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Topics of the Week.

Students and Politics.

THE generally accepted view on this question is that while students should not only be free but should be encouraged to think about, debate and form their own opinions on current political questions, they should be discouraged from taking active part in political movements. In the latest issue of the *Harian* Mahatma Gandhi expresses a similar view. "Students should have the greatest freedom of expression and opinion," he says. "They may openly sympathise with any political party they like. But in my opinion they may not have freedom of action whilst they are studying. A student cannot be an active politician and pursue his studies at the same time." He thus disapproves of the students' participation in strikes and demonstrations like the Andamans day.

MAHATMA GANDHI would allow students taking part in political movements only when a situation arises where it would be advisable in the general interest for them to sacrifice their studies altogether. He has in mind the withdrawal of students from educational institutions during the non-co-operation movement. In our opinion at no time in the past were the circumstances such as to require this sacrifice of the students. In countries like Egypt and China students have dominated political activities. There has never been any such need in our country.

They might well have been left to mind their studies in the broad sense, without any harm coming from their abstention from active participation.

"EVEN then (in the event of a non-violent active war against the Government of the day)," says the Mahatma, "I should think that to invite students in the first instance to suspend their studies for strikes would be tantamount to a declaration of bankruptcy. ... During the last war the students were not the first to be called out but they were the last, so far as I recollect, and then only college students." We are afraid both these statements are erroneous. School children as well as college students were incited to come out and they were almost the first to receive the call. But we are concerned more with the present than with the past. Students would do well to abstain from active political demonstrations, and not merely because, as the Mahatma seems to say, they would in this way embarrass Congress Ministries, but because it is not yet their job to hearten or embarrass any Ministry. Let them keep their minds alert about everything that goes on, but let them postpone taking action till they have done with their studies.

WE may here recall what Mr. Sastri wrote in this paper on the harm done by educational boycott :

One harm, however, it (non-co-operation) has done, which cannot be effaced for years. The foundation of parental and scholastic discipline has been undermined. The prospect of facile martyrdom and patriotic service that have been dangled before the young of the community has had the effect of a heady potion. Their irrepressible spirits have proved too strong for the restraints of non-violence. To make loveful war, to destroy without hate, to condemn for the pure purpose of improvement are antinomies of self-control beyond their achievement.

U. P. Zamindars.

SINCE the U. P. Ministry gave relief to the hard-pressed tenantry from paying rent, the zamindars in the Province have threatened to withhold payment of revenue to Government, and a resolution was moved in the Legislative Assembly by Raja Durga Narain Singh of Tirwa urging Government to stop coercive measures against zamindars for the realisation of jama. The Revenue Minister, the Hon'ble Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, took a very strong line in dealing with the landlords' claim. He explained that the former Government had issued a circular in 1932 directing that no coercive measures should be adopted in the collection of land revenue from zamindars paying Rs. 10,000 or more, while no such concession was made to the smaller zamindars. Such a discrimination against men who might really be in hard circumstances could not be justified and had been done away with by the present Government. He was prepared to consider every case on its merits, but

would not admit the claim of zamindars to be exempted from land revenue merely on the ground that a stay order had been issued in favour of their tenants in the matter of the payment of rents. Those zamindars who were in a position to pay revenue must pay it, whether they had collected rents or not. He said :

One Commissioner reports that although every zamindar who visits him complains of the non-realisation of rents there is nothing to show that there exists any reason for such complaint. He cites the example of a well-known zamindar who approached him and expressed his inability to pay revenue because he could not realise rent from his tenants. The Commissioner asked the District Magistrate concerned to inquire into the complaint and the reply he received was that the zamindar had already collected his entire rental demand.

I am personally aware of another instance where, although a Raja had collected the *Kharij* demand of 1345 *Fasali*, his revenue for *Rabi* 1344 has not yet been paid. I have seen some of the receipts given to his tenants by his *zildars* and they go to prove that all the money realised is not credited towards the payment of rent.

There are certain districts from which reports have been received that an attempt was made to dissuade the zamindars from paying revenue. A certain zamindar who pays a large amount of revenue and is otherwise considered to be wealthy has refused to pay revenue. He said that he is not paying revenue on the principle that he can pay the revenue only out of the rent collected and as he has not been able to collect rent, he would not pay any revenue.

Now this has never been the policy of the Government. I shall cite another example. A certain zamindar who holds a very responsible position in Government has refused to pay revenue on the contention that the revenue can be paid only after the collection of rent and as he has not been able to collect rent, he was not going to pay revenue out of his salary.

The Commissioner of the Division has forwarded to me the letter this highly-placed Government servant wrote to the *tahsildar* advancing this argument. I have come to know that his tenants were prepared to pay rent, but they wanted only to pay the recorded rent which was much below the actual rent he used to collect. His *Karindas* therefore refused to accept this amount.

The U. P. Ministry is to be congratulated on showing to the zamindar class that they cannot have their own way in future and that if the tenants on account of their hard lot are given any concessions the landlords are not entitled for that reason alone to the same concessions even if they are well off.

Bravo !

WHILE a great many zamindars of Bihar are still engaged in staging passive resistance to agricultural income tax and the Tenancy Bill, when these measures will be enforced, some zamindars, one is glad to notice, have been, with a very generous heart, making valuable concessions in anticipation of the measures. The most pre-eminent among these is the Raja Bahadur of Anawan-Tekari. The concessions made by him include

remission of rent to the extent, on an average, of 25 per cent. since 1339 *Fasli*, remission of all interest on arrears of rent, cancellation of all recent enhancements in rent and a re-adjustment of *bhawali* rent on the basis of half and half between the estate and the tenants even for lands in respect of which the record of rights show a higher ratio. Over and above this, the Raja Bahadur has strictly enjoined on his employees that no *tahrirs* of any kind are to be accepted and in order that this injunction may be observed in spirit, he has sanctioned a general increase of 25 per cent. in the salaries of his employees.

"Made" Tea.

PROHIBITION has started in many places since the first of this month and all social reformers will wish it success. The campaign against drink in Salem in the Madras Presidency was launched by the Premier himself who went to the *Tahsil* headquarters for that purpose. Reports say that great enthusiasm prevailed and funeral processions were taken out to bury the "drink evil." What interests us is the news that at many of the places tea stalls have appeared in substitution of the bars. Tea as a beverage may be looked at askance, but no one can contend that it is capable of anything like the harm which is done by alcohol.

THE increase in the demand for tea which is likely to follow may lead to a commercial evil which has been engaging the attention of health officers elsewhere, in Bombay for instance. It has been alleged that unscrupulous tea dealers in conjunction with equally unscrupulous hotel-keepers mix used tea leaves with a small quantity of good tea and sell it cheap to the poor as fresh tea. The left-over tea leaves, it is said, contain harmful ingredients. This "made" tea might find its way to the Madras market where tea drinking is a new habit and therefore the purity or impurity of the tea purchased is not likely to be recognised by the ignorant villagers. Those who are engaged in stamping out drink might do well to see that it is not substituted by another deleterious drink albeit, not equally harmful.

The Press and the Legislature.

THE Press and the legislature have not always seen at things from the same angle, particularly in the case of the bounds within which the former can criticise the latter. The other day the Speaker of the U. P. Legislative Assembly took strong exception to certain remarks passed by the *Leader* and the *Pioneer* upon the conduct of business in the House. Both these papers took strong exception to the Speaker's interpretation of the rule, whereby members who were known to be proficient in English were allowed to speak in Hindi or Urdu. When invited to say what particular passages were found to be offensive the Speaker, Mr. Tandon, cited some of them. The *Leader*, for instance, criticised the latitude given by the Speaker in the use of languages, - criticism which, to us, seems innocent of any offence. What the *Leader* said was that it was

rather surprised at the latitude allowed by the Speaker of the U. P. Assembly to members to disregard the Act as well as the Rule and allow even those who, for years, have been speaking in English to address the Assembly in Hindustani. Frankly, we think he is wrong. When, however, overzealous members make a scene such as they did against a colleague for venturing to act in accordance with the Act and rules, we think the limit is reached.

In this passage particular objection was taken to the expression "the limit is reached." The Speaker also took objection to the *Pioneer's* comments upon the *Leader's* criticism. It observed: "The *Leader* does not seem to be aware how far disregard of law and rules has already gone." Mr. Tandon read in these lines the insinuation that the U. P. Assembly "has been habitually disregarding the law and the rules in this respect."

In the statement Mr. Tandon made on this point in the Assembly, he has not refuted the charge made by the papers except through a flat denial. But it is a fact that while the rules *ordinarily* do not permit members who are capable of expressing

themselves in the English language, to speak in any other language, Speakers in the Legislative Assemblies have permitted members to use their mother-tongue. In the U. P. legislature, for example, a person like the Hon. Dr. Katju, a leading advocate of Allahabad, was permitted to speak in the mother-tongue. On what ground can such latitude be defended as directly within the rules of procedure laid down, it is difficult for us to see. Mr. K. T. Shaha's interpretation of the rule regarding the use of languages in the legislatures in his book on Provincial Autonomy goes to support us. The facility given to members to use their mother-tongue, he says, is "not open to those, who, knowing English, would, as a matter of national self-respect, insist upon using the vernacular language."

THE question raised by the U.P. Speaker has been raised more than once in various provinces. Where exactly press criticism crosses the bounds of liberty and enters upon licence, it has been always found difficult to define. At best the boundary line is an imaginary one, subject to various interpretations at various times by various Speakers. But we feel that the dignity of the House can be raised into a fetish and, we are afraid, used to stifle newspaper criticism of a trenchant nature. Speakers and members of legislatures must realise that the press but expresses the reactions of the public to their action. In India where parliamentary Government does not command the traditions of the Mother of Parliaments and where the breaking rather than the obeying of discipline has come to be the rule, the press has a duty of correction to perform. If members of legislatures do not hesitate to stage noisy demonstrations within the legislative chambers, as they did in the U.P., and if they are allowed to make rings round the rules by mere interpretations, the papers must warn against it if they believe that such tendency is likely to endanger the ordered progress of parliamentary institutions.

LEST we be misunderstood, we must say that what we are criticising is not the use of the mother-tongue in the legislatures, but its use against rules. Our Speakers have a heavy duty on their shoulders. Their day-to-day decisions are practically sacrosanct and will come to be the bible of their successors. There is a vast scope for unintentional error and the press is the only instrument for its correction. A disciplined and sober House need not worry itself about its dignity, nor need it make a fuss about occasional outbursts of strong language on its floor. Super-sensitiveness about its dignity will only lead to the suspicion that it is a very sickly child requiring vigilant nursing.

"Don't criticise them."

CONGRESS leaders, including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have begun to plead that the Congress Ministries should not be criticised. Demonstrations, marches and newspaper campaigns embarrass them and Congressmen are told: They are your own men, they are doing their best, their purpose is to serve you. Why not leave them in peace to work out their great schemes? Your importunities distract them, weaken them. To sum up what the Congress wants the public to do is to sing in devotional tones:

Congress is in Government
And all's well with the world.

To this prayer for faith a reply appears in *New India*, edited by Dr. G. S. Arundale. It says:

It is more than deplorable that we are being urged not to criticise the various Ministries. Why not? The newer they are, the less experience they have, the more they need criticism. They ought constantly to be aware of any disapproval. They are the servants of the people, not the gods of the people, and the sooner this is realized the better. I think the Ministries ought to welcome as much criticism as they can get. They ought to understand that it is one thing to be in opposition, as they have been for so long, and quite another thing to be in command of the situation as they now are.

Every Congress Ministry ought to be confronted by a strong opposition, so that every weakness is brought to light. Had we a strong opposition in Madras—it is in fact hopelessly weak—the Ministers would have fought far more shy of talking than they have. Congress Ministries must make as many mistakes as other Ministries, though of a different kind, no doubt. And they can less afford to make mistakes than other Ministries, for they are on trial to show to what extent a national Ministry has vision, courage and capacity. With the help of strong approval where approval is due, and of no less strong disapproval where disapproval seems to be due, the Congress Ministry will be able to rectify its mistakes, to understand more clearly what is and is not practicable, and often to do more than it had thought possible.

I wish there were a newspaper in Madras with all the courage of an independence in no way restricted by party considerations, eager to approve where approval is due, no less strong to condemn where condemnation seems necessary. In other words, I wish for a Dr. Besant and her *New India*. It would be like a breath of fresh air in an atmosphere which is in no small danger of becoming an irresponsible autocracy. Power is a very dangerous possession. Although indiscriminate criticism is to be deplored, discriminate criticism should be regarded as manna from heaven.

Aborigines and Prohibition.

THE Rev. Father A. Lallemand, S. J., has in the current number of the *New Review* forcibly put the Catholic case against prohibition. It is well-known that while Roman Catholics favour abstinence they are opposed to prohibition as destructive of personal liberty in matters in which personal liberty should be under no restraints. As Chesterton said: "What are the rights of man, if they do not include the normal right to regulate his own health, in relation to the normal risks of diet and daily life? ... To say that a man has a right to vote, but not a right to a voice about the choice of his dinner, is like saying that he has a right to his hat but not a right to his head."

THESE views, however, will receive no hearing in India at present. But what Fr. Lallemand says about prohibition in its application to the aborigines will, we hope, be noted by the Congress Ministries. If prohibition can be enforced with moral justification in the case of any people, the aborigines who lack self-control are just such a people; and Fr. Lallemand sees no justification for excluding them from the operation of a prohibition law. He says:

The State owes the weaker communities a special measure of protection; and the aboriginal community is among the weakest and most needs to be defended against the allurements of liquor. With their scanty fare, they offer little resistance to intoxication; their worries are so oppressive that many of them take to the easy path of drunken oblivion; nothing is more heart-rending than to see young healthy peasants keep sober till marriage and then age beyond recognition in two or three years of sodden life; nothing is more discouraging to social workers than to see Oraon or Munda give his fields away for a few bottles of mahua alcohol. Of course, many are ready to

oblige them with the bottles and in the name of liberty urge free trade in glass-ware. The Chota Nagpur landscape will smile anew when the prohibition campaign has swept away all the dingy grog shops that are a sin against man and nature. They are a social disgrace and fall within the purview of legal enactments. Why should the aborigines be protected against social uplift?

* * *

IF the excuse is pleaded that mahua trees abound in these tracts and prohibition cannot therefore applied without the risk of an enormous increase in illicit distillation, Fr. Lallemand is not willing to concede its validity. He says: "These timid jungle folk will not easily resort to illicit distillation, the more so as mahua liquor is no respectable drink in aboriginal society." On the other hand, rice beer is. "To taboo it," he says, "would rouse the anger of the old folk but raise the applause of the younger generation and school-going youth. We wonder if a system of licence would not cut it down to the barest minimum. The Ranchi municipality has tried it with success; whatever evasions of the law there are, they take away little from the great progress in temperance."

* * *

Aborigines' Lands.

In the course of the budget debate in the Orissa Legislative Assembly the Ministry was urged to consider the question of abolishing or relaxing restrictions on the transfer of land in Angul district from aborigines to non-aboriginals. The Chief Minister, however, was adamant in not allowing any concessions in this matter to non-aboriginals in any excluded area, and he deserves high praise for taking up such a firm attitude. He said:

I am asked to consider the question of transfer of possession rights of lands of these people in Angul. I think my Hon'ble friends will agree with me that such restrictions are necessary in the interest of the people themselves. My Hon'ble friend will see that the hill tribes are the worst sufferers. Until I make a thorough enquiry and I am convinced that the land will not go into the hands of the exploiters, I mean the Mahajans and the people of the plains, I am not prepared to agree with him, nor will I be willing to go with him and rescind the restrictions that are now in vogue in these partially excluded areas. I am speaking now not only of Angul, but I am speaking of all the partially excluded areas. In fact in certain areas like the partially excluded areas in Ganjam and Koraput, I find people do require these limitations and a special Act has to be enacted to protect the interests of the tenants.

* * *

ON the question of beth-begari and rasad also the Chief Minister was equally strong. It was complained that in Angul people were often compelled to keep cows and bring headloads of brinjals and other provisions for the use of the officials when the latter were on tour without the provisions being paid for. The Chief Minister said that this evil practice which was common in all partially excluded areas must be sternly abolished and invited the co-operation of non-officials in doing so. He added:

With this end in view I have decided to go personally into these areas, convene meetings of the tenants and the hill-tribes in different parts of the country, take the Deputy Commissioner or the Agent to the Governor or the Sub-Divisional Magistrate and inform the people that these are their rights and the breach of these rights by official interference will entail punishment on the officials. Unless such public opinion is created, I believe any number of rules and regulations that Government might make will remain a dead letter and only adorn the files and pages of the Secretariate. However, I have been thinking of issuing a circular to the heads of the districts in charge of these partially excluded areas regarding these points, namely,

that in the first place, we do not approve of any supplies being received by Government officials without payment in money according to the market rates prevailing in that place or in the neighbouring places. It is our intention that all commodities and conveyances and labour supplied to officials on tour shall be paid for at full existing rates. What these rates will be, will be decided by the Government from time to time, year after year.

* * *

Police and the Public.

THE Government of Bombay have issued instructions to the police officers in the Presidency that while it is the duty of the police to report public activities the information should be collected in a manner which will cause offence to none. It has also been made clear that it is unnecessary to call up and question persons who may enrol themselves as members of any Party and that any enquiries that may be necessary should be conducted with tact and courtesy. Speaking recently to the district police in Poona, Mr. Munshi said:

Under the new conditions the police cannot consider themselves merely as upholders of law and order. They have to be guardians of peace and democracy: and as such they have to pursue their arduous duties not only with firmness, but tact, patience and sympathy. The easy method of maintaining prestige by inspiring fear need not be resorted to by such a well trained and efficient force as yours. Uphold law by all means without fear and favour, with good humour and without being vindictive; pursue your duties in the spirit of service towards the public, the master, whom we all serve; maintain not only order, but the reputation of the Government and the dignity of democratic institutions in this country; give the same unswerving loyalty to the present Government as you gave to its predecessors, and I assure you that the present Government, with the public confidence which it has the privilege to enjoy, will maintain your prestige and your authority more effectively than ever was done.

* * *

WHAT Mr. Munshi and the Bombay Government are asking the police to do is to change their traditions and their whole outlook on public matters. It is not an easy change to accomplish. The Bombay Government will succeed in tackling this problem, only when it will take in hand for instruction and reform the new recruit and the existing police training schools and their staff. It is there that the mischief is done and a raw recruit turns out as an insufferable bully with, as he imagines, the might of British Empire behind him. Democratic influences must be brought to bear on the teaching of the police, particularly their officers.

* * *

An Important Bye Election.

THE Hon. Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, a minister in the U. P. Congress Cabinet has, resigned his seat in the Assembly because, having contested the election on the Muslim League ticket, he crossed the floor after election and joined the Congress. We desire to offer Mr. Ibrahim our congratulations for the step he has taken. The formation of the Congress Cabinets presented difficulties in the matter of the inclusion of a Muslim in it and led to certain practices which were not desirable in the interest of the healthy growth of democratic party traditions in the country. In Bombay, the U. P. and the C. P. Muslim members of the Cabinet were not elected on the Congress ticket, which they eventually accepted. This is by no means a healthy practice, unless an avowedly coalition government is offered. The Congress cannot be unaware of it since it gave no end of trouble and imposed savage punishment upon Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar for his acceptance of a seat in the Hug Cabinet in Bengal, even though Mr. Sarkar was not elected on the Congress ticket.

* * *

Then or Now ?

PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU moved a resolution in the Council of State on 20th September urging that the Warrant non-Commissioned officers of the U. T. C. be rendered eligible to the Indian Military Academy on the same terms applicable to officers of the corresponding grades in other branches of the I. T. F. and the Auxiliary Forces and that the examination of B certificate be instituted for members of the U. T. C. with a view to their utilization for the supply of Commissioned officers in ways similar to those prescribed for the Officers Training Corps in England. Mr. Kunzru explained that he was not seeking to provide careers for University students but trying to open up new avenues of service to the nation for them.

THE resolution was opposed by the Commander-in-Chief. In support of his attitude he said that the members of the U. T. C. were regarded as suitable material for admission to the Academy, but he did not see any reason why members of the U. T. C. should be put on the same basis as the listed classes for the purposes of competing for the vacancies reserved for the latter. In regard to the second part of the resolution the Commander-in-Chief could not see any need to grant Commissions as there was an adequate supply available for admission into the Academy.

APART from the traditional and obstinate unwillingness of the Army authorities to give the slightest scope to Indian Candidates in the Army, what is interesting in Sir Robert Cassel's reply is the direct contradiction it contains of a statement made by his predecessor, Sir Philip Chetwode, on the floor of the same House two years ago. On 24th September 1935 Mr. V. V. Kalikar moved a resolution in the Council of State urging that the number of cadets admitted into the Dehra Dun Academy be raised from 60 to 120 per year. Opposing the resolution Sir Philip Chetwode, the then Commander-in-Chief, observed :

I do not disguise from you and from this House, Sir, that I am not altogether happy about the progress we are making in regard to young Indian officers. May I say with all the emphasis at my command that the whole success of Indianization depends on the class of young men we get to lead the Indianized army. We have no doubt whatever that the material from which we find non-commissioned officers and sepoy of the Indian Army is good, as good as you can get anywhere, but I cannot say that I feel the same confidence about the young men who are coming forward for commissions. I hasten to say that the ones we have got and have turned out and are in process of turning out from the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, are universally acknowledged to be as good specimens of young Indian manhood as it would be possible, to find, but we are not getting enough of them. We military authorities are only able to get the bare minimum we want and the 15 we get at each examination for the open competition and the 15 we get from the Indian Army are just about all we can get of the stamp we really want.

IT will not be considered too carping a criticism, we hope, if the public were to ask which of these two statements by two distinguished members of the British Military Service is true. Or are we to believe that within the course of two years the situation in India has changed so completely, that the willingness and calibre of the Indian youth have undergone such a complete metamorphosis? In this particular instance we feel, to quote another distinguished predecessor of Sir Robert, that there has been some "terminological inexactitude" then or now.

Articles.**SACRIFICING THE CONSUMER.**

MR. RAMSAY-SCOTT based his censure in the Assembly of Government's conduct at the International Sugar Conference on two distinct grounds. One was that the Government had failed to consult the industry either before or during the negotiations that led to the Sugar Convention and the other that India should not have been denied an export quota in the convention. There will be general agreement in respect of the first issue raised by Mr. Ramsay Scott. Though under the existing constitution the responsibility of conducting such negotiations is that of the Government alone, this does not absolve it from the duty of ascertaining responsible public opinion on any important question before entering on such negotiations. The Government of India has hitherto pursued no consistent policy in this behalf and it has deigned to consult non-officials only fitfully in a half-hearted manner. It is good, therefore, that all important cases of non-consultation should be forcibly brought home to Government by such motions of censure as the one that was passed in the Assembly last week. The refusal of the Assembly to give its consent to ratification of the Sugar Convention on these grounds was also not a harmful measure inasmuch as a ratification by India or a refusal to ratify would not make much difference to the working of the agreement during the next few years. As a matter of fact the achievements of the London Sugar Conference were not considerable and it is doubtful whether the sugar interests are going to benefit to any material extent by the International Sugar Convention. At the basis of that Convention lies an exaggerated expectation of future world demand for sugar and the export quotas allotted to most countries participating in the Conference are much higher than their average exports for the last few years. Under the circumstances it is likely that even India would have been allotted a small export quota if this had been strongly pressed for at the Conference. This again in our opinion would have made little difference to the actual course of events. For the fact remains that the basic situation of the Indian sugar industry is such that it cannot profitably export sugar for many years to come.

What, therefore, appears us to be the most significant feature of the debate, apart from the censure of Government for non-consultation, is the case made out by Mr. Ramsay-Scott for exports of sugar from India and the support it got from popular representatives. We feel bound to comment on this part of Mr. Ramsay Scott's speech especially because so far as we can ascertain, no responsible member of the Congress party expressed any dissent from the views put forward by him. Mr. Ramsay Scott based his whole case on the surplus production of sugar in India that was bound to eventualise in the near future. And, taking this surplus for granted, he asked the relevant question: "What are we to do with it?" He went on to visualise

possible ways of its disposal and laid special stress on a British quota. He tried to prove that under certain favourable conditions Indian sugar could be exported to England and made in this connection the following significant statement: "A bounty or a cess is not out of the question if by taking excess production off the market we could raise our internal prices to an economic level so as to ensure a reasonable profit to the factory without increasing the price to the consumer unduly." After expatiating on the possibilities of sugar export and its advantages to the producer Mr. Ramsay Scott went on to utter a final warning which all tax-payers and consumers would do well carefully to study. He said, "If Government prohibits the export of the surplus sugar it will have to devise some scheme to help to raise the internal prices of sugar to enable the factory to make a profit."

The industrialist, especially under protection, has at all times exhibited an insatiable appetite and there is, therefore, nothing surprising in the views expressed by Mr. Ramsay Scott. The internal consumer is regarded by the capitalist as the proper beast of burden to carry the costs of his surplus production. Of course, in the case of sugar in India these expectations and pretensions of the manufacturer are even more outrageous than is normally the case. The sugar manufacturing industry in India owes its entire existence to an enormous protective wall built up especially on its behalf. The Indian consumer has during these hard times not had any relief by way of a decrease in sugar prices. That the continuance of the 1929 prices for sugar alone has entailed a real hardship on the consumer has been shown by

the large falling-off in the internal consumption of this important food-stuff. And even so Mr. Ramsay Scott feels no embarrassment in harping on a further rise in this internal prices of sugar. Surplus production is inevitable; for so long as the capitalist is sure that, with enough agitation, wire-pulling and log-rolling he can get Government to provide for his possible losses no incentive for him to control production remains.

We are not, as we said, surprised at Mr. Ramsay Scott. What we are surprised at is that in the Assembly as at present constituted his propositions should go almost unchallenged. Is this not merely a further proof of what is often said regarding the undue softness of the Congress benches towards the pretensions of the industrial and mercantile community? Indian sugar interests are powerful, but even more powerful is the consideration so plainly expressed by Mr. Ramsay Scott: "To-day the sugar industry has been sacrificed, but it may be your pet industry to-morrow." So that whether you are interested or your friends are interested in sugar, or iron and steel or cotton or anything else which can get its claim to special protective treatment established, we must all stand and work together. Then our joint powerful voices can easily drown the small voice of the consumer or taxpayer. Such is the significance and moral, in our opinion, of the sugar vote. The more one studies protection in practice, the more one is convinced of the difficulties of proper discrimination and honest administration. With Congress influence on the other side there is no hope of arresting this avalanche; but we deem it our duty to raise our voice of protest, however unavailingly, whenever an occasion arises.

TENANCY LEGISLATION IN BIHAR.

I.

THE Bihar Tenancy Amendment Bill has been referred to a Select Committee after a very acrimonious debate in the Legislative Assembly. The Bill is an exceedingly modest measure, as we have shown before and as we show at greater length below. It contains no new principles, but only a reaffirmation and elaboration of old and universally accepted principles. This did not prevent the zamindar members, however, from creating a storm of opposition in the Assembly. In doing this they only covered themselves with ridicule. Sir Ganesh Datta Singh, for instance, exclaimed that the Ministry instead of killing the zamindars outright was engaged in lopping off one limb after another; instead of abolishing the permanent settlement at one fell swoop, the Ministry was undermining it in insidious ways. The Prime Minister handled the landlords firmly. He declared that nothing was contemplated at present which would affect the permanent settlement adversely, but if the zamindars took up such a perverse attitude a day might well come when the Ministry would be left with no alternative but to put an end to the settlement. He pointed out that though originally it was intended that the rentals to be recovered from the raiyats were to be fixed along with the land

revenue to be paid to the State, the landlords had continuously been increasing the rentals by fair means and foul. The landlords were entitled to increase the rents only if they brought under cultivation lands which were lying waste at the time of the permanent settlement, but the increase of rental from 1½ crore to 12 crores was certainly not to be accounted for by addition to cultivated lands. Sir Ganesh Datta Singh no doubt maintained that the increase was due to parti lands having been brought under cultivation, but the Prime Minister showed how entirely unfounded this contention was. He showed that the increase that could be attributed to this cause would at most be from 1½ crores to 3 crores, but the rentals had increased to 12 crores. Even during the last 15 years an increase to the tune of 1 crore and 10 lakhs had taken place, which could not be due to bringing parti lands under cultivation. The increase was really due to illegal exactions of the landlords. The exactions were illegal, but they were incorporated in the rent. "The zamindar exacted an abwab from the tenant which after some time was included in rent, and another abwab was introduced. In this way abwab after abwab was invented to be subsequently added to the rent, and that was how the rent payable to the zamindar could rise to a

phenomenal figure since the permanent settlement of 1793." The principle of fixity of rents was thus completely overthrown. Nor had the rents any kind of relation to a change in the level of prices. In his inquiry Mr. Collins had found that while the price of produce rose by 50 per cent., the rise in the incidence of rent was 340 per cent. The zamindars had also neglected to fulfil the obligation that was cast on them to provide the necessary irrigational facilities. A cash rent had been fixed on the distinct understanding that zamindars would carry out this part of the contract, but it was found that only 20 per cent. of the lands were irrigated and 80 per cent. were left to depend entirely upon rain. The Prime Minister said that landlords like Sir Ganesh Datta Singh were expected to rise to their spiritual height and tell the tenants that if the zamindar failed to make the arrangements for irrigation that were required of him, his tenants would have a moral right to withhold the payment of rent. The Advocate General and the Prime Minister between them proved to the hilt that the Bill was not only reasonable but extremely moderate and ought to be supported by landlords as well as by tenants.

II.

The Bill abolishes all grain rents and substitutes cash rents in their place. The Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, proceeding on the basis that money rents would thereafter be the rule, recognised that in exceptional cases produce rents might be allowed to continue and provided in section 40 for the commutation of these rents to nakdi rents, on the application of either a landlord or an occupancy raiyat. It would thus be seen that commutation was conferred as a sort of right on an occupancy raiyat, though the application for commutation might either be granted or refused by the Collector in case it was opposed by the landlord. The Bill now before the legislature makes no distinction between an occupancy and a non occupancy raiyat in this matter, but puts a stop to all rents in kind, even if their maintenance be desired by both landlord and tenant. As an interim measure, until a fair money rent is settled, the Bill provides that the division of the produce shall take place between the landlord and the raiyat in the proportion of 18 seers to the former and 22 to the tenant per maund. Grain rents obviously belong to a primitive state of society and must give way to a money economy as society develops. In Bengal they have been completely abolished, but they are still to be found in certain districts of Bihar, particularly Gaya.

The bhaouli system of paying rents in grain is of two kinds. Where the danabandi system is adopted, the standing crop is appraised and the landlord's share of the crop is made over to him according to this appraisal. Where the batai system is adopted, the produce is divided at the threshing-floor. Each of these two kinds of the bhaouli system has its disadvantages. In the danabandi the tenant is free to cut, collect and thresh the crop at his pleasure, but the landlord may so overestimate the yield as to make its division flagrantly unjust to the tenant. As Mr. Nathuni Lal, who is on the whole favourable to

this system, says: "It cannot be gainsaid even by the worst reactionary that crops are sometimes wilfully and at other times unwittingly overestimated with the result that in some case it becomes well-nigh impossible for the raiyat to pay in full the landlord's share even if he chooses to make up the deficiency by paying the raiyati share as well." In the batai no such exaggerated estimate is possible, but the cutting, collecting and threshing of the crop must be done according to the direction of the landlord and in the presence of his men, which often causes great inconvenience and hardship to the raiyat. The raiyats besides are often charged with secretly removing part of the harvest before it is divided between them and their landlords. If in the danabandi there is room for overestimate and extortion on the part of the landlord, in the batai there is room for concealment and fraud on the part of the tenant.

The advantage of the bhaouli system in general is that where the crops depend upon a good rainfall and where no adequate arrangements for irrigation are made the raiyats share with the zamindars loss on account of drought. Similarly, losses due to other natural calamities or a price-fall are equally shared. As Baden-Powell says, "If in outlying and precarious tracts crops are liable to loss by flood or drought, or locusts or wild easts the tenant who has to give only a fraction of the grain, actually produced and garnered, receives a practical reduction in bad years; the calamity of season and uncertainty fall on both parties equally." But the abuses to which the system is liable are very great. It may also be said that if a landlord is entitled to a fixed money rent he will have no incentive to improve or even keep in repair the large irrigation works in the province which make the province so fertile. There are many ahars (reservoirs for the storage of rain water), alongs (dams and embankments), paynes (water channels) and other means of artificial irrigation which will be neglected by the landlords unless they are given a share in the produce. This is undeniable, and though the Bill provides in clause 17 for an entire or partial remission of rent "if the landlord of such holding has failed to carry out the arrangements, expressed or implied, in respect of irrigation or the maintenance of embankments which were in force at the time when the rent of the holding was settled or became payable," it may be doubted whether the responsibility thus thrown on the landlords will be satisfactorily discharged. On the balance of advantages and disadvantages of cash rental as opposed to grain rental, local opinion inclines to favour the system of money rents. Judging between the pros and cons on this question, the *Searchlight* comes to the following conclusion:

There are certain people who do hold quite honestly that the bhaouli system is better than the cash rent system as under the former the gains and losses may be equally shared by both the landlord and the tenant as also the responsibility for keeping the land in good condition and for maintaining proper irrigation. Theoretically, their position is to a great extent unassailable, but the abuses that have grown up round the system and the actual facts of to-day leave one in doubt as to whether the system can

ever work properly except under very stringent conditions and regulations. We do not propose here to enter into a discussion regarding the relative merits of the bhaouli and the cash rental system. The fact is, however, well known that the bhaouli system has at present degenerated into an engine of oppression and the danabandi system with which it is closely associated has become the most oppressive one can imagine. The danabandi cannot be allowed to exist any further and it must go.

Then the next important part of the Bill relates to the settlement of a fair rent. In this connection it is proposed to repeal section 38 of the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, which gives leave to an occupancy raiyat to sue for a reduction of rent in certain circumstances and two new clauses are proposed to be inserted taking the matter entirely out of the hands of the courts and giving power to the Collector to cancel all enhancements of the rents of occupancy holdings made between 1911 and 1937, to reduce to such amount as he considers fair and equitable the rent of any occupancy holding the rent of which was commuted between 1911 and 1936, and order the partial or entire remission of the rent or reduce the rent of any occupancy holding for reasons mentioned in section 38 of the Act, an appeal being provided for against the order of the Collector. Objection to this part of the Bill is urged on the ground that jurisdiction of the courts is ousted, but it is plain that where complaints of excessive increases in rents are general the remedy to be provided must be speedy. Interest on arrears of rent is to be reduced, as in fact has been reduced in the sister province of Bengal, from 12½ to 6 per cent.

But the landlords' main objection to the proposed legislation is that when such drastic and even arbitrary powers are being taken to fix a fair rent, no provision is made for an easy realisation of rents which, on the Government's own showing, will be equitable when the changes contemplated by it are carried into effect. On the contrary, they complain, such realisation is being made more difficult than at present. Detention of the judgment debtor in the civil prison is to be prohibited; the moveable property of the judgment debtor is not to be attached or sold unless the decree cannot be satisfied by the attachment or sale of the holding, for the arrears of the rent of which the decree is passed. These are minor changes, not much objected to by the landlords. A more important provision is that when the property of an occupancy holder comes to be sold under the decree of a court, only so much of the holding shall be sold as will be sufficient to satisfy the amount due, and such property shall not be sold at a price lower than the specified price. Even to this not much serious objection is taken, but violent opposition is offered to the provision that, both in the matter of rents to which the summary procedure under the Public Demands Recovery Act applies and in the matter of other rents, "the court executing a decree for arrears of rent due in respect of an occupancy holding may, on the application of a judgment debtor, place the landlord in possession of the said holding for a period not exceeding seven years," and if the court does so the decree shall at the end of the period be deemed to have been satisfied

in full, and the court shall then restore the holding to the tenant or his heirs.

The landlords' objection to this clause is that in many cases a landlord will not be able to find other tenants; the tenants to be temporarily evicted may be so powerful as to prevent others from coming forward to work on the holding, and the landlord may not be able himself to take the strip of land under his khas cultivation. Even if he gets other tenants, he may not be able to realise from them the usual rent plus the arrears of rent to be collected from the evicted tenant, and thus he may incur a dead loss. Nor will this provision, it is contended, be advantageous to the raiyats. The new tenants may be so powerful as not to make it possible for the old tenant, when he is reinstated, to work the farm. As to this, surely, the Government will see to it that no man is kept out of his legitimate rights. As to the loss the landlord will suffer, it is clearly necessary to see that the raiyats are not made permanently landless. Rent must not be allowed to be so much in arrear that it will not be repaid in full if the landlord gets the land cultivated under his own supervision for seven years, which he must be prepared to do in the last resort. This clause is modelled apparently upon a similar provision for temporary eviction in the Santhal Parganas, where in case a pardhan is unable to collect rent in full the Deputy Commissioner has power to evict him for a temporary period and make over the village to the landlord for khas collection. The Bill also provides that "a raiyat shall not be ejected in execution of a decree for arrears of rent from his homestead land, whether he holds such homestead land as a part of his holding or otherwise." To this clause it is objected that when a raiyat loses his whole land in execution of a decree, he will usually leave the village altogether and settle somewhere else, and hence the homestead land to be saved will be of no avail to him. In any case such land must be saved, and if in practice it is found that it will be of no benefit to him other measures will have to be taken.

The provision against abwabs or illegal cesses is being strengthened. The present law requires the tenant from whom such exactions are made to institute a suit within six months, and if illegal exactions are proved the landlord has to pay a penalty not exceeding twice the amount exacted. This remedy is found in practice to be far from effective. The Bill makes the offence cognisable and the offender liable to severe punishment, viz. imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months or fine which may extend to Rs. 500 or both. The landlords regard this clause as both unnecessary and vindictive. It is said that at a time when rents are very much in arrear it is unlikely that anything in excess of the rent can be illegally realised. But it is known that such illegal exactions are still common and they must be rigorously stopped. The landlords fear that the provision will lead to harassment of the zamindars and corruption of the police. "It will give a handle to the police who will set up somebody to file information before

them and at once proceed to arrest the landlord or his agent with a view to warm his own pocket and afterwards report that the case has not been proved. The magistrate will issue bailable warrant in such cases. The police will get another opportunity to settle their own terms." Such abuses are possible, but it is difficult to understand how else this deep-rooted evil which has survived the attempts of Government to repress it for a century and a half can be removed.

THE MORATORIUM BILL IN MADRAS.*

THE staying of suits and proceedings is the only method of preventing a rush to courts during the pendency of legislation for relief of indebtedness. The Bill at present restricts its scope to a few agriculturists. An agriculturist must have a saleable right in land. He should not be paying an amount equivalent to land revenue, cess and rents exceeding a sum of Rs. 400. His income from land should be at least three-fourths of his total income. The Bill, therefore, excludes tenants and labourers and other non-landowning classes, as they have no saleable rights in land. So landlords and money-lenders can collect debts and rents from this class of the agricultural population. According to the last census, non-cultivating proprietors are 3.54 lakhs, tenant cultivators 13.6 lakhs, agricultural labourers 42.85 lakhs and cultivating owners 45.78 lakhs. Thus 55 lakhs of tenants and labourers will not only get no relief, but the reactions of the moratorium on this class will be severe. The creditors would like to collect their dues before any relief bill is passed. Even though the village investigations (Vol. 5, Madras Banking Enquiry Committee) deal with the class of debtors and the extent of debt, the information about the debts of the poorer classes is hopelessly meagre; even so the report indicates a group of rural money-lenders such as the Guntur merchants, the Nellore cattle dealers, the Nellore cloth and pearl merchants, etc. Even though the Bill stays the collection of rents through courts which are due before 30th June, 1935, it will not prevent the landlords from collecting the same from tenants who do not own lands as such persons do not come under the protection of the moratorium.

Moreover the Bill does not state definitely in the provisions whether the jurisdiction of the Revenue Courts is excluded in respect of suits for arrears of rent due before 30th June, 1935.

Secondly, there are a large number of working cultivators whose income from land is not three-fourths of their total income. They are nominal agriculturists having a small extent of land but supplementing their income by cart-driving, dairying, manual labour, etc. The Banking Committee's investigations show that a family of five requires at least a sum of Rs. 200 for subsistence per annum. To come under the moratorium, a sum of Rs. 150 which is three-fourths of the subsistence income should be derived from land. Such an income is possible only from 3

or 4 acres of wet land or 15 to 20 acres of dry land. The land tax on this farm will be from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. In other words, those who pay land revenue below Rs. 30 will not derive three-fourths of their income from land and consequently cannot get the benefit of the moratorium. The number of pattas paying Rs. 1 and less is 13 lakhs, those between Rs. 1 and Rs. 10 is 39 lakhs and those above Rs. 10 is 25 lakhs. So more than a majority of land-owning agriculturists cannot be helped at all.

Again, there are artisans who too require relief. The C. P. Government have passed an Act called the "Liquidation of Debts of Industrial Workers Act." If they too are to be given relief they should be brought under the moratorium. If, therefore, the intentions of the Bill are to be achieved, agricultural income should include also income from horticulture, dairying, livestock breeding, manual labour and other village industries. Secondly, the Local Government should take power under the Bill to include all persons as agriculturists who belong to any of the classes scheduled by them, e. g. labourers, artisans, fishermen, hunters, barbers, scavengers, tanners, basket-makers or any similar class of persons whom the Local Government may by notification in the *Gazette* from time to time include in the schedule. This is the procedure followed in the U. P. Relief Bill.

The urban working classes, skilled and unskilled, should also be brought under the moratorium. The wages exempted under the Code of Civil Procedure, sec. 60, relate only to those of manual labourers. The salaries recently exempted relate to those of industrial workers as defined in the Factory Act. But the moveables of other workers are not exempt from attachment. The Local Government should take power to notify such classes also as coming under the Bill.

One other result of the Moratorium Bill—certainly an unintended result—will be to quicken private voluntary sales. The object of the legislation is to arrest the sale of land by small holders. The enquiry made by the Board of Revenue in two villages in July, 1935, has shown that between 1931 and 1934 23,932 acres have changed hands owing to sales and mortgages. On this basis 103 lakhs of acres must have changed hands in the Presidency, which is practically about half the extent of occupied land in the ryotwari areas. One is delighted to note the new angle, the new outlook which the Premier of the Madras Government is instilling in the legislators; viz., to view the ryot as their master, as their food-giver, and as the humble sufferer of all ills which our kind is heir to. Now this ryot has to be protected against his goodness. Very few in this class have developed the mentality to repudiate a debt because it is not legally claimable through a court of law.

Now with the moratorium restricted to those whose income from land will be three-fourths of their total income, the majority of ryots whose income from sources other than land is larger and who will not come under the moratorium will be harassed to pay back their debts. In the case of all agriculturists private sales will be quickened. The way out is to

* This is the substance of a lecture delivered in Tamil in Karur on 28th September.

restrict sales to actual cultivators. Government, therefore, should add a clause to the Bill that private sales at least of subsistence holdings of 3 acres wet or garden or 20 acres dry would be sanctioned only to bonafide agriculturists and not to money-lenders or large holders or absentee landlords.

The Local Government should take power to sanction only bonafide sales. Further, the sale should be at a fair price in the case of creditors. The recent report of Mr. Satyanathan recommended that an upset price should be fixed by the Collector to prevent the knocking off of lands at rock-bottom prices. In the C. P. the occupancy holding is not transferable. The new ryotwari lands in that province are assigned only on condition that they are not transferable. Under sec. 50 of the Tenancy Act the occupancy right of the malguzar sir land is not transferable without the sanction of the Local Government. It is hoped that a clause will be added to the Moratorium Bill in Madras providing for private sales in the case of subsistence holdings only with the permission of the Local Government. The failure of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act is due to the existence of provisions such as fixing of instalments without reduction of interest, etc., and permitting the sale of land. Every money-lender got the sale made in his favour and the Act has encouraged the passing of lands in the hands of money-lenders.

One result of the moratorium would be the conversion of unsecured debts to various forms of mortgage. The creditor will obtain also conditional sale documents, thereby ensuring possession at a future time. He will obtain a single mortgage or create a charge on the land. Thus the very object of releasing lands from the hands of money-lenders and absentee landlords will be defeated. The bill should therefore provide that the burden of proof as to the bonafide character of the mortgage instruments registered between its enactment and the commencement of the new Debt Relief Act should lie on the mortgagee.

The question has been raised that agriculturist money-lenders should be allowed to realise their amounts in all ways. The special privileges for agriculturist money-lenders to buy the lands of the small ryot have in no way improved matters in the Punjab. Aggregation of land to the extent of more than what is cultivable in the hands of a single holder only promotes absentee cultivation.

The Bill is not to apply to loans of Joint Stock banks. This leaves a large loophole for these banks to screw up their demands.

The passing of a Moratorium Act induces the money-lender to safeguard his interests in the face of impending legislation. If there are more loopholes, the dangers of the agriculturist debtor suffering by such an act are many. If rural creditors are not to create new demands the Act should apply equally to Joint Stock banks.

K. G. SIVASWAMI

LABOUR TROUBLE IN UJJAIN.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

THESE are four textile mills in Ujjain. The total number of labourers in these mills is more than 7,000. There was a Labour Union some three years back on the lines of the Ahmedabad Labour Union and in a way it was also managed by the Ahmedabad Union. But it had to be closed under Government orders, though nothing had happened to necessitate this arbitrary order. There is a Factory Act in the State, but its provisions are more often observed in the breach than in the observance. There is no Labour Officer here nor is there any kind of supervision of labour conditions on behalf of the Government. None of the necessary laws to safeguard the interests of labour like the Workmen's Compensation Act, Trades Disputes Act, Payment of Wages Act, are promulgated here. A resolution urging the enactment of such laws was passed by the State Assembly two years ago, but some months back the resolution was vetoed on the ground that it was premature, though this industry has been in existence in the State for more than 30 years.

In June last mill hands of three mills went on strike. Through the intervention of local officials the matter was settled and some small concessions were made, though the important item of wages is still hanging fire. In the fourth mill, which is the oldest mill here, labour troubles reached such a pitch that the position became simply unbearable and the labourers therefore struck work. Two to three months' wages have consistently fallen due, and in some cases even six or eight months' wages are in arrears. The mill was worked for twelve hours a day, in spite of the Factory Act. The labourers were very often maltreated in many ways, corporeal punishment being usually resorted to. And all this was done under the very nose of an official who was styled as Receiver, the said mill being indebted to the Government to a very large extent. The district officer was also in the know of all these things, and very often remonstrances reached him, but to no effect. Every sort of attempt to create a split among the labourers is being made. Nothing is being done for the payment of arrears of wages, the millowner saying that he has no money and the local officials saying that they cannot help. Wires and representations are sent to the Government, but they are still unheeded.

One labour leader, Juggan Khan, has been deported for ten years on the ground that he once belonged to the communist party of Bombay. This order is ill-advised, unjust, harsh and illegal. Action against other leaders is in contemplation. Labourers are getting very uneasy. Holding of meetings for ventilating grievances are greatly resented by officials. Force is being used to eject labourers from mill-chawls and victimisation is also being threatened. Intervention of public workers has had no effect. The behaviour of the district officer towards labourers and their leaders is savage. Labourers have been so far extremely peaceful in spite of frequent provocation.

An inquiry into all these things is urgently needed not only to redress their present grievances, but also to make such things impossible in future. Gwalior claims to be a big State and also claims to be progressive. The young Maharaja is looking into the affairs of the State with great industry and has a sincere desire for the betterment of the subjects. But as things usually happen, interested persons and local officials do not present things in their due perspective to him and delaying tactics are usually being adopted. Workers are usually being misrepresented. An instance in point can well be given. Mr.

Rawal has been working in a village nearby for the last two years. Soon after he settled there a complaint was made by an orthodox patel alleging that Mr. Rawal was doing certain undesirable things there. The matter was duly inquired into by a Tahsildar and the complaint was dropped as baseless. This old complaint is again being raked up and it is learnt that it is to be inquired into behind the back of Mr. Rawal.

SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES IN MADRAS.

A perusal of the reports of the Department of Industries of Madras for the past few years will disclose the fact that the Department has not been able to do much for the development of small industries probably for want of a clear-cut policy, necessary staff and other reasons. Serious effort was made to study the question of organising and developing these industries so far back as 1927 when the Government deputed a Special Officer to carry out a survey of Cottage industries. As a result of his enquiry separate reports pertaining to different districts and a report of general survey were published in 1929. But it is regrettable so far the Government has not taken adequate steps to tackle the question or give effect to any of the recommendations contained in the Special Officer's reports. Such help as is being rendered to weaving, sericulture etc., is due to grants-in-aid received from the Government of India for specific purposes. It is recognised that in any programme of rural uplift the improvement of the economic condition of the rural population should be the main plank and that in an agricultural country like India the provision of subsidiary occupations in order to argument the meagre resources of the agriculturists is absolutely necessary. A scheme for the development of rural industries should be undertaken immediately. The example of Japan which is largely a country of small industries has many lessons for those applying their minds for the development of rural industries. Japan is an instance of a country where small scale industries have not only survived competition of large scale production but also have in fact increased in number and volume, so much so that a large percentage of goods exported from Japan are the products of small-scale industries.

For a proper appreciation of the scope and extent to which the Provincial Government can afford assistance to industries either by technical advice, financial assistance etc., as such help depends on their character and magnitude, it is necessary to classify industries under different categories, roughly as follows:—

- (1) Major industries organised in central factories in which mechanical or electric power is employed on a large scale;
- (2) Minor industries organised in small establishments sometimes using mechanical or electric power on small scale;
- (3) Cottage Industries.

The purpose of this note is not to deal with Major industries which owing to their very character receive influential backing and support. Even if the State wishes to offer assistance it should be through separate organisations in which the State may take a leading part. It is in regard to industries coming under (2) and (3) the problem has to be solved. Even in respect of these industries it may be argued the provisions of the State Aid to Industries Act with some modifications suggested by the experience gained in working it will amply serve the purpose. That the existing provisions of the Act have not succeeded in stimulating the industrial development of the presidency is a recognised fact. How best to recast it in

order it may fulfil the original expectations of the framers of the Act, what the obstacles in the development of industries are and how to remove them are matters which need the immediate consideration of Government. Perhaps the simplification of the machinery set up under the Act also needs consideration.

How to deal with small scale industries which may come either under (2) or (3) requires further detailed examination. The definition of the word 'Cottage Industries' has been modified to include all industries carried on in the homes of the workers as distinct from those carried on in factories'. There was the original restricted definition of 'Cottage industries' viz: 'industries carried on exclusively for the benefit of and by workers in their homes and not industries carried on for the benefit of middlemen, though the workers happen to work not in factories but in their own cottages. The revised definition no doubt takes into account the fact that there are certain industries in which the entire elimination of the middlemen may not be possible, nay even desirable. Even after this amended definition of 'Cottage industries' it is not certain whether a distinct line of demarcation can be drawn between 'Minor industries' and 'Cottage industries' as both of them are found side by side and their problems are similar perhaps only differing in degree. Then again whether cottage industries as such can thrive for the experience of these industries carried on in the homes of workers has been disappointing without proper supervision of production to maintain uniformity in quality, to reduce the cost of production and to gather and market the finished products. It is seen their quality is not uniform, the cost of production is high and the difficulties in gathering the finished products for marketing are often insuperable. While from the point of view of the workers allowing them to work in their own homes may be desirable one cannot say the same thing from a business view-point. Still as long as some of them are followed in their homes and help either to maintain a large part of the population in their hereditary trades or to supplement the precarious income received from agriculture their development should be stimulated taking all possible precautions necessary to avoid the evils enumerated.

The problem of Minor industries as already defined related to finance. The indigenous credit agencies such as banks and Money-lenders play a considerable part. But the terms on which the monies are advanced are not favourable at all. They insist upon tangible and easily recoverable security, high rate of interest, short period of repayment and other condition which in nature of things they cannot fulfil. So they are put to great difficulties. Under the State Aid to Industries Act they can receive assistance. But the conditions of grant are so rigorous especially in regard to security that very few industries which have no assets at their inception can satisfy them. The terms on which aid is given should be relaxed. In this connection it is understood the Director of Industries has prepared a note for the consideration of the Board of Industries suggesting some modifications. It may be considered as also such other amendments necessary to promote their development. The Department of Industries should continue to help these industries with technical advice and guidance, to develop the existing markets and create new ones and in fact serve as their friend, philosopher and guide. The Department should also explore the possibilities of new minor industries, interest the public and see to the introduction, offering all possible assistance to new ventures. The courses of studies in the Industrial schools either conducted or aided by the Department should altered to suit the needs of minor industries. At present there is much

overlapping and the pupils coming out of these institutions find it difficult either to start their own concerns or secure employment in existing industries as the present courses of studies have no relation generally to the industries of the area in which the training institutions are located.

The industries which are followed as the main occupation such as weaving and subsidiary occupations followed by the agriculturists during spare time carried on in the homes of the workers as distinct from those carried on in factories deserve special consideration. The report on the survey of Cottage industries gives a list of such main and subsidiary occupations. Some of them have languished for want of adequate support while others are lingering on leading a precarious existence because the artisans engaged in them have no other means of livelihood. The artisans following these occupations have to depend almost entirely on the local Sowcar who is in most cases a middleman. These middlemen are generally traders who supply raw materials and take back the finished products paying such wages as they like. In some cases these middlemen have establishments of their own in which the artisans are employed as wage-earners. The difficulties under which most of these Home industries, as I would prefer to call them, suffer may be summarised as follows and no comment is necessary as they are all too well-known and recognised :

- (1) lack of facilities for obtaining raw materials required on advantageous terms ;
- (2) lack of guidance in production regarding quality, Standard, cost and design ;
- (3) lack of facilities for giving necessary finish to articles manufactured ;
- (4) lack of marketing facilities and an agency to bring the producer and the consumer into contact ;
- (5) lack of Capital not only for outlay but also for carrying on the industry during the time the articles manufactured are in the process of marketing ;
- (6) lack of facilities for maintaining stocks to meet sudden and unexpected demand ;
- (7) lack of ideas of costing etc ;
- (8) lack of self-confidence in the workers themselves, and their desire to cling to old methods of production.
- (9) to take such other steps to promote the development of Home Industries.

These problems are common to all small-scale industries especially to Home industries. But in the case of Home industries followed as they are by ignorant and illiterate workers, they are accentuated and how best to remove them in order the large part of the rural population may continue to follow them with advantage and also revive the languishing industries and start new ones are the problems to be tackled. To leave them unorganised either for purposes of production or for marketing the finished products is to toll their death knell and bring misery to the toiling millions. To organise them on the basis of organised Major or Minor industries is also out of the question. Owing to their peculiar character they are not susceptible to any method of organisation except the co-operative method. Any Co-operative organisation set up should arrange to supply raw materials required, provide financial assistance required during the period of manufacture to enable the workers to maintain themselves, and arrange for the sale of the finished products. The workers should be enabled to know what the consumers need, how new tastes can be stimulated and fresh demand created. "New sale methods, new ideas of publicity, new methods of canvassing and propaganda are some of the means essential for the successful organisation and creation of fresh markets". This necessitates the setting up of an organisation for the standardisation of production introduction of new and popular designs, arrange-

ment for speedy supply and sale of finished products, and creation of an aptitude in the workers for adaptation and assimilation of new ideas. It is not enough if this new organisation attends to marketing and other cognate problems only. It should arrange for the purchase of raw materials required in bulk and distribute them on easy terms to workers ; it should also give financial aid to workers during the period of employment. In short it should be a Financing and Marketing Society established at a central place with a net-work of affiliated Co-operative Societies of workers formed in the different parts of the presidency. This central organisation should also serve as a Bureau of Information doing everything possible to bring the producer and the consumer into contact. It should also run Emporiums in the different parts of the presidency where the finished products are exhibited for sale.

The duties of this Central Society may be summarised as follows :

- (1) to purchase raw materials required in bulk and arrange for their supply to co-operative societies of workers on easy terms giving guarantee to suppliers.
- (2) to make cash advances to Co-operative Societies for paying wages to workers and to meet other contingent charges up to a certain limit on the security of finished products ;
- (3) to buy finished products from the Co-operative Societies for sale on consignment account paying them advances a certain proportion of their cost on receipt and the balance after the sale is effected ;
- (4) To open Emporiums for the sale of products ;
- (5) to appoint selling agents outside the province ;
- (6) to raise share capital, receive deposits and borrow from Co-operative Banks ;
- (7) to open a bureau of Commercial Information and to carry on propaganda by advertising widely, publishing catalogues and bulletins, holding exhibitions etc ;
- (8) to stimulate the production according to the demand introducing fresh designs etc. ;

All or some of these methods are in actual practice adopted in the case of Weaving. How far they have proved successful it is too early to say. Even if there is doubt entertained in certain quarters regarding the success of the methods employed in regarding to Weaving, it is not too much to say that there is nothing wrong with the methods at all. If the success foreshadowed has not been achieved, it is due more to other causes than owing to any intrinsic defects in the system. Those causes may be noted and removed in the promotion of the proposed scheme.

The Central Financing and Marketing Society may not be able to raise the capital required for carrying on its activities. The affiliated Co-operative Societies consisting as they will of poor workers may not be able to gather enough funds required for their operations. The Central Society would need large amounts to purchase raw materials for supplying them to affiliated Societies, to give financial assistance to them and to make arrangements for marketing finished products. It has to maintain an office to do these things and to co-ordinate the activities of affiliated societies. In the case of the Central Weavers' Society the same difficulties would have been experienced but for the grant-in-aid received from the Government of India. The District Central Banks who ought to advance monies to such Co-operative Societies are somehow averse to it. To look for help from that quarter is perhaps to court failure. Then Government alone should offer financial assistance to this Central Organisation.

What form the Government Aid should take and to what extent are also points for consideration. First of all, for a period of years the Government should

give an annual subsidy to meet the expenses of the Central Society and ungrudgingly place the services of the Industries Department in regard to technical advice and guidance. As there should be correlation between the education imparted in the Industrial Schools and the small-scale industries, the officer in charge of the Industrial education should be the Technical Adviser to the Central Society. Besides giving aid for recurring expenses, the Government may either take some shares in the Central Society or provide the necessary Capital as loan without interest for a period of years. In order to attract share capital the Government may also guarantee the principal of and dividend for share-holders for a period of years. Such a guarantee may attract enough Capital and so it may not be necessary for Government either to take shares or give loan without interest to the Central Society. The Government should nominate the first set of Directors for a term of three years and the Joint Registrar of Co-operative Societies, the Technical Adviser of the Industries Department and the Director of Industries shall be ex-officio Directors.

While the general scheme outlined may receive the support of the Department of Industries and the Co-operative Department, objection may be raised to Government financing the Central Society. The arguments in favour of such assistance are well set forth in the Report of the Industrial Finance Committee, 1935, of the United Provinces. In the United Provinces they suggest the organisation of a joint-stock Company whose capital should be underwritten by another proposed Industrial Credit Bank. No such proposal even to finance Minor Industries is suggested in this province as the machinery already existing in this province under the State Aid to Industries Act may with certain necessary alterations can be used

for the purpose of development of minor industries. In the absence of the Industrial Credit Bank to underwrite the shares of the Central Society, the Government should come forward to give financial assistance.

The proposals contained in this note may be summarised for purposes of easy reference :

(1) Except giving technical advice and guidance as is being done, the Government need not at present do anything for Major industries ;

(2) Amendment of the State Aid to Industries Act and the rules framed under it may be undertaken to afford greater facilities and financial assistance to Minor industries ;

(3) The Cottage or Home industries as it is preferred to call them should be organised and developed on a co-operative basis, with a Central Financing and Marketing Society with Co-operative Societies of workers in the province affiliated to it;

(4) The Government should provide all possible assistance, financial and otherwise, to help their growth on the lines indicated in the note ;

(5) The Courses of studies in industrial Schools should be reorganised to suit the needs of the Minor and Home industries ;

(6) The report of the Survey of Cottage industries should be revised and brought upto date including in the survey even minor industries.

(7) An officer of the Industries or Co-operative Department should be immediately deputed to study the organisation of small scale industries in that Country, especially in regard to facilities for production and marketing of finished products.

S. SURYANARAYAN RAO

FEDERATION NEGATIVES DOMINION STATUS.

MR. R. G. PRADHAN'S SPEECH.

In his speech in the Bombay Legislative Council on the Constituent Assembly Resolution, Mr. R. G. Pradhan, a Congress member, spoke as follows on federation :

MY honourable friend, Prof. Davar, in a very convincing speech which he made yesterday showed how this new constitution is calculated to perpetuate the *economic* domination of Great Britain over India. I maintain that it is calculated also to perpetuate the *political* domination of Great Britain over India. For this purpose I shall just briefly analyse the scheme. I do not want to look at the scheme from the point of view of the ideal of national independence because I have never thought for a moment—and I do not think now—that the British Government or the British people will ever agree to the grant of national independence to India. America has promised independence to the Philippine Islands, but Great Britain is not America; she is still actuated by the imperialist spirit, and the last thing she will ever do, unless she is forced by circumstances, is to agree to the grant of national independence to this country. Therefore I do not propose to look at this constitution from the point of view of national independence. I look at it from the point of view of Dominion Status, which is the goal of the Liberal Party and some other sections of opinion in this country. Considering this constitution from that point of view, judging it by that criterion, I maintain

that this constitution is deliberately designed to prevent India from ever achieving Dominion Status. Just consider the constituent members of this proposed federation; they are the provinces of British India and the Indian States. The Indian States will never be granted Dominion Status, and that is obvious since there is British paramountcy. The Indian States are subject to British paramountcy, and will always remain subject to British paramountcy. There is another feature of the present constitution, and it is this, that the federation will never be dissolved; it is incapable of being dissolved. Take these two into consideration and then consider whether it is possible, within the constitution itself, by a process of evolution, for Federal India as proposed in the Government of India Act, 1935, to attain Dominion Status. I say, Sir, that it is impossible. We may attain Dominion Status in spite of it; we may have it by ending it, by destroying it. But within the constitution itself, by a process of natural evolution, it is impossible for Federal India ever to attain to the status of a Dominion, as defined in the Statute of Westminster. Sir, to my mind, this is the most serious objection to the proposed federal scheme. Honourable Members are aware that the Congress is not at all opposed to the principle of federation; it is not opposed to the ultimate goal of federation. But we are opposed, the

Government is opposed, to this particular brand of federation which, as I say, is entirely calculated, deliberately designed, to retard our political advance.

Sir, recently two arguments have been advanced in support of this federal scheme. It has been said that Indian unity requires it; that this federal scheme is designed in the interest of Indian unity. That is one argument recently advanced by H. E. the Governor General while addressing a joint session of the Indian Legislature. Sir, we also want Indian unity. But we want genuine Indian unity. I go further and say that we want unity not only between British India and the autocratic, reactionary, unprogressive rulers of Indian States, but we want unity between the people of British India and the people of the Indian States. They are our own kith and kin; flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. We want to achieve unity, but not this kind of superficial unity, designed in the interests of perpetuating British domination, economic and political, over this country. We want a genuine, heart to heart, unity between the people of British India and the people of Indian States. What do you find in this constitution? As has been pointed out by some Honourable Members, there is not the slightest place given to the people of the Indian States in this constitution. They are treated as if they are not the sons of the soil; they are treated as if they are not human beings; they are treated as if they are chattel. Speaking for myself, I would not approve of such a scheme of federation, even if otherwise it is satisfactory, if this objection to federation is not removed.

Then the other argument advanced by His Excellency the Governor General is this, that it is intended to save Indian democracy, to save the principle of democracy. When I read this remark in the speech of His Excellency the Governor General, I was reminded of what used to be said at the time when the Great War broke out. It was said that the War was intended to end war. But war has not been ended by that War. Unfortunately, as a result of that War, as the aftermath of that War, war is coming nearer and nearer; it is appearing more and more distinctly on the horizon. Just imagine His Excellency the Governor General talking of saving the principle of democracy when we do not want this constitution, when this federal scheme is a negative of democracy. We do not want it: the Indian people do not want it, and still the British Government wants to impose it on us. Yet His Excellency talks in this fashion, says that the scheme is designed for the purpose of saving democracy. I say, Sir, all these arguments are hollow; all these arguments are misleading. The truth with regard to this constitution, in particular with regard to this federal scheme, is that it is deliberately designed in order that the economic, as my Honourable Friend Prof. Davar said, and the political domination of Great Britain over this country should last as long as possible, may be perpetuated as long as possible, until an international situation arises or there is an accession to our inner strength, which may compel the Government to turn, to recede, from that position, and to accede to our demand for complete indepen-

dence, our demand for an independent, democratic, national Indian Government.

Reviews.

THE LEAGUE FIASCO.

THE LEAGUE FIASCO (1920 TO 1936)
By VICTOR MARGUERITTE. (William Hodga.)
1936. 23cm. 284p. 10/6.

THE French Historian has been a friend of the League of Nations and still continues to be true to the ideal it set out with. His book with that alarming title seems to be deliberately intended as an eye-opener to the League's friends.

Of the two aims of the League, the one regarding the development of international co-operation has been a considerable success even though a much larger number of ratifications of the various conventions were to be desired. Where the League has failed is in regard to its second and the more important task it set itself to achieve: the achievement of peace.

For the first few years, when the nations were war-weary and remembered only too well the horrors of the Great War, the statesmen of the League achieved some notable triumphs. Their failures in the Fiume and Vilna affairs were passed over without much adverse comment.

Then came a brilliant period in the history of the League when M. Briand was the most outstanding leader at Geneva. From Locarno to the Hoover moratorium the progress achieved was very creditable but behind the scenes one could perceive the sad tale of opportunities lost because of the shortsighted policy of politicians.

The memories of the Great War that made international public opinion an active force were fast receding and the representatives of nations who gathered at Geneva developed a habit of private consultations between individual nations for mutual benefit. Whenever they were called upon to take an important international decision they arranged matters behind the scenes and used the League as a registration office. The Geneva mentality was giving place to the old-fashioned methods of secret diplomacy and sinister deals.

Disarmament was fast degenerating into an endless series of committees and commissions in which each nation was manoeuvring for position and trying to put the blame on others rather than working with a will to bring about the achievement of the common aim.

The great economic depression that overwhelmed the world and from which we are not as yet out of danger intensified autarchic tendencies where each one for itself and the devil for the hindmost became the rule and the World Economic Conference was a miserable fiasco.

Alongside of these developments of the post-Briand period came those questions that took the wind out of the League's sails. The Gran Chaco dispute dragged on for three years, and the League only registered the *fait accompli*. Japan's attack on China brought out only a report and a moral protest, leaving Japan triumphant. Italy's attack on Abyssinia was met by sanctions—an apparently further step in the right direction but, Italy knew how to get behind it, and the League having lost its first war made a miserable surrender.

All the time disarmament was being transformed into a feverish rearmament and with the Spanish civil war, another great war appears to be in the air.

It is difficult not to agree with the authors' verdict that the League virtually died in the dark month of July 1936. But recent events, particularly the growing accord between the two Western Democracies, the greater readiness to face the facts and the awakened public opinion of the world and the growing realisation that no nation is really out to face an actual war on a great scale, make us realise the truth behind the author's concluding sentence. "Let us still leave the door ajar for hope."

R. H. KELKAR.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIA.

THE STORY OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION.

BY C. E. M. JOAD. (Macmillan, Bombay.) 1936. 20cm. 152p. Re. 1-8-0.

THE author of the "Counter Attack from the East" who has written this "Story" needs no introduction. This introduction to the study of Indian civilization from the pen of an eminent western philosopher should serve as an eye-opener to critics of the Miss Mayo school. None so blind as those who will not see. There have been studies and criticisms of all types regarding India. It is not very often that one comes across critics of the candor of Professor Joad. He has never visited this country, but has nevertheless written with sympathetic insight. The essential difference between East and West is one of outlook. There are few who are capable of transcending their provincialism and looking at countries and cultures from the point of view of Human civilization as a whole. The contribution of "The Story of Indian Civilization" is in its correct stand-point rather than in its informative character. If India is to be understood at all by a foreigner with a radically different outlook, he must view India as a whole and not piecemeal; and this Professor Joad has done in the work under review.

The author himself considers it "an impressionist sketch that seeks to present a picture of some brightly coloured scenes rapidly observed by the artist, and rendered from a highly personal stand-point almost at the moment of vision." His plan has been "to select those aspects of Indian History which have seemed to me significant or distinctive," and his "interest is mainly attracted by the thought and culture of India," rather than the political history of the country.

The book, or rather essay, opens with an outline of Indian chronology beginning with *circa* 3000 B. C. and closing with 1935 A. D. The items selected for this list are not more than thirty-two, but they at once reveal the author's judgment. Chapter I is entitled "Sketch of Indian History"; but is also typical as an interpretation. He finds in "the Mingling of Races" one of the characteristics of the Indian disposition: "Indian history has been distinguished throughout by a tendency towards toleration." This key-note of Indian civilization he traces through all its phases and aspects. "The characteristic Indian endeavour has been to look for the common element in apparently different things, the single reality that underlies the apparently many appearances."

This view is illustrated in succeeding chapters. The second is entitled "The Search for Truth and Perfection" (Philosophy and Religion); the third is "The Search for Beauty" (Art); the fourth, "The Search for Expression" (Literature); the fifth "The Art of Government"; and sixth, "The Impact of the West." Through all these the inspiring idea of the

Past is traced up to the Present. For instance, he finds in the modern idealistic school of Indian artists the embodiment of "the same intention to express the mental and spiritual conceptions of the artists as has dominated Indian art during the great periods".

If the past of India has any significance to modern India, England, and the World, the last chapter of this book reveals it in a wonderfully outspoken manner. Both the materialistic and spiritual aspects of the impact of the West are brought out with a group of the essentials that the philosophic vision of the writer alone could discuss through a mass of bewildering facts. To comment on this chapter adequately would require the underlining of every word in it for the benefit of both Indians and Englishmen, though his conclusion seems too trite and obvious: "What at the present moment seems to be required is a judicious blend of Western materialism and Indian spirituality. The prospects of Indian civilization depend, in other words, upon the ability of Indians to take over and adopt the material goods of Western civilization without falling a victim to the characteristic Western inability to see beyond them." Professor Joad has made a successful attempt to discover for the benefit of the West "the spirit of India", and to know "how much of the enterprise and efficiency of the West India may safely adopt without danger to her 'spirit' or to what still remains to her of it." The essay merits thoughtful reading at the hands of all interested in the future of humanity.

S. R. SHARMA.

HINDU POLITICAL SCIENCE.

THE NATURE AND GROUNDS OF POLITICAL OBLIGATION IN THE HINDU STATE.

By J. J. ANJARIA. (Longmans.) 1935. 22cm. 323p. Rs. 7-8.

THIS book belongs to a series on Regional and Sociological Studies edited by Prof. N. A. Thooti, D. Phil. (Oxon.), of the University of Bombay. The chief merits of the work are its thoroughness, clarity of thought and expression, and freedom from bias. The writer is not swept off his feet by a sense of false patriotism in making exaggerated claims for the contributions made by early Hindu thinkers to the history of political thought and statecraft. He admits that in ancient India political science was not developed as an independent science, but only in relation to religion, theology and philosophy. What one finds is various practical maxims of statecraft rather than a well worked out theory of the state.

The learned author draws, wherever possible parallels between the ancient Hindu and Western political thought, but avoids the fanciful comparisons and excesses of earlier writers. He rightly remarks that much of the Hindu political thought centres round kingship. The Divine Right theory of kings and Force theory are represented as having played a great part in early Hindu thought, although they were not carried to absurd extremes. Kingly offices and functions are stressed by nearly all the writers. The social contract theory of the Western thinkers is found only in its elementary form. The early Hindus, lacking a strong sense of social consciousness, do not develop the organic theory of the state fully. The author believes to be far-fetched the attempt of Dr. Bhandarkar to equate the doctrine of *saptanaga* with the organic theory of the state. He holds that the conception of the state as a moral organism is not really present in Hindu thought.

The author rightly claims that the nature of the Hindu state is determined by the conception of Dharma. Dharma is at the heart of Hindu life and thought. At times it is identified with the existing social order, thus becoming a justification of the status quo, idealising the actual instead of actualising the ideal. At other times it points to higher reaches and endeavours to unify the varied life of man under an all-embracing principle. In ordinary practice, however, Dharma comes to mean Swadharma, which unduly emphasises the separateness of the individual. Sadharana Dharma seems to mean only duties common to all, instead of duties necessary in the interest of the common good.

The author does not find any strong tinge of pluralism in Hindu thought. There is no division of sovereignty in the real sense. However, various associations existed in the Hindu state which were not co-ordinate in authority with the state. The king was the final authority. Though his power may not have been arbitrary, its basis was autocratic. The Hindu state recognises plurality in so far as it does not militate against the central conception of Dharma. In other words, plurality is recognised inasmuch as that is the nature of Swadharma.

The author's conclusions are: (1) The conception of Dharma as relating all loyalties to the central principle underlying the universe is so important that it should not be given up. (2) Genuine democracy alone can satisfy man's creative spirit.

The book is bound to be of value to all those who are interested in a comparative study of ancient Hindu and modern Western political thought, in both of which the author seems well-grounded.

There are a few slips in grammar, idiom, and printing, which, we hope, will be corrected in subsequent editions.

E. ASIRVATHAM.

Correspondence.

DEMAND FOR A MORATORIUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE SERVANT OF INDIA."

SIR,—You fear that unless an immediate moratorium on the debts of agriculturists is declared, money-lenders will flood the courts with suits for recovery of their debts and obtain decrees and sequester their debtors' lands before the promised legislation for relief of agricultural indebtedness comes to be enacted some months hence.

I can, however, assure you that the fear is groundless.

A suit filed in a civil court has to go through certain preliminary processes, which ordinarily take about three months, before it becomes ripe for hearing. There is no civil court in which there is no accumulation of work, and in many of the courts there is generally congestion. Hence, of the cases ripe for hearing the more recent ones have ordinarily to go on the waiting list and stay there till the older cases are disposed of. Besides, owing to the elaborate investigation that has to be made, a suit under the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act cannot ordinarily be decided in less than six months after it is set down for hearing, and often takes longer. Moreover, in most cases, the decree would be made payable by instalments, or at any rate after the expiry of six months, and cannot be executed forthwith. Further, where execution is sought against the debtors' land,

the decree has to be transferred to the Collector, who is enjoined by the Land Revenue Code to avoid bringing the land to auction and arrange for the gradual satisfaction of the decree in other ways wherever it is permissible and possible to do so. And in any case, the execution process takes considerable time and cannot generally be completed in less than a year. It would thus be seen that there is not the remotest likelihood of any agriculturist losing his land between now and the passing of the promised legislation through any suit that may be brought against him for recovery of debt during the interval.

It is, however, possible that courts may be flooded with such suits during the interval if the belief prevails that a decree obtained before the new legislation comes into force will prevent Conciliation Boards from going behind it and reducing the amount payable under it or altering the mode of payment. There is, however, every reason to believe that decretal debts will be brought within the purview of Conciliation Boards. The court will have determined the amount which, according to the equities specified in the D. A. R. Act, is justly due to the creditor. But Conciliation Boards will have to take into account further equities such as the enhancement in the value of money which has taken place within recent years, and the debtor's repaying capacity as measured by the value of his property (exclusive of such property as is not available to creditors). Besides, for reasons stated above, hardly any suits now instituted are likely to culminate in decrees before the new legislation comes into force. The only result of such suits will be to simplify the work of Conciliation Boards.

A moratorium may become necessary when the new legislation comes into force. That will mainly depend on the character of the legislation. At present it is unnecessary as well as harmful.

There is a great temptation to a Congress Ministry to declare a moratorium, both because it was promised at the elections and also because the declaration would strike the imagination of the masses and redound to the credit of the Congress. I trust, however, that the Bombay Ministry will resist the temptation. I also trust that I have not written in vain, and you will cease leading them into temptation.

P. J. TALEYARKHAN.

Surat,
2nd October.

[Mr. Taleyarkhan will have noticed that the Congress Ministry's objection to a moratorium rests on entirely different grounds than those advanced by him, and it would appear from his letter that the Government's arguments do not appeal to him. We are willing to take it from him that decrees and distraint are not likely to follow quite as soon as we had feared, but we would suggest that he should not proceed on the easy assumption that Debt Conciliation Boards, when constituted, would have the power to reduce decretal debts. Most Provincial Acts dealing with the subject expressly exclude such debts from the jurisdiction of Conciliation Boards. Bombay's Boards might be given extended powers, but they might also be given limited powers. Mr. Taleyarkhan has not shown how a moratorium would be harmful. In any case we hope he would not advise the Congress or any other party blithely to set aside its electoral pledges.—Ed., S. O. I.]