

A LETTER FROM ALBERT MAYER

Begun: June 26, 1948

Finished: July 8

I have been very busy and very hot. But these are probably not the important reasons for not writing. I like to wait for a combination of these conditions - when I feel optimistic, when I feel energetic and alert, and when I feel relaxed enough to consider what it's adding up to. I need hardly explain that this happy combination doesn't often arise, and that when it does, it generally doesn't last long enough to produce a letter, or it must be utilized to hit the ball in connection with our project.

Perhaps I'll discuss the heat first, because the worst of that is over, and I did very well. As it may turn out that that will have been my only conclusive and concluded success, I think I'll have a go at it. In the first place it proved my old contention - that once its gets to be over 100°, it doesn't make any difference how much hotter it gets. One day here in Lucknow it was 115°, and next day it was 103°, but I didn't recognize any difference until I saw it in the paper. Another point of interest is that I have finally met a man who perspires more than I do. Horace Holmes really does perspire, in any league.

I simply cannot sleep under a fan, and in Delhi got around this very nicely by having my bed put on the veranda, outside my room, which later at night became quite breezy and pleasant. At Lucknow the first night I had my bed put out on the lawn. A couple of hours later, I woke up in a sort of panic, and found it was due to repeated puffs of warm and subtle wind - one of the most enervating experiences I can recall. It took me very little time to dash inside. This was the loo, for which this area is famous, and believe me its fame is justified. For days I kept thinking of an old-fashioned expression: "Vor dem loo hab' ich allen Respekt."

But I still couldn't sleep indoors, and had my bed put out next night. That night and every night since, in spite of the daytime heat, it has been fine and refreshing. The stars, and the moon behind the eucalyptus trees have been as soothing as poetry. And every morning all the little birds that are have made a beautiful chorus. The crows don't join in till somewhat later.

The fact is that if you don't try to meet this heat head on, but skirt around it, you can do a lot of work. You can't sleep very much, so you get up at five or six, and can get a lot of work in during the cool of the morning. We generally quit for lunch at 1:00, get back at three, and work till six or seven. Punctuating this with lemon-squashes and a large frequently refilled thermos, you really do all right. And now the monsoon has made a delayed appearance.

Incidentally, my recipe for work in the remote places of the world is a thermos bottle and a volume of poetry. Oh yes, and darning materials. Undoubtedly several other items would come in handy, but these seem to be the essentials.

I think I'll skip over whatever happened until then and start in with Lucknow, the center of our prospective operations. Or maybe I won't, maybe I'll tell of one thing about a happy four-day stay in England which is important to feel and know. I hadn't been in England for ten years or so, and I was particularly anxious to find out how people were feeling, in view of the buffetings to her prestige that England has been taking all over the world, and in view of its economic ills, physical deprivations, rationing and scarcities. I didn't feel I had any particular notion of this from what I had read in our newspapers and magazines. I can sum it up by saying that in this murky world, this has been a heartening experience.

I met a good many people. No big shots, but a fairly varied assortment of ordinary people. Not only was there no extraordinary amount of grouching, but the surprising contrast to me, having just come from the U.S.A., where we hear so much gloom about England, was that people are quite happy. And more than this, they are, it seemed to me, completely free from the jitters. This is what really struck me so strongly. There was some talk about Russia, but not a great deal. And everybody was quite cool about it. I didn't see anything like our atmosphere of fear and hysteria. One couldn't help constantly comparing our own infinitely superior state of physical well-being - it stands out like a sore thumb wherever one went here - and our over-riding spiritual anxiety, with their spareness of living and possibly dim future but with a sort of firm spiritual outlook. Somehow we seem to lack the confidence and serenity which should go with our smoothly flowing success and power ... I know I'm in deep water here, but seeing England pointed all this up so sharply.

Well, I'll skip Delhi, interesting as my few days there were, and as they usually turn out to be, because that's more or less of a detour and we might as well get to the U.P. which is really the main event. -- I should tell you that this letter has been dropped and resumed several times since it began (it's now July 3), and that that optimism I described on June 26 has been violently down, with some rebounds, several times since.

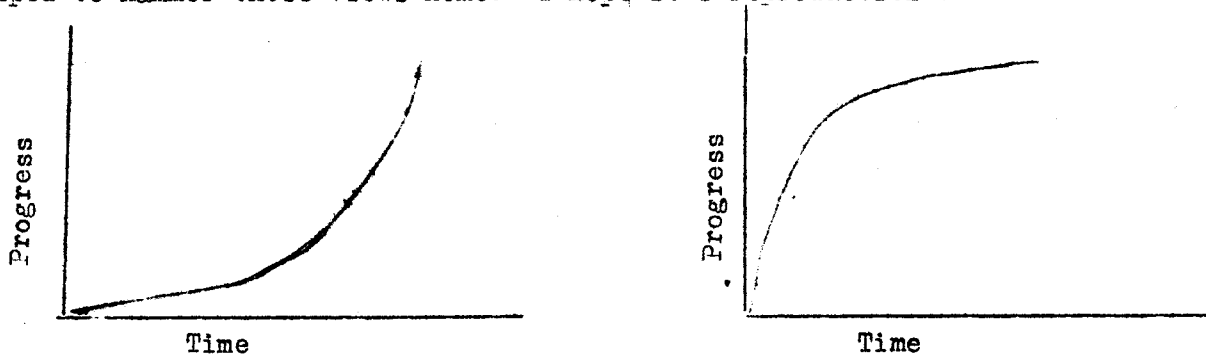
A small attempt at resume, comparing the atmosphere and the atmospheric change since my original visit and reporting, some sixteen months ago. The need for what we are trying to do is fully as great as it was then, greater perhaps. But realistic realization has gone much further. Many of the points we made then have gone home deeply since, both, I think, because we pointed them out sharply, and much more because events and attempts since then have of themselves carried their own logic with them. I should say that, aside of a number of points adopted from those reports which may or may not be of value as adopted because they were adopted isolatedly and piecemeal in a basically unchanged context, the big point that represents real progress and makes this a much more psychological and propitious time in which to start work than would have been the case when I was here in 1946-7 is this: the then prevalent concept was to make plans as broad and as comprehensive as circumstances required, without any true realization - let alone close appraisal - of the desperate inadequacy of resources and personnel. So these were really largely essays on paper, and to use another old-fashioned expression, "Papier ist geduldig." While this glib viewpoint has by no means wholly disappeared, it is a fact that the people who count have become much more realistic about it, and have begun to adopt the viewpoint of adjusting their sights to available trained manpower and resources and to their realistically possible, rather than wishful rate of increase. Again I feel this change is due somewhat to our diagnosis and prognostication, and much more to unsatisfactory experience in the interior.

Anyway, whatever the reasons, they have accepted my original proposal to conduct a pilot project in one or two districts rather than the larger number they had been so anxious to initiate all at once. I am enclosing with this a statement I wrote out a few days after my arrival called, "What This Pilot Project Is and What It Is Not."* The fact that the Ministers concerned have accepted this, is a good indication of how far they have progressed. Another indication is this:

There was a conference recently on opening Regional Training Centers for a new kind of worker, trained in a new kind of way. The goal, the requirement, is to train 600 workers. The prevailing intention was to create ten centers of 60 each. I broadhed the viewpoint that to find so large a number of men with the necessary background and character quickly would probably be impossible, as also to find the requisite number of heads for these centers and teachers. We ended up by agreeing to start with two, to wait with others until we found out the bugs in the first two.

* I won't enclose it. This letter turned out too long anyway.

I have lately used a graphic method to illustrate this point, which I think has helped to hammer these views home. I hope it's reproducible.



The right graph of progress is shown on the left: in other words, start slowly and deliberately, and when you're sure of your ground, you can go ahead more and more steeply, and in the end make the quickest progress anyway. I draw the graph on the right to represent how they have been going, i.e. start with a big splash and hoorah and peter out rather lamely. Bhatia, the Development Commissioner, caught at this graphic idea with alacrity, said I was just being tactful, that the end phase should not be horizontal but drooping.

Bhatia is one man whose views have progressed a good deal along the lines I've outlined. On the personal side, which on my previous visits was a source of doubt - as well as on the action side - we've become very good friends indeed. He has pulled me out of several dilemmas as only he could do, because we have no close idea of how to proceed with the Finance Department and other administrative niceties. I owe a recurrently amusing remark to Bhatia. We have been given a staff car. They offered us a driver with it. I said we had no use for a driver, except that it might be necessary to have one to see that no one syphoned out our petrol, which is both very scarce (rationed) and valuable here (equivalent of 70¢ a gallon, and higher in the black market). Bhatia said there was nothing to worry about in this respect, that it is only when you have a driver that you need worry about your petrol disappearing. Reminds me of that famous old joke: A man loses some money. A friend of his who was with him when he lost it comes to him furiously one day and says, "I hear you accused me of stealing your money." "No," says the man, "I didn't say that. All I said was that if you hadn't helped me look for it, I might have found it."

I think I will start closing this letter with a few notes about people. The first day I arrived in Lucknow, June 16, I visited Premier Pant's house to pay my respects. He greeted me in that grand affectionate way he has and said, "Well, what are you going to do this time, Mayer?" I told him I wasn't ready to say until I'd looked around and seen what changes I'd have to make in my original proposals. He told me he was going to Faizabad next day at four, coming back at 1:00 A.M., and leaving the next day at 7:30 A.M. for Maini Tal, so if I did want to see him again it would have to be before four next day.

That evening when I got home I decided I would have to see him, because I wanted his permission to get two men appointed right away, one of whom was in England and the other in the Central Provinces. Bhatia said he would try to make the appointment, as my office is not in the Council House, where they are, but in a separate bungalow which at that time had no phone. When it got to be 2:30 and no word from Bhatia, I decided to go to the Premier's office and start hanging around, because no matter what happens he generally sees you if you are there, and, it has seemed to me, almost though not quite as readily if you didn't have an appointment as if you did. But this time he really was tied up, and it looked as though I really wouldn't see him. This would have been too bad, because in the midst of touring for an election campaign he wouldn't be back for some time. So I sent him

a note asking whether I could come to see him at 6 A.M. next morning, which he said I could.

While I had in the past seen him at almost every odd hour, this was a new one, and it worked very well. Bhatia and I saw him in bed on the veranda and had tea with him. The mission, which was a little ticklish, succeeded. I say ticklish, because it involved a new post of Rural Life Analyst which hadn't before that been OK'd - and for which luckily we had in the USA found an Indian, Rudra Dutt Singh - and involved paying the difference for him to come by air from London instead of by steamer. I have learned from this incident, though I haven't applied the knowledge in that extreme form. I generally get over there at seven, with work under my arm to do and wait till he wakes up some time between seven and eight. So far it has worked without competition.

One of the finest, most devoted men I have met here or anywhere, is Bholenath Jha, as also one of the most completely self-contained and uncommunicative. He is the beau ideal of the rarefied fraternity, the Indian Civil Service, and while nearly everybody criticizes nearly everybody else over here, I had never heard anyone speak other than well of Jha. I had met him fairly frequently on previous visits here, but he always seemed to me quite cold. I never knew whether he liked me or my plans or was skeptical about both. Whichever it was, he kept it strictly to himself.

He is Chief Secretary, about the most important administrative and executive post there is. For my work I wanted to get two of his men, for places where administrative and executive know-how and decisiveness seemed particularly important. The general opinion, almost axiom, here is that administration won't give up a single man for service in development work. I had given a couple of specific names to Bhatia who undertook to see Jha about getting them. Nothing doing.

I couldn't possibly let it go at that, I felt. In addition to the importance of getting some seasoned men who know the administrative machinery, I felt that even more important was the symbolic value, plus or minus, of our project either being considered centrally vital enough to warrant some sacrifice on the part of the Administrative Service, or on the minus side of being considered merely a side-show. So I decided to see Jha myself and go down the line with him on this.

He was too busy and pre-occupied in his office for the necessary relaxed consideration, so he invited me to have tea at his house on Sunday afternoon. I will tell you about this tea unchronologically, because I want to end up the account of it by giving you some picture of the man himself, and of the way this part of India at least handled the series of crises that accompanied and followed independence. I will therefore dispose of my own matter first, though that is not just how it happened.

I explained to him that I was seeking the bulk of personnel from outside government, both because I wanted to get new and outside drive into things, and because I felt we wouldn't be helping India to the maximum by merely taking good personnel from one productive job into another, that we wanted to make a net addition to effectively used manpower; that even from America we had started to line up people over here (or in the case of Rudra Dutt Singh the Rural Life Analyst, in America). But we did need two honest-to-God administrators who could pilot our ideas and plans through government with its definite habits and procedures, which, however clever the outsiders might be, would take too long to learn. But I emphasized that there was a symbolic importance far beyond that. We need all possible prestige in this situation if we are to succeed, for government efforts are at a serious discount here, and unless we can establish a very special status of standing and enthusiasm we will not only not attract the kind of people we need, but the various vested departments grasp that we have a special status, we will soon be stalled. If on the other hand he, who was known not to give up men, were to do so for us, it might have a quite electric effect... This appealed to Jha, and he not only acquiesced, but

the force of the point itself, and my earnestness in presenting it, put us on quite a new footing, I believe.

Then he opened up. He said he knew he was considered to be stiff as a hog on ice (not his words) in the matter of giving up men. But the desperate difficulty of his job of administration, of preventing administrative breakdown at the time of Independence and Partition, and since, simply weren't known to people because he had never opened up to anyone about them. The requirement was for 284 good administrators at the center and in the 50 districts. A very large proportion of good men were lost to him because all the British left, and all but a handful of the Muslim officers went over to Pakistan. He had actually only 206 bodies to cover this ground. He emphasized the word bodies, because many of them were young and unseasoned, and except for the desperate need some of them would normally not qualify.

But worse than this were the critical conditions that had to be coped with. The massacres and migrations in the Punjab on one side - of the 5,000,000 refugees, a half million had wandered into the U.P., who were not only physically miserable and bereft, but fired with hatred for the Muslims because of their sufferings - and likely to inflame the majority Hindu population against the large Muslim minority - and on the other, Eastern, side, the only less tense situation in Bengal and Bihar where there had been quite serious riots also though a good deal less devastating than in the Punjab. He was convinced that unless the U.P. stood up as a citadel between these two seas of turbulence, full-scale civil war would sweep across the whole of North India from the Northwest frontier to the Bay of Bengal... He wasn't talking emotionally or heroically, but was giving a cool appraisal of the situation as he had seen it. He is essentially and pervasively a cool and seasoned man.

On top of this, there was the problem of the police, which had a large proportion of Muslims. He didn't dare leave any of them in the worst affected western areas, because they themselves were frightened of the inhabitants and frequently simply ran away. Nor was the situation any better with respect to a large proportion of the Hindu police, who sympathized with the Hindu refugees and would not resolutely put down attempts at retaliation on the resident Muslims. He could not call for help from the Army which, due to the wholesale departure of British officers and the split-up of almost every unit by loss of Muslim officers and men due to the partition, was anything but a seasoned force at that time.

So they had to juggle their inadequate numbers of inadequate civilian administrators and of police, placing what they hoped were their fairest, most resolute men in the most critical places. And they had to piece out these inadequacies by quickly forming a volunteer citizen militia, which in itself required the most delicate handling so as to avoid vigilantism and their taking the law into their own hands.

I can tell you my hair stood on end, sitting quietly on the lawn, listening to this calm man telling in a measured way of these blood-curdling situations and possibilities. The facts were heroic, though he didn't present them that way.

One other story I will tell you, in somewhat the same mold of courage and determination, though from a different time. During the recent election, I went with some Indian friends to hear Nehru give an election speech. Pant and he were on the platform. The loudspeakers went out of commission for a half hour or so and we talked about various things. Joshi told me that seeing the two together made him think of an incident during the Congress revolutionary days. The police charged a meeting. Nehru and Pant were near each other. A policeman started to swing at Nehru with a lathi, a long wood club. Pant saw it, sprang

forward, took the tremendous blow, and saved Nehru. It laid him out for a long time, and he suffered pain from it for six years after that... So that's the stature of some of these people.

My two companions here are fine. Horace Holmes is taking terrific punishment. For three weeks we have been pouring it on - meeting new people, new conditions, strange problems, but he is sensitively absorbing it and coming back for more. Nat Durlach, though only a guest star, is, as expected, helping out in various miscellaneous and patient ways which are an enormous help to us.

This letter has an unjustifiably optimistic tone, because it has dealt largely with personal relations which are certainly turning out well, and with the positive aspects of a changing scene. There are many negative aspects also which I will tell you about in another letter. And there is no question that we have undertaken an immensely complete job which may take a good deal more than we've got. I've criticized the Indian tendency to bite off more than you can chew. In all likelihood, I've done the very same thing.

A.M.

A LETTER FROM ALBERT MAYER

Bombay, October 12, 1948

I meant to have and should have written this from Delhi on October 3. I passed thru there that day, wanted to see six people, but found only two available, so I had the whole of Sunday afternoon luxuriously free. So what did I do? I fooled around and lazed around and did nothing, except listen to a symphony orchestra after lunch.

I will try to give you some appraisal of the work I have done or tried to do here (i.e. in India), later in this letter. But first I will put down some other things.

One week-end I had to go to Calcutta. I looked forward to it a good deal, nostalgically. When I got there, and drove from the airport to the hotel, I was disappointed. For Calcutta seemed to me the dirty, harsh, uninspired city that I had felt it to be when I first saw it in the Army days. But gradually under the warming influence of seeing old friends and discussing the problems I was down there to discuss, and especially as dusk and night descended, and Calcutta changed into its dusky purple and yellow colors and its small dreamy lights at night, these harshnesses disappeared, and it proved to be a sentimental journey after all. I dropped in to see my old friend Bernard Matthews, a British architect, who has redone his horrible flat imaginatively and beautifully. There are many opinions about Matthews, but I love him. There may be many others, but there are only two Britishers I know - Matthews in Calcutta and Eddie Souter in Kanpur (used to be Cawnpore) who completely loved India, believed in it, didn't pass judgment on it, who completely identified themselves with it, and mean to stay there till they die.

Next day at lunch in the Great Eastern Hotel which is still the ungainly conglomeration of different floor levels and long tortuous hallways as before, I saw a monocled Englishman eating by himself. For all I know, he may have been a most sympathetic character, but to me he represented or embodied suddenly, the aloofness and unbending quality of the typical Britisher in India (not all, but most, by far), who found their happiness in "European" clubs, and who don't know the fun they have missed in never having shed their self-consciousness, never freely forgot themselves and their color and dignity and never just circulated around among people. This is not a holier-than-thou remark, and unfortunately doesn't apply to the British alone but to all of us. What my monocled man suggested to me was what might be called the human race's lost opportunity.

What I was doing in Calcutta was to advise with the Ramakrishna Mission on some problems connected with construction of a new group of buildings on a beautiful piece of land they have acquired in the Dakuria Lakes area. Aside of Swami Nityaswarup-ananda who is in charge of this and who had asked me to come down, I wanted to see Swami Atmabodenanda, an old and delightful member of the order. Unfortunately he was ill, so Swami N. drove me up there (he has a car now which he never used to have), to an old dingy Shambazar area. The place is small and crowded both with hard-working Swamis who appear to turn out an incredible amount of work under the conditions, and visiting Swamis who pass thru there. It is also a sort of shrine because it was the Holy Mother's house, the self-sacrificing wife of Ramakrishna, the saint and founder of the order. One room is kept sacred to her. One cannot describe such a place, one must see the relics, the pictures, the garlands, the offerings of various kinds that are constantly left there; nor can one fail to be moved by it.

Well that was Calcutta. Swami N. insisted on taking me to the airport in his tiny car at the outlandishly early hour that for some reason seems to be the time one generally flies away from Calcutta.

Jumping around a bit, I want to tell you something about Hyderabad. I don't know whether this got much into the U.S. newspapers, and what they had to say about it if they did, but the British papers and the BBC seem to have got a completely wrong impression of the facts of the situation and what might be called the moral aspects. They represented it as a reckless gamble and war of unjustified aggression. Anyway, whether or no, I think it's worth telling something about, because I feel it represents a high point of masterly and humane handling, not too usual here and probably not anywhere.

As you know, Hyderabad has been a very worrisome problem. Of the 562 or some such number of princely states, only a handful had failed to join the Indian Union or Pakistan. Hyderabad was out, and the largest and most powerful of any of the 562. It was not possible to let Hyderabad remain independent, both because of the deteriorating effect it was having on Princes who had acceded, and because Hyderabad is entirely surrounded by provinces of the Indian Union. This obviously meant that communications, defense, foreign policy somehow had to be commonly handled; also it meant a terrific lot of unrest on both sides of the long border, "refugees" going back in each direction all the time, etc. What made the problem delicate and thorny was that the ruler and his administration were Muslim, and the people Hindus. India was desperately anxious to settle the issue peacefully, because of the danger of Muslim-Hindu trouble within India and on the long Pakistan borders; and Pakistan newspapers and leaders played up this threat. So for many months negotiations went on, during which they repeatedly offered, in different forms, a settlement to Hyderabad on terms considerably better than the other Princely States had received. Each time the negotiations looked OK, the Nizami's negotiators returned from Delhi to Hyderabad and the answer finally was always NO.

The situation got to be so tense that it looked as tho there might be Hindu-Muslim trouble among the people all over India if the stalemate continued. In other words, this danger appeared by this time to be greater than the danger that might result from action. At this point India sent its army in, and as you know, the Nizami capitulated at once. Whether he had been bluffing all along, whether he had been relying on outside help, or whether he had been the unwilling agent of a fanatical Muslim private army called Razakars as he said, isn't certain.

But the results were unqualifiedly good. There wasn't any Hindu-Muslim rioting or even tension in this country. Certainly this was a test, and everyone was simply overjoyed as a result. India knows much more surely where its people stand on this terrible possibility than she could have in any other way.

The Indian army behaved beautifully, seems to have been perfectly disciplined and done no looting nor taking it out on the Muslim population. Another source of needed confidence for this infant country.

Also, the effect on those princes who may have been contemplating funny business, has been good. Incidentally, one of the Princes, the Maharajah of Bhavnagar has been appointed Governor of Madras (in this job he has nothing to say really, a sort of honorary figurehead idea, these governorships).

But above all, the Hyderabad thing has given the people of this nation an opportunity to be pleased with itself, to take pride in itself, to recover from the frustration that followed the original partition into India and Pakistan, which had deeply disappointed everyone, necessary as it finally was. While the leaders and the newspapers have showered endless praise on the prowess of the army which so small an operation scarcely justifies, I don't yet see any signs of militarism or chauvinism. In fact, tho there has been elation at the upshot, the moral handling of the situation has been sober, the treatment so far of Hyderabad seems to have involved a minimum of suppression or threats. In fact my impression is they are leaning over somewhat backwards in this regard.

They do these things in an Indian way. For example, in the Kashmir struggle, it has lately been acknowledged that Pakistan government troops are in the field there, so the two nations are informally at war. As you know, Jinnah recently died, the creator of Pakistan, the leading motives of whose life and actions seem to have been implacable distrust of Hindus, and a deep almost fanatical belief in his and Pakistan's destiny, as leaders of the Islamic world. Yet on his death, Nehru, Patel and all the Indian leaders sent messages of sympathy and praise to the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

One other point of general interest. The following is a quotation from a good Indian newspaper. While in so short a space, the tone is characteristic of Indian reaction to American policy. Here it is:

"Changchou, capital of Manchuria, is lost to Kuomintang China. Mukhden may also be evacuated shortly.

"These are very poor dividends on the hundreds of millions of dollars poured into Marshal Chiang's treasury by the U.S. government. How much help has been advanced to date we shall never know, but it does strike one as curious that Washington does not bother to inquire why the Kuomintang is not more successful. Because if it did, it might come to the conclusion that even non-communist China does not think the Kuomintang right for it. Then the fat would be in the fire. For as Senator Gurney has recently stated, 'anyone who fights communism is our friend.' He was referring to Generalissimo Franco and his inspiring record against communism since 1936. This makes one wonder whether Senator Gurney's way of thinking is not the unofficial mentality of the American State Department also. Then on the other hand we recall that our government too is fighting communism, that it has already made of India the most stable of Asia's countries. We however get no dollars. The twists and turns of American foreign policy are a little difficult to understand."

Other newspapers say other things. But you might generalize, and have to make almost no exception to the generalization, that in the political and moral sphere all of them and public opinion too have concluded that nothing creative will come from us as a nation. Some came to this conclusion with regret, some triumphantly as confirming the viewpoint they have always held.

I will now give you something of a summary and appraisal of our work here:

1. Bombay revisited seems to me to justify my previous optimism. I think this plan is getting somewhere and getting somewhere faster than any city I have done any work in or know about, except a new city, planned from scratch like Canberra, and this in spite of the fact that its overall resources financially and in materials available, don't begin to compare with cities of the western world.

Also something like 150 copies of the plan and report have been purchased outside of Bombay in all parts of India. Several cities have written in about planning services for them.

2. Town and Village Planning in the United Provinces. Two years ago I recommended setting up a Provincial office for this purpose, and presented a proposed set-up. The idea was that they needed planning in so many cities, towns and villages that they couldn't possibly find enough trained men, and the localities couldn't afford it anyway, so I felt a concentrated group of skill and experience available for the most urgent cases, and able to train men who would have been of no value on their own, was the solution, for several years at least. Nothing doing. So much so that I didn't broach it again. It wasn't, as Bill Wiser would put it, a felt need. It was, as I would put it, only a diagnosed need (the Wisers are as wonderful as ever, but I've told you all about them). Well, a few weeks before I was slated to leave, Premier Pant called for me.

This in itself was unusual, because usually he expects me to come to see him when there's something. He told me he wanted me to submit a proposal for a Provincial Planning office as soon as possible. As whatever planning or attempted planning there is, has sort of drifted into about four departments, I said I thought there ought to be a meeting presided over by the Premier where we could discuss the set-up I would be ready to propose. I said I thought the meeting ought to be not later than tomorrow or next day. He couldn't do that, but suggested that same afternoon. As this meeting involved other Ministers and Department heads, you can see this was pretty fast action.

I think the reasons for this new sense of urgency were three: the general sense of the acuteness of the problems has sharpened; more important, hundreds of thousands of the refugees from the original Partition massacres are clamoring to be settled, have built themselves shacks anywhere and everywhere and reinforced the still unliquidated war-time crowding of cities. The third and most potent reason is the recent devastating floods which have destroyed thousands of villages and part of cities, which have got to be rebuilt at once. (We made plans for them in a desperate hurry; I hope and expect the actual rebuilding is taking place now.)

Anyway, the Provincial Planning office is set up under Dudley Trudgett, one of our team, is probably functioning embryonically now. There are bigger and more varied possibilities in it than you have the patience to read about here. If they do develop, it will not be for a year or more.

3. Etawah project. This is the all-over rejuvenation and planning of a District, mostly rural. It is the most difficult, most needed, most uncharted and most uncertain in result of any. It was for this that the team was taken over. This took most of the time and thought and travail, and heaven knows how it will come out. But I can report that it is now launched in the field. The atmosphere is one of eagerness and high expectation. At the end of this letter I am attaching two notes. One is called "What this Pilot Project is and what it is not." Its purpose was to avoid handicapping the project by over-expectancy.

The other is a note I wrote to Premier Pant telling him briefly the progress and status of the various things I had been mixed up in.

I have been puzzled right along as to whether to try to explain the Etawah project briefly in one of these letters, but finally decided it couldn't be done, or anyway that I couldn't do it. But I have brought back two extra copies of the program and if there are any heroes who want to grapple with it and they will make themselves known, I can have these two copies circulated around among them. However I warn these potential heroes that this program consists of 60 typed pages.

Coming back to Bombay, I'm sorry I have never taken the space to try to do it justice. Tho it is a late comer in my Indian affections, I'm not sure that by now it isn't my major one. However varied my work over here has become and however more varied it is likely to become, and however much a deep interest embraces each facet, I find I am at heart a city walla, and a big city walla at that. Bombay is a great city, a vital city, a city of fresh minds. Like all cities I know anything about, it hasn't lived up to its potentialities, particularly men haven't yet developed anything to be entirely worthy of its marvelous sea-girt location. But when you look down on the lights of Marine Drive from Comballa Hill, you're not so sure of that either.

I think I should record that when I left India this time, I had a feeling bordering on elation. I had momentarily the feeling that I had done some solid things. I even had the feeling that within my limitations I had done all I could possibly have done. It was only a momentary feeling of course, and in the hours between planes at Karachi I made a ghastly number of notes of things to be done, of ideas

and projects to be pursued, and to tell you the truth I am terrified by them, both because of their number and because I can't see my way from the idea to the performance. Yet for a half hour I did have that feeling, childish as it was, and for that length of time I felt fine.

I thought I had finally finished, but I will say one thing more. I think the feeling may have been somewhat justified, to this extent. What bothers me in the USA is that we seem to require so much paraphernalia, so much apparatus, so much personnel, so many buildings, so much information and statistics, particularly in planning, that we make a sizeable undertaking mountainous, and, I've had the feeling, tend to make the apparatus an end in itself that sometimes obscures the real objective. India can't afford so much apparatus now, maybe never will be able to, and I wouldn't grieve if she should never want to. My thesis in coming over here was that to go more directly from the intent to the objective might be entirely feasible, as also it was the only way possible, and that by a bolder reliance on imagination and experience aided by existing information and information gathered only as the problem desperately developed the need for it, you might get a fresher, happier result. From my experience here, only in this particular kind of work of course - I'm not talking about science or industrial technology - it wouldn't surprise me if this should turn out to be right, or anyway not altogether wrong.

APPENDIX I

Office of the Planning & Development
Adviser to Government, U.P.
98 The Mall, Lucknow
September 26, 1948

Hon'ble Pt. Govind Dallabh Pant
Premier, United Provinces, Lucknow

Dear Premier Pant:

As I am leaving for Etawah and Chaziabad on Tuesday, and then leaving the U.P., it occurred to me to give you a brief memo of the status of things with which I am concerned, both for your general information and because you may want to discuss one or two of the points when I see you.

1. Etawah: Thanks to the help, ingenuity and patience of a good many people, but particularly Bhatia, A.N. Jha, Corbett (and on a different plane, of Bhatia's superintendent Tripathi), I am leaving at a time when the framework, personnel, budget, supplies and equipment are pretty well lined up. Now we've got to start delivering.

2. Flood re-housing: Trudgett and I have sketched up the house and village plans which are being now drawn up in detail by the men you ordered assigned to us, and Chakravarti will have what he needs by Wednesday, September 29.

A little later on, Chakravarti is getting his overseers here for a meeting to explain the plan and plans, and Trudgett will answer their questions.

At a conference with Chakravarti, it was agreed that Trudgett would be available to go out into the field to observe conditions and give advice where needed. It was estimated that this phase might consume two or three weeks.

3. Kanpur: Mehta and Dev Raj are going with us on the train to Stawah, so that I may have the uninterrupted time to give one final review to the plan and report.

Trudgett is going with me to Etawah, and on his way back will spend two or three days at the Kanpur Board to go over and check with them any final changes that may result from our meeting on the train. - Kanpur plan and report should be ready for the printer by the end of October.

4. Provincial Town and Village Planning Office. Please give some thought to the matter of priorities which we discussed. I would feel happier, and Trudgett would, if it were indicated what work he would be doing in the next 6 or 8 months so that we could discuss it together before I go, and so that I might from my longer experience here, give him whatever orientation I could as to the specific assignments that are likely to arise. This does not mean that he could not get along without this, but it might help.

I will stop in early Monday morning to see whether your views on this have crystallized.

5. Town Planning Legislation. I will look over the draft and give you my comments when I get it in Bombay or the U.S.A.

6. What with the flood work and Konpur, it will probably be a month or six weeks before Trudgett gets around to detailed studies in Etawah. However I don't consider this at all serious.

Yours sincerely,

Albert Mayer

APPENDIX II

What this Pilot Project is and what it is not

June 22, 1948 (revised June 25)

Many of the notes and minutes of meetings held in the last two years, deal with the question as to why so much well-intentioned and intelligently considered village and rural development work has been disappointing, has often failed to maintain itself and has certainly failed to spread.

There are certain elements in our program designed to probe into this disappointing condition, and it is hoped to learn the answer with a greater and more uniform degree of success. The following should be particularly noted, in connection with our work and government's viewpoint:

1. Government to consider this pilot project, as what we in America call "action research." Do not be over-anxious and expect speedy miracles. Consider this like other research: that there are certain elements, processes, reactions that cannot be over-expedited without losing the value of the research. Certainly this is true of projects dealing with people and with land cultivation, land management, land and water reclamation. Even relatively immediate results of any one measure, however potentially and eventually successful, require minimum of one crop cycle to yield tentative results, and human and physical reorganization require even longer.

We will be energetic and are not trying to build up excuses or alibis. But we must have time to study methods, successes, failures; so that the results may be truly valuable. We want to concentrate all our effort and talent first in one district, long enough to know what we are doing, before going to the next. No one who has been connected with such projects of a successful character can expect real results without at least a few years spent on it (certain elements are of course useable sooner). But the ultimately speediest and most successful program is the one where the initial exploration was best done. And of course our basic endeavor is to see how quickly this work can be done and how quickly expanded (and to expedite the process).

2. On the positive side we are adding these elements:

(a) Rural Life analyst. This socially trained specialist, who interprets the people and their culture to the technician and official, and the technicians and officials to the people, who from this knowledge and experience helps to time the introduction of elements - i.e. to advance or to retard them based on the people's readiness or otherwise - is one of the latest additions to our social-technical approach to these problems. So many improvement projects involving people have resulted in frustration on both sides and great waste of money, that this element and technique have been introduced, with a high incidence of success and is now in the U.S.A. considered an indispensable adjunct, for work even among our fellow citizens. This should have very great value not only in this case, but for work thruout this province and India.

Also, he will have the opportunity to observe and study operation and mutual relations of cooperatives and of new panchayates.

(b) The NEW DEAL atmosphere. In this effort, we are making extraordinary efforts to gather people of enthusiasm and energy AT ALL LEVELS, people who you might say are simply bursting their seams for the opportunity to participate; just as in the New Deal days in our country people of the greatest ability, energy and capacity trooped in to our projects to participate in what they believed in and had been waiting for. We hope and expect to build up that kind of excitement and reputation. But you can't find large numbers of such people at once. We are getting them but if we expand too fast, we will dilute them (on the analogy of the seed store with a lot of seed, but only a little of it good). If we can create the aura and reputation we intend to, then in the future people of the kind we want, will seek us out; provided our standard is high and undiluted. That seems to us the answer to the problem of finding such men for expanding work later.

(c) A closer tie-up, exchange of information, and current comparisons with private individuals and organizations in this province (and others), whose work bears on ours either in individual elements or overall character or both. This will make both more fruitful. There is a great deal to be done here profitably which has not yet been done, both in incorporating past and current experience of others, and in avoiding duplication of mistakes and of research effort.

(d) Improving the land thru improving the people; improving the people thru improving the land. The former is the time-honored method, and our plans are geared to accomplish this, as just noted, but the second element is of the greatest importance also, and this new element we plan to introduce in our river shed work.

3. No changes and shifts. To give the work continuity and dignity and maximum of accomplishment, shifts of personnel should be avoided except for grave reasons.

4. Cooperation with other departments. The primary objective is of course to do the most direct and fruitful job for the village and towns, as fast and as permanently as we can. But as far as extensibility and future province-wide acceptance are concerned, we want to make every effort to get the glad cooperation of other departments, to have them feel we want their help, and to help them; not to replace, or to compete for credit.