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Topics of the Week.

Cancellation of Restrictive Orders.

THE Bombay Government has at last removed the restrictions on labour leaders and labour organisations imposed under the Emergency Powers Act and restored these persons and bodies to civil liberty. This fact itself proves how false was the charge that was levelled by Congressmen against those, whether Congressmen or non-Congressmen, who were urging the Government to take this step, that their criticism was unhelpful or embarrassing. A criticism that is reasonable is helpful or unhelpful as the Government chooses to look upon. If the Government is wise, it will take advantage of the pressure of public opinion that is expressed to expedite the action that it itself thinks necessary but cannot for one reason or another take promptly. In this particular case we have no doubt that the Kher Ministry will appreciate the assistance such friendly criticism as we ourselves and others have ventured to make, gave it in enabling the Ministry fully to carry out its pledges to the electorate, whatever its overzealous friends may say to the contrary. Anyhow the Government's action has fully vindicated our own criticism addressed in all good faith, and we congratulate the Ministry upon what it has done.

Textile Wages Inquiry.

THE Bombay Government has appointed a Committee to inquire into the wages of labourers in textile mills in the Bombay Presidency. The inquiry has come none too soon, and indeed with the boom period ahead, the matter is so urgent that the Government has directed the Committee to render an interim report on the probability of an immediate wage in-

crease. The appointment of Mr. D. R. Gadgil to the Committee ensures that the inquiry will be thorough, comprehensive and on scientific lines. His competence in economic matters, independence of judgment and radical approach to social problems constitute a guarantee that the labour point of view will receive due attention. Two other members of the Committee, Messrs. Vaikunth Mehta and Brelvi, have genuine sympathy for labour and can be trusted to do justice to its cause. One only hopes that they will not have their ears too close to the ground to find out what kind of recommendations will be regarded by the Congress Party as embarrassing to itself. There are instances of non-official Congress reports which have become a source of difficulty and perplexity to the authorities. The members of the present Committee must not allow themselves to be influenced by such considerations. We make no complaint that neither the employees nor the employers find a place on the Committee. But that among the assessors in behalf of labour there is no one who has first-hand knowledge of conditions in Bombay is a defect which is likely to impair the Committee's usefulness to no small extent. It is a very encouraging sign that Bombay labour has closed its ranks and decided to tender joint evidence before the Committee. We hope that the Committee's findings will be satisfactory and will be followed up by speedy and vigorous governmental action.

Self-Supporting Education.

WRITING on the Abbott-Wood Report on Education, Dr. A. B. Dhruva agrees wholeheartedly with the amplified interpretation put by Mr. Wood upon "literacy". He says: "That reading, writing and arithmetic should not be taught in an abstract or mechanical way, but should be made concrete and visible is a precept which has been known and practised in modern India for the last fifty years." Dr. Dhruva thus supports the proposed introduction of suitable handicrafts in primary education with a view to creating an active interest in children in practical matters and training their faculties, but he also deems it necessary to enter a caveat. He says:

Mahatmaj wants to make primary education "self-supporting" and he would, therefore, engage children in such small industries as spinning, etc. and make them literate through the agency of these industries. I would gladly welcome the introduction of such interesting crafts as spinning in rural and even urban schools, provided the educational stand-point is not subordinated to that of the financial, that is, the State making a little money out of the industry to support the school. The question before the educationalist should be merely: "Does this craft, or rather activity, interest these children, no matter whether it pays or not?" If it pays, well and good; if it does not, that is no reason for discarding it, provided it is found educationally suitable. In other words the stability of the school and the school-master should in no case be made to

depend upon the return which a particular school brings in rupees, annas and pies.

Bihar's Indebtedness Bill.

THE following news item has been published :

It is understood that the draft of the agricultural income tax and rural indebtedness bills will be shortly discussed by the Council of Ministers, when final touches will be given. Both the bills will be introduced in the next session of the Bihar Assembly which will probably be held in November. It is understood that the main object of the rural indebtedness bill is to check the exorbitant rates of interest charged by money-lenders. The draft bill, it is said, proposes to fix the maximum limit of interest at about 12 per cent. The bill will also provide for the licensing of money-lenders who will have to submit annual accounts to their debtors. The time limit for launching civil suits for the recovery of loans and interest will be three years.

If the debt bill of Bihar does nothing more than to put a maximum limit on interest rates—and that at 12 per cent.—it will be a poor bill. We have no desire to indulge in criticism of the Ministry on the strength of press reports, which are often unfounded, but we wish to give a timely warning that unless the Ministry made up its mind to tackle the problem of rural indebtedness in a bold and comprehensive manner, it will engender grave discontent. Even the pre-reform bureaucratic Governments have taken far more radical action than the post-war Congress Government seems willing to take, if report speaks true.

Sauce for the Goose, &c.

THE Revenue Minister of Madras, Mr. T. Prakasam, as every other Revenue Minister, is being urged in addresses and representations to grant remissions of land revenue. In a memorandum presented to Mr. Prakasam at Anicut in Tinnevely District, a deputation of peasants that waited on him asked that "the existing assessments should be revised in reference to a common denominator, i. e., the price-level of any one year, and that the assessments thus revised should prima facie form the basis of the standard assessment." Similarly, a peasants' march was organised, like the march of the peasants in Ahmednagar district in the Bombay Presidency, to put up a demand for a general remission of land revenue to be granted on a graded scale.

MR. PRAKASAM apparently felt very much worried by such representations constantly raining upon him wherever he went, although since the election manifesto had made definite promises to the peasants there was no cause for him to be surprised at this. In his answer Mr. Prakasam asked the marchers and the deputationists to consider what would happen to the Revenue Minister and to the Government if such remissions were granted. They must not suppose, he said, that because their Ministers were in office, they were entitled to ask for remissions all round, which would land the Government in bankruptcy.

THIS is a convincing answer. We would suggest only one little emendation. He might have said, they must refrain from asking for remissions all round *because their* Ministers were in power. Such a demand would have been quite proper under the old bureaucratic regime, and even under the new regime where a non-Congress Ministry was in office. There could be nothing wrong in involving the bureaucracy or a non-Congress Ministry in bankruptcy. But Congressmen must stay their hands in Congress provinces. Election pledges? They were obviously

Utopian promises, which could be fulfilled only if Government were to be regarded as a Santa Claus handing out largesses to all and sundry from an inexhaustible reservoir of cash. The promises were to be literally construed in provinces in which non-Congress parties obtained a majority in the election. But so far as the Congress was concerned, the mass appeal to Utopia was intended only to capitalise the votes of those who were ground down by poverty, and did not the high-powered publicity technique, added to the bright promises that India would be a land of milk and honey, do its trick? The Congress party had been able to take command in seven provinces, but having done so, the Congress Ministers must not be asked to implement these promises, which were only meant to set a standard for non-Congress Ministers.

MR. PRAKASAM, like the Revenue and Finance Ministers in every other Congress province, asks Congressmen to discard their old irresponsible ways and to develop a sense of responsibility. Congressmen will no doubt do so, but they find the change a little too sudden. In the meantime there is no call upon Congressmen in non-Congress provinces to bear in mind that even non-Congress Ministries have to operate under the limitations of the budget and the provincial credit. At any rate they do not show themselves to be overweighted with a sense of responsibility.

IN Assam, which is a non-Congress province, Mr. Siddhinath Sarmah, General Secretary of the Assam Provincial Congress Committee, moved on behalf of the Congress party, a resolution in the last budget session recommending a uniform reduction by 50 per cent. of the land revenue assessment from the year 1937-38. To this resolution an amendment was subsequently moved, asking for 33 per cent. reduction instead of 50 per cent. The Revenue Member in charge was not agreeable either to the original resolution or to the amendment. He offered to effect a flat rate reduction by 25 per cent. and to appoint a Committee to inquire into the feasibility of reduction on a graduated scale in necessitous cases up to 50 per cent.

THE Congress spurned this offer, and the Assembly adopted the amendment as a resolution recommending reduction of 33 per cent. land revenue. The Assam Government apparently do not intend to give effect to this resolution, for they have appointed a Revenue Enquiry Committee, which is asked to make recommendations as to which classes of people should get the benefit of reduction by 33 per cent. and which classes by a lesser percentage. Mr. Siddhinath Sarmah was appointed to this Committee, but he has declined to serve on it on the ground that Government were going back on the Assembly decision.

THAT the Assam Government offered to reduce the assessment by a flat rate of 25 per cent. and to consider how far up to 50 per cent. they could go in hard cases appears to the Congress party in Assam a clear proof of "Government's indifference to one of the most vital problems of the masses". But if Congress Governments have not done even as much, it is to be taken not as a sign of their indifference to the lot of the peasants but as a sign of their new-born sense of responsibility. Of course, circumstances alter cases; and what is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander.

Public Demands in Mysore.

PRESIDING over the thirteenth session of the Mysore State Lawyers' Conference at Nanjangur, Mr. T. G. Narayan Iyengar voiced the Mysore subjects' demand for a greater share of responsibility in the affairs of the State.

The two principal legislative bodies of the State, (he said) the Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council, which were placed on a statutory basis in the year 1923 do not possess any real power. The former continues to be a consultative body with its decisions not binding on the Government and the latter, which has some powers of legislation, has no elected majority to influence the decisions of the Government. Demands have been frequently made to enlarge the scope and character of the legislatures so as to vest them with substantial powers, but the Government do not appear to have given them any serious consideration so far.

FIVE days after this demand was voiced from the platform of the soberest possible assembly, the Dewan of Mysore, Sir Mirza Ismail, addressed the Mysore Representative Assembly's Dasara session and referred to it indirectly. Such demands, he believed, were influenced by "the political changes on the other side of the border," meaning thereby the assumption of offices in seven provinces by the Congress. Sir Mirza's response to the public demand will cause disappointment even among the most moderate quarters in the State. In terms which are vaguer than Viceregal announcements, he said :

It has ever been the desire of His Highness to widen, according to the favourable developments of circumstance, the opportunities afforded to his subjects of sharing in the responsible tasks of government. I have been commanded to assure you that His Highness has been watching with keen appreciation the growth of public spirit and patriotic zeal among his subjects, and that their aspirations for larger opportunities to serve the State will meet with due response at the proper moment. How soon that moment will arrive must naturally depend on how well opportunities now existing are made use of.

THE recent prohibitory orders on Congress and Socialist workers in the State were also referred to by Mr. Iyengar in the Lawyers' Conference. Mr. Iyengar expressed surprise that "an innocent activity like that of enlisting membership to the Congress excites the police and the magistracy and notices are served not to hold any meetings or make any speech". In the speech to the Mysore Assembly, Sir Mirza justified these orders on the ground that non-Mysoreans had no business to interfere with the internal affairs of the State. "Render unto Mysore the things that are Mysore's" was, he said, the Government's motto and it "cannot concede to any body of persons who are not subjects of His Highness the Maharaja, the right to interpose in matters that lie strictly between the people and the Government of Mysore. He appealed to the Congress to "remain a friendly neutral" so far as the internal politics of the States are concerned, in which case he promised, when the time comes, to give it "willing and useful co-operation in the States for the supreme work of raising the strength and the stature of India." The price for toleration was neutrality and a denial of the right of every Indian to help a fellow-citizen placed by historical misadventure within the bounds of a State to raise his stature!

SIR Mirza would have British Indians urge all they could for the remission of Mysore's contribution to the British Government. But they must keep their hands off the people of the Mysore State! His idea of neutrality is like the bureaucracy's idea about the duty of students to abstain from politics. Students

could sing hosannas to the British Government for the benefits of British rule; but they must not indulge in any criticism.

Malaya Repercussions to Prohibition.

The Indian, a paper produced in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, in the interest of the Indian immigrants observes that the prohibition policy of the Madras Government will not fail to affect the Indian population in Malaya, which is mainly drawn from that presidency. The prohibition of toddy over all the presidency is expected to be a fact within three years if C. R. has his way, and he is not a person who is likely to give up a project on which he has set his heart. *The Indian* observes that when the whole of South India goes dry it will deprive the Malayan Government of their excuse to permit toddy shops in that country. The Malayan Government is used to argue that the Indian immigrant, who is accustomed to toddy in India, would find it hard to go without it in Malaya and prevention of toddy might lead to his falling a prey to worse evils.

The Indian observes in this connection :

When prohibition becomes absolute in South India a new generation of complete teetotallers will be coming to Malaya only to succumb to the temptation of estate toddy shops. When they return to India on short holidays, they will collide with the law of prohibition by having recourse to illicit liquor. The toddy shop problem in Malaya thus reaches a new phase. Political India is moving at such a rapid pace since recent times that it may not be long before the Central Government falls into the hands of popular Ministers. Malaya is thus faced with a great problem and the sooner action is taken here the better for all concerned. We do not question the local Government's sincerity when it says that its opposition to the abolition of toddy shops is due to the potential menace of "samsu." There can be only two explanations for this attitude; either that the Government is too weak to suppress a crime or that its interest in the welfare of the Indian labourer is not so great as to adopt special measures against the "samsu" evil.

A Valid Objection.

WE are not in sympathy with much that the *Hindu Outlook* of New Delhi propagates, but its criticism of the popular representatives in the Central Assembly for overlooking the dangerous implications of Sir Mahamud Yakub's bill to secure for the Muslim community the estates of a Muslim dying intestate, seems to us to be forceful and valid on grounds of national policy. Sir Mahamud's legislation is, the paper says

not only a serious departure from the law now in vogue but is opposed to the principle recognised in all civilised jurisprudence. Underlying the Bill, there is a principle, which is most vicious and anti-national; it amounts to a denial of the sovereign right of the Indian nation with regard to the estate of one of its nationals dying intestate and heirless. To recognise this right in the case of a Mahommedan would mean recognising it in the case of the Hindu as well. Once this principle is recognised, there is no knowing how far its application will go, as can be no resisting the claims of different sects for its application.

Late and Insufficient.

THE Government of India's report on "India in 1934-35" was published last week. The delay in this annual publication is almost a record and we wonder what purpose is served by such belated reports or in what way the British Parliament, for whose information the report has to be published as a statutory

obligation, is benefitted thereby. Even as an accurate record of events in India, the report is incomplete and full of half-truths and facts misleadingly presented. Had such a document been produced by any business firm, it would have long gone into liquidation. The sharp criticism with which the passages describing the manner in which Government dealt with the Indian situation were riddled in the past seems to have resulted in contracting this report to a slender volume of less than hundred and fifty pages. This feat of compression has, however, not succeeded in curing the report of its usual defects, particularly in its references to the political events in the country. Thus the report refers to the passage in the Central Assembly of Mr. Jinnah's amendment in connection with the communal award to the Government resolution on the Joint Select Committee's Report by a majority of 68 against 15 votes, but very cleverly omits to note that the Congress Party in the Assembly, which commanded 44 votes, remained neutral on it.

REFERRING to the reactions in the press and the public to the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935, the report observes that "there appeared to be increasing recognition that in the existing condition of India the Act represented a sound solution of the problem of reconciling legitimate political demands with the need for providing a workable system of government." This is a sample of the accuracy and faithfulness followed in the report in depicting nationalist political opinions. This part of the report forms, as a matter of fact, its most important section and propagandist half-truths do little to make it either a useful guide to or a dependable reference book on Indian affairs.

Mr. Satyamurti on Federation.

REVIEWING the work of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly in a speech at Madras last week Mr. Satyamurti made some definite suggestions in connection with the coming federation. Federation should start, he says, with the eleven provinces only after modifying the federal structure and its functions according to Indian opinion. The system of indirect election to the Central Assembly, separate electorates and dyarchy should go. The Indian States should be allowed to come into the federation, Mr. Satyamurti suggests, only if they agree to have their representatives to the Central legislatures elected; grant fundamental rights to the States' people and make the federal court accessible to the people of the States in certain defined cases against the States' encroachments on their rights.

IT is unfortunate that Mr. Satyamurti, who holds an influential position in the parliamentary wing of the Congress, should not have tried to persuade the Congress Ministries to put forward these views in specific resolutions. The suggestions made by him might well have been the foundation for the Congress Cabinets in the seven provinces to formulate resolutions in their legislatures. A demand by the provincial legislatures on the lines suggested by him would certainly have carried more weight than stray speeches of Congress leaders in public meetings. Mr. Satyamurti enjoined the provincial Governments and particularly the Congress Governments to start and keep up a strong and persistent agitation for ensuring that they be fully consulted in the matter of the inauguration of the federation. How much better would it have been if such an agitation had been the first concern of the Congress provincial Governments which have sadly sidetracked this important problem and seem to have given the impression that their grim

determination to fight the federation to the bitter end has undergone a change in their preoccupation with administrative issues of lesser import!

Federation.

THE fourth session of the all-India Muslim League held in Lucknow passed the following resolution:

The all-India Muslim League records its emphatic disapproval of the scheme of all-India federation as embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935, and is opposed to its introduction, and urges upon the British Government to refrain from its enforcement as it considers the scheme to be detrimental to the interests of the people of India generally and to those of Muslims in particular.

Articles.

THE COMPLETE COMMUNALIST.

GREAT hopes were entertained from the Muslim League's session, which met under favourable auspices after a long period of disunity among the Muslim ranks. But even to the most cynical student of public affairs the address of Mr. Jinnah at its session in Lucknow on the 16th instant will give a shock. There the one-time nationalist Jinnah whose memory is honoured by the Bombay citizens in the Jinnah Hall, — the Jinnah of robust patriotism and stern independence, emerged as a rank communalist whose politics are shorn of the saving grace of concern for the larger interests of India as a nation. Mr. Jinnah's speech at the League is a speech of a man in anger, but it reveals the seeds of a policy which may prove the ruin of nationalism. One can understand Mr. Jinnah's reactions to the persistent efforts of the Congress to break his influence over the Muslim masses, but one cannot understand his throwing overboard Muslim nationalism as a consequence of it. He attacks the Congress, he attacks those Muslims who have joined it, he attacks the provincial Governments for countenancing the formation of Ministries with the help of Congress Muslims. As the *Pioneer* puts it, it is sad that Mr. Jinnah had no more significant message to give his followers than the outworn doctrine of Muslims against the world.

Mr. Jinnah charges the Congress with trying to win Muslim support with offers of seats in the Government. But the gravamen of his charge is not that such a "bribe" was offered but that the Congress insisted on its new Muslim adherents signing its pledge and obeying its mandates. We are unable to understand why this condition should so enrage Mr. Jinnah. It is one of the necessary fundamentals if the right type of party traditions are to be created in this country. We could have understood if he had challenged those Muslims who had joined the Congress after contesting the elections on the League ticket to resign and seek the mandate of the electorate in approval of their new allegiance. But Mr. Jinnah apparently is quite willing to allow the Congress to form governments provided it does not

involve his followers in any political commitments. No party commanding a wholesome majority in the legislatures would be so bankrupt of political foresight as to walk into Mr. Jinnah's parlour. But Mr. Jinnah is not satisfied with blaming the Congress alone; he turns his wrath on the Governors of the provinces for their "breach of promises." He remarked:

It has been clearly demonstrated that the Governors and the Governor-General, who have been given the powers and special responsibility to safeguard and protect the minorities under the constitution which was made so much of by Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, during the controversy of the assurances demanded by the Congress party, have failed to use them and have thereby been a party to the flagrant breach of the spirit of the constitution and the instrument of instructions in the matter of appointment of Muslim Ministers. On the contrary they have been a party to passing off men as Muslim Ministers by appointing them as such, although they know full well that they do not command the confidence of the Muslim representatives or the public outside. If, in a matter like this, the Governors have shown their utter helplessness and disregard for their sacred obligations which were assumed by the British Government for the protection of minorities, could they or would they be able to afford protection in a hundred and one other matters which may not come up to the surface or known in the day-to-day working of the Legislature and the administrative machinery?

It seems to us that Mr. Jinnah has preferred to ignore the obvious interpretation of the instructions given to Governors for the protection of minorities. Had the Governors refused to recognise the claims of a Muslim member of a non-communal party in the legislature to safeguard the interests of a community, on the ground that he did not belong to a communal party, they would have been, in our opinion, guilty of the most flagrant violation of their primary duty towards the country and the sovereign, which is to seek a stable Ministry to carry on the King's government in the provinces. What Mr. Jinnah seeks to establish as the right of minorities is a vicious principle whereby every community will have to form itself into a small watertight communal party. If this happened, there would be an end to representative Government in the country. So complete is Mr. Jinnah's surrender to communalism that he asks for the sacrifice of the principle of collective responsibility to satisfy his communal prejudices. Incidentally Mr. Jinnah has forgotten that the Punjab Government contains men belonging to communities whose communal organisations in the province refuse to recognise them as their leaders. Would Mr. Jinnah recognise the right of the Hindus in the Punjab Legislative Assembly who follow Raja Narendra Nath, to question the representative character of the Hindu Ministers in the Punjab Cabinet?

The Congress plan of mass contact has evidently frightened the communalists. Mr. Jinnah inveighs against it in bitter terms.

The All-India Muslim League certainly and definitely stands to safeguard the rights and interests of the Mussalman and other minorities effectively. That is its basic and cardinal principle. The Congress attempt under the guise of establishing mass contact with the Mussalman is calculated to divide and weaken and break the Mussalman and is an effort to detach them from their accredited

leaders. It is a dangerous move and it cannot mislead any one. All such manoeuvres will not succeed notwithstanding the various blandishments, catchwords and slogans. The only honest and straightforward course is to give the minorities a fair deal. All the talk of hunger and poverty is intended to lead the people towards socialistic and communistic ideas for which India is far from prepared.

It is difficult to understand wherein nationalist political parties in India have failed to "give the minorities a fair deal". To claim seats for the minorities on the sole strength of communal qualifications cuts at the very root of nationalism, and if the process started by Mr. Jinnah is an indication of the trend of minority politics in India the politics of the future will be tragic in the extreme.

The Congress which is the target of Mr. Jinnah's attacks seems to be in an unenviable position. Like a person in the no man's land, it is being subjected to crossfires from both sides. A day or two before the League session in Lucknow, Bhai Parmanand referred to the "pro-Muslim" policy of the Congress in bitter terms at the Sind Hindu Conference.

The Congress (he said) does not recognise any necessity for doing something for the good of the Hindus. The Congress aims at killing all sense of self-respect among the Hindus; they have consistently sacrificed Hindu interests at the altar of the Muslim communal demands. The pity of it is they do not see the seriousness of their mistake.

There must be something twisted with the communal outlook if two opposite and contradictory points of view see an ally of the other in the same party.

The *Pioneer*, a paper which is, if anything, friendly to the Muslim interests, is provoked into a strong protest against Mr. Jinnah's dangerous lead to the country. The paper is not noted for its friendship with the Congress; it welcomed the League session as "a landmark in the history of the community, a triumph for Mr. Jinnah", but it asks:

When the agitation against the communal award was at its peak, the Congress refused either to accept or to reject it. Was this an exclusively Hindu policy? When the Congress Nationalists protested and threatened secession, the Congress was unyielding and fought them even at subsequent elections. Was this, too, a Machiavellian plot to split the Muslim community? If Mr. Jinnah knew all along that Congress leaders were playing a double game, why did he not show them up in their true colours at the time, instead of attempting in 1935 to negotiate a communal settlement with Babu Rajendra Prasad? He has, in fact, allowed his present prejudice to colour his reading of past history. Nothing can be more dangerous. We do not suggest that all Muslims should go Congress forthwith. But why dub those who are so inclined as traitors to the Muslim cause?

It seems to us, as the above of quotation shows, that far from being anti-Muslim the recent developments in Congress policy show an excessively tender consideration towards the Muslim community.

To Mr. Jinnah's attacks on those Muslims who joined the Congress the same paper replies by reminding him of some rather inconvenient facts. Both Mr. Huq and Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan fought and won elections in Bengal and the Punjab against the Muslim League candidates, and their followers to-day include non-Muslims also. The *Pioneer* says:

Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan has announced his acceptance of the leadership of the League on behalf of the Muslim

members of the Unionist Party. The Unionist Party defeated the Muslim League Party in the Punjab at the last elections. It includes a number of Hindus. Does not the accession of Muslim Unionists to the Muslim League mean the direct flouting of the mandate of the Muslim electorate in the Punjab in the first instance, and the betrayal of their Hindu colleagues? Is not Mr. Jinnah leading his community back to the barren fields of isolation? They may be attractive at the moment. But is the path which he has chosen the path to a united India?

TENANTS IN BIHAR.

WE have already given to the Congress Ministry in Bihar its meed of praise for promptly remedying some of the most urgent grievances of the peasantry by introducing a Bill to amend the provincial Tenancy Act. The Bill was confessedly anything but comprehensive, and instead of waiting for years to carry a radical measure to the statute book, we thought it was good policy on the part of the Ministry to set about giving immediate relief to the raiyats in certain directions and eliminating the most glaring abuses in the relations between landlord and tenant.

While we still remain of the same opinion, we cannot understand why any suggestion on the part of the raiyats to go a little further should be dubbed by Congress journals as unhelpful and destructive criticism and criticism that would only embarrass and discredit the Ministry. The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha met recently and passed a resolution which, while reminding the Congress of the spacious promises it made to the raiyats in its election manifesto, pointed out that the Ministry could have immediately taken action on certain matters. Among such the Kisan Sabha mentions stoppage of salami or the fee which a landlord exacts when a raiyat sells his holding and abolition of the certificate power granted to the landlords which enables them without recourse to a civil court to recover any rent that is in arrear by auctioning the raiyat's land.

We cannot for the life of us understand why these suggestions should be regarded by Congress journals as of an irresponsible and revolutionary nature and the Kisan Sabha which made them as a body bent only on overawing and intimidating the Congress Ministry. As a matter of fact these suggestions are of a modest character, and the Ministry should, if it is not going to rest on its oars but wishes to make any forward move, thank the Kisan Sabha for placing behind its back the support of public opinion which it would badly need in its future programme of amelioration of the tenantry.

Are the suggestions unreasonable? The Bihar correspondent of the *Hindustan Times* thinks so. Of the abolition of the certificate procedure he says:

After all a Government who has to depend upon the revenue from the zamindars and who realises this under the "sun-set rule" which perhaps does not exist in any part of the world and in any province except Bengal and Bihar, cannot deprive the zamindars of their right to

realise rent from the ryots so long as they themselves do not forego their own revenue. This would be the position of any Government engaged in administering the affairs of State in which more than one party is interested. The provisions of the proposed Bill have raised a storm of protest among the zamindars, which is due to keen resentment at the drastic nature of the changes suggested in the Bill. To go beyond these provisions is as well as to propose a one-clause Bill abolishing the zamindari system.

The Ministry itself never made any pretensions that its Tenancy Bill partook of a radical character to any extent, but its provisions become suddenly "drastic" because the kisans urge the Ministry to do something more. If the Bill represents the farthest limit to which the Ministry can ever go and if the next step after this can only be abolition of the zamindari system, to which the Ministry is opposed, what could the Ministry mean when it said that the Bill was only an interim measure to be followed by another which would provide for a complete reform of the tenancy system?

The *Searchlight* at any rate does not take such a panicky view of the two suggestions of the Kisan Sabha mentioned above. "We sympathise with these two demands," it says. Nevertheless, it too would very much wish that the demands were not put forward. Why, we should like to know. Why should not the kisans say that the Ministry might as well have included provisions relating to these matters in the Bill? Why should the *Searchlight* coolly assume that nothing more than what the Ministry has actually done was possible? In defence of the Ministry, our contemporary says: "If they (the Ministry) have not done anything spectacular, it was because nothing of a radical character could be done within the framework of the Act." It is an easy way with the Provincial Governments in India to blame all their failures on the defects of the Act. The Ministry might not be able to do anything spectacular, but that is no answer to the Kisan Sabha, which pleads that the Ministry might have undertaken two more small reforms, which the *Searchlight* admits are desirable.

These reforms are certainly practicable within the limits set by the Reforms Act, as is proved by the fact that the Bengal Legislative Assembly has already passed a Bill on the subject. It is futile to argue that what a non-Congress Ministry could do in Bengal for the raiyats in spite of the far more powerful opposition of the zamindars and the Europeans (for the latter joined hands *en bloc* with the zamindars in their opposition) the Congress Ministry could not do in Bihar. In Bengal the Congress party played a very dubious role in relation to the amendment of the Bengal Tenancy Act. In the light of what Congress journals are saying about two modest demands of the kisans in Bihar, the criticism which the Prime Minister of Bengal, Mr. Fazlul Huq, levelled against the Congress as a whole seems fully justified. He said: "I will ask Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose (the Leader of the Congress party) to compare what we have done with what has been achieved in the Congress provinces. They have not been able to achieve

anything like this, and if I can be a prophet for once they will not be able to achieve anything. If in course of time you can show that the Congress Ministries in Bihar, the United Provinces and Orissa have done more for raiyats than we have been able to do, then indeed we shall stand self-condemned."

We hope and believe that Bihar will do as much and more, but in the matter of tenancy reform the non-Congress Ministry in Bengal has carried into effect certain improvements which the Congress Ministry in Bihar has failed to do at the present moment. And the Congress Ministry will fail till it gives up the spirit of self-satisfaction at what it has done and a sense of resentment at suggestions from the public as to what it has yet to do that the Congress journals are showing. We think that the Congress journals are doing a disservice to the Congress and to the cause of progress by treating everyone who makes even friendly criticism of the Ministry as an enemy who must be scotched and by making every question that comes up a question on which the Ministry's *izzat* is staked. They should themselves listen to any adverse criticism with an open mind and at least with patience and insist that the Ministry does likewise. Otherwise all progress will be blocked.

There is another point to which the Kisan Sabha's resolution draws attention, viz., the inclusion in the Bihar Ministry's Chota Nagpur Tenancy Bill of "a fresh clause about salami." Clause 3 (b) allows the landlord the same transfer fee as is provided by section 11 of the 1908 Act in the case of tenureholders. This would be a definite set-back. In 1920 it was found that in some areas "even in cases of succession the landlord frequently seized the opportunity to exact an illegal and heavy salami," as the Revenue Member said at the time. The Act passed in 1920 put an end to this. But it did not stop there; it provided that no salami would be payable when raiyati holdings would be transferred, whether by succession, or inheritance or sale. For it should be remembered that the amending Act of that year made it possible under certain conditions for the occupancy right to be transferred by sale, and, while providing for registration of transfers "by succession, inheritance or sale", laid down in section 23 A (2) that the landlord "shall not be entitled to levy any registration fee." The Ministry's present Bill relaxes still further the limitations imposed upon sales of occupancy holdings, but at the same time provides that in all cases of sales the landlord "shall be entitled to a registration fee", of which the amount is the same as in the case of sales of tenures.

BENGAL TENANCY BILL.

THE Bengal Legislative Assembly passed in its last session by 110 to 27 votes a Bill to amend the Bengal Tenancy Act. The Bill does not attempt any radical reform of the tenancy law, but only seeks to remove some of the pressing grievances of the raiyats. We shall give a general estimate of the measure later, but would at once introduce the reader to the three main provisions of the Bill, viz., the abolition of the *nazar* now paid to the landholder on the transfer of a piece of land by the transferee, the abolition of pre-emption which gives the landholder the right to purchase a piece of land on sale for himself and the abolition of the certificate procedure which empowers a section of zamindars to realise the rent in arrear in a summary fashion by auctioning the properties of the tenants.

1. LANDLORD'S TRANSFER-FEE.

The Bill abolishes the landlord's salami or transfer fee and the right to pre-emption conferred by the Act of 1928. Till then the prevailing custom in Bengal of a raiyat being at liberty to transfer his rights in land had not received legal recognition, but the 1928 Act formally recognised for the first time an occupancy raiyat's right to transfer his holding subject to the payment of a *nazar* to the landlord. The original Tenancy Bill of 1883 had proposed to make the occupancy right transferable and heritable because Government found, in the words of Sir Ashley Eden, that there had grown up "an almost universal custom" to this effect, and they thought it best to recognise it in law. Government also considered transferability desirable in itself. "Alienability,"

said Mr. Field, "is in every other country, sooner or later, annexed to everything that is the subject of property, and that here, in Bengal, this tendency, has spontaneously shown itself in a very marked manner in respect of these very holdings." Another reason which induced Government to propose making occupancy holdings transferable was the fact that, as Sir Stuart Bayley said, "transferability is the only alternative to unlimited subletting," a practice which ought to be sternly discouraged. Apprehension was expressed at the time that a general power of transfer would result in the passing of lands from the hands of the cultivators into the possession of middlemen and moneylenders, but it was thought that till then at any rate the purchasers belonged to the same class as the sellers and that consequently no restrictions on the transfer of occupancy holdings were required. The Bill of 1883 thus contained a provision for the free sale of the right of occupancy, but this right to be conferred upon the raiyat was to be accompanied by a corresponding right of the landlord to pre-emption in every case of transfer. If the right of occupancy was freely transferable by the existing custom and the landlords had no right to object to the in-coming tenant, then clearly the right of pre-emption proposed to be given to the landlords was unjustifiable. But at the time Government thought it best to give this additional privilege to the landlords, by which they could themselves buy the right at a price to be fixed by the civil court and thus keep off from the holdings any raiyats whom they might consider to be undesirable. However, in the final form in which the Bill was

passed in 1885 the right of occupancy was not legalised. The raiyats were admitted habitually to transfer their holdings in most parts of the province, but the Act finally adopted left the custom "to strengthen itself and crystallise into a shape which may hereafter render its regulation (by law) less difficult than it is at present." What decided Government at the time to drop the provision about transferability was not so much the injury that might result to the tenant—"expropriation of the raiyat and rack-renting of the actual cultivator"—as the practical difficulties about pre-emption, which too was dropped with the provision about transferability.

Things remained in this condition till 1928, when legislative effect was given to the firmly established custom about the free sale of occupancy holdings. Before the 1928 Act was passed, some raiyats had to pay a fee to the landlord at the time of the transfer and others had not to pay any fee. But the Act introduced uniformity into the procedure, and laid down that all occupancy raiyats must pay as fee to the landlords five times the rent or one-fifth of the consideration money, whichever was greater, whenever they sold their holdings. It was stated in justification of this provision about the conferment of the right of free transfer subject to the payment of salami that the rate of salami that was fixed corresponded very closely to the fee that the raiyats were on an average actually paying, and that the Act did thus nothing more than recognise the custom of salami along with recognising the custom of free transfer. But, in the first place, imposition of a fee on raiyats who could freely transfer their lands before without any payment was clearly unjustifiable; in the second place, payment of salami was made a pre-requisite even of part-transfers of occupancy holdings, whereas before the Act part-transfers were not subjected to a nazar even in areas where full transfers were, and part-transfers are far more numerous than full transfers, and thus the Act of 1928 did a grave injustice to all classes of raiyats, whether they used to pay nazar or not; and, in the third place, exaction of transfer-fee was wrong in any case, whatever the custom in regard to it might have been. It was really something in the nature of an abwab, an illegal exaction, though the courts allowed it as legitimate. It clearly arose from an entirely erroneous conception of the status of the zamindars, viz., that they were the absolute owners or proprietors of the soil and could do what they liked with their tenants. The landlords are mere rent-receivers, and have no concern with who pays the rent to them. Their recognition of a sale of the occupancy right, which recognition is dependent upon the payment of a fee to them, should be unnecessary. Government refused to recognise the landlords' pretensions in so far as Government themselves were concerned, but did not challenge them to the extent that was necessary in so far as the raiyats were concerned. Government ought to have put down the practice of receiving nazar as they tried to put down abwabs, but having recognised the evil custom, they gave it recognition in law in the Act of 1928. It is well that in the present Bill the Fazlul Huq Ministry seeks to abolish it altogether. The retention

of salami was advocated on the ground that it put a check on fragmentation, but if Government really wished to restrain this evil, they had better do so by directly imposing restrictions on transfer instead of going about it indirectly so as to enrich the landlord at the cost of the raiyat. The Bill, the Revenue Minister calculated, would deprive the landlords annually of Rs. 30 or Rs. 35 lakhs, to which they had no moral right, and add so much to the income of the raiyats. The European group, joining the zamindars on this point as on every other, spoke as if salami was part of the rent and could not be abolished without paying adequate compensation to the zamindars. They thought that this part of the Bill and several others were of an expropriatory character and that the Bill must for this reason be vetoed by the Viceroy. This is a fantastic objection, for the landlord's fee is entirely unjustified and the Huq Ministry deserves congratulations for proposing to abolish it *in toto*.

2. THE RIGHT OF PRE-EMPTION.

The Act of 1928, while giving legal recognition to the raiyat's right of free sale of his occupancy holding, gave a right of pre-emption to the landlord, who could, if he so liked, repurchase the holding from the purchaser. This again was based on the notion, for which there was no warrant in law or fact, that the landlord was the master of the land for which he was responsible for paying revenue to Government. He was in reality only a superior holder and was not entitled to interfere in any way with transactions that might take place between inferior holders. But Government were prepared in 1883 to insert a provision in the Tenancy Law enabling a landlord himself to purchase a holding in order to prevent it from passing into the hands of a tenant whom he might think objectionable. The price which the landlord was to pay in such a case was to be fixed by the civil court. The 1928 Act revived this provision which was not included in the Act of 1885. Only the landlord's right was not a right of pre-emption properly so called, but a right of post-emption. After the sale was effected, the landlord could come in and say, "I shall repurchase this holding from the purchaser." The price was not fixed by a court, but whatever price was entered in the sale deed was to be taken as the price that had actually been paid and the landlord had to pay 10 per cent. over. This effectually prevented any collusive under-statement of the price in the sale deed. As this right of post-emption extended only to two or three months after the sale had taken place, the purchaser was not put to any serious hardship. Assuming that the right of pre-emption was good in theory, the administrative arrangements made for enforcing it were unobjectionable, but conferment of such a right was in itself unjustifiable, and the Huq Ministry did the right thing in putting a stop to it altogether. A high-placed official, Rai M. N. Gupta Bahadur, who was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council when the Act of 1928 was passed, says in his commentary on the Act: "The doctrine (of pre-emption) is undoubtedly repugnant to modern ideas of rights of property," and he forecasted then that the next generation would have to reconsider the position.

viz., "whether the right of pre-emption should not be taken away altogether." His forecast has come true, and almost the first act of the autonomous Government of Bengal is to take away this right. The Government deserves credit for it. While abolishing the landlord's right of pre-emption, the Bill, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, confers, on an amendment to this effect being moved by Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas and accepted by Government, the same right on a co-sharer of the tenant who transfers his share of the holding. The right of pre-emption to be now conferred on co-sharer tenants of course stands on an entirely different footing. As the Revenue Minister said, it would help the consolidation of holdings and would prevent family property passing into the hands of strangers. Both the abolition of the landlord's right of pre-emption and the conferment of it on co-sharers were vigorously opposed by the zamindar and European groups in the Assembly, but their opposition was of no avail. If, as was maintained, the right of pre-emption is very rarely exercised, one does not see any reason why such opposition should have been offered. The landlords seem to have persuaded themselves that their existence somehow works to the great material advantage and moral upliftment of the cultivators. The salami they exact keeps down the number of transfers and helps in preventing land-grabbing by mahajan's; so salami benefits the raiyats. The right of pre-emption acts as a safeguard in the interest of the raiyats, because it stops "unethical practices in farming." As in several countries the State has the right of pre-emption, so in Bengal the landlords must be endowed with this power. Such were the arguments advanced. Happily, they did not weigh with the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

3. REALISATION OF ARREARS OF RENT.

The Bill also withdraws from the landlords the privilege given to them under Chapter XIII A of the Tenancy Act of realising arrears of rent in summary fashion by auctioning the properties of their tenants. It should be remembered that one of the main objects of the Act of 1885 was, while giving protection to the raiyat, to give to the zamindar facilities for recovering his rents. The landlords claimed that as the Government's revenue demand was inexorable and as the Government adopted a summary process to realise it, so should they themselves be enabled to recover their rents from the raiyats by a summary procedure. This claim was in principle accepted by Government. In fact, as the Bengal Administration Report for 1911-12 states, "All legislation of this period (i. e., before the permanent settlement of 1793), dealing with landlord and tenant had one primary object, viz., the security of the public revenue, and each successive Regulation served only to arm those who were under engagements for revenue with additional powers, so as to enable them to realise their demands in the first instance, whether right or wrong. 'Under the haftam process (Regulation VII of 1799),' as has been well observed, 'the person of the raiyat could be seized in default; under the panjam process (Regulation V of 1812) his property could be distrained; and in either case the proceedings commenced with what has been

described as a strong presumption equivalent to a knock-down blow against the raiyat. Remedies were no doubt provided in every Regulation for redress against any injustice by referring discontented parties to the civil court, but, constituted as the civil courts then were, the raiyats were left without any adequate means of relief for the most manifest extortions." The Act of 1859, the first modern tenant law, modified distraint but did not abolish it. The act of 1885 further regulated the power of distraint. All this while it was conceded by Government that if an authentic record of rights and rates were kept up and a reliable system of recording payments could be enforced, there was no reason why the zamindar could not be given the benefit of the kind of summary procedure in recovering rents that Government themselves adopted in realising their revenue from the zamindars. After the record of rights was prepared, Government allowed landlords, under the Act of 1907, in special cases the privilege of realising arrears of rent by resort to the summary certificate procedure under the Public Demands Recovery Act. The Act of 1928 went further in this direction. It provided that in all cases where the landlords maintained the record of rights with Government agency and kept correct and reliable accounts, the landlords would as a matter of course be allowed to have the benefit of the summary certificate procedure for realisation of arrears of rent. The present Bill repeals section 158A, giving this privilege to the zamindars.

While it must be admitted that it is not to the advantage of the raiyat that he should be in arrear in the payment of rent, fixed at a reasonable rate, it is agreed on all hands that the summary procedure is liable to abuse and should be done away with. A zamindar, severely criticising the provisions of the Bill, can only say about the abolition of the certificate procedure: "The harm does not lie in the repeal of section 158A. The harm lies in not providing for effective realisation of rents." In the absence of the certificate procedure the zamindars will have to go to the civil courts, just the same as other creditors. *Forward* too has not much objection to urge. "The harassing procedure should go," it says, "but it should go uniformly in relation to zamindars as well as the Court or Wards and Government." It is true that in the case of khas mahal lands and property under the management of the Court of Wards the certificate procedure is enforced, and a demand was made in the Assembly that the procedure should be abolished in these case too. This reminds us of what Mr. Evans said in 1883 in reply to what he called the *argumentum ad Governmentum* which several members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council had used at the time to show that Government themselves were open to the same charge of extortion as they brought to the door of the zamindars. He said:

It is no argument to say that the Government in various departments have done the same thing. In speaking of the Government, it must be remembered that there are many departments of the Government. From one point of view, you may have the Government sitting here consulting for the general good of the country and taking broad views of the question. On the other hand, there is a department which represents the Secretary of State, who

represents the positive right of the Government in their property, just as in the case of the Crown lands in England. When you deal with the Government in this capacity, I am sorry to say that they don't seem to be the same kind of people as the Government of India in its broader capacity. I have seen the same thing at home. I have seen what I considered to be very hard and unjust conduct on the part of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, conduct which was worse than would be expected of any private proprietor. They are in the nature of a Corporation, which has to preserve the rights of the Crown, and they come to look on everybody else as natural enemies, who are endeavouring to deprive the Crown of its rights; and I have seen a good deal of the same sort of thing in India, and I am quite prepared to believe it is true, as many of the Government officials must know, that these officers often think it their duty to exact as much as they can.

The Revenue Minister promised to consider whether the certificate procedure could not be withdrawn from the khas mahal lands and the estates under the Court of Wards, though he said that if the revenue of the Government suffered too much such withdrawal might not be practicable. The Minister appeared personally opposed to the abolition of the certificate procedure in the matter of recovery of arrears of rent of the zamindars and perhaps he accepted this particular provision under pressure. He said: "The Government would watch the effect of the repeal of the section relating to the certificate procedure. If this did not fulfil their expectations, they might have to reconsider the whole situation in the light of future developments."

BY THE WAY.

BANDE MATARAM.

THE controversy raised by certain Muslim members of the Madras and the Bengal Legislatures over the use of the song *Bande Mataram* as a national anthem has been raised to the status of a question of serious politics by the Muslim League which protested against it recently. The "national anthem" and the "national flag" have been a contentious public question because of the extreme party colouring given to it by the Congress in the early days when first it began to use Bankim's famous song and the tri-colour. Since its accession to power, the Congress has tried to force them on men of all persuasions. However regrettable Congressmen may think it, the fact remains that as yet the nation, as a nation, is not identified with it and the wiser course would have been to refrain, in good grace, from creating further schisms by insisting on raising what is as yet a party war-cry and a party symbol into matters of national significance.

A WRITER puts the impartial view of the use of *Bande Mataram* as a national song in the *Visva-Bharati News*. He deprecates the fanaticism of some Muslims who smell idolatry in all literary use of Hindu mythology, but in this particular case his sympathies are with the Muslims.

The spirit of the imagery and invocation employed in this song (he says) is more than merely literary and is such that it is unfair to force the monotheistic followers of the

Prophet of Arabia to swallow it in the name of Indian Nationalism.

"Thou indeed art Durga
with thy ten arms carrying weapons,
And Lakshmi dwelling on lotus petals,
And Saraswati who gives Vidya,
I bow to thee."

I do not know how Pandit Jawaharlal regards a song as harmless, which is bound to irritate the legitimate religious standards of so many of our countrymen. I am not sure if all Hindus even would appreciate the picture of India invoked in the image of the Goddess Durga.

A NATIONAL song should embody in its descriptive passages the whole nation, which the *Bande Mataram* does not do. The writer referred to above says:

But now that our love of our country has ceased to be merely lyrical and, since the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, has been chastened with better understanding of India as it actually is,—a land featured by poverty, ignorance and dissension,—it is hardly worth our while to get sentimental over a song which hardly reflects our present attitude to India and pay for it the heavy price of misunderstanding. Finally, one would like to ask the protagonists of the Congress creed of non-violence, how far the image of the ten-armed deity, flourishing weapons, represents their creed.

It should further be acceptable to everyone in the country irrespective of his political and religious beliefs. Those who feel indignant over Muslim opposition to the use of Bankim's song would have done better to study not their own interpretations of the song, but the objections of its opponents, all of whom are not anti-national "traitors." Apart from the objection on religious grounds, even on political grounds, it is objected to in certain quarters because it is forced on all.

NATIONAL LANGUAGE

THE decision of the Madras Government to make Hindi compulsory in the middle schools of the Madras Presidency has provoked the *Indian Social Reformer* to devote a leading article to the wisdom of the step. The *Reformer* opposes the move as one which cannot be defended on educational, economic or political principles. The Prime Minister of Madras, Mr. Rajagopalchari, justified the inclusion of an alien language as a compulsory subject in the middle schools because "the future of the children was dear to him." C. R.'s concern for the children reminds the *Reformer* of a similar expression of the German Dictator and it observes: "The distance from Omaluru to Berlin is formidable, but ideologically the two places might be suburbs each of the other"! The making of Hindi into national language has become a formidable fetish of the Congress leaders ever since their party came into power in the Provinces, and opposition to it is dismissed with the 'flippant sneer' that it comes from men whose habit it is to oppose everything that comes from Congressmen. C. R. is reminded that those who oppose the Hindi fetish have whole-heartedly supported the Congress scheme of prohibition and encouragement to village industries.

THE Congress commands docile majorities in seven provinces,—majorities the members of which

dare not raise their voice against any scheme which obtains the seal of approval from Wardha. And Hindi is one of the most favourite of the Mahatma's fetishes. We will not be surprised, therefore, if other non-Hindi provinces like Bombay and Berar are also forced to submit their children to the imposition of Hindi in the middle schools. The use of majorities for such purposes, the *Reformer* styles as "an abuse of power." For such suppression of opposition by the sheer weight of numbers is a characteristic feature of all dictatorships. The objection to compulsory Hindi are "first that it answers no felt need, removes no felt hardship, satisfies no felt aspiration." The *Reformer* further asks the Madras Prime Minister whether he is quite sure that there is no big business behind the organised propaganda to impose Hindi on South India!

MYSORE AND THE CONGRESS FLAG

THE attitude of the Mysore Dewan towards the Congress flag as explained by him in his speech to the Mysore Representative Assembly on the 16th instant, should find a response in the hearts of all true Congressmen. For it closely follows their own attitude towards the flags of other organisations vis-a-vis the Congress tri-colour. Sir Mirza Ismail dealt with the Government's attitude to this question with commendable frankness. He said:

I should like here to make clear our policy regarding the Congress flag. We have a flag of the Empire and we have a flag of the State. But that intermediate entity, India, has not yet been welded into a federation, nor has an all-India Government promulgated any universally accepted emblem of our nationality which is common both to Provinces and to States and comprehends all the communities and groups of the Indian peoples. The Congress is a great political party, and we have no more objection to the display of its emblem at places or on occasions which are connected with legitimate activities than we have to the display of the emblems of other parties or sectional bodies. But we cannot permit it to be displayed in a spirit of hostility to the State flag, or under conditions which are liable to cause provocation or annoyance to persons who are not members of the party.

SIR MIRZA hoped that his words would not be construed as a declaration of opposition on his part to the Indian National Congress. He need not have been anxious on that score. His words almost echo the sentiments expressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru some time back regarding the Red flag and its use in Congress meetings. Mr. Nehru impressed upon the public that although he had no end of reverence for the flag of international labour, the Congress flag, as embodying the achievements and aspirations of the Congress, must reign supreme in any meeting under its auspices. If people desired to have the Red flag also let them have it, but let it be only on sufferance and in a subordinate position. The height of its pole and its length and breadth must in no way be such as to divert people's attention from the Congress flag.

SIR MIRZA pointed out that many of the principal items of the Congress programme like khadi, rural improvement, harijan work, etc. have been given full measure of sympathy by the Mysore Govern-

ment and that there was no need to fear that in claiming to have the Mysore flag supreme in Mysore, he was in any way hostile to the Congress. Mr. Nehru also argues in the same vein regarding the communist programme and Congress sympathy with many of its items. Congressmen, therefore, will not take umbrage at Sir Mirza's refusal to accord their flag a dominant position at public meetings in the State and will certainly appreciate his injunction to them to keep their enthusiasm for the flag within proper limits and not to permit the use of the flag to start agitations to coerce the State's people "in respect of matters of domestic politics".

SCRUTATOR.

SHORT NOTICES.

THE BELLE OF BALI. By ARDASER SORABJEE N. WADIA. (Dent) 1936. 25cm. 111p. 10/6.

"THE Belle of Bali" is an account of the author's trip to find a spot as nearly ideal as this world can offer. It is refreshing to read that he was perfectly satisfied with what he found on the much-talked-of island of Bali.

The beautiful photographs, by the author, help to understand his enthusiasm for the Island that the natives themselves believe to be "Heaven."

M. C. RAO.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE BLACK MAN IN HIS SEARCH FOR GOD. By H. M. SINGH. (The Lion Press, Lahore.) 1937. 23cm. 93p. Re. 1-14-0.

NOTHING is gained by attacking personalities respected all over the world, as Mr. Singh has done in this volume in ridiculing such a great man as Mr. Bernard Shaw, who has been described as "The Irishman standing on his head and kicking his heels in air in order to attract attention." The subject-matter is a mere attack on the so-called materialism of the West, but is wholly irrelevant as a reply to Mr. Bernard Shaw's famous book.

W. M. V.

Miscellaneous.

MR. KODANDA RAO'S EXPULSION FROM INDO-CHINA.

The following information was elicited from the Government of India by question and answer in the Council of State on 5th October regarding the expulsion of Mr. P. Kodanda Rao from French Indo-China.

The Honourable Pandit H. N. Kunzru: (a) Are Government aware that Mr. P. Kodanda Rao informed the Governor General of French Indo-China of his intentions to visit Saigon with a view to studying the conditions of Indians therein and that the Director of the Central Tourist Bureau acknowledged Mr. Kodanda Rao's letter to the Governor General, and welcomed the prospect of his visit and offered facilities for his investigation, but when he was actually on his way to Saigon, after previous notice to the authorities, he was not allowed to proceed to Saigon but turned back from Phom Penh?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have made any enquiries into the matter, and if so, what is the result of such enquiries?

The Honourable Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad : (a) Yes.

(b) Yes. The expulsion was apparently due to some misunderstanding on the part of the French authorities.

The Hon'ble Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad : Sir, I may amplify this answer. I very much regret the inconvenience caused to Mr. Kodanda Rao and I can assure my Hon. friends opposite that we have taken steps to see that such misunderstandings do not occur in the future.

The Hon. Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru : May I ask whether the Government of India have inquired how this misunderstanding arose? Mr. Kodanda Rao sent a copy of his letter of introduction which he received from the Government of India to the Private Secretary to the French Governor General and subsequently received a very cordial reply from the Director of the Tourists' Bureau. What happened then to create misunderstanding?

The Hon. Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad : Sir, it is perfectly correct to say that Mr. Kodanda Rao did write to the Private Secretary to the Governor and that the letter was then forwarded to the Director of the Tourists' Bureau, who, in December I believe, replied to Mr. Kodanda Rao. I think this misunderstanding occurred in May and from the information that we have, I gather that the French Government did not regard the credentials of Mr. Kodanda Rao as sufficient, because no information was sent direct from the Government of India to the French Government that Mr. Kodanda Rao was likely to visit Saigon, and the reason for that was that when Mr. Kodanda Rao started on his itinerary he had given the Government of India no information that he was going to Indo-China. He had a general letter of introduction and I gather that he sent a typed copy of that letter to the French Government, and I understand that that was not regarded as suitable. As I told my Hon. friend we shall see that in future this sort of misunderstanding does not occur.

The Hon. Pandit Kunzru : Was not the copy of the letter sent by Mr. Kodanda Rao regarded as sufficient in the first instance by the Government of Indo-China?

The Hon. Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad : As I say Sir, the reply was from the director of the Tourists' Bureau. Mr. Kodanda Rao did not get any reply to the first letter from the Government but only from Tourists' Bureau in December, and subsequently they did not regard the copy as sufficient. That was the view they took.

The Hon. Pandit Kunzru : Is my Hon. friend aware that Mr. Kodanda Rao's letter was forwarded to the Director of the Tourists' Bureau by the Governor General of Indo-China?

The Hon. Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad : I said it is perfectly true that the copy of the letter was sent to the Director, but the reply was from the Director. I cannot say whether the reply of the Director of the Tourists' Bureau can be taken as the reply from the Government of French Indo-China. As I said, this happened in December and Mr. Kodanda Rao really went there in May.

The Hon. Pandit Kunzru : Is it not clear that the Governor General had in the first instance no objection to Mr. Kodanda Rao's visit to Saigon?

The Hon. Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad : That is a possible interpretation. On the other hand, it is quite likely that the French Government merely sent it to the Tourist Bureau and the Director replied on his own. Both interpretations are possible. Subsequent enquiry shows that the French Government did not regard the copy of the letter from the Private Secretary as a sufficient introduction.

The Hon. Pandit Kunzru : Have the Government made inquiries and obtained any definite information from the Government of Indo-China or not?

The Hon. Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad : We have had replies from the Consul General. What I am stating is based on the reports that the Foreign Office in England received from the British Consul General, of which copies were received by the Government of India, and, as I said, the French Government did not consider that a copy of the introduction letter which was given to Mr. Kodanda Rao by the Foreign Department here was a sufficient credential. As I have said we are taking steps to see that this sort of thing does not arise. I hope that will satisfy my Hon. friend.

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