

HAVE OUR LEADERS ANY SELF-RESPECT?

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While the Government of India is prohibiting the entry into that country of American Missionaries for “politically influencing” the people under the guise of educationists and social workers, our Government appears to welcome them indiscriminately when they come to us for the purpose of splitting up our society and drawing our people away from their loyalty to the country. At a recent College dinner which had more politics in it than education - politics of the American brand - the Prime Minister is reported to have said, **“The pity of our educational system is that we cannot get teachers of the calibre of the American Missionaries”**.

This reminds me of the Vatican-inspired Petain who when France was about to fall before Hitler’s onslaught wanted a defeat for the regeneration of France. Even so, today we salute not Petain but Winston Churchill who, when his country stood up all alone to bear the brunt of the Second World War, called for “blood, toil, sweat and tears” of his people.

If our new-found freedom cannot produce initiative, manliness and self-reliance in all spheres of life, it has no meaning for us. To be sure, we have them in plenty, but Government gives them no outlet. Men of first-rate ability sulk in their tents, while armies of foreign experts - all mediocrities - pass by just to mess up things and go back.

The dominance of foreign experts and the neglect of local talents are due to various circumstances in which we are placed. The colonial ruler never wanted of his own choice to give us freedom. As a matter of fact, with the idea of crushing any attempt on the part of our people to wrest freedom, the colonial ruler set up, in addition to the military army of occupation, a far more powerful “civil army and garrison every where”, who would be ever so loyal to him, but definitely hostile to the people at large. This civil army and garrison is still with us, with the same characteristics and with the same outlook as it had under the British. Perhaps the Prime Minister has unwittingly got into its grip.

How else can you account for a foreign national declaring in the Prime Minister’s presence that he is sick of hearing of Sinhalese and Tamil nationalism - referring, presumably, to the move for giving their rightful place to the national languages? It is well for our foreign guests to remember that we do not care to know their views on so delicate and intimate a question of ours as the language problem which concerns us alone. How else, I ask, can you account for a Supreme Court Judge, well-known as an exponent of ball-room dancing for University Students, calling Swabhasa an Iron Curtain. If he is one with the people, he should know that Swabhasa, far from being so, will definitely lift the already-existing Iron Curtain which has for Centuries masked the unholy alliance our westernised section have had with the foreign ruler to share power and privilege at the

expense of their fellow-countrymen.

It is high time that our leaders realised that the fulfilment of our national destiny depends on the inner capacities of our own people and not our going round the world with the begging-bowl.