

CHAPTER XI

THE PUNJAB

514. While reviewing the northern and eastern boundaries of Rajasthan, we have dealt with the future of certain territories which now form part of the Punjab and PEPSU. We shall now examine the major proposals bearing on the future of these two States and the adjoining Part C State of Himachal Pradesh.

515. We first examine the demand for the formation of a Punjabi-speaking State. The case for the creation of this State, as set out in the memorandum submitted by the Shiromani Akali Dal, rests mainly on the arguments generally advanced in favour of linguistic States. But it has some features of its own and poses problems which require very careful consideration.

516. The main arguments urged in favour of the proposed Punjabi-speaking State are:

- (i) it will remove all causes of unrest and discontent, eliminate language controversies, enable the imparting of education in the mother-tongue and help the people to grow and advance;
- (ii) it will be a geographically compact unit, financially viable, surplus in food and rich in resources;
- (iii) it will be a homogeneous State inhabited by sturdy people, and as such would strengthen the defence of the north-western border; and finally
- (iv) it will secure for the country a contented Sikh community.

517. The areas which are claimed to be Punjabi-speaking, and are, therefore, suggested for inclusion in the proposed State are:

- (i) *Punjab*.—The districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Ferozepore, Ludhiana, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Ambala, Karnal (except Panipat tehsil) and tehsils Sirsa and Fatehabad, and sub-tehsil Tohana of Hissar district;
- (ii) *PEPSU*.—The districts of Patiala, Barnala, Bhatinda, Kapurthala, Fatehgarh Sahib and Sangrur (except Jind and Nirwana tehsils);

(iii) *Rajasthan*.—Ganganagar district.

518. The agitation in favour of the proposed Punjabi-speaking State has been the subject-matter of a serious controversy, a regrettable consequence of which has been the inflammation of communal passions in this region. One strange result of this has been the repudiation by large sections of the Hindu community of the Punjabi language as their mother-tongue. This led during the last Census operations to a situation in which the separate tabulation of Hindi and Punjabi-speaking people had to be abandoned.

519. A peculiar feature of the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State has also been that, while other demands for separation from existing composite States have had the backing of an overwhelming majority of the people of the language group seeking such separation, the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State is strongly opposed by large sections of people speaking the Punjabi language and residing in the areas proposed to be constituted into a Punjabi-speaking State. The problem, therefore, is *sui generis*. It has to be examined against its own peculiar background.

520. We first examine the linguistic considerations urged in support of the demand. As has been stated earlier, our approach to the linguistic principle is governed by practical administrative considerations. Linguistic homogeneity, in our opinion, has to be aimed at as an instrument for facilitating social and political intercourse amongst the people and for ensuring the closer association of the people with the government. If this criterion is applied, it will be found that there is no real language problem in the State of Punjab as at present constituted. This is so because the Punjabi and Hindi languages as spoken in the Punjab are akin to each other and are both well-understood by all sections of the people of the State. Nobody has seriously argued before us that the present set-up presents any difficulty so far as the communicational needs of the people are concerned.

521. It is also of interest to note that while the substratum of Punjabi is a language of the outer circle akin to modern Lahnda, its superstructure is a dialect of western Hindi. According to Grierson, "the superstructure is so important and has so concealed the foundation, that Punjabi is rightly classed, at the present day,

* During the course of the discussion with the Commission on the 12th April 1955, the General Secretary, Shiromani Akali Dal, intimated that the organisation no longer wished to press the claim for any parts of Karnal district or for parts of the Ganganagar district other than the tehsils of Hanumangarh and Ganganagar.

as the language of the central group". The line of demarcation between the Punjabi and the Hindi spoken in the State has, therefore, been more theoretical than real. In recent years, moreover, with the large-scale influx of Punjabi-speaking people from Western Punjab into all the districts of the State this line has been further blurred.

522. Likewise, the present arrangements do not stand in the way of the growth of Punjabi language and culture. There are no distinctive cultural zones in the existing State. As for literary activity, the figures cited in the Akali Dal memorandum would themselves rebut any contention that in the existing Punjab State there is any impediment to the development of the Punjabi language.

523. The feelings of those sections which advocate the creation of a Punjabi-speaking State seem to be that Punjabi is a distinct and developed language with a script, different from the Nagari script, devised to suit the phonological and inflectional peculiarities of the Punjabi language; that this language is the language of the region which is proposed to be constituted into a Punjabi-speaking State; and that those who oppose the demand are motivated by communal considerations because the Punjabi-speaking State will "improve the position of an under-dog of democracy which they at present are".

524. Those opposed to the movement argue on the other hand that basically the demand is a communal one and that cultural and linguistic arguments have been pressed into service merely to camouflage the real motives. The Hindus as a whole, it is argued, have never accepted Punjabi as their medium of expression, to the exclusion of Hindi, because while at home they speak the Punjabi language, in their religious ceremonies and festivals, in their schools and colleges they use Hindi. In any case, they have never accepted the Gurmukhi script.

525. For assessing the merits of these contending views, it is necessary to take note of certain special features of the linguistic composition of the Punjab. The first point to remember is that, although Punjabi has been the spoken language of the greater part of the eastern half of the undivided province of the Punjab, the position before the partition was that Urdu and not Punjabi was regarded as the official language for purposes other than those for which English was used. This position still holds good. It is only recently under the decision known as the Sachar-Gyani Kartar Singh formula that Punjabi and Hindi are proposed to be introduced as regional languages for official and educational purposes in the two language-zones into which the Punjab has been demarcated.

526. There is also no denying the fact that the demand that Punjabi written in Gurmukhi script alone should be recognised as the Punjabi language is of relatively recent origin. Not only have some of the reputed Punjabi writers like Warris Shah written in a script other than Gurmukhi with which Punjabi is now sought to be related, but even the University of Punjab had been giving before partition an option to candidates taking various Punjabi examinations to adopt either the Gurmukhi or the Persian script.

527. The problem of language in the Punjab is, therefore, primarily one of scripts; and in this battle of scripts, sentiment is arrayed against sentiment.

528. We have to consider how far the formation of the proposed Punjabi-speaking State will help to solve this script problem. The first point to be considered is naturally whether there is any justification for the exclusive use of the Gurmukhi script in writing Punjabi. It has been contended that no practical difficulties were experienced even when the Persian script, which is quite distinct from the Gurmukhi script, was used for writing Punjabi. The Devanagari script, it is claimed, is even more suitable, because it has marked affinities with the Gurmukhi script, and is fully equipped to meet all the phonological needs of the Punjabi language.

529. The Hindus, as a community, seem to be strongly opposed to the imposition of the Gurmukhi script on them in disregard of the past practice as also their own sentiment. In these conditions, it may create more problems than it would solve, if this area is constituted into a unilingual state, in which only one script, namely, Gurmukhi, is recognised.

530. Assuming for the sake of argument that a settlement of the problem is to be sought by conceding the demand that Punjabi written in Gurmukhi script should be the language of the region proposed to be constituted into a Punjabi-speaking State, the long-term prospect, from the point of view of all those who are interested in the growth and development of the Punjabi language, can hardly be described as happy. In the proposed State, people claiming Hindi as their mother-tongue will still be entitled to receive instruction in Hindi. Under the arrangements made at present, in implementation of the resolution regarding the interests of linguistic minorities that was adopted by the Provincial Education Ministers' Conference of August, 1949, and approved by the Central

Advisory Board of Education and the Government of India, the State Governments are required to provide facilities for the instruction of children in the primary stage in their mother-tongue, if it is different from the regional or State language, provided that there are at least 40 pupils speaking that language in the whole school or 10 in one class. Facilities must also be provided in the secondary stage, if there is a sufficient number, usually one-third of the total number of pupils, whose mother-tongue is different from the regional or State language.

531. Having regard to the background of the language controversy in this area, it is not unlikely that large sections of Hindus would seek instruction in Hindi if a Punjabi-speaking State is formed. Whatever the legitimacy of such a demand may be, there is no method by which a person can be compelled to adopt a mother-tongue other than that for which he himself shows his preference. In these circumstances, even if a Punjabi-speaking State is formed, the entire area will still be bilingual, in the sense that instruction in Hindi will have to be arranged on an extensive scale, and for official purposes also Hindi will probably have to be given special recognition.

532. That the demand for the due recognition of Hindi as the spoken language of the region has not been stimulated only by the recent controversy, is clear from the fact that, of the total number of candidates who appeared during the last five years in the Hindi and Punjabi examinations of the Punjab University from the Jullundur division, 62.2 per cent appeared in the Hindi examinations and 37.8 per cent in the Punjabi examinations; these figures relate to the six Punjabi-speaking districts of the present Punjab State in which, according to the 1931 Census, the percentage of Punjabi-speaking people was 97.2 and of Hindi-speaking people only 1.3. It is also of interest to note that, out of 1,03,758 candidates appearing in the matriculation examination of the Punjab University during the last four years who had the option to answer history and geography papers either in Hindi or Punjabi, 73.5 per cent. elected to answer in Hindi and 26.5 per cent. in Punjabi. Motives cannot well be attributed to examinees at university examinations who must have exercised their option on the basis of their own literary needs and family traditions. For this reason, the conclusion which seems to be indicated cannot be ignored. Hindi will not by any means be unimportant in the Punjabi-speaking zone and Punjabi and Hindi will have to exist and develop side by side.

533. An arrangement such as that contemplated under the Sachar-Gyani formula, based on the recognition of the bilingual character of this area would provide, in these circumstances, a more effective solution of the problem of language than the separation of the Punjabi-speaking areas from the rest of the State. It may be pointed out that Punjabi has now been given, under this formula, a place of honour in that it is accorded the same treatment in the Hindi-speaking zone as has been conceded to Hindi in the Punjabi-speaking zone. If, therefore, in consequence of the formation of a Punjabi-speaking State, the Punjabi language secures an advantage in one direction, namely, in the enforcement of the Gurmukhi script in the Punjabi-speaking zone, it may lose in another direction, namely in its dissemination in areas now known as the Hindi-speaking areas.

534. There is another important aspect of the problem which should be taken into account in considering a further division of the Punjab on linguistic grounds. According to Grierson, the line between western Hindi spoken in the Hindi-speaking area of the Punjab and Punjabi could be taken as the meridian passing through Sirhind. The territorial claims for the proposed Punjabi-speaking State, however, ignore this line of division. They go so far as to include the whole of Ambala, the district of Karnal *minus* one tehsil, and portions of Hissar. A claim has also been made to the Ganganagar district of Rajasthan which never formed part of the Punjab. With the large-scale dispersal of Punjabi-speaking people from the Punjab (Pakistan) in the eastern Punjab and with the colonisation of the area under the Bhakra project, the division between the two linguistic zones in the Punjab is progressively becoming less and less real. The Akali Dal memorandum itself states that the Punjabi-speaking people carry their culture and language with them.¹ Quite clearly, with this widespread dispersion of the Punjabi language in recent years and the intermingling of Hindi-speaking and Punjabi-speaking people, it would be impossible to create a compact unilingual State.

535. The results of this brief examination may now be summarised. The creation of a Punjabi-speaking State would offer no solution to the language problem, the present arrangements for the recognition of both Punjabi and Hindi could not be done away with, and the controversies would not in all probability come to an end, and while the major problem would be solved, both the languages might suffer.

1. Memorandum of the Shiromani Akali Dal.

536. We now come to the important question whether the proposed State will secure an improvement from the point of view of peace and contentment of the people of the area. There are no complaints from those sponsoring the movement for a Punjabi-speaking State about economic or political exploitation of the Punjabi-speaking areas by the representatives of the so-called Hindi-speaking region. If anything, the complaint is from the hilly areas and the Hariana tract.

537. There is undoubtedly internal tension in this area. But this tension follows communal and not territorial lines. There is little likelihood that the creation of the proposed State will lead to greater communal harmony and concord.

538. The sponsors of the Punjabi-speaking State argue that a majority of the people inhabiting the area are in favour of a Punjabi-speaking State and that opposition is confined to certain communal elements. The results of the recent elections to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee have been cited as evidence of the popular backing which the demand has amongst the Sikh masses. On the other hand, the results of the last general elections and the subsequent by-elections are cited in support of the view that the demand for the Punjabi-speaking State is confined to communal elements in the Sikh community.

539. We do not propose to express any opinion on the relative influence and popularity of those supporting or opposing the movement for a Punjabi-speaking State. But it is quite obvious that the minimum measure of agreement necessary for making a change in the present set-up does not exist so far as the proposal for the Punjabi-speaking State is concerned. The Dar Commission rightly expressed the view that no linguistic State should be imposed on substantial minorities opposing them. In this particular case, we may actually be imposing the wishes of a substantial minority on the majority.

540. The case for a Punjabi-speaking State falls firstly, because it lacks the general support of the people inhabiting the area, and secondly, because it will not eliminate any of the causes of friction from which the demand for a separate Punjabi-speaking State emanates. The proposed State will solve neither the language problem nor the communal problem and, far from removing internal tension, which exists between communal and not linguistic and regional groups, it might further exacerbate the existing feelings.

541. We now come to the demand for the separation of the so-called Hariana area of the Punjab. The complaint from this area is one of inadequate representation in the civil administration of the State and relative economic backwardness.

542. The Punjab Government placed before us some facts and figures in repudiation of the allegation of discriminatory treatment of this region. It has been argued that schemes have recently been formulated or implemented for extending the irrigation system of Gurgaon Canal project now under consideration is a major project intended to benefit Hariana. The Bhakra-Nangal project will materially benefit this area and the contention that the original plan has been varied to the disadvantage of the area has no basis in fact.

543. We do not wish to express any opinion on these two contending views, but we are convinced that the separation of the so-called Hariana areas of the Punjab which are deficit areas, and are, according to the memorandum submitted by the Akali Dal, "only a liability which can be better borne by their neighbours with whom they have greater affinity in language and culture" will be no remedy for any ills, real or imaginary, from which this area at present suffers.

PEPSU

544. The next question we have to consider is the future of PEPSU. The decisions regarding the proposed Punjabi-speaking State and the Hariana tract which have been indicated in the preceding paragraphs do not dispose of the contention of the PEPSU Government that having regard to the special background against which this State was created the *status quo* should not be disturbed. We now examine how far the claim to the separate existence of PEPSU is justified.

545. Physically and geographically PEPSU is very much a part of the Punjab. From the point of view of population PEPSU is the smallest of the Part B States and is comparable to an existing Part C State, namely, Vindhya Pradesh. The area of the State is less than one half of that of Vindhya Pradesh and even this small area is not geographically compact. It consists of five disconnected bits which are surrounded mostly by the territories of the Punjab. This lack of geographical contiguity has naturally stood in the way of a real political integration of the people of the State and it is not surprising that demands for merger in the adjoining areas have been voiced

from time to time in the outlying enclaves of Kapurthala and Mohindergarh and the hilly tracts of the State. It is because of this anomalous geographical position that it has often been argued that PEPSU is an artificial unit and cannot continue under any scheme of reorganisation.

546. There is considerable force in these arguments. We feel that even with its present territory the State cannot be regarded as a sizeable unit, and with the merger of its outlying pockets in the adjoining areas, which should follow as a natural corollary of territorial readjustments in this area, it will become very difficult for this State to maintain its separate existence.

547. As it is, the State is not in a position to maintain separate cadres of All-India Services and the proposal for having a common cadre with the adjoining State of Punjab has been under consideration for some time. Administratively the States of the Punjab and PEPSU have a number of common problems to face and devices such as a Joint Advisory Council and periodical conferences have to be adopted to achieve a certain minimum degree of co-ordination between the two States. It would be simpler and more economical, besides being conducive to more efficient administration, if the State were merged.

548. The main arguments advanced in favour of the continuance of the State are, firstly, that PEPSU is a home land for the Sikhs and should, therefore, be allowed to continue as such, and secondly, that the alternative to this would be to concede either the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State or the demand for a Maha Punjab, both of which, it is stated, are communal in character in that they are intended to tilt the balance in favour of one or the other of the two main communities.

549. In an earlier Chapter we have discussed at some length the implications of the home land concept. Here we would only add that while we view the doctrine of a linguistic home land with serious misgivings, we consider that the concept of a communal home land is fraught with even more dangerous potentialities.

550. As for the possible unfavourable repercussions of enlarging the present State of Punjab on the existing communal equilibrium, the position is that the proposal which we make about this region will no doubt result in the formation of a larger unit, but the Sikh percentage in the enlarged unit will not be adversely affected as compared with their percentage in the existing State of Punjab.

The Sikh percentage in the proposed State will in fact show a small improvement of a little more than 1.5 per cent. resulting in a corresponding decrease in the Hindu percentage.

551. It is no doubt true that the percentage of the Sikh community in PEPSU is 49, but for the reasons already stated, this unit cannot be considered to be administratively viable and we do not find it possible to overlook this fact.

552. During the course of our discussions with the representatives of the PEPSU Government we noticed that it was appreciated that on account of clear geographical and administrative compulsions, PEPSU could not continue as a separate administrative unit for any length of time. It was, however, suggested to us during these discussions that for some time to come the State might be maintained as a separate unit in order to ensure that the present pace of its development was not impeded. We are not impressed by this argument. We feel that the people of PEPSU are as resourceful and enterprising as those of the adjoining areas of the Punjab and there is no reason why the immediate formation of the larger unit should in any way prejudice the development of the areas now included in this State.

553. It seems to us that one important reason why the proposal to merge PEPSU in the Punjab has not been as popular as it might otherwise have been is the feeling that Patiala city, which has grown appreciably in size and importance since the partition of the country, may be overshadowed by Chandigarh and Simla. A great deal of money has recently been spent on the improvement of the city, and if it were to be reduced after merger to the status of a mere district headquarters or the headquarters of a Commissioner's division, much of this investment might turn out to have been a waste.

554. It would be reasonable to take note of this feeling. We do not foresee that the government of a united Punjab will ignore the claims of Patiala, which has so far enjoyed the status of an important State capital, or that any future administration will deny itself the use of the facilities which are now available in Patiala city. By way of caution, however, and as a concession to the sentiment in Patiala, we would recommend that the special position of the city of Patiala might be recognised and that some important offices of the Punjab Government might be located there. This would involve no departure from the general principle which is referred to elsewhere in this report, namely, that administrative convenience must be the main consideration to be taken into account in deciding the location

of government offices. The claims of Patiala can be supported on the ground that Chandigarh has still to develop and that the location of some offices in Patiala which is situated at a short distance from Chandigarh, will be both popular and convenient.

Himachal Pradesh

555. Our decision regarding the future of the Himachal Pradesh and the general considerations on which it is based have already been indicated in Chapter I of this part of the report. We shall now examine certain arguments advanced by the Himachal Pradesh Government against its merger in a larger unit.

556. Himachal Pradesh is relatively backward, and having regard to its small population, the percentage of literacy in these areas which is much lower than in the case of the Punjab, and the very great need for development, it is argued that this State as part of a bigger unit will be a neglected area with few opportunities, if any, for economic or social advancement. The alleged indifference of the Punjab Government to the needs of the eastern portion of the Kangra district is quoted in support of this argument. Himachal, as it happens, is also a border State, with an international boundary which is partially undefined. It is contended, therefore, that the existing position, under which the State has a separate administration but is actively supported by the Centre, should continue.

557. We have examined these arguments with sympathy and understanding because the area is backward, and will need special attention for quite some time to come. We are extremely doubtful, however, whether direct administration by the Centre, within the framework which we propose for centrally-administered territories, is the best solution which is possible or whether this solution will be acceptable to those who have been advocating the continuance of Himachal Pradesh as a separate unit.

558. Himachal is relatively poor largely because of the poverty of its resources. The lack of trained personnel is also at present a serious impediment. It is not, therefore, a unit which can stand by itself.

559. One of the main arguments in favour of separate existence is that the area has a cultural individuality and that the interests of the relatively backward people of this area will suffer by association with the more advanced people of the adjoining plains. We are unable to accept this argument, because it does not seem to us

to be desirable that states should be formed in this or any other region consisting exclusively of hilly areas. For one thing, it is not correct to say that all hill people are necessarily backward. It is also implicit in the demands for separate hill states that the interests of the hill people, on the one hand, and the interests of the people of the adjoining plains on the other, are mutually exclusive and that the former can develop economically and politically, only if they are segregated from the people of the adjoining plains. These assumptions are unwarranted by facts.

560. The economic and administrative advantages of Himachal Pradesh being integrated with the adjoining States are on the other hand quite clear. The catchment area of the Sutlej and the Beas, for instance, is mostly in Himachal Pradesh; and from the point of view of the Bhakra project, this fact is of such great relevance that the need for the transfer of some area to the Punjab has been accepted in principle and a Committee appointed by the Union Ministry of Irrigation and Power has already gone into the details of this proposed transfer. The links between the hills and the plains are really much more intimate than even this report suggests. Soil conservation in the hills is vitally important from the point of view of the plains. Integration of these areas will, therefore, be to the mutual benefit of the people of the plains and of the hills.

561. Another argument urged in favour of the claim of Himachal Pradesh to separate existence is that the Government of India in the Ministry of States had intended at the time of the formation of this unit that it should continue as a separate centrally-administered unit. It is doubtful if any firm assurance to that effect was actually given. Quite apart, however, from the merits of the evidence on which this argument is based, the arrangements which were made at the time of the integration or merger of the former princely states, including their classification as Part B and C States, must, as we have observed earlier, be regarded as transitional expedients. If we were to accept them as final and binding settlements, it would be impossible to reorganise the States on a rational basis. The declaration by the Government of India of their intentions about the future of the units known as Part B States rests on a more formal basis than those made in respect of Part C States. Since, however, our terms of reference do not exclude from the purview of our enquiry any category of States, we have recommended substantial alterations in the existing structure of even the Part B States. It will, therefore, be invidious to lay particular emphasis on any assurance assumed to have been given in the case of Himachal Pradesh.

562. Our own impression, formed as a result of our tour of this area, is that opposition to the integration of this unit in the Punjab is not so strong as is generally made out. While we undoubtedly noticed some sense of uneasiness in certain sections of the people about the merger of the State, it was clear to us that vested interests were actively fostering this. Taking this into account, we see no reason why all other important considerations should be subordinated to the alleged feeling of the hill people against amalgamation with the adjoining areas.

563. In view of what has been stated in the preceding paragraphs the right course would be to merge Himachal Pradesh with the Punjab and to make at the same time suitable arrangements to ensure that the economic development of this area is not impeded. We have already recommended in Chapter I of this part that the Central Government should retain supervisory authority over this area and that the flow of central aid for its development should not be disturbed for another period of, say, ten years.

564. We also suggest that the Punjab cabinet should include at least one member elected from one of the constituencies of the Himachal Pradesh.

565. The India-China border in this region admits of easy infiltration and the defence and security requirements of the region must remain a special concern of the Central Government. These considerations of security in our opinion require the establishment of a stronger and more resourceful unit than the present Himachal Pradesh.

566. We do not propose to go in any detail into the proposal for the formation of a larger hill unit by integrating with the present Himachal Pradesh the adjoining hill territories of the Punjab, the Uttar Pradesh and PEPSU. For one thing, there has been no reliable evidence of any desire on the part of the people of the areas claimed from other States to join the people of Himachal Pradesh. In fact, if one were to judge by the results of the recent elections in Bilaspur, which according to the winning group constitute a clear popular verdict against the merger of Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh, the claim that in the adjoining hill areas there is a popular movement in favour of integration with Himachal Pradesh would stand repudiated. Quite apart from these considerations, it is clear that if even a larger hill unit is brought into existence, it will not form an administratively viable unit.

Maha Punjab

567. It now remains to dispose of the demand sponsored primarily by certain Hindu organisations in the Punjab for the formation of a larger Punjab unit comprising not only the territories of the States of Punjab, PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh but also of portions of the existing Delhi State and two or three neighbouring western districts of the Uttar Pradesh. On administrative and economic grounds, there is no case for the further addition of territories to the proposed Punjab State. From a political point of view, the acceptance of the proposal is likely to have very undesirable repercussions.

The new State of Punjab

568. We have now considered all the important proposals regarding the future of the Punjab. By a process of elimination we have arrived at the conclusion that the merger of the existing States of the Punjab (except the Loharu sub-tehsil of Hissar district), PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh in a single integrated unit is the most satisfactory solution which can be proposed. This new State will have an area of about 58,140 square miles and a population of 17.2 millions.

569. We have approached this problem with every desire to assess the merits of the alternative proposals, because of our anxiety to consider and examine these alternatives as objectively as possible. Our final conclusion has been reached as a result of discarding all other alternatives. We would like to make it clear, however, that this final solution is not in the nature of a mere *pis aller*. It is not only the least unsatisfactory of several unsatisfactory alternatives. There is a great deal that can be said positively in favour of the formation of a united Punjab.

570. The whole of the Punjab from the Sutlej to the Indus was obviously intended by nature to be a single natural area. Even after the division of the State, the areas within the Union of India commanded by the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej constitute a compact unit fertilised by a single river system. The central part of this unit consists of an area on both sides of the rivers Beas and Sutlej. This central part, however, has vital economic links with the hill districts of Himachal where the catchment areas of this river system are located; and the portion which is to the south also has important economic links with this central part, because the most important irrigation work which has been undertaken since Partition is intended to serve this southern portion, either directly by means of new

irrigation canals, or indirectly by means of augmenting the available supply in the old canals. An important instance of the links of the south with the north is provided by the Mohindergarh district. Situated in a remote corner of this region, it is likely to receive electricity from Bhakra, and if plans which have been under investigation materialise or are extended, this district, which has had no irrigation so far, may get water from the Jumna. Apart from the fact that the irrigation system of the whole of the Indian Punjab is thus one and indivisible, the power potential of this region, which is also dependent on this system, is also immense; and the Uhl and Bhakra-Nangal electrical power grids together are intended to command the entire area of united Punjab.

571. It is impossible to overlook the fact of this natural and economic unity; and in recent years, as more and more attention is being devoted to economic development, this essential unity of the region has been illustrated in various ways. We have already referred to the Joint Advisory Council and to the Hejmadi Committee's report regarding the transfer of some area from Himachal to the Punjab in the interests of the Bhakra project. Other instances can also be quoted. The system of road communications in Mandi, Mahasu, Lahul, Spiti and Kulu is centred, for example, on Simla; and trade flows along these routes. The allotment of evacuee agricultural property under the resettlement scheme had to be handled at Jullundur as a regional problem. The prosperous central belt moreover is the granary of the Punjab; and the Haryana tract of the Punjab, which experiences periodical famines in food and fodder, derives considerable advantage from the fact that it can draw on the resources of this central belt.

572. During the past few years new problems calling for co-ordination have arisen as a result of the Punjab undertaking commitments in respect of the Bhakra project. These problems are the rehabilitation of persons displaced by the project and the orderly implementation of the agreements regarding the rivers of the Punjab which have been or are likely to be arrived at as the result of negotiations between India and Pakistan. In our opinion, the formation of a united Punjab will facilitate planning of the kind which seems to be so obviously indicated.

573. Before we conclude, we should like to emphasize the important fact that whether the proposed Punjabi-speaking State is formed or not, the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab have to live together in amity. The two communities are so interspersed in this region that no form of reorganisation can be a real substitute for

communal harmony. To base a decision regarding the future of this area on the assumption that the Hindus and Sikhs are destined to drift apart will be both shortsighted and unwarranted in these circumstances.

574. The Punjab has, during the recent years, passed through the very severe ordeal of Partition. It is only by the joint and heroic effort of the Hindus and the Sikhs that it has been possible to rehabilitate the political, social and economic life of the province which was so completely disorganised as a result of Partition. It would be most unfortunate if a number of complex problems were created at this time by a further division of the State with all its undesirable consequences.

575. From the point of view of the Sikhs themselves, the solution which we have proposed offers the advantage that the precarious or uncertain political majority which they seek will be exchanged for the real and substantial rights which a sizeable and vigorous minority, with a population ratio of nearly one-third, is bound to have in the united Punjab in the whole of which they have a real stake.

576. Numerically, the Sikhs are a small community, but they are an enterprising and vigorous people. Their creative energy needs greater opportunities than those which a small unit can offer. Those amongst them who have pinned their faith to a home land which cannot be justified on important administrative grounds, and in which the political power of the Sikh community is likely to be evenly balanced by the power and influence of the other major community, seem to disregard this fact.

577. We realise that important sections of the Sikh community seem to nurse a sense of grievance and seek its redress in a Punjabi-speaking State of their conception. We are in no position to say how far the allegations made about discrimination against the Sikhs have any real basis in fact. One complaint is that the Sachar-Gyani formula itself has not been implemented effectively. This formula had the support of all the political parties in the Punjab legislature at the time it was adopted. We see no reason why the arrangements proposed under it should not be worked in the right spirit. Another grievance which has been voiced relates to the relative share of the Sikh community in the services of the State. The validity of this complaint has been questioned. It is not for us to express any

opinion on this or any other grievance of the community or to suggest measures for the solution of the communal problem in the Punjab. All that we would say is that, given a measure of goodwill, an amicable settlement should not be difficult.

578. If the political settlement which we propose is accepted as a fair and lasting solution, a great deal of time and energy, which are now spent on the reconciliation of divergent points of view, will be released for implementing the far-reaching development plans which the various governments in this region have now under consideration. We would conclude in the hope that these anticipations would prove to be correct.

579. Our Chairman is unable to subscribe to the recommendation we have made about the merger of the Himachal Pradesh in the Punjab. He would prefer the administration of this unit by the Centre as a territory. A separate note containing his views on the subject is appended to this report. On all other issues discussed in this Chapter, including the abolition of Himachal Pradesh as a Part C State, the recommendations made are unanimous.