

## Centre offers training in leadership



A group of student volunteers who ran the Summer Fair held at Panchgani, recently, to collect funds for the construction of M.R.A. Training Centre there, seen rendering a song.

FROM a tiny spring emerging out of a sacred temple in the Sahyadri ranges, the Krishna river starts on its seemingly endless course.

By 'Krishna'

As it descends from gorge to gorge on its run towards the Bay of Bengal, this ageless river waters many of India's fertile regions, quenches the thirst of millions of people and rolls on and on spreading a message of peace and prosperity. The river has been associated with the rise and fall of great civilisations — civilisations that have gone beyond the borders of India and brought great fame to this country.

### CENTRE'S AIMS

The Krishna valley is at once beautiful and mysterious. The clouds come into full play, now dispersing to let sunlight flood the valley, now casting a blanket of mist and shadow. And then they move gently away, merging into a hazy horizon. This is the Krishna Valley at its best. And this is just one side of a glorious day and an unforgettable experience for a visitor.

Yet from the other side of the same valley, in the Satara District of Maharashtra, one starts another day which is equally memorable and, in a sense, history-making. Here one sees the sun rising behind the massive cliffs of the Panchgani tableland, and setting off an intense round of activity. Even as the first rays pour into the vast area lying immediately beneath this tableland, about 100 workers assemble and briskly go about their business.

This is the spot where in a few months' time will arise modern India's beacon of hope—the Moral Re-Armament Training Centre — destined to change the hearts and minds of the people. From here will come out trained men and women their ambitious task to remould a nation, currently steeped in poverty and despair, with its image distorted beyond recognition.

The Centre, in a sense, will try to do what Asoka did shortly after the famed Kalinga war — when he sent out his emissaries to the distant ends of the earth to re-humanise man.

The Panchgani Centre, among other things will: Help mould the youth of India for the tasks of leading India, Asia and the world; give industrial labour the necessary training "to fight not only for a fair day's wage but also for a fair day's work;" help traders and industrialists to put people before profits; train teachers to revolutionise the educational pattern; give the peasants sufficient training to place the nation before themselves; properly direct politicians on the fundamentals of team work; and, in short: instil in every man and woman the need to care for the family, the neighbours, the community and the country.

Mr. S. L. Kirloskar, well-known industrialist and President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry for 1965-66, has this to say of this Centre: "We must help with finance, so that this Centre can spread Moral

Re-Armament all over Asia." He also wants young industrialists to come and have training in leadership so that they can play their part in promoting the economy of the State and the country. The setting for this 20-acre Centre is lovely. Beneath the tableland is the site for an open-air theatre which will accommodate 500 persons; in the centre will be a vast auditorium and dining room, and to the right and front will be residential buildings for 650 staff quarters, infirmary and a guest house in the foreground. There are also farming sites, drive-ways and gardens.

### FUTURE ROLE

Already the first rice, wheat and vegetables have been harvested on the site. Some Australian farmers are making a gift of several cows to initiate a dairy and breeding centre.

As one approaches the site one is greeted by the hatless Major Young, the site superintendent, directing the operations in chaste Hindi. In less than a year, Major Young has planted some 2,500 trees consisting of eucalyptus, gulmohr, jacaranda and citrus.

The auditorium will be modern with simultaneous translation systems, and the latest gadgets so that all proceedings can be heard in several languages.

There will be playing fields and facilities for recreation and physical fitness. The Centre will also provide training in cooking and home-making through the pro-

gramme of catering for and running the conference centre.

The entire designing of the Centre has been done by Mr. Gordon Brown, a leading architect of Australia, and his staff, who have given their services free. A leading Bombay firm of consulting engineers is also rendering free services in supervising the construction.

A glimpse of what this Training Centre is capable of doing in future was obtained recently when a teachers' training camp, a summer fair, a boys' work camp and a girls' camp were held at Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar.

At the teachers' camp, principals and teachers from several schools participated in group discussions and underlined the need to provide leadership for the country.

Mr. R. M. Lala, editor of a leading Bombay weekly, spoke of how the Centre's programme would touch every walk of life and make it the dominant aspect thereby transforming and creating a new society.

In Mahabaleshwar, a summer fair was held to swell the funds of the Training Centre. It was manned by young students spending their vacation days in a disciplined way. They worked, sang, ate together, and ran their camps efficiently.

Soon the MRA Centre will be throbbing with life; after its completion it will take its place with other similar centres in Japan, Switzerland and North and South America which are playing a significant role in creating a sense of unity, security and offering new hope for the world.



Some of the students working on the site of the International Centre. They offer their spare time and services free.