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Rioting Alarms Indian Leaders

Joint Action Being Taken to End Fighting

By Preston Grover.

BOMBAY, AP—Both Hindu and Moslem leaders are concentrating efforts on ending increasingly widespread riots whose savagery threatens to create an almost unbridgeable gap between two religious communities.

Their efforts indicate clearly their alarm over continued clashes which seem to challenge their ability to master the complex problem of governing India. Impartial observers believe that leaders will gain control in time but their prestige has been assailed and new ammunition provided to critics both at home and abroad.

Surprising to most observers is the violence of Hindu attacks against the Moslems. This correspondent has been told repeatedly in recent years by Moslem leaders and by British long in India that "Hindu riots don't amount to much, but wait until the Moslems cut loose."

Hindus Show New Spirit.

To the surprise of almost everyone, Hindu assaults against Moslems in several areas have been at least on par with Moslem attacks.

In previous communal clashes, Hindu casualties have been two or three times as great as Moslems. There is a long tradition of placidity and non-resistance among many sections of the widespread Hindu population, accentuated by the teaching of non-violence as a religious and political weapon by Mahatma Gandhi.

Hindu violence against Moslems has caused many Hindus, especially among younger groups, to assert that non-violence is finished as a political doctrine. Gandhi himself has rebuked his followers on repeated occasions for their departure from his non-violent teachings and now he has warned that he will use his most formidable weapon if necessary to bring a cessation of outbreaks. One of his closest friends, Rajendra Prasad, member of the interim government, said that Gandhi had resolved to "fast unto death" unless disturbances in Bihar stopped.

Bihar is a heavily populated province on the lower Ganges plain adjoining Bengal. It is overwhelmingly Hindu but has small pockets of Moslems just as eastern Bengal is overwhelmingly Moslem with small pockets of Hindus.

Moslem Deaths Mount.

The death toll among Moslems in Bihar seems already to have exceeded the deaths of Hindus during previous disorders in eastern Bengal. The latest official roundup estimated fatalities in Bihar at most than 400. Since then various piecemeal reports indicate that several hundred more were killed and undoubtedly most of these were Moslems.

To this later outbreak area, Nehru, congress leader and head of interim government, rushed in company with Moslem league associates in the interim government. They travelled together, issued joint appeals, and Nehru, warned that continued violence would bring machine guns and bombs if necessary.

This interference of the central government in the administration of one of the provinces was of itself a strong step. The British cabinet mission last summer repeatedly assured Moslems that the greatest amount of local autonomy would be assured provinces. This was intended as protection from interference by the central government which Moslems felt was in danger of domination by the Hindu majority.

To Show No Partiality.

From a political standpoint it was notable that the threat of central government intervention in Bihar was most forcefully directed at protecting Moslems from Hindus.

Obviously, congress leaders are seeking to demonstrate to the Moslem population that no partiality will be shown to Hindus. It was a strong bid for a solid idea united under one central government as opposed to the Moslem league's demand for their own independent Moslem state.

One thing is increasingly clear as disorders progress. That is that there remains a considerable gap between the governing officials at the top and the disturbed population at the bottom. Much time and education is still needed to bridge the gap.

—Save Waste Paper—