

(written in Madras, South India, December 2, 1946)

Dear Mr. Rogers:

My journal and my correspondence have both been relegated to a secondary place during the last three weeks, as talking and touring have rendered me ready for sleep at an early hour. I regret that my good intentions to write regularly have been temporarily abandoned. So that you won't become alarmed at the delay, I am today cabling to assure you that it's only the pressure of travel that has silenced me.

I have undoubtedly been travelling more rapidly than is desirable in some ways. No sooner do I make new friends than I leave them, which makes life a series of fleeting moments lacking the stability (conservative but comfortable) of residence on a permanent home ground. So it is with all travellers, I suppose. The desire to move on does get in the blood. There have been few hours in which I haven't learned something new - the question is how much have I forgotten because I didn't have time to record it? Despite the speed and the consequent wastage, I do feel that the trip is proving worthwhile. In addition to some village data which I have gathered, I have acquired much general information about the different areas, and will therefore follow developments through the newspapers with greater interest and some understanding. I shall keep in correspondence with many of the people whom I have met, which will give me a source of up-to-date news on particular regional subjects. And I am learning the distances and geographical varieties of this vast sub-continent. (I see that I can't avoid use of Mr. Churchill's much overworked cliché).

In Bombay I stopped three days with Phil Talbot's close friend Bob Stimson. Bob is Assistant Editor of the Bombay British-owned newspaper The Times of India, and is the co-author of an extremely readable and useful informational handbook, "Introduction to India", to which Phil contributed some of his knowledge during his tour of naval duty in Bombay. Bob is English, and is awaiting the return from the States of his American wife, who is now on the seas. He was the perfect bachelor host to me and to Preston Grover of the Associated Press, providing every comfort yet imposing no requirements. Besides contributing a lot of common-sense talk about India, he arranged a busy program of interviews for me.

Perhaps the most interesting was with J. R. D. Tata, Chairman of the Board, Tata Sons, Ltd., India's most sweeping industrial enterprise. At 45, Tata is a fairly young man for the scope of his job. He explained for me his growing social philosophy. "I think you'll find most Indian industrialists more progressive than your American capitalists", he said. "At least we believe that's true in Tata's. In our position we are forced to give somewhat more attention than others to the future position of the state in the national economy. For some time I have been devoting more and more of my own time to study of today's conflicting economic theories and systems. The world is groping and striving towards the much more ideal society which we hope will come. Certainly neither the Russian nor the American method has provided the answer. We do not

admit the necessity for the complete control exercised by the Soviet state, yet we can not protect the individual's rights of free enterprise if the individual is reactionary. Today we feel that the British socialistic experiments are promising". He went on to explain the genesis of the so-called "Bombay Plan" for India's economic development, of which he was the initiator. He termed it "the stimulus, after which criticisms and other plans appeared", and said, "We feel that the government must scientifically plan and then give active direction to our economic growth". He hoped that scientific economic regionalism would replace the current religious regionalism and that, if the National Government became permanent, "with Jawaharlal Nehru in the Cabinet, strong positive steps will be taken to develop a complete national plan and to implement it". I was forced to admit to myself that not many American business leaders would use similar words today! Whether or not Tata is representative is of course another question.

One of Phil's thoughts in proposing a few days' stay in Bombay was that I should acquire some familiarity with the financial and commodity exchanges of India's largest trade center. First I talked with Stanley Laud, Commercial Editor on the Times of India, in an effort to understand some of the fundamentals. Frankly I felt the insufficiency of my textbook knowledge of finance and investment, and my need of some direct examination of Stock Exchanges and some practical association with financial men. Even with such training, however, I fear I might never comprehend the psychology of such people who have a flare for risk-taking plus the desire for huge profits.

Unfortunately, the Bombay Stock Exchange was closed in honor to Pandit Malaviya, a deceased Nationalist leader, on the day when I planned to visit it. When I went around to talk with Sir Chunilal B. Mehta, speculator in cotton and bullion, he expressed surprise on learning that I had had no practical business experience, and was rather critical of my attempt to study Indian economics in the absence of such a background. He was, nevertheless, most hospitable and courteous, but much more adroit than I at questioning. Consequently he learned at least five times as much about the Institute of Current World Affairs as I did about Bombay finance. Later I talked with Sir Kikabhai Premchand, another leading financier, who was more expansive in discussing future American investments in India, and who thought that the present attitude of the Congress Party was properly socialistic, neither too much nor too little. Thus far, unfortunately, the economic philosophy of the Congress Party seems to be all things to all men. I do not think Sir Kikabhai was referring to the same degree of socialism that J.R.D. Tata was.

Fundamental economic principles will not be hammered out in this country, apparently, until politico-religious differences are solved. Both Tata and the next person I saw, a young Communist, were regretful that India wasn't getting ahead with its real problems. Mohan Kumaramangalam's background is not typical of the Indian Communist Party, as his education was at Eton and Cambridge, but I understand that his high ability and intelligence are definitely representative of many young leaders of the Party. In addition, he is a most charming and likeable person. He outlined for me the present demands of the Commun-

ists. They seek full nationalization of the basic industries to insure that they receive priority of development; otherwise, the Communists believe, the consumer-goods industries which promise earlier profits will grow but India's basic economy will remain weak. In agriculture, the Communists demand complete expropriation of land from all non-cultivating owners. Some compensation would be given, especially to protect the smaller owners. Land would then be assigned to the actual cultivators, and new laws would prevent it from returning to the hands of the money-lender or other non-cultivators. With the redistribution of land, present programs would be intensified towards agricultural training, increased use of fertilizers, improved seeds and better implements, and new irrigation schemes would be pushed more rapidly. Collectivization or state ownership of land is not contemplated by the Communists at present.

Had there been time, I would have asked Kumaramangalam or one of his comrades to take me into some working class homes, for which Bombay has a reputation. As it was, my investigation of factory conditions had to be confined to one visit which it was possible to arrange through the mill's management. Unfortunately, I saw the most modern mill in Bombay, as it is more difficult to persuade owners of antiquated mills to show visitors around. Examination of more typical conditions will have to await a longer stay in Bombay. The mill I did see is the largest in India, with machinery of recent vintage and a plant design providing plentiful window space. Relatively I suppose its working conditions are far better than those of most mills; but the thought of working in the lint-filled atmosphere during the sweltering summer months, with no air conditioning of course, did not appeal to me. Viewing the immense production of these 110,000 spindles, one is tempted to scoff at Gandhi's spinning wheel; but viewing the humans behind the machines I was reminded of the remark of a station agent with whom I talked the other night: "The world is putting materials above humans".

I went on from Bombay to Poona, the hill station for Bombay Province, in itself one of India's leading educational centers. Aside from a nearby village where I spent two days, my particular interest was in the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics. This is a school for research students, who often join for work lasting several years. It is designed to be a pioneer in working out new investigational and statistical methodologies and in adapting western survey methods to India. In some instances, the Bombay Government has adopted on a large scale methods developed and tested by the Institute in sample cases. The Institute has produced a number of monographs, the results of both library research and thorough field studies. Examples are: "A Survey of Labor Legislation in India", and "Poona: a Socio-Economic Study". I shall benefit greatly from their works when I start "book study".

In the meantime, I talked with the Director and guiding spirit of the Gokhale Institute, Dr. D. R. Gadgil. I asked him about one of

his favorite topics, the regional approach. His comments reminded me strongly of the thoughts of Dr. Leo Pasvolsky in Washington, who also emphasized the regional variety of India, though Gadgil's conclusions are not necessarily akin to Pasvolsky's. Gadgil believes that India's scholars for a century have been misleading themselves, because in their efforts to win national freedom for the entire subcontinent they have emphasized "the unity of India". This has disguised the true ethnological, linguistic, historical, geographical and social differences of the regions. To undertake lengthy field work in the villages and to dig into the old documents in each area, in order to produce a definitive regional monograph, is a job which is only now being tackled in a few areas, especially in the south under Gadgil's aegis. Only after completion of these monographs for all India's regions, he feels, will it be possible for a serious student of Indian history to fit together the mosaic and write the national history as a composite of the interacting or separating forces of the various groups.

To the beginning student such as myself, who was contemplating the study of India as a region of the world, the emphasis placed on sub-regional study by such a specialist might seem a trifle overwhelming. He added, however, that for my purposes it will be sufficient to know the existence and the main characteristics of the sub-regions. Illustrating the contemporary importance of the regional viewpoint, he cited the population studies carried out by his assistant, Dr. Sovani, which showed that in some areas of India the population had remained static for a century, whereas in other areas there has occurred an increase of over 100 %, which has made the overall Indian increase seem so heavy. Obviously this variation in population trends is an important clue to very great economic and sociological factors, and it will provide a good takeoff point for regional awareness.

On the other hand, Gadgil cautioned that the existence of definite historical and economic regions was no final criterion for judging whether it will be possible to erect a political union of all the varying elements. He didn't want to spend time trying to pin down the question "what makes a nation", but he evidently believes a federal union is possible, based on political cooperation despite economic divergence. This brings one back to Pasvolsky's statement that a nation can only be constructed when one party is strong enough to enforce the unity. The negotiations on the political plane, in accordance with Pasvolsky's judgment, will decide the strength or weakness of India's federation.

Therefore, while studying the regions of India and seeking the ways by which their differing economies and social structures will be integrated to make a working whole, I mustn't be misled into thinking that I'm unifying India. I'll take a holiday, and leave that to the gentlemen at present in London!

Sincerely yours,

Richard Manna