

A FRIENDLY GOVERNOR

KODARDAS K. SHAH, who is demitting the office of the Governor of Tamil Nadu this week after nearly 50 years of active public life, is one of the stalwarts of the freedom movement and has participated in the 1930 and the 1932 struggles and in the 'Quit India' Movement of 1942. He has been a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the Bombay Assembly and the Rajya Sabha from 1960 to 1971. As legal Adviser to the Maharaja of Baroda, he was instrumental in the merger of that princely State with Bombay. He has held all the important offices in the Congress organisation such as General Secretary, Vice-President and President of the Bombay P.C.C.; later, he became the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. Associated with the Bombay and Baroda Universities as a member of the Senate and the Syndicate of the former and of the Senate of the latter, Mr. Shah has first-hand knowledge of the problems of university education. Mr. Shah was a member of the Union Cabinet, first as Minister for Information and later as Minister for Health and Housing. Thus, it was a mature and seasoned politician that assumed the office of the Governor of Tamil Nadu in 1971.

From the very beginning of his tenure, Mr. Shah was determined not to be a passive ornamental dignitary that a Governor usually is. He plunged into the life and culture of the Tamils, learnt their language at that age with the assiduity of an elementary school boy, participated in the social, educational, cultural, religious, charitable and philanthropic activities of the State with a gusto and became an indistinguishable part of it. He eschewed official rituals, minimised formalities and was freely accessible to all people. Study of Sanskrit, Ayurveda and principles of Yoga are but a few of his many-sided activities. He created institutions for carrying on research and further development in those fields. The number of trusts which he has created for fostering several aspects of our ancient culture will bear testi-



mony to his versatility of interest and depth of knowledge.

Mr. Shah assumed the office of Governor of Tamil Nadu at a time when a non-Congress Government was in power in the State, a situation which might well have led to confrontation and conflicts. But, as a seasoned and mature politician, Mr. Shah generally managed to keep correct and cordial relations with the Ministry and function smoothly. It is a moot point whether the Governor could have interfered with the Ministry's style of functioning earlier and saved the misery and sufferings of the people of Tamil Nadu, but the country will never know the inner story of "aid and advice" Mr. Shah received on matters that are now under investigation. Whatever the constitutional pundits may say, Mr. Shah will be unanimously voted as a kind, gentle and friendly person and Tamil Nadu will remember him for a long time as such. Mr. Shah carries with him the abundant goodwill of the people of Tamil Nadu for a long, happy and healthy life of further dedicated service to the nation.

Mr. MOHANLAL SUKHADIA

Tamil Nadu has been fortunate in the succession of talented Governors it has had since Independence and Mr. Mohanlal Sukhadia, our new Governor, is another bright star in the galaxy of eminent men who have adorned the office. Born in July, 1916 and trained in Electrical Engineering, Mr. Sukhadia jumped into the freedom struggle and became an active participant in the student and labour movements under the Praja Mandal of the former

Mewar State. Mr. Sukhadia was interned during the 'Quit India' Movement and soon after his release became Minister for Civil Supplies in 1946 in the princely State of Mewar. Mr. Sukhadia may be called a political prodigy as he had continued ever since in office. On the birth of the Rajasthan State in 1948, Mr. Sukhadia came into the Cabinet of the new State and became its Chief Minister in 1954. Mr. Sukhadia, who was barely 38 at that time, was the youngest Chief Minister in the country. During the next 18 years Mr. Sukhadia was Chief Minister, he transformed the medieval Rajasthan conglomeration into a modern State and parts of the proverbial Rajasthan desert into a blooming garden. Pandit Nehru was so much impressed with Mr. Sukhadia that he was treated as the pet boy of the class in the National Development Council meetings and often complimented on his achievements.

A clear, cogent and forthright speaker, never attempting hyperbole or flights of rhetoric, Mr. Sukhadia could convince anyone by his sincerity of purpose and dedication to duty. When, in 1971, Mr. Sukhadia was made the constitutional head of a State, there was a feeling that the country had wasted the services of one of its ablest administrators. It is very thoughtful of the Prime Minister to have appointed Mr. Sukhadia as Governor of Tamil Nadu in spite of the embarrassment involved in shifting him so soon after he had taken charge as Governor of Andhra Pradesh. Tamil Nadu has no popular Ministry and the Governor has to function as a real and not a titular executive. In the performance of this task, the long, rich and varied experience of Mr. Sukhadia as Chief Minister will prove a great asset to the State. Tamil Nadu has never been under President's rule since Independence and the people are not accustomed to official disposal of popular grievances. There is a lurking feeling amongst the masses that on the removal of the D.M.K. Ministry, the Congress has automatically

(Continued on next page)

L.I.C.—MOUNTING EXPENSES

(Continued from page 4)

amounts to a subsidisation of insurance agency.

During the period 1956 to 1975, travelling expenses increased by 732 per cent, compared to a 674-per cent increase in premium income. A lot of touring is required to be done for the inspection of branch offices and auditing accounts. Decentralisation of powers and formation of smaller divisions, as recommended by the Administrative Reforms Commission would reduce these expenses considerably.

PROLIFERATION OF SUPERVISORY CADRES

Expenses on salaries have gone up by 90 per cent, whereas those on other benefits to the staff by 1,411 per cent. The monthly gross salary bill increased by 1,068 per cent from Rs. 55.97 lakhs in 1957 to Rs. 653.79 lakhs by March, 1975. The average salary paid to subordinate employees went up by 490 per cent during 1957 to 1975. During this period, the index number of wholesale prices went up by 266 per cent. Thus, subordinate employees, not only obtained a complete neutralisation of the rising cost of living but about 224 per cent more. It seems the LIC was correct in installing computers in its Bombay and Calcutta offices for reducing expenses on subordinate employees.

The number of class I officers increased by 366 per cent from 903 in 1957 to 4,209 in 1975. The ratio of class I officers to other members of the staff rose from 1 : 30 to 1 : 13. This means that in January, 1957, one class I officer supervised the work of 30 subordinate employees. By March 1975, he looked after the work of only 13 subordinate employees. This means more than 50 per cent of class I officers in the LIC are redundant now if their standards of work existing in 1957 are applied now.

The LIC should investigate whether it really needs so many class I officers now and whether everyone is being assigned enough work load. Further, it must also be examined if these officers are

doing any work which can easily be entrusted to subordinates, or which was actually being done by subordinates in the past. It is thus clear that the LIC will not succeed in controlling its expense ratio unless it is able to check its expenditure on employees.

HIGHER ALLOTMENT FOR ADVERTISEMENT

Expenditure on advertisements also shows a substantial increase of 757 per cent. Before nationalisation, 245 different insurance companies spent separately on advertisements. After their integration, such enormous publicity has become quite unnecessary now. The LIC now has the monopoly of life insurance business. Hence, a substantial fall in this expenditure was expected. But it has not happened.

In the final reckoning, the LIC should remember that the high quality of its service to the policyholders is its real and lasting advertisement. The Estimates Committee of the Lok Sabha, in its 134th report, devoted a full chapter to a discussion of the various complaints against the LIC in the matter of service to its policyholders. The findings of the Committee seem to hold good even today. In fact, complaints received

(Continued from previous page)
come to power and that Congressmen are shirking their responsibility of redressing popular grievances. In this context, the wisdom and experience of a senior politician like Mr. Sukhadia will go a long way in not only solving the day-to-day problems of the people but also in assuaging their feelings. In the special and difficult conditions prevailing in the State, it may be safely asserted that the Prime Minister could not have found a better Governor for Tamil Nadu than Mr. Sukhadia. To Mr. Sukhadia this is an opportunity to prove his mettle and to add one more feather to his cap, full of achievements. We welcome Mr. Sukhadia and wish him Godspeed in the task ahead.

by the central office of the LIC from its policyholders are growing every year, as any annual report of the LIC itself will show. Fortunately the LIC Chairman seemed to be alive to this when he said in Bombay on April 4, 1976, that it was necessary for the Corporation to bring down its level of expenses as well as improve its services to the policyholders and the returns the latter got. It is high time the LIC translated this awareness into reality.

Quake Theory Confirmed

Moscow: The theory, first advanced by Soviet scientists, that changes in the composition of underground waters are the first sign of impending earthquakes was confirmed by the recent quake in the Kyzyl-kum desert in Soviet Central Asia. This took place on the morning of April 8 — an 8-point quake felt up to 500 miles from the epicentre. But the gas content of water in the area began rising on April 3 and dropped sharply on April 7. Vibrations were noted in the amount of carbon dioxide, argon and helium, and also in traces of fluorine, mercury and other elements.

Daily seismic observations have been made in Uzbekistan for ten

years by a team headed by a young scientist, Dr. Abdul-Mobdi Sultanhojaev, set up by the Uzbek Academy of Sciences immediately after the great Tashkent earthquake of 1966. Observations are made at 500 boreholes and artesian wells and processed continuously by computers at two stations near Tashkent and in the Ferghana Valley. The "hydro-chemical" test is now applied in other parts of the Soviet Union and in earthquake-prone areas in the United States, Italy and Japan.

Soviet experts hope to perfect the method till they are able not only to predict earthquakes but also their exact place and strength.