

into the hands of Mr. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, my sayings and doings ran athwart his policy. I was no favourite with him and figured frequently in his columns as a Servant of India whose services India could do without. This Babylonian exile, however, was not everlasting. I recall with gratitude many a pat on the back which betokened my restoration to



S. Rangaswami

grace and in particular an indignant protest against the persistent abuse of which I was victim at the hands of Justice, then alive, and spitting fire and brim-stone."

While S. Rangaswami wielded a pen that scorched paper, K. Srinivasan, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's son, attended to management, playing more and more of a major role as his father's health deteriorated in the early 1920s. He teamed with Rangaswami and his brother, K. Gopalan, to turn the paper into a financial success. Together they remodelled the methods of production and circulation. A battery of Linotype machines and a new high-speed rotary printing machine were in place by 1921. Space for 'Commercial', 'Financial' and 'Sporting' features was increased. And so were wages for all — which were supplemented by a Provident Fund. An even faster rotary machine capable of printing 30,000 copies an hour was ordered.

Together they introduced numerous entertaining features to brighten the paper. In the mid-1920s, *The Hindu* introduced cartoons, a full picture page, a weekly woman's page, short stories and humorous skits aplenty — and the paper included among its exclusive contributors Jawaharlal Nehru, Krishna Menon, Subhas Chandra Bose and a galaxy of writers from abroad introduced through syndicated services. It published wedding photographs, pictures of arrivals and departures (this exposure becoming a status symbol), of social functions and entertainments, of successful persons and new appointees. It was a paper as game to publish a whole page of pictures of Governor Lord Goschen's daughter's Madras wedding as it was to publish pictures of the ex-Maharaja of Indore and his American fiancée as well as columns of reports on their international romance. It was a natural and successful partnership that lasted until Rangaswami's untimely death in 1926 — his memory now commemorated only in the trophy for national supremacy in the game he loved, hockey, the Rangaswamy Cup presented by *The Hindu* in 1957.

The liveliness gradually declined when A. Rangaswami Iyengar rejoined as Editor in 1928, fading out almost completely in the 1930s. The sports page, the weekly women's page, the pictorial page and the erudite weekly Literary Supplement, however, survived till World War II, but only the first named came through the restrictive rigours of that holocaust.

Rangaswami Iyengar, son of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's sister, was of a different mould from S. Rangaswami. A man of moderate political views, he left *The Hindu* in 1915 to

edit the *Suwasamitran*, which was to make him an all-India figure. A constitutional expert, Rangaswami Iyengar was an important man in the Congress machinery; he had been its Secretary twice. Srinivasan persuaded him to give up the Secretaryship and return to *The Hindu*. Rangaswami Iyengar not only agreed to give up a key political position, but also committed himself to helping *The Hindu* maintain its reputation as an independent, if less hardline, newspaper.

A politician-journalist and a man who took a legalistic view of public affairs, Rangaswami Iyengar constantly strove to bring the official and unofficial worlds closer, using his remarkable political insight to make *The Hindu* a vehicle of political thought. With him began an era of moderation and conciliation ending the more firebrand eras of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and S. Rangaswami. To Rangaswami Iyengar, "unjust" if used with indisputable facts was as effective a word as "damned unjust," a view *The Hindu* has rather stuck to ever since.

Together, Rangaswami Iyengar and Srinivasan saw Civil Disobedience going nowhere. *The Hindu* argued in the Editor's best lawyer manner: "Everyone will agree with him [Gandhiji]... on the message of non-violence preached by him in the darkest days of India's travail. By adopting it as 'the right route to our goal' in 1920 the country has gained in political stature, momentum and power; we see the evidence of it in the mass consciousness of national self-respect that has made itself felt both by our rulers and by the world at large. But neither the country as a whole nor many leading Congressmen will agree with the views which Gandhiji has put forward of the tenet of non-violence and its scope in practical application... [as a commitment] for all time... It cannot... be contended that the Congress has been irrevocably committed to it... It can hardly appeal to those politically minded Congressmen who still feel that mankind will have to travel a long, long way before such a lofty goal could be realised."

This was almost the last influence on *The Hindu* of A. Rangaswami Iyengar who had once acted as Gandhiji's secretary at the London Round Table Conference. With his death in 1934, Srinivasan became Managing Editor, the post he held till his death in 1959, assisted by his younger brother Gopalan, co-proprietor, Printer and Publisher.

It was on the question of the freedom of the press that *The Hindu* of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's day, and to an extent during his son Srinivasan's stewardship, waxed most eloquent. The newspaper first strongly asserted its views on the question of press freedom in the wake of its comments on the Punjab turmoil, when the Government sought security deposits from it for good behaviour. The paper answered: "We feel no doubt that the action of the Madras Government... is a violent stretch of the arbitrary power conferred by the Act. It is a gross and dangerous infringement of the liberty of the Press and if the present policy is continued it must lead to the extinguishment of honest and independent journalism in this country. So far as *The Hindu* is concerned, the contemplation of a perverted application of the Press Act and the involving of it into further pains and penalties will not have the result of inducing it to swerve from its past traditions and the path of journalistic independence and rectitude which it has always maintained." During the Moplah Rebellion of 1921 — its climax being the death of 66 out of 100 prisoners who were confined overnight in a closed iron wagon that was

part of the Calicut-Madras train — *The Hindu* asserted its independence when asked to publish only official reports. "We may be wrong," it said, "but we feel that an attempt is being made to put the Press in blinkers and we do not propose to submit ourselves to that operation. Putting it bluntly, the public have no confidence in official accounts and to ask us to refuse publication to others unless they have the imprimatur of departmentalised truth is asking us to betray our responsibility to the public." The era of the cousins was marked by the bluntness of S. Rangaswami and Rangaswami Iyengar's reasoned criticism in blunted words.

#### 4. The Kasturi Srinivasan era

### TREADING SOFTLY — BUT MODERNISING APACE

THE old era ended and the paper passed into a new one when Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's full-length portrait was unveiled in 100 Mount Road in March 1925 by Mahatma Gandhi. By the time Kasturi Srinivasan took over *The Hindu*, he had a sound investment to protect. So in spite of being almost as ardent a Congressman as his Tilak-admiring and battle-welcoming father, he preferred to tread softly. He continued to champion the freedom of the press. When Devadas Gandhi of *The Hindustan Times* was arrested during the 1942 Quit India agitation, *The Hindu* commented: "This is an order that simply takes our breath away... the Chief Commissioner makes it impossible for them (the press) to fulfil their duty to the public which is to give it all the news which in their judgement is fit to print."

Srinivasan, presiding over the All-

As late as April 1951, discussing proposed amendments to the Constitution, *The Hindu* entered into a lengthy argument with Prime Minister Nehru, asking him to leave the Press alone. *The Hindu* criticised Nehru for looking upon the Press "more or less as a kind of permanent opposition" and advised him to "free himself from the obsession" that the Press was "incapable of taking an unbiased or rational view of Government's policies."

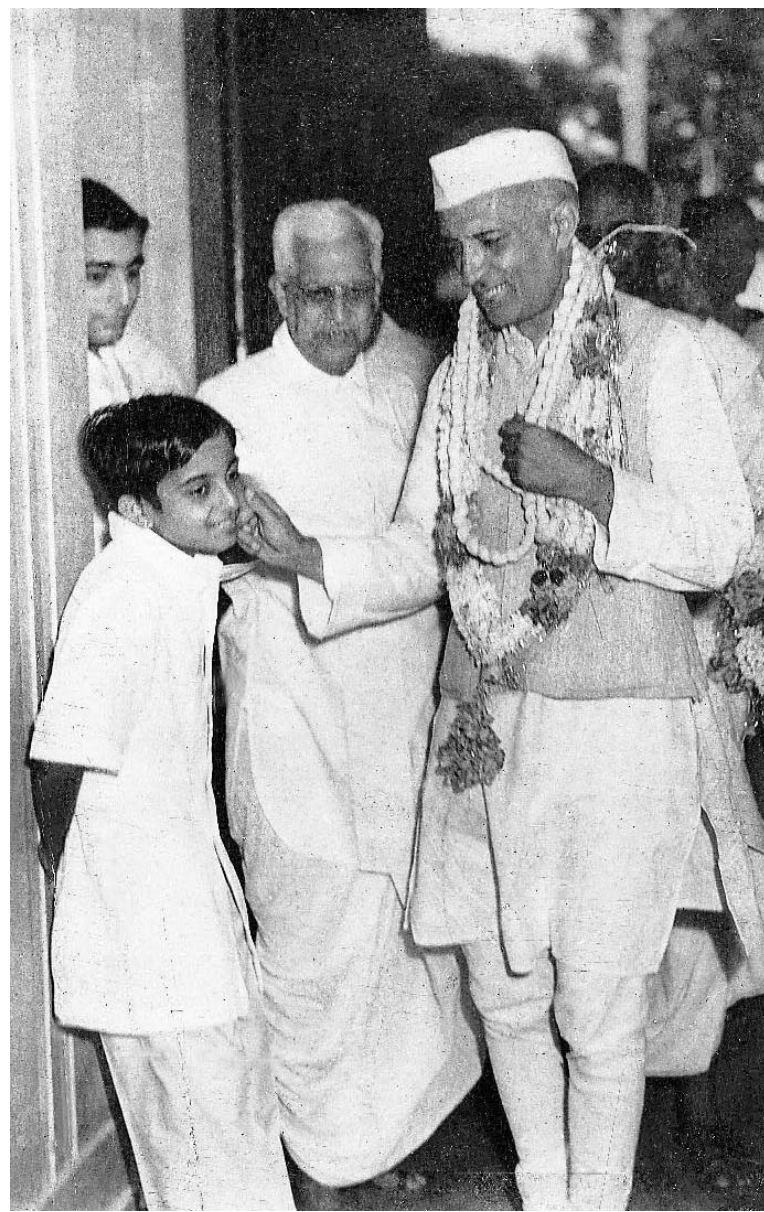
The *Hindu* in the 1930s and the 1940s also paid considerable attention to the drums of war and the War itself. The Second World War had the newspaper looking at the international scene from various angles. There was the Indian viewpoint: "Great Britain has made no efforts... to get into touch with leaders of Indian opinion... This is the more surprising when it is remembered that a big, nay, decisive factor in any struggle into which she may enter or be drawn would be the attitude of the Indian people." The paper reiterated the point a few days later: "If India is to throw her weight actively on the side of the democracies in case a struggle is unavoidable, it is obvious that the shortest way to set about it is for Britain to call Gandhiji to the council table of the Commonwealth in this hour of crisis and to make it possible for him to respond to that call."

On the War itself, *The Hindu* made its viewpoint clear on September 1, 1939: "The lights are going out once again in Europe and soon there will be total darkness in which the evil forces of destruction will bring civilisation itself into jeopardy." The paper was equally unequivocal in its disapproval of the negative attitude of Britain's wartime hero, Winston Churchill, towards India: "There is little doubt that though he may win the war for Britain he would lose the peace if he had his way. He would do his best to restore the status quo with

come with negotiation. The paper and its leadership played no little role in the Congress accepting office in the States. No less was *The Hindu's* concern for India's economic future: as a newspaper of record, it published the first five-year plan dreamed up by an Indian, M. Visweswaraya, the great Mysore planner. On another occasion, the newspaper reflected that while a great leader might, facing a crisis in national affairs, enthuse the people to "superb heights of altruistic idealism," it was "broad and butter considerations that sustain(ed) the common man in his work-a-day life."

In the first year of freedom, the paper paid considerable attention to the direction Government should take in economic matters, taking a stand on the paths to development: "Production is the need of the hour and production can be achieved only by hard sustained work... If we are to concentrate on production it is only common sense that we should not at the same time rudely shatter the fabric of economic relations by launching on what is vaguely envisaged as 'socialism.'" In 1952, *The Hindu* made its position on such issues even clearer: "There are limits to State action and quite definite limits to the improvements which can be effected by State ownership or management. The wise rule for the Government would be to limit the fields of its own direct management to the narrowest confines and to leave as wide a field as possible to private initiative and enterprise."

Two other issues of significance on which *The Hindu* took significant stands during Srinivasan's stewardship were the formation of linguistic States and the status of Hindi. On the first question, it went along with the concept resignedly, commenting: "Whatever the historical reasons or accidents which determined their birth, many of the existing provinces are unilingual for all practical purposes... There is a



Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at *The Hindu* in 1948. Two generations of the family managing *The Hindu* can be seen: K. Srinivasan, G. Kasturi and S. Rangarajan, presently Managing Director.

tance under Srinivasan, management and business — aimed at modernisation — began to play a more significant role at 100 Mount Road. During the two decades before the War's end, *The Hindu* made significant innovative strides. By 1927, it had grown to standard broadsheet size, publishing at least 12 pages daily, but remained an evening paper.

As early as 1921, a rotary printing press, "the first of its kind in the East," had been installed at 100 Mount Road. Soon its capacity came under pressure, as the paper's circulation began to exceed the 17,000 copies the machine had to print when it was installed. It was only in 1928 that The National Press was financially in a position to install a new rotary. This enabled *The Hindu* to print a 24-page broadsheet at 30,000 copies an hour. In anticipation of this high-speed machine, the astute Srinivasan had replaced the traditional hand-composing practice of typesetting with mechanised Monotype, Linotype and Ludlow typesetting machines. It was not long before equipment to convert photography into half-tone blocks for printing arrived to complete the process of making *The Hindu* one of India's most modern newspaper presses.

Photography became a regular feature in the 1920s. Around this time, Srinivasan even introduced illustrated jokes to fill space at the end of columns. He took this a step forward when, in October 1925, the paper published its first political cartoon by one who signed himself 'Horace' and remains anonymous to this day. The inability to find a regular cartoonist made cartooning in the paper not only infrequent but of variable quality. When *The Hindu* began publishing regular cartoons, they were by David Low; his work, introduced with some fanfare, first appeared in the paper in 1933 and continued until the celebrated cartoonist's death in 1963.

Among the features introduced at this time was a weekly 'Literature-Art-Philosophy' page. In 1927 this evolved into *The Hindu's Educational and Literary Supplement*, a separate folio-size publication that, like *The Times*, London's Literary and Educational Supplement, gained an international reputation for quality and urbaneness. This publication went through various metamorphoses, but survives as the once-a-month *Literary Review* that appears with the Sunday paper today. That paper itself started as *The Hindu Illustrated Weekly*, a stand-alone, differently formatted journal containing the best writing from the week's daily issues and targeting readers in other parts of India. With Dandapani Aiyer in charge — one of those rare journalists who had a passion for printing as well as photography — it was much sought after as a high-quality journal, both for its content as for its presentation and print quality. The Depression, however, proved its nemesis. In 1936, a broadsheet Sunday Magazine Edition, one of the first in the country and an adjunct of the main paper, made its appearance. Another quality publication, *The Hindu Annual*, which had appeared in 1923 with features and short stories by well-known authors, did not last long. When Dandapani Aiyer joined the staff in 1926, he persuaded Srinivasan to make it a glossy, illustrated publication priced at an unheard-of-at-

the-time Re.1. The publication was to prove a popular gift item, but in the end proved unsustainable.

Other features Srinivasan introduced to make the paper live up to its reputation of being "The Manchester Guardian of India" were 'Commerce-Engineering-Industries-Machinery', a feature ahead of its time in a non-industrialised country, and a weekly feature for women readers, "Our Ladies' Column", by the first woman graduate and women's journal editor in the south, Kamala Sathianathan. In the mid-1930s, after Srinivasan had become the first Managing Editor of a paper in India, *The Hindu* introduced a cinema page and a gardening page.

But as important as technological improvement and content up-gradation were two transformations that occurred in the newspaper during the Srinivasan era — both of which he introduced with the greatest reluctance. In 1930, he experimented with bringing out *The Hindu* as a morning paper but soon dropped the idea. But the time zones of World War II demanded a morning paper and, so, from November 11, 1940, *The Hindu* arrived at the city reader's doorstep at dawn and soon became an inseparable adjunct of that Madras addiction, 'morning coffee'.

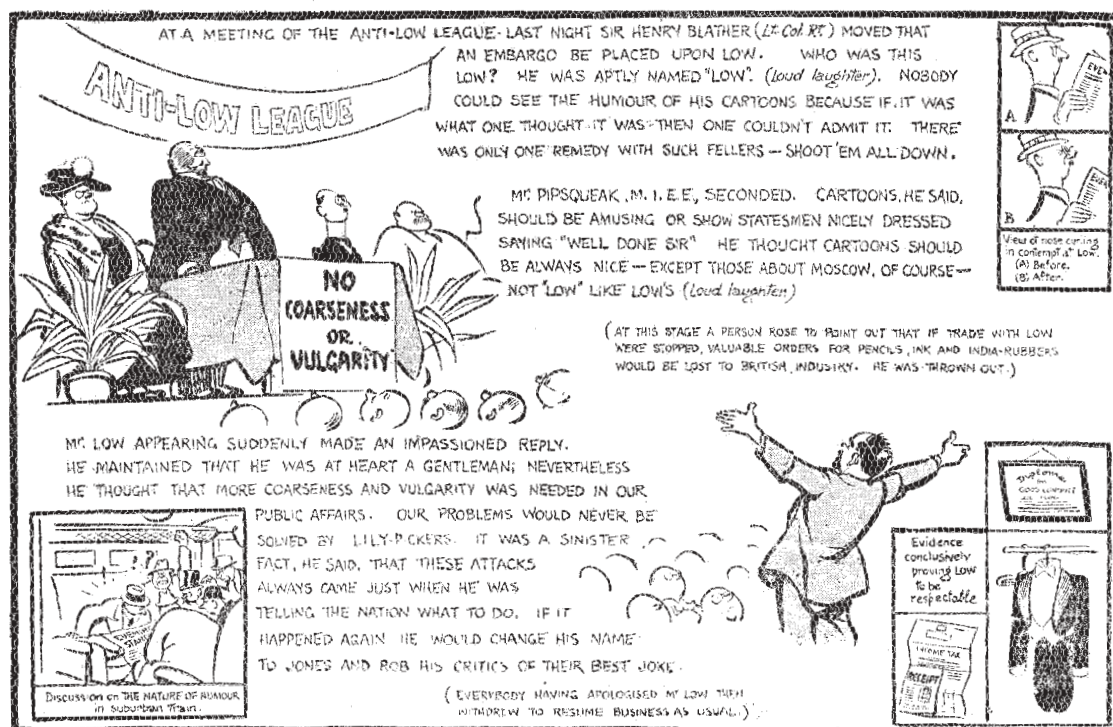
The 1930s was also an era when the world's newspapers were beginning to front-page news. Srinivasan resisted the temptation but on June 2, 1941, a Monday, *The Hindu* started its readers by front-paging the news. However, he assured them, this would be a practice followed only on Mondays — when advertising was lean and editorials were not written. It also proved to be only a wartime practice. It took 17 years to make the change permanent — on January 14, 1958. Before this happened, the paper meticulously prepared both readers and advertisers for the new practice with circulars and a month-long advertising campaign, followed by a sample of what to expect delivered to 85,000 readers in miniature.

The 'new look' did not introduce the flamboyant layouts being followed by newspapers round the world. *The Hindu* continued with the restrained style it had learnt from *The Times*, London, but in front-paging the news it offered for the first time a few double column headlines. Significantly, most readers welcomed the changes — and others that began to appear with greater frequency in the years since.

Yet another major change was the introduction of a new masthead. *The Hindu* had started with a stark typeface and then Gothicised it. Along the way it had added a crest that was better suited to the Raj — the lion and the unicorn accompanied by Britain's motto, *Dieu et mon Droit* (For God and my Right). In 1935, *Kamadhenu*, the divine cow, representing prosperity, and *Airavatham*, the divine elephant, representing strength, replaced the Raj's animals and bracketed a shield that rested on a lotus. The shield bore an outline map of India with a conch in the centre. Blades of grass sprouted on both sides of the crest. Although neither name nor crest nor the changes were ever explained, the founders and those who followed them were clear that the 'Hindu' in the paper's name was no communal statement. It represented the people of Hindustan and was

THE HINDU, TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1933.

### INTRODUCING MR. LOW — AND HIS CRITICS



The first David Low cartoon to appear in *The Hindu*, August 15, 1933.

India Newspaper Editors' Conference (AINEC) that he had held in 1941, said: "There is no question of our willing submission to any proposal which in our opinion is derogatory to the profession or in any way prevents us from functioning as responsible newspapers." These convictions he demonstrated in action when, late in 1942, the Government banned publication of news of the fast by a Professor Bhalsali. In retaliation, Srinivasan led the AINEC in blacking out Government circulars, Honours Lists and speeches. When the Government reacted to these tactics by withdrawing facilities to the paper's reporters, *The Hindu* commented: "No popular Government would dream of brushing aside the public's rights so lightly as the Madras Government has shown itself ready to do, since it would clearly see that such action would really amount to cutting off the nose to spite the face." On January 6, 1943, it went so far as to suspend publication

all its age-long inequalities, injustices and slaveries." It also criticised President Roosevelt for "so completely [failing] to grasp [this] central fact."

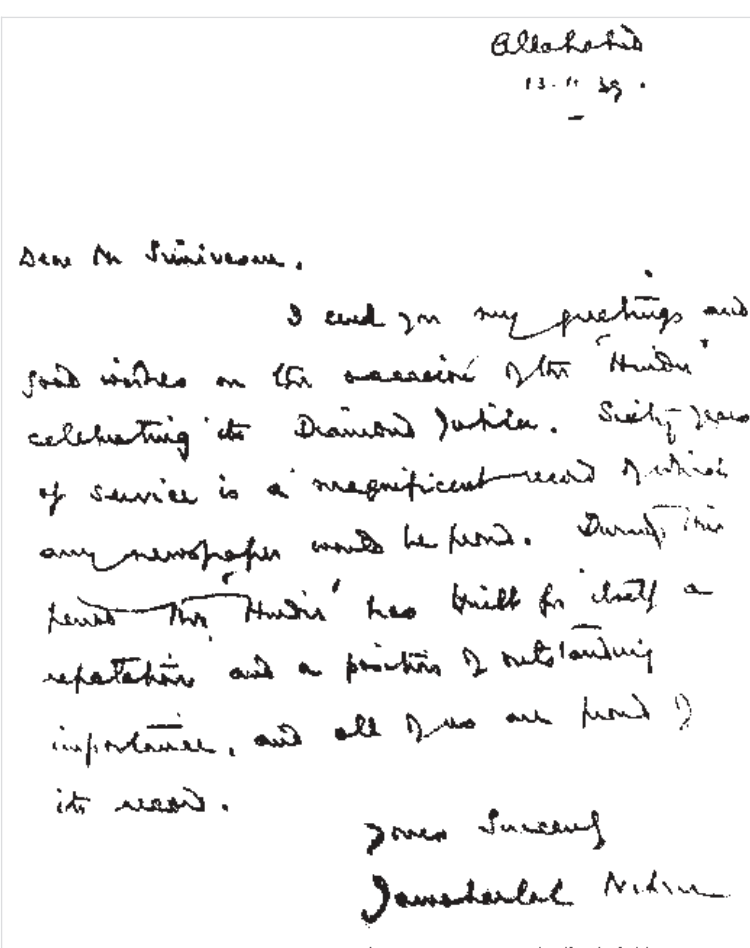
But while Srinivasan and *The Hindu* cogently argued the case for India's independence, both were uncertain about the ability of the masses to take charge of their future. As late as 1949, when the Constitution was being shaped, *The Hindu* was editorially suggesting that the introduction of universal adult franchise be put off: "It will not be an easy thing for the common people, defenceless in their ignorance, to resist plausible sophisters who beckon them to the promised land... Nothing will be lost by postponing this tremendous and hazardous experiment for a few years."

The Srinivasan era was one in which *The Hindu* adopted a firm but conciliatory attitude, towards both government and Congress, convinced that freedom would

dominant feeling in many areas and an overwhelming one in some in favour of giving every well-defined linguistic unit the right to govern itself in regard to its domestic affairs consistent with maintaining the larger unity of India unimpaired... If popular sentiment is predominantly in favour of such a settlement it cannot possibly be prevented in the long run and it might even be undesirable to make the attempt."

As for Hindi, *The Hindu* proposed that "the whole of India must be given a chance to familiarise itself with Hindi before bringing it for official use, where precision and clear understanding of meaning is essential" and that "before Hindi can take the place that English now occupies it must overcome certain serious defects which now make it unsuitable for use as a common medium."

Even as editorial policy was moderated and news and entertaining reading began to grow in impor-



Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to K. Srinivasan on *The Hindu's* Diamond Jubilee. (Right): *The Hindu's* crest, which replaced the lion and unicorn on January 1, 1935.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CREST

The *Hindu* crest has intrigued many of our readers. The design is intended to symbolise Indian nationalism which *The Hindu* seeks to reflect in every aspect of its existence. Here is an explanation of what the various elements in the design symbolise.

