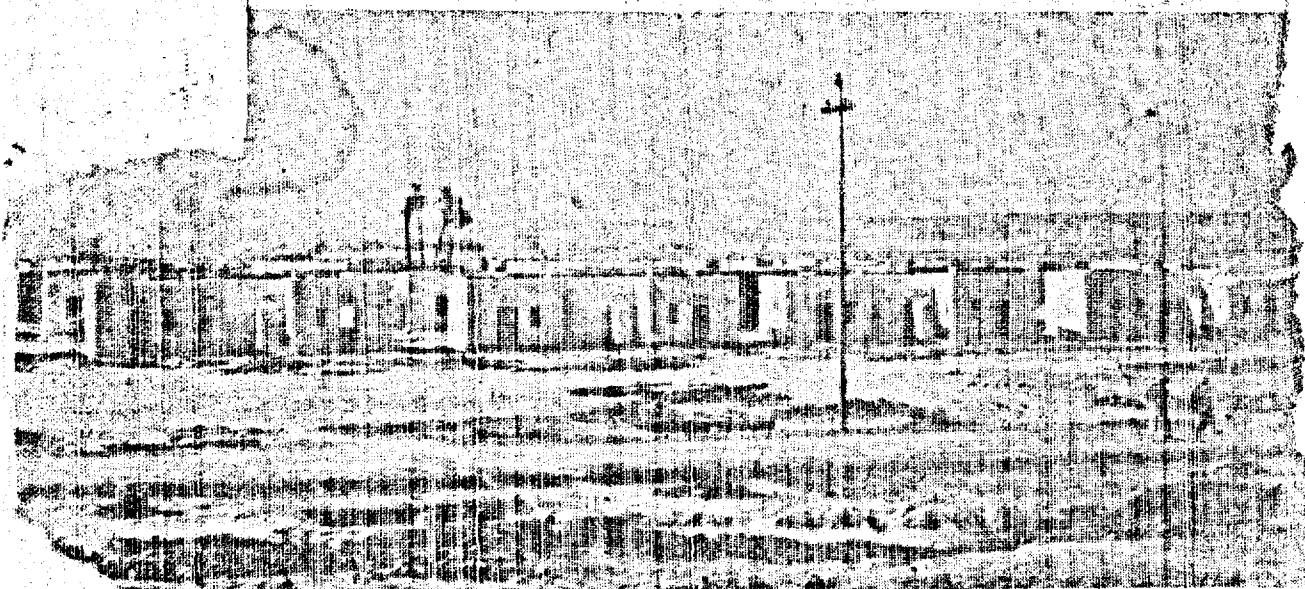
Their speciality is ready-made garments. The Union also includes consumer stores which deal largely with controlled items such as cloth.

Each society is completely autonomous and manages its own internal day-to-day affairs through its elected office-bearers and a Committee of Management, without any intervention by the Union. Through its organisers, the Union educates the members of these societies and keeps a strict supervision to see that they conform to the co-operative pattern in spirit as well as in structure. The bye-laws of the Union prescribe that all who work in a co-operative industry, except casual labour, must be members of the society, with complete voice in its running and management; equally non-working members are severely restricted. In short, the societies have to be composed of workers-cum-owners, not wage employees. The intensive effort of the Union has gone a long way in making the worker-members more and more aware of their own rights as well as duties, as is evident from the process of



CONSTRUCTING A HOUSE

page three



COMPLETED HOUSES

change in the constitution, management and working of many of the societies. The Union also keeps vigil over the raw materials supplied, loans advanced and goods marketed, to be sure that these transactions are above board.

Co-operation is a way of life and must be made to permeate every aspect of life. The Union attaches great importance to fostering community activities amongst the co-operators. It has a trained social worker to stimulate educational and cultural programmes amongst the members, particularly community activities, usually organised around a community centre specially constructed for this purpose and which generally includes a library and reading room, adult classes, community singing, dramatic shows, sports, games etc. Close collaboration between the different societies is encouraged. There is exchange of produce and even of personnel for the purpose of expert advice or general aid.

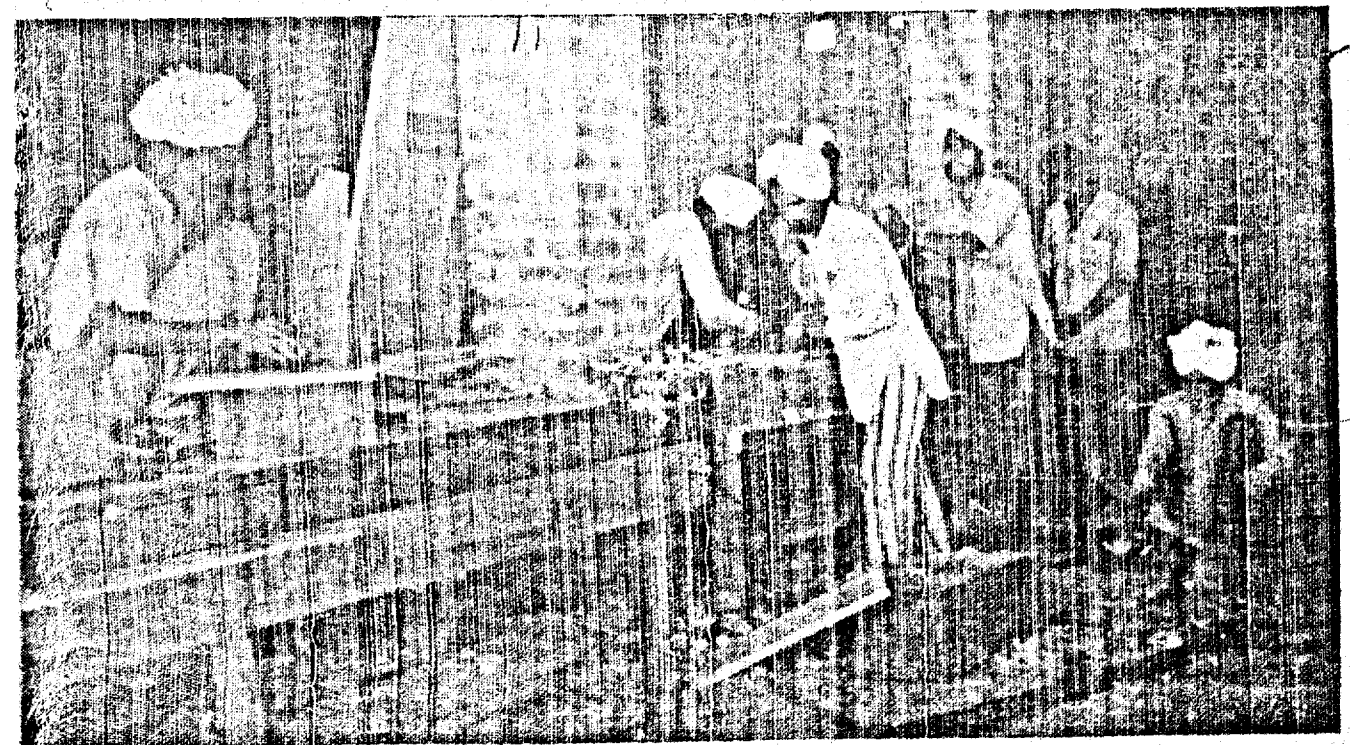
As the co-operative circle cannot be complete without also the marketing side, the Union is setting up a special organisation for it. It will have two aspects: first, the development of the industry, which will study markets for the purpose of advising the producer on the types of goods to be produced, check up on the quality and specifications, provide the necessary raw materials, and what is equally important, advise on the designs, for which purpose a special designs section is just being set up; the other will be the sale of the finished articles.

page four

Several deterrent forces retard the normal progressive growth of the industrial societies. In Delhi State in particular, the societies are in danger of stagnation, for as in the case of the rural co-operatives, unless ample and ready funds are made available to the societies, they can never grow, expand or improve—for every change is a new venture, and during the experimental period, the difficult transitional time has to be negotiated by advancing to the workers finances to live on, until the new goods are successfully marketed.

Co-operatives are not taken seriously by the general public; yet as sound economic propositions, particularly in Delhi, where they are often considered as the queer fad of a few, especially by those in important strategic positions. The administration has still a wooden, inflexible attitude, with a rigid adherence to statutes, some of which are out-of-date and destroy the co-operative spirit.

For the successful growth of the co-operative movement and to enable it to play a dominant role in our national life, a big change in the mental attitude of those in economic and political key positions is necessary. The Indian Co-operative Union believes that production is integrally bound up with the psychological working of the producer's mental make-up. Only if production



CARPENTRY WORKSHOP

page five



TOY MAKING

is made a creative effort can the worker be made to put in his best. Co-operation creates that necessary mental condition by providing the proper stimulation and is therefore directly linked with the production of national wealth, be it agricultural or industrial.

The biggest project attempted by the Union is in Faridabad. As the effort is concentrated in a single place and where life is starting afresh, it has all the promise of presenting the possibilities of co-operation in a very vivid and concrete form so as to open up new techniques and social patterns. Faridabad, therefore, calls for a special story.

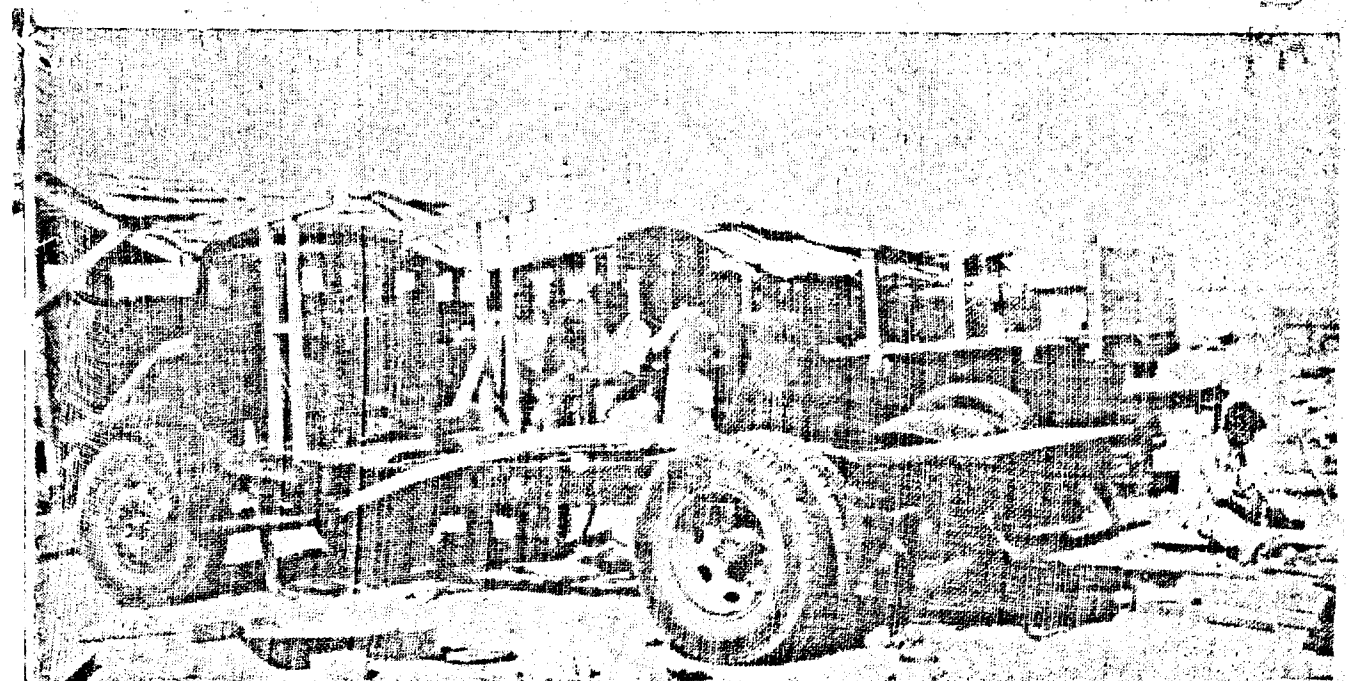
Planned urban settlements as model towns have become a special feature of modern life. They received a fillip from the large influx of refugees into India from Pakistan after the partition of this sub-continent. Scores of these new refugee townships now dot the country. They naturally vary in size and

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character, determined partly by the region in which they happen to be built, as also the composition of the inhabitants.

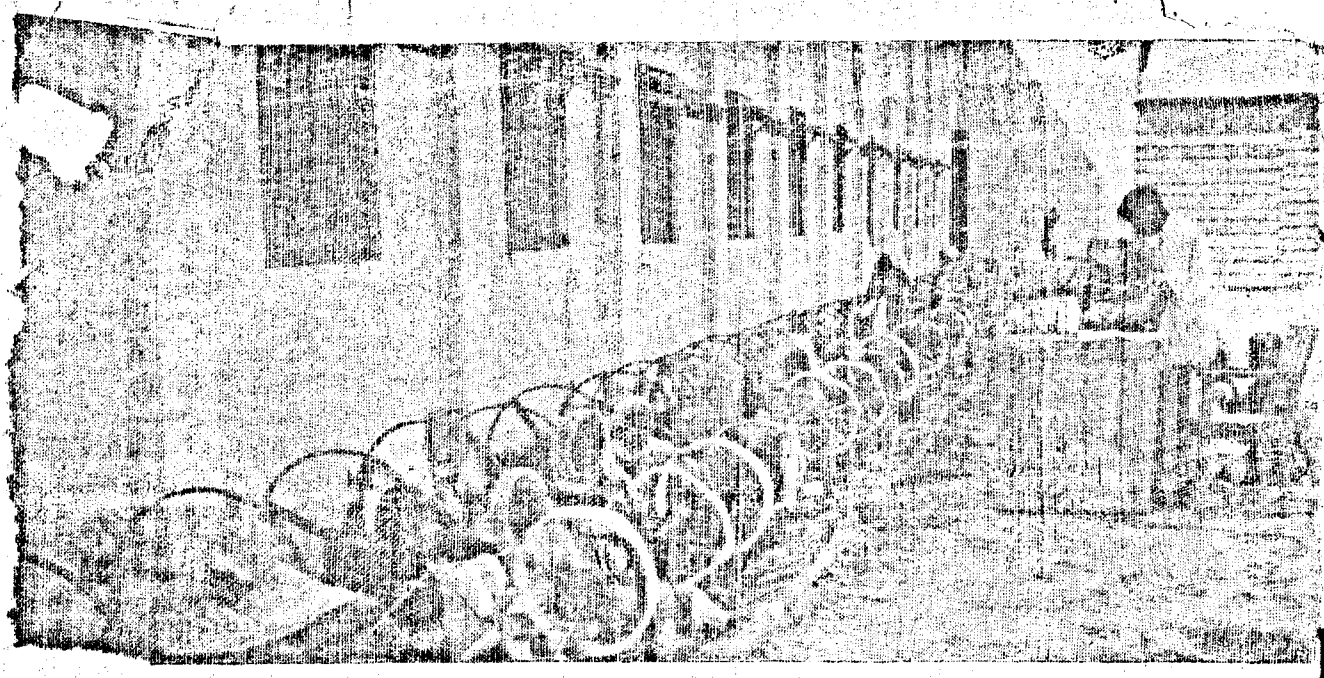
It was natural that in this new field of activity which opened up, there should be a few original experiments in construction as well as in social patterns. One such is the township at Faridabad, about sixteen miles from the capital city of India, New Delhi.

In the great caravan that moved across the vast plains and mountains into India from Pakistan were eight thousand families from the North-West Frontier, the mountainous region bordering on Afghanistan. They were mostly Pathans and spoke Pushtu. Of the same stock as the Afghans, they share a common language and culture. As a strategic region guarding the only gateway into India from across the mountain barrier, the Frontier Province had, after British occupation, been converted into a security area isolated from the rest of the country, even though historically it had been an integral part of the Indian sub-continent over many centuries, noted as one of the great centres where Buddhist art had flourished. It was only the emergence of the great Pathan leader Abdul Gaffar Khan as one of the revered figures in the Indian Pantheon that reforged once again the broken links. But the period was too brief for any fusion to take place when the partition of India took place. The Pathans thus remained a very distinctive group. Therefore, the massive Pathan families who came to camp on the



TRANSPORT CO-OPERATIVE.—TRUCKS BODY BUILDING

page seven



WOMEN WINDING YARN

ancient plains of Kurukshetra, seemed rather forlorn, a part of India and yet apart, when the Indian Prime Minister very thoughtfully decided to give them a township of their own, where they could recreate for themselves something of the atmosphere of the land they had lost.

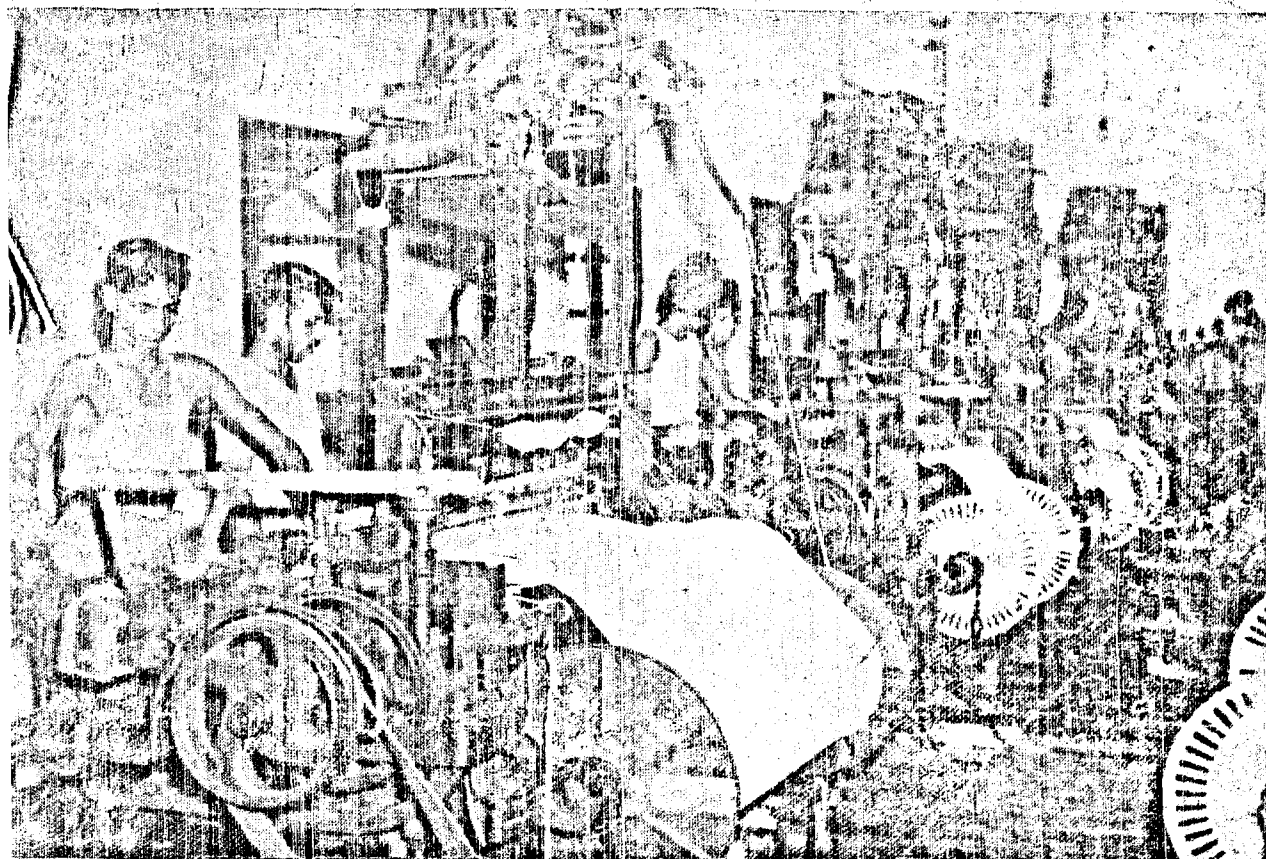
Faridabad, an ancient village on the Delhi-Bombay road, was selected as the site, since it offered enough open ground for the construction of the town. 3,000 acres of land was acquired, and the blueprints for the layout were prepared. Five to six thousand of the refugee families were moved out to this new site, the others were to be brought as these moved into the new houses. The Indian Government formed an autonomous Development Board to associate non-official public workers with it for the promotion and administration of this township, and placed at its disposal a sum of twentyfour million rupees in the shape of a long term loan. The Board now includes representatives from the Co-operative Union and the Nai Talimi Sangh.

The Faridabad Board approached the Indian Co-operative Union to lend a helping hand in the general rehabilitation of these refugees and for organising their training in vocational pursuits and light industries since the Union, though primarily engaged in building up co-operatives in the country, had particularly devoted itself to settling and rehabilitating refugees from Pakistan in rural and urban areas.

page eight

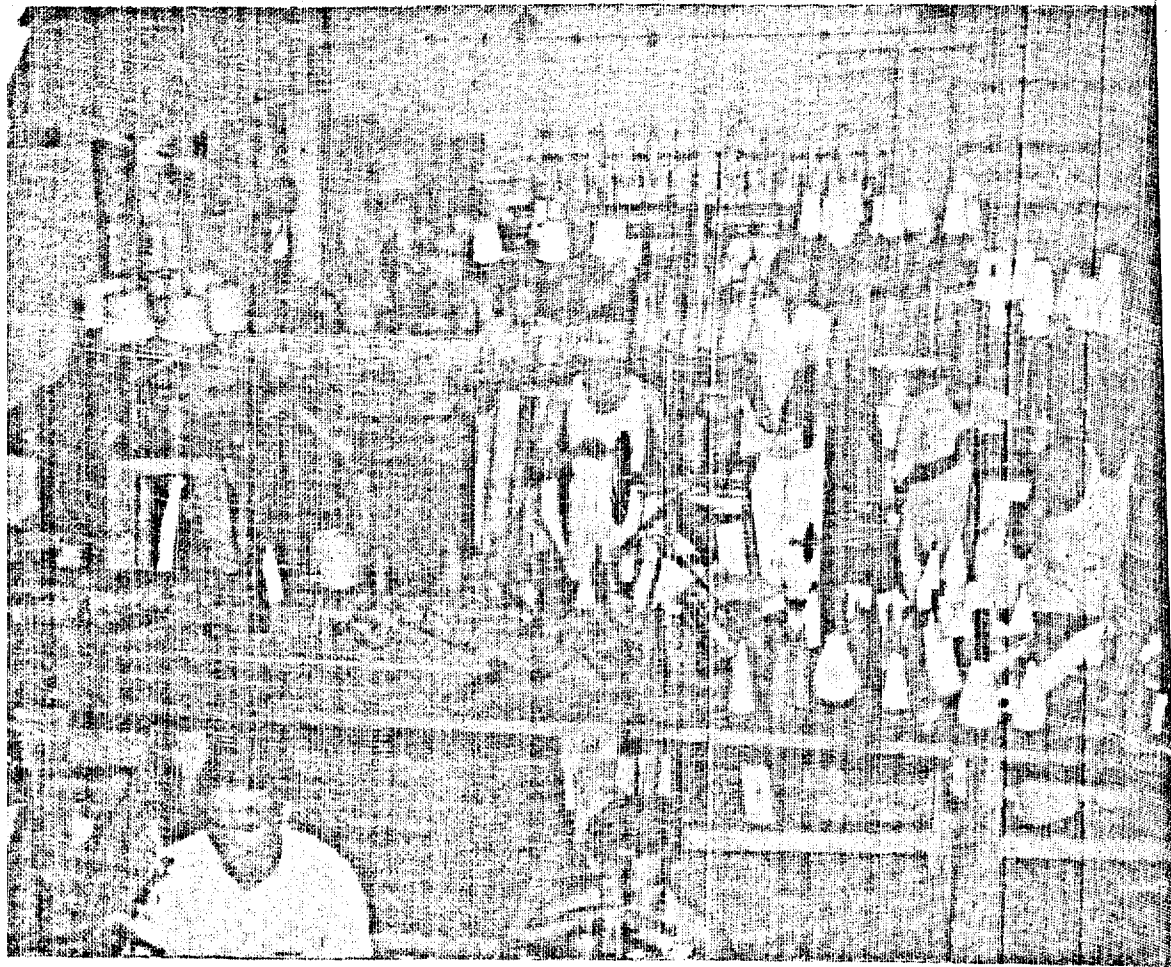
The Union made it clear to the Board that it would be interested in the township only if all the construction activities and services could be co-operatively done and by the refugees themselves, free of contractors and other types of middlemen and of the usual administrative red tape. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, now the President of the Indian Republic, who was then Chairman of the Faridabad Board, as also the Prime Minister, encouraged the Board to agree and give this experiment a chance.

It was a daring project for the Indian Co-operative Union to undertake, for it was a small growing body, barely a year old, with very meagre funds at its disposal. Yet the novelty and the very boldness of the scheme attracted the small band of workers who comprised the Union. When the Union's executive drove out to Faridabad to acquaint itself with the place and the people, it saw a very grim spectacle. The place was a sea of tents in which were huddled many women and children. It was a sultry summer morning with the hot desert wind blowing in gusts of yellow sand into the eyes, ears,



POWER LOOMS WEAVING CLOTH

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HOSIERY MAKING OF SOCKS AND VESTS

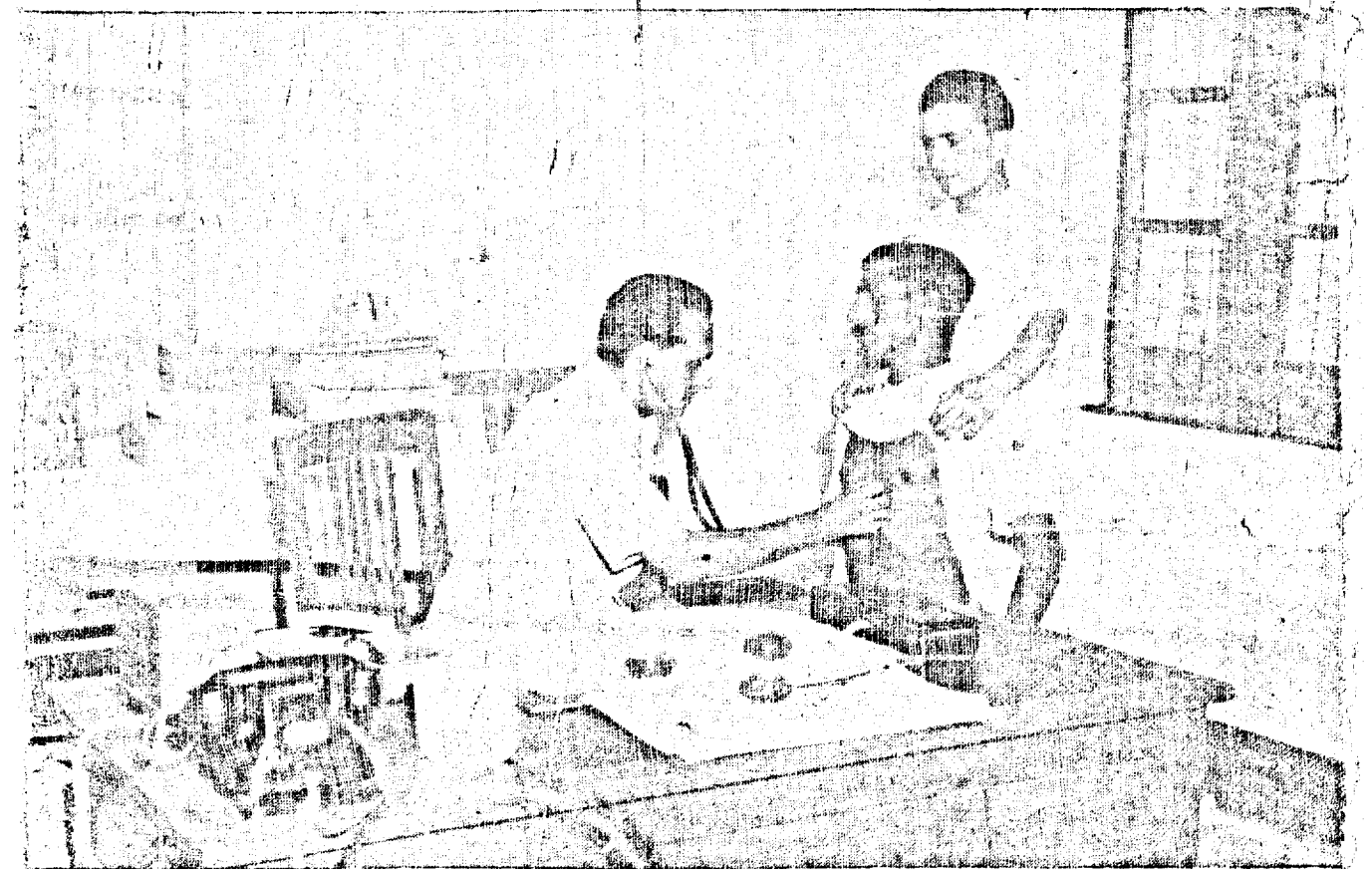
mouths and hair of these families, who seemed stricken as with a curse. They were sullen and sore. Nobody wanted to look at the strange visitors. When they did throw glances, they were like piercing daggers.

Undaunted, the Union set to work. More set-backs were in store. When a census was taken, the population was found to consist overwhelmingly of traders and shop-keepers, with a top layer of contractors. There were neither artisans nor professional people. Skilled technicians were unknown. The Union, however, made a direct appeal to the people and explained to them the significance of this experiment, the excitement they could get out of building the town themselves, and the several useful trades they could learn as they went along. Having been independent workers all their life, the

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co-operative structure and the human inter-relationship it promised, appealed to them as a system which would preserve their dignity and self-respect. But working with the hands for those who had never wielded their fingers or hands was terribly hard. But they bravely set their faces to this new and stimulating task, and gave ample proof of their appreciation of the great faith reposed in them by a hearty response. Today they have the inspiring experience and pride of creating their new habitation out of their own genius and industry, which is an important factor in rehabilitation. Above all, the effort is helping in establishing a new relationship between man and man and between the worker and his job, a relationship of dignity and harmony.

The able-bodied adults were divided into working groups, some to do earth work, even to break stones, others to learn crafts such as brick-making, carpentry, smithy, casting, painting, gardening and a host of other jobs necessary for the construction work. Vocational classes were also started for training them for various jobs, as also small industries, such as weaving,



HEALTH CENTRE UNDER SOCIAL HEALTH SCHEME

page eleven

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DUM-NAT FACTORY
MAKING BUTTONS

sports goods, steel fabrication, hosiery, button-making etc. The earth-workers were formed into labour corps to take on direct piece jobs, eliminating the middlemen and their profits. To many, especially in the administration used to the conventional P.W.D. methods, this appeared foolhardy and impracticable, and the Punjab administration withdrew its outfit from the township, apprehensive of a total failure. It was mid-summer when the building of the houses was started, and it was a race for time, for adequate housing had to be provided before the rains came. In the first four months they completed 1750 houses, a remarkable achievement for new comers, with

barely 15 to 20% skilled workers from outside to aid and train them. The Board had originally estimated Rs. 1,400/- for each house consisting of one room and a verandah. The Union was, however, able to get a model house copied which would give each family two rooms and a kitchen for the same amount. An additional Rs. 300/- provided each family with a separate bath and sanitation, in other words privacy, so dearly coveted, so seldom enjoyed by the common folk. These houses, with extra land around each for another two rooms, are given on a hire-purchase system under which each owner pays Rs. 11/- a month over 30 years to become its owner.

The constructional output of this co-operative endeavour has resulted up-to-date in the completion of 4,500 houses, a number of public buildings in the centre of the town, such as the hospital, library, theatre and about a hundred shops, schools, health centres, the power house, factories, all at a building cost much lower than the normal. The pride of place amongst them goes to the 125-bed hospital named lovingly after their venerated leader Badshah Khan, who though far away in Pakistan in incarceration, continues to live as a vital force in the hearts of these Pathans. That devotion is expressed in the transcription inscribed on a tablet in the hospital wall: "This Hospital built by the people of Faridabad with their own hands was named after their beloved leader Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan".

Faridabad will also be unique amongst Indian towns in having a modern up-to-date theatre. The Board plans a cinema-house for the town as a non-profit-making institution, meant more to serve the educational and cultural needs of the community. These public institutions are to be run directly by the Board.

All food articles are distributed through co-operative consumer stores. These stores also run flour-mills.

The township is now approaching the final stage and will close with the completion of another 4,000 houses, making a total of 8,500 when the reconversion of the present working sectors into permanent industries will commence. Faridabad will have a mixed economy, industries run by the Board, by private enterprise, and by co-operatives, with greater emphasis, it is hoped, on the last. Two key factors to industrialisation are already provided by the Board: a power generating plant giving six thousand KW of electricity, which the people erected themselves for less than half the cost originally estimated. The other is a fairly large technical institute run on training-cum-production basis, which has already shown keen enterprise by starting on the production of diesel engines, so greatly in demand and so scarce in supply in this country. A fast growing industrial sector is stepping up the tempo of the place. Some of the bigger industries for making shoes, radios, steel-rolling, etc. are under way. The co-operative enterprises cover a wide variety: brick-kilns, black-smithies, steel fabrication, carpentry, hosiery,

weaving, tailoring, button and shoe-lace making, dairying. Those under construction and plan are for the manufacture of card-board, sand-paper, glass beads, lacquer paints, nuts and bolts, pumps, bicycle parts, artificial leather, wire, and articles out of saw-dust, waste rubber, rags and other waste. The workers erect their own factories where they later work. Practically all the transport is handled by the co-operatives who run their own servicing and repairs stations also. The Co-operative Union runs a petrol pump for supplying gasoline to the transport co-operatives. The co-operatives also propose to ply a bus service between Faridabad and Delhi.

The co-operative industries have so far been financed by the Faridabad Board through special loans for the purpose. In view of the success achieved, the Co-operative Union is confident of getting similar help in the future, so that the co-operatives may continue to occupy a significant place in the economy of the township. Even from the financial point of view, Faridabad is considered a sound proposition and the loan of 24 million rupees carrying a 3½% interest is expected to be paid back in 30 years, out of the incomes from the electric power, the rents from the houses and out of the industrial wealth.

The entire town is divided into five neighbourhoods, each a complete unit with shops and stores, two primary schools, one for boys and the other for girls; and a recreation and health centre. There are 30 miles of internal roads with street lighting. The 10 tube-wells for water supply to the families and factories yield 3,500,000 gallons of water. The interesting thing about them is that they were located by a water-diviner.

Each health-centre is manned by a doctor, a nurse and two health visitors, and is accessible to all inmates of that neighbourhood for consultation and general check-up. It maintains a complete record of these periodic health-check-up of all men, women and children in that sector. Thus the whole town is provided with a public health scheme—probably, the first of its kind in this country—administered by the Faridabad Board. Preventive work through education is also carried on at these centres. Attached to each health-centre is a clinic for medical examination of the inmates. Cases requiring specialised attention, hospitalisation or segregation are taken care of by the Badshah Khan Hospital.

The primary school education of Faridabad is based on the Wardha Nai Talimi Sangh model and therefore lays great stress on hand work and instruction through crafts. It is handled by the Talimi Sangh and caters for about 4,000 children. Besides this, there are two middle-cum-high schools for 800 boys and girls for the whole town. In order to extend the principle of education through work, it is proposed to utilise the technical institute and other existing workshops for the use of these students to encourage them to work with their hands, to find out for themselves their aptitudes and foster in them useful hobbies, so that their creative urge finds appropriate

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fulfilment, and they are trained as useful citizens and add generally to the fullness of their lives.

While the Indian Co-operative Union has been mainly concentrating on the organisation of the people into co-operative units for productive work or for services, it has been paying equal attention to the social and cultural needs of the people. Volunteer bodies like the Seva Samiti and Seva Dal devote themselves exclusively to social work. The Union has set up a physical-culture centre and also organises sports, games and open-air exercises. On the cultural front it has formed a branch of the Indian National Theatre which is an affiliated body of the Theatre Centre of India. This is quite active and puts on regular shows. The Kasturba Sadan is an institution run by the Board as a work centre for the aged, infirm and unattached women, where the women earn mainly through spinning and making of woollen carpets and blankets for soldiers.

The co-operative activities are spreading amongst the community at large. The unused land about the town has been jointly cultivated in order to produce foodgrains and vegetables. Plans for community granaries for storage are under preparation.

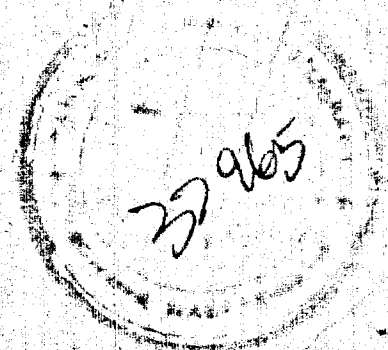
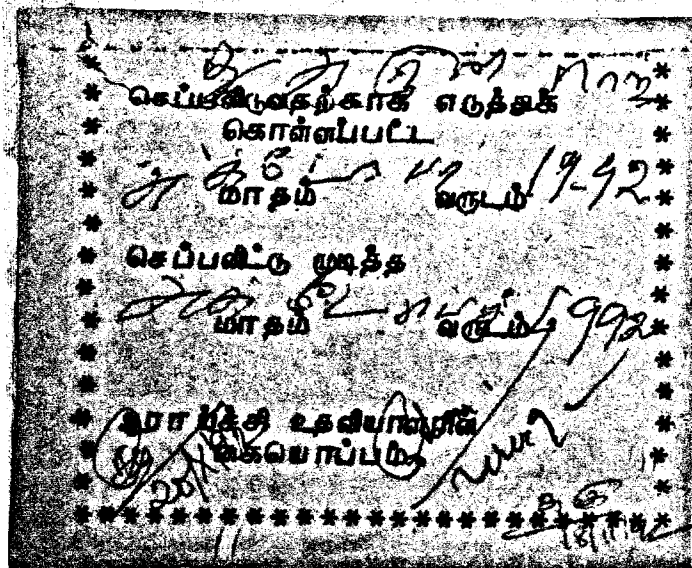
It is realised that a township cannot be isolated from the villages around. In fact one of the tragic features of the under-developed countries is this lag between the country and town, the wide discrepancy in the socio-economic conditions between the urban and the rural areas. The Faridabad rural development project aims at changing this by establishing a balance between the two by integrating about 216 villages around into its development scheme, so that some of the knowledge and prosperity accruing to the town may be shared by these villages.

The idea is not to turn the town into a benevolent patron for the villages; but rather to form a two-way traffic between the two and thus build up a relationship of interdependence. There can be an exchange between raw materials and manufactured goods; the town can provide cheap power for the tube wells and cottage industries and give the villages the benefit of its extended health services as well as technical advice and training, and get in return its food supplies, fruits and vegetables and milk. In fact a beginning has already been made with the collection and distribution of milk from the villages for the town through a milk distributing co-operative. The principle of co-operation is thus being extended and each village will have a multi-purpose co-operative. Incidentally, it is hoped that this will enable the people to produce some of the articles they need for themselves. One of the villages, called Pali, has already made a start in this new direction by collecting ten thousand rupees for establishing a co-operative health centre in its midst.

Perhaps the measure of success achieved in Faridabad can best be gauged by watching the people and the flow of their life today. The frontage of many

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a cottage is brightened by flowers and foliage, and the back yard is heavy with vegetables. In the morning one can see batches strolling down to the Jumna for a bath. In the evenings the air is rent with excited voices of children at play; and as the twilight creeps over, the play grounds are taken over by the grown-ups, relaxing after a hard day's labour, swinging a bat and throwing a ball. The silence of the night is broken by the haunting melodies of the Pathans, when men and women mingle their voices to revive old memories. On holidays one sees wrestling matches and physical cultural competitions. When the marriage season comes, the merry sounds of drums and musical instrument fill the air with gaiety and promise. As time goes on, hope waxes like the full moon, growing brighter and bigger, dispelling the dark shadows which once lay across the stony pathways. Instead the polished highways gleam, the radio reverberates, the electric lights blaze a gleaming trail and tell a new story—not of Arabian Nights, but a simple tale of a simple people, of their courage and determination, their hard work and industry. For there is nothing extraordinary about Faridabad. It is not a miracle. It is a normal and ordinary thing; above all it is natural. To co-operate and work in unison like community singing, is the most natural instinct of man, and that is why he evolved Society and State, and is moving towards a World Community and World State. Faridabad is a tiny mile-stone on that long march of humanity.



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