

Preface

This volume contains a selection of papers presented at the Seminar on Constitutional Developments Since Independence organised by the Indian Law Institute at New Delhi from April 19 to 22, 1973. The Seminar represented a mixed group—judges, lawyers, law teachers, civil servants and political scientists.

The occasion of the completion of a quarter of century of India's freedom was considered opportune to evaluate the significant developments in the field of Constitutional Law. The Constitution completed twenty-three years of its working. This period, though it may seem pretty long in the life of an individual, is not so in the life of a constitution as the constitution is meant to endure for ages to come. However, this period is quite crucial and important particularly in a developing country as the experience of other developing countries shows where the constitutions, one after the other, had to be abrogated within a short time of their adoption. In a newly independent country the aspirations of the people, which had been suppressed for centuries, are unleashed all of a sudden, and the constitution with all its checks and balances may not provide enough flexibility to accommodate these aspirations. However, it is a compliment to the people of India and to the wisdom of our constitution-makers that our Constitution has been able to adjust the conflicting values in our society and has shown sufficient resilience to meet the changing needs of the society. The Constitution of India has not been without its turmoil, but this had to be so in a dynamic and fast changing society struggling for economic growth with social justice. It has not only weathered the storm of the formative period but has also acted as a beacon light for the legislature, the executive and the judiciary for taking the Nation towards its goal of social welfare. The initial period is important from another point of view. However detailed a constitution may be, its provisions have to be in broad and general language leaving scope for sound conventions and practices to grow. It is during the initial period that the seeds of these conventions and practices are laid.

In the short duration of three days of the Seminar, it was not feasible to discuss all the developments. Therefore, the Seminar selected those broad topics which were considered to be the most significant. The three topics discussed were :

- (i) Parliamentary Form of Government (including Legislative Procedures);

- (ii) Centre-State Relations; and
- (iii) Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles.

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