

YOUTHFUL OCTOGENARIAN

FEW IN INDIA have such a long and distinguished record of service to the nation in such wide and varied fields of activity ranging from politics to literary work, administration to humble social service and from editing to emancipation of the Harijans as the youthful octogenarian, Sri K. Santhanam. It is said that a woman is only as old as she looks and a man as old as he feels. It is indeed remarkable that Sri Santhanam preserves a freshness of outlook, a breadth of vision, and a resilience of mind to new ideas not commonly associated with advancing age. Endowed with industrious habits and an impeccable sense of duty, Sri Santhanam's long public career, extending over three decades, has been one of solid and continuous achievement.

Sri Santhanam courted imprisonment five times between 1920 and 1941 in the cause of national liberation in response to Mahatma Gandhi's call, served as a legislator at the Centre for 11 years in three spells between 1937 and 1964, functioned as Editor for 17 years of the nation's most important newspapers like the *Indian Express*, the *Hindustan Times* and the *SWARAJYA*, served as Union Minister of State for Railways, Lt-Governor of Vindhya Pradesh, Chairman of the Finance Commission, Chairman of other committees on cooperation, handloom, etc., and also found time to write a dozen books in English, nearly a score in Tamil and do half a dozen translations from Sanskrit. This sweep of activities is possible only for a person whose mental range is wide and deep and whose powers of analysis are incisive. Sri Santhanam has been an outstanding journalist of his time. His writings have been marked by depth, erudition, clarity, simplicity, objectivity, and above all, sobriety, a unique combination of rare virtues. His versatility was truly remarkable. He was equally at home whether it was a naughty problem of economics, or a confused constitutional question, or a tangled

On Men & Matters

—R. V.

issue. His alert and sharp mind would assimilate any subject, analyse problems and assort the grain from the chaff with the deftness of a surgeon. He brought credit to the profession of journalism by his firm, fearless and forthright expression of views and he seldom evaded issues before the nation.

Sri Santhanam was a model legislator who studied his papers carefully, did his home-work thoroughly and spoke effectively without flourish or flamboyancy. As a member of the Constituent Assembly, he worked very hard, gathered material, collected precedents, prepared drafts of articles and made a unique contribution to the framing of the Constitution. He came under the favourable notice of both Panditji and Sri N. Gopalaswami Iyengar during this time and recognition followed through his appointment as Union Minister of State for Railways and later as Lt-Governor of Vindhya Pradesh. In public life, Sri Santhanam maintained the higher traditions of integrity comparable only to that of the saintly statesman, Rajaji, whose friendship and regard Sri Santhanam enjoyed to the last. It is a pity that his electoral reverse in 1952 deprived the Union Government and the country of his invaluable service as a Cabinet Minister.

A scholar with a knowledge of Sanskrit, Tamil and English, Sri Santhanam could turn his hand to anything and edify it. Translating Kalidasa is no easy matter and Sri Santhanam did it so well that the *Hindu*, in its review, stated that "both the letter and the spirit of the originals are well preserved."

He brought complicated ideas of economics and politics within

the reach of the common man in easy intelligible Tamil. His books *Selvam* (Wealth) on economics for the general reader and *Rajyam* (State) on principles of political science and State illustrate his efforts in this direction.

Above all, Sri Santhanam is a lovable, kind and friendly person with suave manners and a withdrawing disposition. He is no extrovert and never forced himself on others. Today, he is one of our most revered elder statesmen whose wise counsel can be of great assistance in the solution of the harassing political and economic problems. If his sagacious advice is not sought, he is not the loser.

On the happy occasion of his completing 80 years of age on 14th July 1975, we convey our best wishes for his long life, good health and perfect happiness in the days ahead.

Electronic Cardiostimulator

Moscow: Soviet Academician, Dr Boris Petrovsky, head of a world major centre for the surgery of heart, blood vessels, lungs and other organs, has conducted a unique operation for the transplant of a radioisotope cardiostimulator to a patient suffering from transverse heart bundle-block. The disease brings about a disruption in the functioning of the system of self-regulation and this results in a sharp slowing down of pulsation.

As early as the 1960's, bundle-block patients came to be treated in the USSR by implanting an electronic stimulator. Since then, more than 3,000 operations have been performed. However, the time functioning of the electronic stimulator is limited to two or two and a half years. After this the power source battery has of necessity to be replaced and that means the patient will have to undergo another operation.

As a result of collaboration between scientists and engineers, a new cardiostimulator with radioisotopes has been evolved. The device works on plutonium 238 and can keep going for 10 years.



"You could withdraw your money before five years losing interest, but then, in practice, it takes five years for us to complete the formalities to pay you back . . ."

Power Boards should be able to do quite precise Pert Chart planning. There is the nightmare of resource constraints—that have held up overall planning in India. Therefore, it is worth the while of our Planning Commission to concentrate on a master plan for power generation—and declare a holiday in regard to all other angles of planning—to consolidate the existing gains. There can be no more economically satisfying objective, than to operate our present installed capacity in industry—both in the public and private sectors—to optimum points, without flogging our machines. That way we shall produce more goods, generate more public revenues, plough back more funds, employ more people in the tertiary and service sectors, export more goods and mitigate inflation. How soon we can implement this objective hinges a great deal on how soon we can lay the spectre of power inadequacies. Let us hope those who are at the job will deliver the goods. There is reason to believe they will. There must be the will—starting from the Union Ministry of Power, the C.W.P.C., the C.E.A., the Planning Commission and the State Boards. The lack of will at any one level can prove the tenuous link that can break the chain. Is this too much to ask for—that after 25 years of Planning—we operate our collective will, informed by the collective wisdom that trials and errors over the same period have garnered for all those engaged in this sublime effort to build this crucial item of our infra-structure?

power shortage for 4 to 5 years. Soon after, the said Minister unbuckled his seat-belt and relinquished office.

There are some monetary experts who estimate that about 20 per cent of the inflation that occurred in 1974 (27 to 30 per cent) could be confidently put down to loss of production following power cuts in the country, while about 50 per cent could be ascribed to the oil crisis and the balance 20 per cent to conventional factors like money supply, excessive inventories and hoarding. Those who were obliged to cut back on installed capacity because of reduced power supplies and to lay off workers, can testify to the scale of economic waste and human distress to which they were constrained to contribute.

Creation of Additional Capacity

How militant and practicable are current efforts to improve power generation? How purposeful is Centre/State/Power Boards' co-ordination in creating fresh generation capacity? Has any effort been made to assess up-and-coming installed capacity in industry and in particular power-intensive industries like caustic soda—in terms of what additional power they would consume—so that power planning does not run into quicksands a second time in five years? While it is correct to admit that fewer than 25 per cent of industrial licences are ever transformed into installed capacity, it is indiscreet and risky for power-planners to under-estimate the energy needs of industries under construction or poised to go into stream. Indeed, taking caustic soda licences alone, even if 30 per cent of issued licences result in consuming cells, we shall need a sizable enhancement of energy supplies.

Ordering out of generation equipment and of transmission material must be dovetailed properly, so that inventory imbalances and delayed transmissions of energy produced do not supervene. Thanks to financial difficulties or suppliers' problems. Power Boards have, in past years, held unbalanced inventories, of which little was known outside. With a domestic organization of the size and versatility of B.H.E.L. operating creditably and a wide range of supplying industries that have enhanced installed capacity,

POWER SHORTAGE

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has been, that the Boards will have funds to put up one project, where they could have put up three, the ratio being influenced by both erosion of viability of particular projects and their swollen costs.

Plea to put up Tariffs

Today, Electricity Boards—whose published balance-sheets disclose their state of steep indebtedness to the State Governments, illiquidity and overall unprofitability of operations—have been asked by the Centre and the Planning Commission to put up tariffs, to tone up their profitability and also to improve their liquidity and thus to lean less heavily on Central subventions. The rates at which power is supplied to agriculture are wholly unrelated to the overall power generation costs and the losses are sought to be subsidized by enhanced industrial tariffs. Political overtones have applied closure to the debate on agricultural tariffs. Antithetically, the idea that the Power Boards must aim at a return on capital outlays, which have some parity with current bank interest rates, has been implanted in the minds of Power Board Chiefs recently. Ironically, this bright suggestion has come at a time when over a quinquennium, there has been a 150 to 200 per cent increase in the capital cost of projects. The idea, say, of 11 or 12 per cent return on capital laid out today on a project, is the same as a 22 or 24 per cent return on the capital invested on a similar-sized project five years ago—which is wholly unrealistic, because to achieve this, tariffs will have to be put up to levels that might equate them with diesel-generated power costs. The consumer of goods will become the whipping-boy again—through energy costs swelling ex-factory prices.

India is paying a heavy price for inaction under the Planning Commission's vigilant eye over a four-year period. Lord Byron, it is said, woke up one fine morning to find himself famous. Similarly, the country found itself one fine morning suddenly short of power with the Union Minister for Power mustering the courage to say that we shall have to bite the bullet if