

# Presidential Address

by

Prof. A. C. Roy

I thank the sponsors of this conference for inviting me to preside over this function. It is this privilege and pride that I prize most, and I hope that I shall be able to discharge my duties satisfactorily. I had the privilege of taking part in the First All India Conference held last year. That Conference was very successful and was well appreciated and valued in responsible quarters.

The sponsors and their co-operators viz : I.S.I., G.S.I., CMDA, CMPO, C.M.W & S.A., Institution of Public Health Engineers (India), Institution of Structural Engineers (India), Indian Association of Geohydrologists, Govt. of west Bengal and Chambers of Commerce are to be congratulated for their effort, and I hope that their initiative will continue in organising similar conference at least once in each future year.

India and her people are on the march of progress in all spheres of developmental activities. From the position of an under-developed country, India has been promoted by the International Community to the position of a developing country. During this progress, the effort made by the people of India included not only the Indian Scientists, Engineers and Administrators but also the common people following various avocations. It is necessary that from time to time and as frequently as possible, conferences and seminars be organised and conducted so that we can take stock of our achievement and scrutinise, cogitate and plan the programme of our future course of action.

In order that developmental activities are planned and executed in our country in a manner which will bestow benefit to the rural and urban population alike, our planners are in constant and continuous search for fixing priorities of projects to be executed according to the availability of resources in the field of finance, technical personnel, industrial capacities, etc. Very high priority has been allotted to the project of development of rural areas, rural employment and agriculture. In this context the Organisers of the present conference and seminar, have selected three subjects of high importance for discussion viz :—Rural Electrification, Tubewell Irrigation and Roads and Highway Construction. The Organisers realise and appreciate the importance of other similar subjects but time and other serious considerations have restricted selection, but it is hoped that other equally important subjects will be included in future seminars.

It may please be noted that from the point of view of planning and objectivity the three selected subjects are closely related and form the core of the project of Rural Development. Rural Electrification is necessary for supply of electrical energy to the rural areas for operation of tubewells for irrigation purposes, while construction of roads & highways are necessary for improved communication and transport facilities, The three subjects have therefore been well chosen.

Claims have been made in India and abroad that India is undergoing "green" revolution. While certain parts of the country have defi-

nately progressed and increased their agricultural output. large parts of our country are still to be developed and organised for higher agricultural output, be it "green" or otherwise. Much therefore remains to be done although a very good start has been made.

To achieve higher agricultural output, dependence on Nature has to be minimised. Rural Electrification is therefore necessary for supplying power for operation of tubewells and machinery for cottage and small-scale industries, in rural areas.

The seminar therefore has drawn a programme of discussion and finding ways and means for solving the problems now being faced by the implementing authorities of the Government.

Where surface water is not available in adequate quantities and also for equitable distribution of water during the year, tubewell irrigation becomes a crying need of the cultivator. Difficulties in the nature of materials, drilling methods etc., have been included in the programme of the seminar.

Development and maintenance of roads and highways have been correctly and intelligently included as one of the subjects of the seminar. Communication and transportation facilities are to be made available to the rural areas so that, apart from other requirements, agricultural output may be marketed swiftly and economically. Our country is large and different parts of the country present different problems during construction and maintenance of roads and highways. The seminar would do well to take cognizance of the variations in terrain and weather while discussing problems of construction and maintenance of roads and highways.

This conference is primarily concerned with the problems of engineering materials & equipment. With the best of design and

manufacture, machines and equipment may be built to perform a certain operation most efficiently and economically, but the motives and objectives for which the machines and equipment are designed and built, will not be attainable unless human effort, correct and cogent planning, suitable manpower and organisation are there to operate the project. In the organisation and planning of any project the manpower and human resources are as important equipment, if not more important, than the materials and equipment in literal sense of the terms.

In this context, I refer to the speech delivered last year in the inauguration ceremony of the 1st. conference, by late B. B. Ghosh when he specifically mentioned the problems of the day, viz: Rural and Urban Housing, Slum clearance, Garbage disposal, Road repairs, and above all unemployment and under-employment of our youth. There is so much to be done and so little time to do it in. The youth, especially the unemployed youth, sees things with discontent. We, therefore, have to recast our plans and projects with a view to increase immediate and long range potentiality of employment of our youth.

The impatience of our youth is understandable, independent India of nearly 25 years ago, has not been able to cater to the needs of her youth as much as she should have done. We have therefore to redouble our efforts and reorganise ourselves to undertake development work which will create immediate employment attain self-sufficiency within a very limited period.

Providence has placed people of our age in India, in a very fortunate position in the history of India. We have seen India in subjugation, we have seen India in ferment due to foreign occupation, we have seen and taken part in the freedom struggle, we have seen independence

ushered in. We have seen the start of the gigantic task of development undertaken by independent India. We have seen our children grow to love independent India. We have also seen our children gradually becoming discontent with the pace of progress India is making since independence. This discontent in our youth caused frustration, and loss of faith in our leaders, educational institutions, religion and social order. Time is therefore very important. Quick and effective steps are necessary to satisfy the immediate needs of our youth.

In this task of development work, we have

to re-dedicate ourselves. Let us therefore pray that providence gives us courage, confidence, energy and good sense to accept and discharge this new responsibility to look after our youth.

If this Conference contributes and assists in discharging our present task, we shall feel grateful and thankful that we were able to take part and develop mother India so that we may say to ourselves before we go that we are leaving the country in a better condition than what we found when we came in.

I thank you for giving me your attention and hearing.

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