

Parsiānā

For whom the bell tolls

A news analysis of the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress

Perhaps the most lasting memory of the Congress will be the bell. The metallic ring dominated the three-day meet more than any individual or event. Speakers and audience found their destinies controlled by the manually operated instrument and the clock.

"When they wrote to me, they said I would have 15 minutes to speak," said Behram Deboo of British Columbia. "When I arrived in the hall they told me 10 minutes and now (on the stage) I'm told not more than six minutes. I don't know where to begin and where to end."

Prof Kaikhosrov Irani of New York also noted "that when I prepared this paper I thought it would be a summary of what I was going to say. Now my talk will be a summary of my paper." On another occasion, Irani noted he was going to perform a signal service to the Congress by being one of the only speakers to end his talk before the bell rang.

Though the January Congress was billed as the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress, it was very much a Bombay affair. Invitations to foreign speakers

went out so late that some of them received the letters after the deadline for submitting the papers had passed. Also, few of the major issues facing the global community were scheduled for discussion as all "controversial

Few of the major issues facing the global community were scheduled for discussion, as all "controversial subjects" were barred.

subjects" were to be barred. Thus the issue of acceptance/non-acceptance of converts, adoption, inter-community marriage, the position of children of such marriages, the need for behdins to perform priestly functions due to the dearth of athornans were not discus-

sed. Even a non-controversial paper by Dr Kersey Antia on the need for a decision-making religious body was rejected because Antia, who had performed Joseph Peterson's navjote ceremony, was considered too controversial.

Perhaps the most unfortunate incident of the Congress also involved the Chicago high priest. While Antia was near the foyer of the Birla Matushri Hall, Tehomton Aresh, president of the Zoroastrian Association of California, physically accosted and verbally abused him. Antia reportedly kept his demeanor. The attack on Antia was most regrettable and the only such known incident at the Congress. As Prof Irani had observed in his talk "Why can't we disagree without being disagreeable?"

Aside from the late invitation to speakers, the worldwide Zoroastrian associations did not participate in the format and subjects of the Congress due to the distance and lack of time. Even if time and distance were not inhibiting factors it is unlikely the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, which sponsored the function at the request of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans

of India, would have permitted key issues to be discussed. Thus it was a pleasant surprise to find Kobad Zarolia of Toronto on the stage, talking on the issues facing the Zoroastrian priesthood in North America. These issues involved who could be a Zoroastrian, who could have their navjotes performed, the stand on abortion, why a spring ghambar should be held in the fall as is the present situation, etc. Zaro-

If the North
American priests
wanted to be in the
forefront, the priests
in India seemed to
be content with
backseat driving.

lia outlined the issues and said a time frame for implementation had still to be drawn up. He wanted to gauge the Congress' thinking on the points raised. "The priests in North America want to be in the forefront of their community," he said, therefore they

had decided to tackle the main issues.

If the North American priests wanted to be in the forefront, the priests in India seemed to be content with backseat driving. Eight high priests of Bombay and Gujarat were conspicuous by their absence. Though invitations had been issued to them, they chose to stay away. Thus when they had the opportunity to offer leadership to the community, they characteristically abdicated their role.

Perhaps their absence explained a question raised at the Congress: Why do so many Zoroastrians drift towards other religions, cults and individuals? Time and again speakers at the Congress attacked Zoroastrians for seeking religious salvation elsewhere. One speaker from the floor spoke of the "menace of Christian Science." But other speakers rightly pointed out that because Zoroastrians did not find comfort in their own religion, they turned elsewhere. Unfortunately the failing of the Zoroastrian religion as practised and preached today was not a subject on the Congress' agenda. Nor was the subject of a priesthood that has failed to make Zoroastrianism meaningful to its followers.

There were many such missed opportunities at the Congress. Even the Congress theme *Ham Band Paivaste* —

Bound Together Unitedly Forever, proved to be illusionary. A community that is afraid to face problems, that sweeps aside all controversy for fear of offending one section or the other, cannot claim to be united. It is only when there is free and honest discussion within the framework of a Congress or symposium that unity emerges, unity of thought, rather than unity of physical objects.

Perhaps, for these reasons, the session on the world body was the most dramatic. An important issue was before the Congress: whether the World Zoroastrian Organization would and could continue as an acceptable world body or whether once again the matter would be in abeyance. In his inaugural address on January 10 on the Cusrow Baug lawns, Federation and BPP president Dr Aspi Golwalla categorically said "It would be foolish to have two world bodies." That set the tone for a constructive dialogue. Even the Delhi Parsi Anjuman president Shiavax Nargolwala's acerbic remarks on the Panchayet and the WZO did not alter the positive tenor of the discussions. Instead it earned a rebuke from the session's chairman Dr Farhang Mehr who requested speakers "to refrain from personal attacks and insults."

No decision was reached on the issue



At the inauguration (from left) Kanga, Begum Latif, Guzder, Governor I.H. Latif, Golwalla, Nargolwala, Dastur N. Minochehr-Homji, (rear right) Homai Mody and Gool Tata.

of a world body but it was a tactical victory for the incipient WZO. They had at least been able to stall any move for forming a parallel world body at the Congress.

Papers

The quality of the papers on most of the topics was uneven. Some of the talks were rambling and irrelevant. Only few were well researched.

Mercifully the fourth Congress, unlike the third, was spared homespun theories on genetics. The constant reference to the virtues of thoroughbreds, both animals and humans at the third Congress, had led Aspi Moddie, a business consultant, to then remark that he was not certain whether he was present at a world congress or a stud farm.

At the fourth Congress only one speaker from the floor began to wax eloquently on the merits of thoroughbred dogs. He was immediately contradicted by rapporteur Homi Sethna who remarked that genetically pariahs are the strongest dogs.

In terms of content, the session on research in the community addressed by Dr D. Jussawalla, Dr N. Bharucha and Dr M. Karkal was probably the most relevant and best presented. But here also unfortunately the speakers were restricted to their time schedules, and other speakers from the stage and floor spoke on subjects totally unrelated to the topic. The session also saw a dramatic confrontation between the chairman Prof Khurshed Sheriar and a speaker from the floor Ms Meher Master-Moos, the feisty founder of the Mazdayasnie Monastery. Master-Moos insisted on speaking for more than the prescribed time of three minutes and when Sheriar refused to oblige, she continued to speak till finally the microphone was switched off.

There was no doubt an element of arbitrariness throughout the Congress in terms of which speaker got how much time. On several occasions speakers ignored the repeated requests of chairmen and organizers to refrain from speaking further as time was running short. As BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga told one speaker who persisted on being allowed to speak towards the end of the Congress, "People are fed up" of those who impose themselves on the audience. Kanga, at another moment, jocularly told the gathering, "Now is the moment you all have been waiting for — the last speaker."



Iran: signal service

All photographs in this issue by Homiyar Mistry.

Perhaps the most disastrous session of the Congress was the last, dealing with the summing of the subject sessions by the respective chairmen. The speeches were either too long, irrelevant or repetitious. As BPP trustee Jamsheed Guzder observed in his winding up speech "I won't tire and bore you again with a summing up of the Congress proceedings."

Guzder went on to speak about the Congress and how the emphasis had been on youth. In most of the sessions, young members of Khojeste Mistree's group, Zoroastrian Studies, spoke and earned themselves loud applause. BPP trustee Eruch Desai even went so far as to say the Congress had changed his opinion of youth. Guzder spoke of holding a youth Congress in December 1985. Whilst the youth performance was commendable, some youngsters were annoyed that opportunities were given largely to Zoroastrian Studies' members. Whilst sometimes the adulation given to youth verged on pandering, the fact remained that no subjects directly pertaining to youth were discussed. The young speakers were almost an afterthought. Even their papers were cyclostyled at the last moment instead of being printed. And the youngsters all appeared to be from Bombay.

So what then did the Congress achieve? The Congress raised community consciousness where it is most needed — in Bombay. The Congress immediately brought the glaring deficiencies of hosting such meetings to the



Antia: regrettable incident

forefront and thereby focussed on the need to hold Congresses more regularly with time schedules and guidelines spelt out. It pointed out the need for coordination on a global scale and the need for a world federation to host such events in an international spirit of give and take. The large contingent of Zoroastrians from Iran, around 150, lent an international flavour to the meet. The youthful presence of the Zoroastrian Member of Parliament Malek Pour who carried a message of greetings from Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, highlighted the strong bond between Zoroastrians in Iran and elsewhere.

The Zoroastrians from North America who had been dwarfed at the third Congress by the presence of the powerful Iranian delegation, emerged as a new force on the international community scene. But the anjumans of India, other than Bombay, barely featured at the Congress, though most of them were present. There were no reports on the status of Zoroastrians in India. The Congress mirrored and at times magnified these organizational shortcomings and lack of direction.

But despite all its drawbacks, the Congress was, in Guzder's words "truly successful." Perhaps not as a world Congress but a Bombay effort to get back into the mainstream of Zoroastrianism.

Selected papers presented at the World Zoroastrian Congress will be carried in our forthcoming issues.

Ranina reports

The youngest BPP trustee informs the Anjuman Committee of his first six months in office.

Arnavaz S. Mama

More than 500 Parsis occupied all available chairs at the Walchand Hall of the Indian Merchants' Chamber on January 24, 1985. Representing a diversity of community opinion from old guard stalwarts of the far right to young CER (Council for Economic Revival) enthusiasts, the audience comprised the Anjuman Committee which, historically, is convened only to elect a candidate to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's board of trustees and then, generally and conveniently forgotten. On this occasion they had assembled at the invitation of Homi Ranina, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's youngest trustee, who was honouring a commitment made when elected last June, to meet with the electorate every six months to enlighten them on Punchayet affairs.

Congratulating the Parsis as pioneers for having elected 37-year-old Ranina ("I face a generation gap on the BPP board" smiled Ranina) six months ahead of the national swing towards youth, the evening's maverick chairman and former BPP trustee, Shiavax Vakil, noted that hitherto the question of accountability to the community or the Anjuman Committee was held a guarded secret. Then, informing the audience of their right to question Ranina at the end of the talk, Vakil noted waggishly, "I will not say that there should be no controversial questions as happened at the big, resounding meeting a week ago."

Ranina spoke about all aspects of the BPP's working including accounts, the different funds under its command, housing and the Gibbs Road project, the amelioration of priests, repairs and the Jyoti Studio imbrolio, the allotment of flats, electoral reforms, etc.

Noting that "almost 30 percent of my time I'm spending on Punchayet affairs... I've resigned from three to four company directorships (to make the time available)" Ranina said, "Anjuman Committee members should not

merely vote at trusteeship elections but should work more actively" for community welfare and urged the audience to form "area wise committees."

Ninety-five percent of the donations to the BPP were made before 1950, said Ranina. Prodding for the reasons why donations have now dried up, he questioned, "Have the Parsis had a change of heart? People haven't become less wealthy. They have become more materialistic. They no longer pride themselves in donating for charitable purposes."

The BPP is
considering the
shifting of the
existing Godavara
agiary fire to Godrej
Baug.

Referring to his electoral promise to try and divert unutilized funds of the BPP, Ranina narrated his experience with the Punchayet's accounts department. On August 2, 1984, the day he took office, he was informed that accounts of 1981 were still under preparation. Assuming the delay to be due to the understaffed and inefficient working of the accounts department, Ranina says he "brought in two to three young accountants and paid them from my own pocket... found the system of accounting totally outdated... modern accountants could not follow the system. It is to the credit of Mr Soli Katpita of Surat who comes to the BPP to speed up accounts, that they've decided to convert to double entry book-keeping from the '83 accounting year." Ranina declared that 1981 accounts were signed on October 30, 1984; that by May '85 accounts of 1982

will be ready 1983 accounts in September '85 and 1984 accounts in November '85. Thus "in one and a half years we will complete accounts of four pending years," said Ranina.

While the general feeling is that the BPP is loaded with money, Ranina said, "Its total funds are no more than seven crores of rupees, of which five and a half crores are in liquid assets, yielding a return of 14 percent per annum, which is the maximum we can get." Noting that "money is the root problem of the Punchayet," Ranina detailed the various funds administered by the BPP (approximate amounts, some based on 1979 figures): Poor Parsis of lunatic asylum: Rs 87,300; Poor Parsis' change of air: Rs 76,100; Honorary fund to bonesetter: Rs 22,800; Victims of World War II: Rs 1,24,500; Ghambhar fund Rs 6,03,000; Technical education and setting up small scale industries: Rs 13,66,300; Poor Parsi farmers of Gujarat: Rs 12,79,100; Amelioration of priestly class: Rs 3,00,000; Construction of new buildings: Rs 30,00,000.

Thus there were only two or three funds with defunct objectives, viz the bonesetter and victims of World War II and their diversion would yield a mere one and a half lakhs of rupees, said Ranina, adding "legal fees to change the objectives may (absorb) half the amount."

While 95 percent of these donations were made before 1950, Ranina spoke of his success in getting the Income tax Commissioner's approval and the Income tax exemption under section 80 G of the Income tax Act granted to the women and children fund of the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital which exempts the donor from gift tax and allows a certain rebate under the Income tax Act. "The 80G could be obtained for the women's wing of the Parakh Dharamshala, the Golvad Home, the fund for marriage expenses of women, the fund for navjote expenses of



children, the training of priestly youth, etc." noted Ranina, appealing to his audience to be more generous and forthcoming for the support of the community.

Housing

Meeting people twice a week, Ranina says, he has, by now, met between 1,500 and 1,800 people living in old and dilapidated houses. Cautioning his audience about the "very serious housing problem in store," Ranina was emphatic that the Gibbs Road project be made to yield the maximum surplus. The project, as it now stands, offers accommodation to the well-to-do ranging from Rs 800 per sq ft in the basement to a gradually accelerated Rs 1,100 to 1,300 as one goes higher from the first to the sixth floor. The earlier price was Rs 800 per square foot for any flat. The anticipated surplus from Gibbs Road is expected to amount to six crores of rupees says Ranina, which would be enough to construct 600 flats. There is a reasonable chance to acquire three acres from Behram Baug in Andheri and if some land could still be acquired in Uran (in view of the projected hovercraft service which would reduce commuting time to less than 30 minutes across the bay, says Ranina) 500 to 600 more flats for poor and middle class Parsis could be constructed for which another 10 to 12 crores of rupees would be required. Of the 20-25 buildings projected at Godrej Baug, three buildings have received sponsorship—

one each from Shapoorji Pallonji, Ms Variava and from my family trust" says Ranina.

Explaining the causes for the delay in the Gibbs Road project implementation, Ranina related that the Task Force had suggested a lease with a developer which would later be commuted into a lumpsum to enable the Punchayet to build for the poor, but such an arrangement would be illegal as a landlord cannot accept compensation. This, according to Ranina, would entitle the government to take the following three courses—to confiscate the proceeds, to confiscate the land and to levy a penalty. They could even jail the trustees, he noted. Ranina says, "I don't mind going to jail, but the land should not be taken away." Eventually the BPP sought and accepted Nani Palkhivala's legal opinion—to build and sell flats at Gibbs Road and use the profits for the construction at Godrej Baug, Panthaky Baug etc, as part of a composite scheme and thus free of tax liability. "I had suggested this in 1982," noted Ranina "but I was overruled."

Concurrently, the BPP trustees examined the possibility of selling the Gibbs Road land in toto. They had received an offer of Rs 700 per sq ft from Tata Housing and another from a Middle East consulate, noted Ranina. The trust deeds of 1869 however stipulated, "We are purchasing this land so that no non-Parsi shall have access to Doongerwadi," quoted Ranina and re-

ferring to a suggestion to move the court to amend the clause said, "The point is whatever our personal views, we cannot brush aside these views. This land is for the use and benefit of the Parsi community. In December it was decided we cannot sell the land."

"Last Tuesday it was decided to offer flats to the public at Rs 1,100 to 1,300 per sq ft. A flat of 1000 sq ft carpet area will cost between Rs 12,87,000 and Rs 15,21,000. When you buy, remember, every flat will generate sufficient surplus to construct seven to ten flats for the poor. The Gibbs Road flats are meant for the maximum possible profit," added Ranina. Tenders from prospective builders have already been invited and will be opened by mid February and "the best possible person will be awarded (the contract)" noted Ranina. Municipal permission has already been secured.

Ten to 12 lakhs of rupees had to be deposited with the municipality before getting their okay for the plans for the M and P plots of Godrej Baug; but with representation, the deposit has now been reduced to Rs 20,000, said Ranina, promising construction activity before the monsoon. "Publicly acknowledging with gratitude what the Godrej family and Foundation has been doing for the Parsi community," Ranina noted that the Godrej Foundation will get the right of allotment to the extent of the difference between the market price of construction and the actual price of construction, which may be considered as Godrej's donation.

The 160 flats of 500 sq ft at Bharucha Baug, Andheri west, will also be sold at less than market price but will yield one and a half crores of rupees for building at Panthaky Baug in Andheri east. The snag at Panthaky Baug is said to be the creation of Pestonji Zilla who, Ranina noted, has allegedly sold part of the land to Mittal builders.

**For our expansion and diversification plans
We are looking for
Qualified Engineers in Senior Positions
With a Wide Experience in R & D and
Scientific Studies**

**Pioneers in the field of
Scanning Electron Microscopy
Quantimet Image Analysis
III-V Semiconductor Pullers**

**Also in the fields of
Electron Beam Lithography
Automatic VLSI & LSI Circuit Fault Locators
Equipment for Epitaxy, Cutting & Polishing**

JNM Systems & Services Pvt Ltd

a member of the JNM Group



You can measure our contribution by your benefits

**P.O. Box 37, Bombay Pune Road, Kasarwadi,
Poona 411 034.**

A boundary wall needs to be constructed at Panthaky Baug for which the Punchayet has allocated Rs 4,84,000 but "the municipality has yet to demarcate the boundary which job it has been putting off month after month."

Repairs

Having emphasized repairs in his manifesto, Ranina wanted to start with the job but found that there is no portfolio in the Punchayet for repairs. Having persuaded the BPP chairman to start a new portfolio, Ranina finds that Phiroze Davar, a retired engineer

"We were told that the types of illnesses your community suffers from are not enough to qualify a medical student."

looking after the job, is seriously overworked. "There are 200 and odd buildings in our possession," says Ranina "and so I'm trying to get another engineer so that one has south Bombay and the other has north Bombay." Despite the difficulty of finding a capable person "on the type of salary we offer," Ranina is confident of finding a suitable incumbent.

Meanwhile work has been sanctioned for Building No. 6 at Khareghat Colony with 50 percent contribution from the tenants and Rs 4,63,000 have been sanctioned for repairs at Panthaky Baug.

At Navroze Baug, No Objection Certificates have been received from the repairs board and repairs at the A and F blocks are already in progress. We shall get to the others as soon as we get money from the Jyoti Studio land, said Ranina.

Jyoti Studio

Noting emphatically that it is not true that Neville Wadia wanted to favour developer N.L. Mehta, Ranina contended that the Jyoti Studio land adjacent to Ness Baug, being a public trust under the Wadia management, had to ask for offers and accept the highest received: Rs 72 lakhs for one arm of the L-shaped property. It was a unanimous decision of the Wadia manage-

ment, ratified by the BPP and in February 1982, the Charity Commissioner had approved the sale. When Mehta started delaying the payment (of Rs 64.8 lakhs balance—earnest money Rs 7.2 lakhs had been paid at the outset), the BPP decided to enter into negotiations and force Mehta to give the money. Mehta wanted the second half of the property for an additional 18 lakhs of rupees and the matter was left to BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder by a decision of the board which stipulated that eight percent interest was not acceptable and instructed Guzder to negotiate a higher rate of interest, said Ranina and quoted Guzder's note of February '83 according to which half the amount would be paid by Mehta by March '83, and the balance by June '83.

At further negotiations on March 16, 1983, Mehta stipulated that payment would be made only after the sale of the second plot of land was approved by the Charity Commissioner, said Ranina and noted, "To date we have not received the money. The Charity Commissioner has refused to sanction the second deal" and Mehta has now agreed to give 14 percent rate of interest. "Now consent terms are being finalized. We hope N.L. Mehta will pay up with 14 percent interest from the date when he was liable to pay."

As soon as the money comes in, all Wadia Baugs' repairs will be undertaken, says Ranina, adding "In the meanwhile, residents of Cusrow Baug are going ahead with repairs and the Wadia management has agreed to reimburse them when the Mehta amount comes in."

Priests

"We are the only community who have not looked after our priests," says Ranina adding that the BPP scheme is woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the priestly class. Ranina pleaded for a measure of social security for them with a decent commercial wage of Rs 2,000 per month and the financial wherewithal to accomplish it. Ranina estimates the need of an additional fund of one crore of rupees as against the BPP's corpus of three and a half lakhs under this head and the Cama Institute's 30 lakhs plus three lakhs per month which it will be receiving from Tata Housing.

The time has come for average individuals of the community to donate a

percentage of net income, he said, repeating a plea he made before his election last May (*Parsiana* June '84). Thus, if 5,000 Parsis would undertake to pay an average of Rs 50 per month for three years, a sizable corpus of one crore of rupees would enable the maintenance of 125 priests, he said.

Flat allotment

Referring to the BPP's recently adopted merit rating system which categorizes applications under various heads with credit points (eg engaged couples waiting for accommodation to marry, married couples where the wife is of child-bearing age, house collapse, living in zoppadpattis or morally undesirable areas, etc) as "the only scientific way in which we can make some assessment of a person's need for accommodation," Ranina says since July '84 there has been no allotment out of turn. "Just because someone comes and pesters you, do you have to take up his case?" asks Ranina and notes

"The CER should have a candidate of (its) own... and if ... Minoo Shroff is put up, we shall not oppose him."

that, as of the December 3 meeting of the BPP's board of trustees, it has been decided that even "if a trustee gives the directive that a case be put up, it should not be put up and may only be taken up when the particular category is taken up for discussion."

Trusteeship elections

Noting that Naoroji Godrej was elected trustee of the BPP on January 22 when no other nomination was filed to challenge his candidature, Ranina touched upon the question of BPP trustee and Bombay's municipal administrator Jamsheed Kanga resigning his trusteeship. According to the community grapevine he intends to do so because his professional duties do not leave him enough time to attend to Punchayet matters. "Jamsheed Kanga has helped the Punchayet in his own way and personally, I hope he will not

"BPP's total funds are no more than seven crores of rupees, of which five and a half crores are in liquid assets"

resign," said Ranina. Then added, "Let us assume that Kanga resigns, then the CER should put up its own candidate. I should like to say publicly that the CER should have a candidate from their own coterie of men and if someone like Minoo Shroff is put up, we shall not oppose him."

Proposed developments

Questioned about the proposal to institute a medical college at the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, Ranina acknowledged that the point had been considered but "we were told that the types of illnesses your community suffers from are not enough to qualify a student." The matter was still being looked into, said Ranina.

Since Godrej Baug will eventually consist of 498 flats, an agiary there made a lot of sense and Ranina noted that the BPP was considering the shifting of the existing Godavara Agiary fire there. (The Godavara Agiary is the only adaran under BPP control, the entry to which being denied to Ms R.D. Tata sparked off the Parsi Punchayet case of 1903.) The development of the present site of the Godavara Agiary by leasing part of the area to a bank would not only enable the BPP to at last have its own office (hitherto they have been licencees of the Jejeebhoy Benevolent Fund) but help to defray the cost of construction of the new adaran at Godrej Baug, said Ranina.

Questioned about the electoral scheme which the trustees are due to submit to the High Court by March 15, Ranina agreed with a suggestion from the audience that the reforms should be discussed with the community before submitting the scheme to the High Court. The official BPP stand has been to submit the scheme and let the High Court call for objections, he noted.

Giving the BPP staff a special pat on the back, Ranina noted that when a trustee tries to understand their problem, they cooperate. They have been

granted a straight increase of Rs 180 a month together with medical benefits and an eight hour day, said Ranina and expressed the sentiment that under the guidance of chief executive Russey Anklesaria—"a very competent man"—the BPP should improve. Vakil, however, commented that some of the staff behave as though they were the trustees!

The BPP trustees had decided on September 25 to hold an Anjuman Committee meeting on November 25, said Ranina. Then, on November 13, the Jyoti Studio controversy being in

the air, the trustees did not want to face the public. Ranina says when he told his co-trustees that he would be going ahead with his own meeting, they made a plea for unity. "But we can't be united to deceive the community," says Ranina.

Ranina said his critics averred that there is "a lot of dissension in the Parsi Punchayet since Ranina has come." But Ranina counters, "I do not believe that we must speak with one voice. You elected me because you knew I would dissent and not bow down to any pressure."

ALMOAYYED INTERNATIONAL GROUP BAHRAIN

The leading computer company of the Middle East
now with subsidiaries in UK

REQUIRES COMPUTER SALES EXECUTIVES (Ref. AC/CSE)

Management or Commerce Graduates willing to travel
in the GULF to promote the most advanced
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM "PROFIT"

5 years experience with proven track record
in the commercial sector selling computer systems

THE CANDIDATE WOULD BE:

- willing to earn more than IRs. 30,000 a month
- 30 - 35 years of age
- desire to spend not less than 5 years with the company
- capable of working in multinational environment
- preferably married with no children
- must travel on short notice to demonstrate the product

The selected candidate shall be based in **BAHRAIN**.
The package shall permit the earnings in excess
of IRs. 3.5 Lacs a year.

apply in confidence with detailed CV, accompanied by
certificates, testimonials, references, passport size photograph
& copy of valid passport to:

**Pervin Nirumvala
Manager
Administration & Personnel
P.O. Box 26259, Manama, Bahrain.**

For
**Individual
Or Bulk
Requirements**

**Fine Paintings,
Jewelry
& Handicrafts**

Rajasthani Art Gallery
Room 9, Abbas Building
Ground floor
35, Mereweather Road
(Near Taj Hotel)
Colaba
Bombay 400 039
Phone 240031

BPP electoral reform proposals

Constituency-wise voting, parity between the elected voters and the donors before a trustee election, a seven-year term for trustees instead of the present 10, are the highlights of the electoral reform scheme to be presented by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet to the Bombay High Court on March 15, 1985, it is learnt.

The A, C, D, E and F registers are to be scrapped and in their place will be a General Register and a Donors Register. Names will be transferred from the present registers to the new ones. Ten percent of the seats from the general register will be reserved for graduates. For new entrants to the Donors Register, the amount to be donated has been raised from Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,500.

As in the Municipal and other elections, voting will be on a constituency basis with Parsis voting for candidates to represent their areas.

The Anjuman Committee elections will be held every seven years as at pre-

sent, but the last date for registration of voters prior to the election, has been advanced from December 31 to November 30.

One hundred and twenty days before any election of a trustee, the General Register and the Donors Register will be brought on par with each other. This will be done by including in the anjuman committee "those persons who stood next in the number of votes (received), to the last candidate declared elected at the immediately preceding general election."

The deposit for a person contesting as a trustee has been set at Rs 500 and if the candidate gets less than 50 votes, the deposit would be forfeited.

The reforms will be presented to the High Court which will then invite suggestions, recommendations and so on from the public. After going through the various proposals, the High Court will decide which reforms are to be incorporated.

For a liberal point of view subscribe to **KAISER-E-HIND**

Fill out the application form and mail along with your payment to Kaiser-E-Hind, 300 Perin Nariman Street, Fort, Bombay-400 001.

Annual Subscription Rs.15. Cheques to be made in favour of Kaiser-E-Hind. Add Rs.4 for outstation cheques.

Send me

- ☐ 2 year subscription for Rs.25
☐ Cheque enclosed (sub + Rs.4)
☐ Send first issue by V.P.P.

- ☐ 1 year subscription for Rs.15
☐ Money order sent

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

PIN CODE

STATE AND COUNTRY

"Everyone
is a potential winner.

Some people
are disguised
as losers.

Don't let
their appearances
fool you."

— Kenneth Blanchard
Spencer Johnson

THERMAX PRIVATE LIMITED, THERMAX HOUSE,
4 BOMBAY-PUNE ROAD, SHIVAJINAGAR, PUNE 411 005



'Devotion to public good'

Arnavaz S. Mama

"From Dadabhai to Manekshaw, from the beginning of the struggle for freedom... the results of that freedom... your influence has been such despite your small numbers."

Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma, Governor of Andhra Pradesh, complimented the community handsomely as the two-day deliberations of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India wound up with an At Home to the Governor in the spacious Eduljee Chinoy Pavilion of the Parsi Dharamshala in Secunderabad:

"You provided the first Member of (the British) Parliament... *Swaraj* was first used by the Parsi president of the (Indian National) Congress. Sometimes one word galvanizes people. That one word changed the whole complexion of the freedom struggle. One cannot and should not forget the great pioneering work done in India's industrialization. (So what if) the first steel plant was only half a million tonnes."

"In 1969 I was in the Federal Republic of Germany and visited the Mercedes factory. They said with the Tatas they'd go into any collaboration..."

The Governor was introduced by Bejan Dittia whose article entitled *Parsis' battle for survival*, realistically assessing community problems, had appeared in the Secunderabad morning *Newstime* that day. Referring to Dittia's article, the Governor said, "It disappointed me — because in my mind Parsis are equated with people with determination, the grit and determination to get over whatever difficulties there may be... the grit which made you reestablish yourselves is hereditary... when you came from Iran, things could not have been easy here. Your forefathers got over them... You adjusted yourselves with the time... that's what took you up fast... good things should not be given up. The feeling that Parsis cannot be poor should be true."

According to Sharma, the Tower of Silence is based on the concept that "one must be useful to the end. I may

be wrong, but that's the idea in my mind..."

"There should be more articles, more writing about Zoroastrianism. When something is not known, all sorts of wild things are talked about... There is nothing wrong in a discussion on why a person cannot be a Parsi. If there is a large number of non-Parsi Zoroastrians, the problem of marriage, etc gets solved..."

"Somebody was there in Kashmir to find the original Aryan. If he had come to Bombay he would have found those people who had tried to keep up the purity of blood..."

"Your religion, in one sentence," concluded the Governor, "is devotion to public good — from birth to death, in your case even after death."

Initially, while responding to the Governor and later while speaking in Gujarati to the assembled Parsis after the Governor had departed, Dr Aspi Golwalla, chairman of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India referred to the conversation he had had with the late Prime Minister regarding the Adoption Bill when, he reported, Ms Gandhi had remarked, "Why can't such a small community speak with one voice?" "And that," said Golwalla, "is what the Federation is all about," concluding with the fervent hope "*Ke Parsioma ekdum unity ave* (that Parsis be totally united)."

The Parsis at Nizam's Court

"Administration, to be strong and efficient, needs a cadre of people who have insight, dedication, authority and the freedom to act." Professor Polly Chenoy, Ph.D. and professor of English was speaking on "The contribution of the Parsis to the administration of the Asaf-Jahi dynasty" at the Eduljee Chinoy Pavilion of the Parsi Dharamshala in Secunderabad on October 28, 1984. Chenoy is said to be working on a mimeograph on the Parsis in Nizam's Hyderabad.

Harkening to 1850, Chenoy noted that Salar Jung I was aware of the need for able, honest, dedicated officers and attracted some of the best Parsis who, through 19th and 20th century Hyder-

abad, created an unbroken record of trust and responsibility. The combined knowledge of English and Persian enabled the Parsis of that era to proliferate in all departments of government—the mint, judiciary, post office, etc. Holding themselves aloof from politics and intrigue, some even earned the gratitude of the masses by standing up to cruel officers, said Chenoy.

Referring to the "peace, prosperity and confidence enjoyed by Parsis under the Nizam," Chenoy spoke of



Chenoy: unbroken record of trust

Faredun Ul Mulk Bahadur, the eldest son of Jamshedji Vatcha who worked with deep involvement bringing wasteland under cultivation, became commissioner in 1884 and then private secretary to Salar Jung II. Holding the interest of the ruler, the state and the minister above all else, such was Faredun's individuality that it impressed many a visitor to the court of the Nizam, said Chenoy. She spoke of Mulla Kavas, an astrologer of great skill and accuracy and though much is not known about his life in Hyderabad, the annals reveal that the King of Iran had received him with great respect and advised him to stay in Iran, but that Mulla Kavas returned to Bombay to consecrate the Dadysett Atash Bahram. There was Jamshedji Munshi who became the minister's special adviser but left under a cloud of disfavour. One of his two sons became a scholar of English whose treatise "*My defense* was a brilliant piece of legal conception and (the family name) was completely exonerated," said Chenoy.

Chenoy spoke of Kaikobad Munshi, a renowned Persian scholar, Vicaji and

Pestonji Meherji, Pestonji Chenoy who was the first Indian to be Master of the Mint, and a host of others who by their personal dignity, courage and loyalty earned for the community a special place in Hyderabad affection.

Minority safeguards vs integration

The fact that the Parsi population declined by 20 percent in 20 years indicates that the community does not feel very confident today, noted Dr Malla Reddy, dean of the College of Education, Osmania University, addressing the executive committee members of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, on the problem of minorities with regard to alienation, integration and identity, at the Eduljee Chinoy Pavilion of the Parsi Dharamshala, Secunderabad, on October 27, 1984.

The four major characteristics of minority communities, stated Reddy, are: powerlessness, a belief that the minority cannot alter the existing systems; meaninglessness, an individual feeling that his work has no value apart from the money it may earn him; isolation, the belief that the minority's customs and beliefs are different from those of the majority and therefore the feeling of social segregation; and finally alienation, which evokes a feeling of distance from, and antagonism towards, the majority community.

Historically, the minorities had no place in politics until the 17th century, said Reddy. Earlier, religious states backed with armed might ruled the world. The opposition by those who resisted and sought to maintain their own place was referred to as the 'rebelliousness of tribal groups.' However, in the 17th and 18th centuries, political philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau established the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity of men and challenged the divine right of kings. With the rights of the individual, arrived the concept of nationalism, and the right of people to govern themselves within national boundaries.

With the rise of nationalism arose the issue of the rights of different smaller groups — the minorities.

Minorities within a nation can be of five types: religious, linguistic, racial, tribal or immigrant.

While ethnic minorities were a uni-

versal phenomenon, Reddy said, "They differed not only in terms of size but in the degree of discrimination they faced." Minorities could be so totally oppressed that individuals and groups acquired a suicidal bent; or there was withdrawal from the mainstream of life; or protest behaviour bordering on rebellion.

Reddy referred to the constitutional safeguards guaranteeing the privileges of the minorities and noted that often these become counter-productive when the minority views them with a vested

When minorities
adopt the language,
dress and
environmental
patterns of the
majority, as the
Parsis did in
Gujarat... they
ensure an integrated
society.

interest. For example, when a minority group conforms to the constitutional definition of backwardness or poverty, merely to claim privileges, which in open competition it would be unable to acquire, the majority community becomes angry and envious. These emotions, when played upon by demagogues, eventually lead to unpleasant situations. Another example is that of the special marriage laws for the

Muslims. If a Hindu becomes a Muslim, says Reddy, his earlier marriage stands annulled. Thus, a minority privilege becomes an indirect temptation to convert to another religion. When religious and racial minorities adopt the language, dress and environmental patterns of the majority among whom they dwell, as the Parsis did in Gujarat and the Hindus did in Nizam's Hyderabad, they ensured an integrated, harmonious, tension-free society without losing their identity, noted Reddy.

While festivals and rituals can become sources of friction, Reddy commended the model of village celebration where all communities participate at functions like a marriage because everybody is required to contribute to its success—the village tailor, cobbler, weaver and sweetmeat maker, among others, are involved in the celebration.

Noting that "we have done nothing at the school level for the integration of people," Reddy described how prejudices are perpetuated at the family level. Children from a tender age hear their parents and family elders ridiculing the beliefs of other communities or reliving again and again some martyrdom suffered by the community's forebears, he said. This planting and fanning of antagonism in the youth against others added to the general level of intolerance which mischief makers always exploit, he said.

At the intellectual level, Reddy says, school curriculum should be revised so that children acquire some knowledge of all religions. "It is absence of knowledge that leads to hatred," he said. He also objected to the dictum that morals emerge from religion. "People should not only profess but practise secular values," he said.



**The Friendly Gift Shop for
handicrafts, festive gifts and
Zoroastrian artefacts**

Bombay Swadeshi Stores Ltd

Sir P.M. Road, Bombay 400 001

Tel: 253443 & 252730

Different strokes

The community's lament that the young do not heed the wisdom of their elders could be overcome if parents reasoned with their young instead of dictating to them.

Addressing the executive council delegates of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India at the Eduljee Chinoy Pavilion, Dr Parameswar, dean of the faculty of Social Sciences, Osmania University, spoke about 'Parents and Youth' with wit and verve.

Placing the ball squarely in the parents' court, Parameswar said, "Effectiveness of the parent depends on the ability to communicate. Grow with the child so you comprehend him and he understands you. Once he realizes you are not autocratic, you gain credibility. Make small sacrifices and come-downs. Inability on our part to make small adjustments means that psychologically we lose them. The responsibility rests with parents."

Describing how the elder generation had grown up in "a world which was relatively stable if not stagnant... we

went through life almost like a horse with blinkers on... we were not called upon to make decisions. Many of us did not know where we were going until we arrived," Parameswar noted.

Each generation makes blunders, Parameswar continued. However, because of the easy pace of earlier life and the relative simplicity of society then, the actions of earlier generations did not have the impact that is evident today. Whereas life had remained unchanged for generations and centuries, contemporary existence changes daily, he said. Nor is the change limited to a single direction. Today's social problems may be compared to the problems of trigonometry; while the problems of earlier generations were comparable to the problems of simple arithmetic, Parameswar implied.

Thanks too, to the mass media, youth everywhere is aware of the material progress of developed societies but is psychologically unable to counter the frustration of not being able to realize it personally, said Parameswar. "The marketing culture opens up temptations. When we were given Rs 100 we promptly handed over the money to

our parents who saved it (It was unthinkable then, to spend so much money). Given Rs 100, today's child has Rs 500 worth of things to buy. The decisions are taken by the advertiser. My ignorance as an elder, my inability to understand," fouls the relationship with youth, declared Parameswar.

Referring to the elder generation's often unbending attitude and unwillingness to learn anything new, Parameswar commented, "Though living together," the older and the younger generations seem to be inhabiting "two different worlds." They speak different languages, operate on different wavelengths that run parallel and never meet, he said. The parent is a fossil, while the child lives in the future. The young man almost speaks "the language of his grandson," notes Parameswar.

As parents we take up one of the three attitudes: We dogmatically oppose and put down the child or we abdicate authority, letting the child do what he wants, referring to him as a 'gone case' or we appease by surrendering. Parameswar noted that parents generally adopt one of these three atti-

LET'S BUILD THEM TOGETHER!

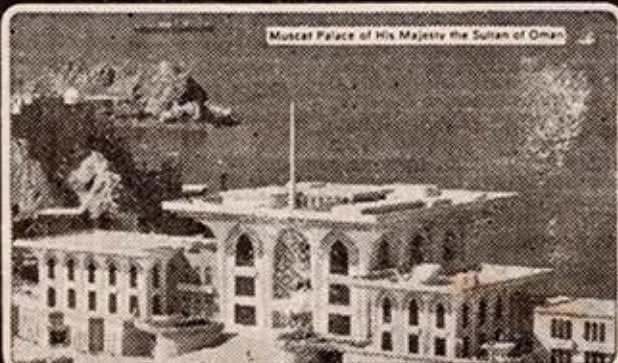
Whether it's a five-star hotel, a Sultan's Palace, a hospital, a chemical factory, a fertiliser plant or a housing project—we have the expertise and experience—to handle any turn-key construction project anywhere in the world. Over the last 100 years we have not only pioneered the construction industry in our country but spread our wings to Muscat and the Middle East—where against competition from the best construction companies, we won the contract

for putting up the imposing Muscat Palace complex of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman—and completed it in time.

The multiplicity of projects carried out by us over several decades has resulted in the building up of expertise in numerous aspects of the construction industry. We proudly offer this expertise for any construction project and proposals for joint ventures would be welcome.

Taj-Intercontinental Hotel
—Bombay

Oberoi-Sheraton Hotel
—Bombay



Muscat Palace of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman

SP

SHAPOORJI PALLONJI & CO. (PVT.) LTD.

International Operations Division,
Engineering & Construction Contractors,
New India Centre, 17 Cooperage Road,
Bombay 400 039 India

tudes or a combination of them. None of these attitudes is rational, he added.

Citing the example of the peculiar tattered pants that today's young men prefer, Parameswar noted that the boy buys a good pant out of respect to his parents, then disfigures it to fit the culture of his group. The parent must understand and accept the pressures that cause this behaviour, says Parameswar.

On drug addiction he noted that poor and rich children take to drugs, but their reasons are different. In the upper class prevails a state of disgust with the status quo, the drugs becoming an avenue of escape. The lower class views drugs as a way of catching up with the rich. The poor boy thus takes to drugs to ape the rich, hoping that being addicts together will bridge the gulf between his colleagues' wealth and his own poverty. Hence, in the case of the poor child, education is enough, whereas the rich child requires counselling, he noted.

Refusing to advocate permissiveness, Parameswar advised "rapport with the child instead of dictating to him; (use) influence rather than authority."

In the discussion which followed, BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga noted "We never questioned the respect due to the elders. Are leaders of society now setting bad examples?" Parameswar replied: "Not only have models changed, processes of responding have changed. Today's young are far more critical."

When Adeshir Batliwala of Calcutta questioned why youth brought up in respectable families do not live up to the family tradition, Parameswar explained "Values have changed. Today, what is profitable is respectable. What is traditionally respectable is not profitable. Now respectability is a purchasable commodity; to you respectability is a sacred heritage."

"On the question of attitude, choice, decisions, the genetic factor has no role...it is entirely the environment. Then, expanding on the theme, Parameswar spoke of the home today being "not a home but a hostel or even an orphanage. The parental attitude is that the school will take care of my child." There is a tendency to pass on the buck.

Introducing a spark of male chauvinism, Federation secretary Keki Gandhi noted mock seriously, "Once

everyone listened to the male. That dominance is now no more..." Parameswar smiled compassionately, "They kept us under that illusion!"

Dr Malla Reddy, dean of the College of Education, who had sat in on the talk, provided an additional facet to the perplexing change in social values.

My ignorance as an elder, my inability to understand, fouls the relationship with youth.

There is "always a link between technology and the value system," he said. "We have acquired new technology and new institutions but our values have not changed. Youth looks upon this as hypocrisy."

Federation vice-president Shrivastav Nargolwala disagreed, noting "It's not important what you say to the child; it's the example you set... human life, human relations are the same...my grandmother was a better psychologist than Parameswar."

Taking Nargolwala's comments within his stride, Parameswar countered, "But grandmothers are not available, so you have to be satisfied with Parameswar!"

Matching the peg to the hole

"Is career planning the responsibility of parents, schools or government?" Dr M.A. Aleem of the Department of Public Administration, Osmania University, posed the question to the executive council members of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India assembled at the Parsi Dharamshala, Secunderabad.

Noting that graduates from Indian universities do not find it easy to gain employment in trade, industry and government, Aleem noted that "Our education is not management or job oriented. Elsewhere professionalism is instilled early into education." In India, despite the trend towards planning for development, career planning is still unpractised, said Aleem.

Only the few educated families practised career planning, Aleem noted. In

the majority of cases, whatever is in vogue is uncritically accepted. "Parents rarely bother about the curriculum chosen," he said, and contrasted that attitude with the practice in Japan where careers are planned from the kindergarten stage and records of three and four-year-old children are maintained. The aptitudes and attitudes of such young children are tested by their reaction to toys and instruments. "It's a costly affair," said Aleem, "K.G. teachers there are paid more than professors here." Moreover, there was much waste of talent in India due to periodic underestimation and overestimation of jobs. Then too, because there is no employment in sight, the 75 to 80 percent students who stay free in hostels keep taking courses, in order to avail of the hostel's shelter in an uncertain environment.

Asking "How do you pinpoint talent?" Aleem suggested that parents and children should alike cultivate the habit of seeking guidance if a child is not doing well in a particular subject. "Take him to a psychologist... find out what is the cause," he advised.

Referring to parents who insist on their children following a vocation which may be unsuitable or even disliked by the child, Aleem suggested that a child's daydreams are a good indication of the sort of work he finds genuinely interesting. Information on education should also be actively sought, he said. Unless the habit of consulting guidance bureaux is cultivated, children remain ignorant of the opportunities in store for them.

Dr Russi Anklesaria of Calcutta, agreeing with Aleem on the havoc caused by ignorant and overbearing parents noted, "Many parents force their children to be round pegs in square holes."

Reports of five Federation guest speakers written by Arnavaz S. Mama.

CORRIGENDUM

Ms Meher Contractor is presently vice-president of Union Internationale de la Marionnette and not president, as was mentioned in *Parsiana*, August 1984. The error is regretted.

The judge and I

Bejan Daruwalla

"The only honest resignation in the Bhutto case" said the Karachi lawyers of Judge Dorab Patel. Of course I had read about him in our Indian papers during Bhutto's trial. What sort of man was this judge? Did he grant an interview? The last I had heard was that he had refused politely but firmly, an interview to a BBC correspondent. If the BBC had failed what chance had an Indian astrologer?

I checked up my own horoscope and concluded that Dorab had a date with Daruwalla! I told my friend Aziz Munshi, deputy attorney general of Pakistan about it. Aziz laughed outright. "My God, Bejan, you want to enter the tiger's den!" "With your help, Aziz!" At that Aziz laughed a little more, winked, and a week later, I was at "The Towers," a huge, sprawling place, the residence of the mighty man.

"I hope sir, 'The Towers' have nothing in common with our Parsi Towers of Silence" I said as an opening gambit. For a brief moment a smile flitted about Justice Patel's lips and then he was his usual, ram-rod straight, sprightly, self.

I guessed that he was in his late 50s,

very straight, eyes, pools of darkness and sorrow and knowledge and wisdom, a fine nose, clear voice, impeccable English, legs crossed, as he sat on the main sofa, in his huge hall, furniture definitely period, old-fashioned, no photos and certainly no TV (Books and he, it turned out were company enough). He was a bachelor, exceptionally self-reliant.

He closed his palms, interlaced his fingers in an attitude of prayer, placed his chin on it, and waited for me to talk with the patience of an alligator.

Yes, I was a bit unnerved. So was Aziz. We looked mutely and I tried this foray, "Renovation, decoration, alteration, or even a complete sale of The Towers is possible, Sir." He trained his eyes on me and asked, "I take it that this is a prediction, Daruwalla!" "Yes sir." "Well, maybe, you are not wide off the mark" he said and smiled. That broke the ice.

"I assure you, sir, Aziz did not tell me about it!" I blurted.

"He couldn't have. Nobody knows about it. I have just been toying with the idea. So, no need to defend yourself, Daruwalla!"

Though the words were uttered rather sternly, I again saw the lips move with slight mischief. Justice Sahab was pleased with the prediction.

I plunged in the icy waters of dialogue straightaway, "Sir, we in India are completely aware that you resigned in the Bhutto case, rather than be a party to his hanging. Allow me to say, sir, that it was a brave thing to do!"

"Not brave, just normal and proper. By my lights and conscience, there was not enough evidence, on this particular issue, to merit the hanging of Bhutto. That's all."

"It must have caused a sensation, sir!"

"That I don't know, but let me state in all fairness, that the very next day, President Zia called me to dinner."

"That means no bad blood, sir" I said.

Aziz realised that I was going too far, too fast and gently said, "We would all appreciate tea!" And it was tea time. After that, it was time to go.

*Reprinted from "A Kiss for Karat (I)chi,"
Sunday Mid-day, March 18, 1984.*

E.D.P. CONCEPTS & COBOL PROGRAMMING

Graduates only
Project work on computer
Immediate jobs for two
best students per batch

COMPUTER EXPOSURE & BASIC PROGRAMMING

Career oriented vacation courses
for undergraduates & SSC Students
Also suited for already employed people seeking
Computer concepts

Small batches • Personalised attention • More computer time

Course conducted in Association with
Bombay Data Base Management Services Pvt. Ltd.

For Details Contact

Sir J.J. College of Commerce

14, Nanabhoy Lane Bombay 400 023 Phone: 251185
Course commencing March 4, 1985

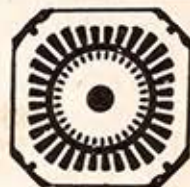
**Working to fulfil the demands of today.
Driving hard to meet the challenges of
tomorrow.**



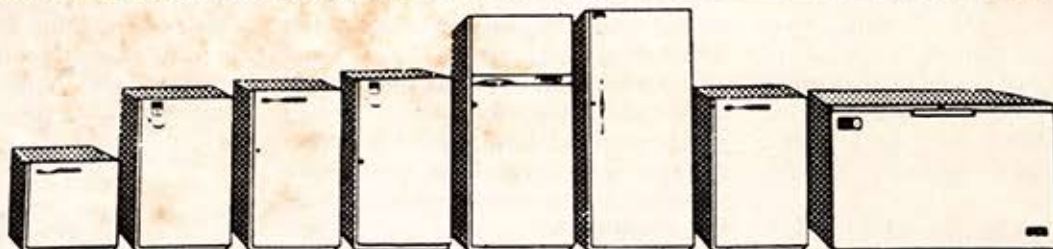
**CASH REGISTER
DIVISION**
(Electro-Mechanical &
Electronic)



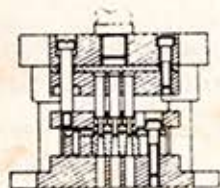
**AUTOMOTIVE
DIVISION**



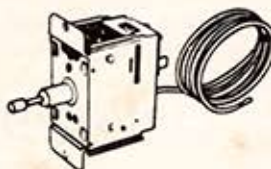
**LAMINATION
DIVISION**
(Electrical Motors &
Stampings)



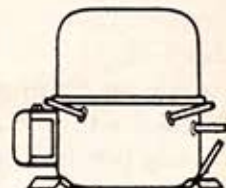
REFRIGERATION DIVISION
(Refrigerators & Deep Freezers)



**CENTRALISED
TOOL ROOM DIVISION**
(Sophisticated Tools,
Dies and Fixtures)



**CONTROLS
DIVISION**



**COMPRESSOR
DIVISION**

Kelvinator
of India Limited

Mutual-2763