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Topics of the Week.

Dharavi Labour Troubles.

THE Dharavi tannery works were the scene of a clash between two sections of labour the other day and the police had to open fire on rioters in the interest of peace. This is the second time since the Congress ministries took office that the police had to be called in to restore order in labour areas in a Congress province, the first being in Cawnpore. We do not wish to comment upon the firing at Dharavi at this stage as an inquiry is to be held into the affair very soon. But a grievance to which Mr. S. V. Parulekar has drawn Government's attention deserves their sympathetic consideration immediately. The sixth Presidency Magistrate of Bombay has demanded heavy bails from those who have been arrested on charges of rioting at Dharavi. A cash deposit of Rs. 150 and a surety of Rs. 500 from persons whose income rarely goes above Rs. 30 per month and who are not permanent residents of this presidency is tantamount to refusal of bail and defeats the very object for which bail is provided for in law, viz., to give the accused freedom of movement and consultation and at the same time ensure his presence in Court when necessary. In demanding sureties beyond the means of the poor workers, the Magistrate has virtually penalised them to a remand in police custody.

THE Bombay Government have promised an inquiry into the firing at the request of Mr. Parulekar who has been working in the Dharavi labour area for a number of years now. We would urge upon the Government the need for an open rather than a departmental inquiry into these regrettable incidents. A departmental inquiry would not inspire confidence

in the public and its value will be practically nil as far as the public go. The Congress has been the loudest in its condemnation of 'close' governmental inquiries. Here is an opportunity for its spokesmen in the Bombay Government to translate their views into action. The U. P. Government has already given a lead in the matter and we hope the Bombay Government will not lag behind.

Retrograde.

WE cannot congratulate the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, on the views it has expressed in its letter to the Bombay Labour Commissioner about the type of trade unions it would deal with. The Chamber urges that, rather than regional trade unions, vocational unions should be organised and seems to prefer unions manned entirely by workers to those which are guided by "outsiders". It would not agree to give any latitude to trade union officials to communicate with workers inside the factories; collection of trade union subscriptions on the wage day it would not encourage; it would only recognise unions whose membership extends to fifty-one per cent. of the workers concerned; recognition would be given to unions if they agreed not to support a lightning strike and agreed to support only such a strike as would follow a month's notice, and that too when fifty per cent. of the workers previously signified their intention in favour of it. It stipulates that a strike should be called off the moment an inquiry is started into it and that the rules of the union should be submitted to and approved by the Government and published in consultation with the employees and employers.

THE Indian Merchants Chamber has revealed itself in this letter as a body animated by class prejudice. The great services rendered to Indian labour by "outsiders" have been recognised even by the Royal Commission on Labour which conceded that for some time at least their help was essential for the growth of labour organisations in this country. The Indian Merchants' Chamber, to say the least of it, does not inspire confidence in its attitude towards labour by the publication of this letter.

MR. SUHRAWARDY, the Minister for Labour in the Bengal Government, is an impacable enemy of spurious unions, among whom of course, he includes all 'Red' unions. His views on labour unions can therefore be trusted to appeal to the Indian Merchants' Chamber as sufficiently reasonable. In a recent statement on labour policy he gave some advice to the employers of labour. We make a present of it to the Indian Merchants' Chamber.

A strong and healthy trade unionism (said Mr. Suhrawardy) is not only a necessity for the labourers and the State but also for the employer himself. It is possible

that, in the first flush, the employer may not like it as it rouses him from the complacency that he has hitherto enjoyed. But it is time that he recognised the irresistible march of events and reconciled himself to collective labour bargaining. A trade union will have many enemies even amongst the labourers themselves, particularly from amongst the lower ranks of the supervisors, who have been battenning upon the labourers. They will attempt to crush all organisations of labourers, and the employer must in his turn curb and crush such attempts and rise above the mentality of invariably supporting the superior employees at the expense of the labourer. It pains me to have to say that I have often found employers distrustful of trade unions, even more distrustful of genuine trade unions than of the spurious ones; for genuine trade unions have justice and fair-play and moderation and public support behind them, whereas the spurious trade unions can be neglected, ignored and discredited.

* * *

Agricultural Labourers.

ATTEMPTS are being made in Bihar to organise agricultural labourers who think that in any land legislation their interests should come first and the raiyats' afterwards and demand increases in wages. While withholding support from such agitation, the Patna correspondent of the *Searchlight* puts forward certain suggestions as to the way in which the Ministry can do something to improve the lot of agricultural labourers. He says:

They are a limb of our economic life and their grievances must be tackled in common with those of the rural community. For instance, there exists in some parts of the province some oppressed people akin to hereditary bondsmen. They serve their masters from generation to generation without redemption. Legislation must be undertaken to put a stop to it. I have no doubt that the new Bill which is going to be introduced in the ensuing November session of the Assembly to remove indebtedness of the rural community will not leave this evil untouched. Another direction in which the agricultural labourers can be benefited is to provide maintenance for the aged, the sick and the disabled among them. They are left uncared of even by their own children who cannot support themselves. They cannot work and become beggars, with misery and deprivation in the long run. The zamindars and well-to-do ryots should contribute to a fund for the maintenance of this nature of charity, and the Panchayats or some such other local institutions which are contemplated by the present Government, in one of their new measures, should administer this fund.

* * *

Judicial and Executive Function.

FROM the manner in which at about the same time Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, Prime Minister, in Madras and Mr. Kailas Nath Katju, Minister of Justice, in the United Provinces tried to make out that after the establishment of Congress raj the ancient Congress demand for the severance of the executive from judicial functions had become an outworn dogma which need not now be respected, it was feared that this was perhaps the new Congress policy to be brought into force in all Congress provinces and that revenue collection and administration of criminal law were to be left in the hands of the same officials. Happily, it would now appear that it is not going to be so. Mr. Rajagopalachariar is already trying to wriggle out of the *faux pas* into which he had landed himself and Mr. Katju was put in his place almost immediately by Premier Gobind Ballabh Pant.

* * *

MR. MUNSHI, the Bombay Minister for Law and Order, took occasion last week to say that he believed

steadfastly in the separation of executive and judicial functions and that he was considering to what extent he could give effect to the principle in view of the heavy expenditure that would be involved in carrying out such a scheme over the whole area. As soon as this scheme was in a practicable shape, the Minister added, it would be his duty to appeal to the legal profession of the Presidency to help in the cause of the separation of functions on which depended the successful establishment of a reign of law in criminal matters. We are glad that Mr. Munshi does not consider the Madras and U. P. indiscretions as a sort of direction to him to commit a similar indiscretion in Bombay and to use arguments which would throw cold water on an urgently needed reform. The Chari-Katju utterances only show what a great temptation a subtle intellect offers for aberration from the right path.

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Registration of Hindu Marriages.

THE Nizam's Government is to be congratulated on the introduction of a system of registration for Hindu marriages in the Hyderabad State. The work of such registration is entrusted to the police department for the present. No fee would be charged for registration, which is voluntary. With considerable forethought the order in this respect enjoins the police not to exercise compulsion in the matter, but to record only those marriages about which information is willingly offered. The order also restricts their work to bare registration and prohibits interference of any sort with the usual ceremonies connected with the marriage.

* * *

THE Government communique on this order says that the innovation is introduced in response to representations by several sections of the Hindu community and the proposals of some officers. While we congratulate the Hindus of Hyderabad for their progressive spirit in insisting on this reform, we feel that the Nizam would have given a splendid lead if a similar reform had been introduced in the State irrespective of communities. For the advantages of registration of marriages in case of inheritance, maintenance and other legal matters in connection with property suits are patent and no religious susceptibilities are likely to be hurt by it. We hope the facility allowed to Hindus would be taken advantage of in large numbers by them, and would lead to a similar demand on the part of other communities in the near future. We only wish the State could find a better agency than the police to do the registration work.

* * *

Irresponsible and Silly.

ADDRESSING the Muslim League session at Lucknow last week, Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Prime Minister of Bengal, indulged in a tirade against what he believed to be a conspiracy to establish a Hindu raj in India. While calling upon the Muslims to join the Muslim League banner to protect Islam in danger, he uttered a threat to the Governments of "Hindu provinces" which he believed were treating the Muslims not very fairly. "If Muslims were ill-treated," he said, "in minority provinces, the Bengal Ministry would retaliate." For sheer hectoring this avowal of readiness to institute Governmental civil war between province and province will be hard to beat. Mr. Huq forgot that he was the head of a coalition Government of a province where non-Muslims formed a substantial part of the population. The talk of a *jihad* against nearly a half of the citizens of the province, by the head of

the Provincial Government would have, in other circumstances and normal times, meant a crisis in the Cabinet, and we are not sure that Mr. Huq's non-Muslim colleagues in his Cabinet would keep quiet over what is either empty bluster or wicked vindictiveness.

EVEN the *Civil and Military Gazette* found it difficult to swallow Mr. Huq's fulminations and could not but observe :

Seldom can a more meaningless and, at the same time, more tendentious speech have been made at any important political gathering. From a lesser man than the Premier of an important province it would have been arrant tub-thumping. If Mr. Huq cannot see his way to explain away or, at least, to tone down the effect of the more violent passages of his speech, both Mr. Jinnah and Sir Sikander Hyat Khan would be well advised to dissociate themselves from the possibilities which the Bengal Premier adumbrated.

"Wreck Federation."

NEXT month the Kathiawad States' People's Conference is going to be held in Rajkot. In Kathiawad there are as many as 206 States for a population of 28 lakhs. A Conference of the people of these States was not allowed to be held for the last seven years, but the Thakoresaheb of Rajkot has this year given permission to the Conference to be held in his State. At a meeting held in Bombay on the 19th inst. to appeal to the Kathiawad people to make the session of the Conference a success, Sardar Vallabh Patel, who presided over the meeting, said about federation :

A good deal is being talked about federation. It was up to the people of the States to understand what would be their position in the federal scheme. So far as the rulers were concerned they did not understand anything and that was why they sent for barristers from England spending lakhs of rupees and only signed documents prepared by these barristers, not knowing what the documents contained. But the people should know what were their rights, what would be their position, if their respective States agreed to enter the federation. It was their duty to express their views and make their rulers know what they thought about the federal scheme. It was up to them to declare that they were against the federal scheme and that they would see to it that the federal scheme was wrecked, if and when it was introduced.

Vande Mataram.

MR. M. N. ROY writes as follows in *Independent India* on the Muslim League's opposition to the "Vande Mataram" song.

The resolution against the adoption of the song "Vande Mataram" as the national anthem will surely be resented by many a Congressman. But on this point again, let us not be guided by prejudice. The criticism contained in the resolution is well-founded. Indeed, there is no express anti-Muslim spirit in the text of the song. But the context is

there. The author of the song put it in the mouth of rebels against the enemies of Hinduism. The spirit of the song is idolatrous and certainly pronouncedly Hindu. Would the cause of unity be promoted by our insisting upon the Muslims' subscribing to Hindu ideas and ideals? Why can't we compose a new national anthem which will be less controversial, expressing the secular ideals of our struggle for freedom, ideals to which the entire people of India can readily subscribe irrespective of communal, religious and provincial differences?

Inquiry Resented.

MR. N. V. PHADKE, member, Servants of India Society, has issued the following statement :

One of the settlers in the Criminal Tribes Settlement at Ambernath was handcuffed, chained and subjected to brutal thrashing by the authorities of the Settlement on 22nd night at Ambernath for his alleged offence of having invited Mr. S. V. Parulekar, M. L. A., to Ambernath to address a meeting of settlers.

The meeting was to be held in order to formulate the grievances of the settlers and prepare a memorandum to be submitted to the Criminal Tribes Settlement Enquiry Committee recently appointed by the Government of Bombay. Mr. Parulekar had issued a hand-bill requesting the settlers to assemble in a meeting for the above-mentioned purpose, there being nothing unlawful about such a proceeding.

The Superintendent took objection to the meeting whereupon Mr. Parulekar asked for his permission in writing. The permission was not granted, and so in order to avoid harassment and victimization of settlers, Mr. Parulekar postponed the meeting according to the wishes of the Superintendent, who wanted to obtain permission of the Backward Class Officer. It is not known what steps the Superintendent took to obtain the permission of the Backward class Officer, but in the meantime extremely severe punishment was meted out to one of the unfortunate inmates of the Ambernath Settlement for the crime (?) of having offered to attend the proposed meeting.

One wonders what would have happened if the meeting had been held in spite of the Superintendent.

Self-Supporting Education.

THE following resolution was adopted at the Educational Conference held last week-end at Wardha under the aegis of Mahatma Gandhi :—

In the opinion of this Conference, free and compulsory education should be provided for seven years on a nationwide scale. The medium of instruction should be the mother tongue.

The Conference endorses the proposal made by Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education throughout this period should centre on some form of manual and productive work and that all other abilities to be developed and the training to be given should as far as possible be integrally related to a central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.

The Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of teachers.

DISINTERRING THE CORPSE OF NON-INTERVENTION.

AT the meeting of the League of Nations Assembly M. Negrin, the Premier of Spain, said on 20th September: "Non-intervention is dead indeed, but its unburied corpse is responsible for an artificial atmosphere in international circles. It may be that yesterday's announcement of the withdrawal of the

Anglo-French naval patrol from the Spanish coasts will constitute the last step but one in its official burial." If non-intervention was buried, its bones are being disinterred by Great Britain and France, particularly the former. The British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, spoke bravely at Llandudno on 15th

October, giving an indication that at last the British Government would be ready to give up its policy of one-sided neutrality which placed only a premium upon aggression and which, as M. Alvarez del Vayo, Spain's Foreign Minister, observed in the Sixth Committee of the League, "amounted in practice to a blockade of the legitimate Spanish Government." Mr. Eden said on that occasion: "A feature of the present situation is proclaimed intervention and the glorification of the breaches of the agreement. Therefore, nobody can complain if the patience of those who have striven to keep their responsibilities constantly before them is well-nigh exhausted. I, for one, certainly will not criticise any nation which, if such conditions continue, felt compelled to resume freedom of action." Even this change in the British Government's policy from its former toleration of aggression to a willingness to consider collective action was due not to any concern for the maintenance of the territorial integrity of a League member, but to the piratical submarine attacks by Italy in the Mediterranean, Britain's sea-road. Great Britain kept quiet while Italy invaded Spain, but roused herself to activity when her own strategic position was menaced. M. del Vayo spoke bitterly and caustically about this. There had accumulated, he said, outrages and attacks in the Mediterranean on such a scale that the protagonists of non-intervention, when their own vital interests were directly threatened, were forced to return to the path of collective security. Great Britain co-operated with other countries and made the Middle Sea safe for herself, and it was hoped that she would at last extend the collective action, initiated in her own interest, in the interest of Spain also, giving up the "ironical fiction" (in M. Negrin's words) of non-intervention.

But these signs are again belied. Great Britain has agreed, and has persuaded France, which was far more impatient of the Fascist aggression in Spain and was straining at the leash to reopen the Franco-Spanish frontier to the passage of arms to the Spanish Government, to agree, to the continuance of the fiction of non-intervention. She had insisted at first that Italy and Germany should agree to a complete withdrawal of her nationals fighting in Spain on the side of rebels, and that only after the Non-Intervention Committee had satisfied itself that considerable progress had been made with withdrawal, the countries represented on the Committee would accord the rights of a belligerent to the Burgos junta. But at the Chairman's Sub-Committee of the Non-Intervention Committee she gave in once again. Italy and Germany agreed only to a token withdrawal; what would be enough as an earnest of the eventual evacuation of the Italian and German combatants was not determined; then a Commission of Inquiry was to go to the war zone to find out what were the proportions of foreign nationals fighting on the two sides; and after the report of the Commission was received, then the real exodus was to begin. Any one could have seen that Italy was once again employing dilatory tactics and did not want anything more than to prevent, by a show of reasonableness,

arms and perhaps volunteers going to loyalist Spain along the Pyrenese frontier, because even Italy does not believe that Great Britain will give any material assistance to the hard-pressed Spanish Government. It was not even asked of the Fascist countries that they would accept the figures given by the Commission of Inquiry and that they would agree to withdraw their army units from Spain in proportionate strength. In fact, two days after the non-intervention scheme was reconstructed and a day after the House of Commons was bidden to hold its soul in patience, the Fascist powers refused to abide by the verdict of the Commission. Thus the whole scheme has already gone to pieces even before it came into force. All that Italy and Germany want is that Franco should be recognised as a belligerent, so that the blockade of the Spanish coast which has already been illegally established could be made legal and enforced even more rigorously. If the new scheme of non-intervention comes into operation at all, it is certain that Italy and Germany, who have established their armies of occupation in Spain, would begin asking, the moment a token withdrawal takes place, for the recognition by Great Britain, France and Russia of Franco as a belligerent.

At least after the acknowledged Italian victory at Santander, the playing with neutrality should have stopped. So long as Italy and Germany were shy about their exploits in Spain, there might have been some excuse for not inculcating them. Mediterranean piracy is still in that stage. Everyone knows that it is Italy and rebel Spain that are practising gangster terrorism of the seas, but diplomatic etiquette still requires that everyone should speak of unknown pirates. But no such reticence is demanded in the matter of the international war on the soil of Spain. There is no need to name the aggressor here. As M. del Vayo said, "In the case of Spain the aggressor defines himself." Full details have been published in the Italian papers themselves of the part that the Italian army played in the fall of Santander, which after the fall of Bilbao is the heaviest reverse sustained by the Valencia Government. Of the forces that attacked Santander no less than half were supplied by Italy, the other half being supplied mainly by the mercenary Moors and foreign legionaries. The total strength of the army which took part in the attack is placed at 30,000. Three Italian divisions — Black Arrow, Black Flame and 20th of March — fought in this battle and were supplied with 200 tanks and several air machines, which were mostly German. Mussolini sent a telegram to the Officer commanding the Italian troops giving him the nation's praise for the superb conduct of the command. Franco telegraphed to Mussolini, expressing his gratitude, and Mussolini wired back: "The brotherhood of arms, already close, guarantees the final victory which will liberate Spain and the Mediterranean from any menace to our common civilization." And be it remembered that this cynical avowal that the fall of Santander was due to the bravery of the Italian army and the direction of Italian generals came after Great Britain's plan for the reconstruction of non-intervention was propounded, and yet not a

single meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee was held to consider this flagrant violation of international order. M. Negrin said at the League meeting: "To-day, speaking with a full sense of responsibility, we say that Italy is at this moment transporting to Spanish territory an army twice as large as that which she at present maintains there. Let no one plead ignorance on this point in future! Due warning has now been given." What was Great Britain's reaction to Santander and to this news that twice the number of forces were being dispatched to aid Franco? "A resurrection", as M. del Vayo said, "of the corpse" of non-intervention. Why is any preliminary inquiry needed to determine the numbers of foreign nationals taking part in the war on the two sides before their participation is stopped? The numbers are fairly well-known. Three months ago they were about 12,000 foreign volunteers on the side of the Government and between 80,000 and 100,000 Germans and Italians on the side of the rebels, since when the rebels have obtained a large accession of strength from Italy. But whatever the numbers, why cannot these foreign combatants be withdrawn from the combat at once? Sir Archibald Sinclair suggested in the House of Commons on 15th July last that although it would take some time to get these combatants out of Spain, there should be no difficulty in withdrawing them all immediately from the firing line. But if this were done, no room would be left for Italy to procrastinate and in the meantime to rush her forces into Spain.

What Italy and Germany want is that Franco be granted belligerent right so as to give him prestige and legalise the blockade that has already been enforced by illegal means. Loyalist Spain has lost Bilbao, Santander and Gijon; on the northern front her position has been shaken, but in the south she is holding out with the utmost bravery. She has given up defensive tactics and has taken the offensive; her army is no longer an improvisation that it formerly was; and she no longer fears that she will be conquered by force of arms; it is the blockade that she fears. Reohard Watts, Jr., writes in the *Current History* for October: "Unquestionably loyalist Spain is still dependent on materials from the outside. More and more munitions are being manufactured within the country, with small factories throughout the land adding their mite to the military resources of the Government. So far, however, they cannot supply all that is needed if all the available men are to be properly armed and if the offensive that is to bring victory is to be properly equipped. Gasolene and various raw materials are required, and there is a particular lack of heavy artillery which cannot be supplied in the country itself." The chief motive underlying submarine piracy in the Mediterranean was to strengthen the blockade of the Spanish Government's coast which till then was partial. In the absence of recognition of the Burgos junta as a belligerent, "General Franco's forces were unable legally to enforce a blockade. In order, therefore, to cut off loyalist supplies, particularly of oil and gasolene for tanks and airplanes, nothing could be simpler than to attempt to enforce an illegal one by means of un-

identifiable vessels." Now that piratical attacks are stopped, Italy is concentrating on the grant of belligerent rights to Franco. The military advantages of such rights would be very great indeed. War material would cease going from Barcelona to Madrid, and Madrid would fall to the rebels. Non-intervention has been, as M. del Vayo observed, "a fatal policy"; it has only prolonged war, but for it the Spanish war "would have been brought to an end in less than two months." One can but endorse the pathetic appeal which the Spanish Foreign Minister made to the League: "If the League of Nations is not in a position to afford the State victim of aggression that active assistance to which it is entitled under the Covenant, let it not commit, at any rate, the iniquity of preventing that State from acquiring the means of providing for its own defence."

CURRENT COMMENT.

AN APOLOGIA.

THE Bombay Ministry, having once refused a moratorium on agriculturists' debts, must of course continue to refuse it, for where else would be its prestige? But it now speaks in rather subdued tones and does not denounce moratorium in wild and flamboyant terms or plead that it would ruin the credit structure of the province as it did before. It now is prepared to argue, and argue coolly; only in doing so, it has completely shifted its ground. A moratorium does not now appear to the Ministry harmful and even fatal, as some time ago it persuaded itself to believe, but only as not so emergent.

Mr. Latthe, the Finance Minister, speaking at Shenoli last week, seemed to imply that the advocates of a moratorium based their demand at present on a different ground from that on which they had based it before. For ourselves we never pleaded for it as an extraordinary emergency measure, but only as a precautionary measure to ensure that agriculturist debtors for whose benefit the Ministry has pledged itself to enact debt legislation of a far-reaching character will not be balked of it. We agree that agricultural prices have shown a tendency to rise during the last two or three years, and that this makes unnecessary a moratorium of the kind several continental countries declared during the period of economic depression.

But we are tempted to ask Mr. Latthe why then he carried on a furious agitation only last year for a wholesale reduction—the figure he mentioned was 50 per cent.—of land revenue. The reason that he then adduced was the fall in the prices of agricultural products of the same extent. He now sings a different tune. Is it because he has since come to know that the prices had already been going up or because he has acquired a new sense of responsibility and does not anyway want to be bothered by demands with which it was his wont to harry the old bureaucratic Government? This is a question that he might ask his own conscience. We are not concerned with

it, as we have urged the declaration of a moratorium neither as a stick to beat the Congress Ministry with, nor as a measure demanded by a national emergency, but only as a necessary preliminary to the indebtedness law which the Ministry has promised.

The Finance Minister says that debtors' lands are not being transferred to money-lenders "on a large scale," and that therefore a moratorium is unnecessary. But we ask. Why should they be allowed to be transferred on any scale? Why not prevent it altogether? What harm can possibly result from it even assuming that, on account of the executive orders issued by the Government, a moratorium is now unnecessary? Perhaps, the Ministry will say that after a moratorium the usual channels of rural credit will be blocked up. But the executive action which Mr. Latthe himself says the Government has taken will have the same result. If this action is on a sufficiently wide scale, it will be only another name for a general moratorium, and it will be open to the same objection of restricting the credit of agriculturists as a moratorium is open to. If the action is meagre, then to that extent it is free from this objection, but in that case *ex hypothesi* it does not make a moratorium unnecessary.

Mr. Latthe, after balancing advantages and disadvantages, comes to the conclusion that "this measure (the Debt Conciliation Bill), when introduced would probably be superior to a moratorium." Who ever recommended a moratorium to him as a measure alternative to debt legislation? The first is only ancillary, preliminary to the second. For its justification a temporary measure like a moratorium depends upon being followed up, within a short time, by a permanent debt law. The debtor is to be temporarily safeguarded against being made to pay in full when, and only when, he has a chance of having his burden reduced by debt legislation, which will take into account not only the terms of his contract but the equities of his case. That is the *raison d'être* of a moratorium. It is not intended, and was never intended, as a substitute for the legislation itself, and the two, therefore, cannot be compared as independent, rival solutions of the same problem.

What Mr. Latthe says at the end is, for him, politically dangerous. "The experience of rushing through proposals of this kind (i. e., a moratorium) elsewhere has taught us to be cautious ourselves." The "elsewhere" here refers to Madras. In Madras Mr. Rajagopalachariar deemed it expedient to withdraw the Moratorium Bill that he had introduced in the Legislative Assembly of his province for a time. It has since been exposed to a fire of criticism, but the fire is from both sides. If in some quarters it is criticised as interfering with the legitimate rights of creditors, it is also criticised in other quarters, Mr. Latthe may well note, as not going far enough, and it may yet pass the Madras legislature with its claws still more sharpened. Granting, however, that it eventually fails to become law, Mr. Rajagopalachariar will at

least have the credit of having attempted something that was clearly necessary. His failure will in any case afford no justification to the Bombay Ministry for the deliberate dereliction of duty of which it is guilty. And, considering the matter from a political point of view, does Mr. Latthe think it prudent for one Congress Ministry, whose offence is sheer inaction, to point a finger of scorn to another Congress Ministry, whose misfortune it is, not offence, to have tried and failed? And why does not Mr. Latthe cast his eyes upwards? In the United Provinces a third Congress Ministry has sponsored a similar measure; it has already passed the Legislative Assembly and perhaps before Mr. Latthe reads these lines, it will have passed the Legislative Council. The Bombay Ministry will not make much progress if, ignoring the achievements of its sister Ministries, it revels in and gloats over the possibility of their failure.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN BIHAR.

DR. SYED MAHMUD, Minister of Education in Bihar, made a notable announcement at Bettiah last week in the matter of compulsory education. He announced that by the end of February, 1938, in all municipal areas primary education would be made compulsory and the Government would bear the cost and the municipalities would be asked to spend what they might have been spending over education towards proper sanitation of their towns. He said the detailed scheme would be placed before the public by the end of November, 1937, and the question of extending this proposal in rural areas would also be discussed.

One can well understand Dr. Syed Mahmud taking municipal towns in hand first; they are educationally more advanced than rural areas, and obviously the cost of bringing all the school population to school in tracts where a large number of them are already at school would be much less than in other tracts where education is backward. From this point of view the introduction of compulsion in municipal towns is easier, and it is well that the Education Minister begins his drive against illiteracy there. The total population living in municipalities in Bihar is 13¼ lakhs, and it may be said that of this about a lakh or 8 per cent. is already in school. This proportion compares very favourably with the general percentage of children at school to the total population in the province, which is only a little more than 3 per cent. The cost of introducing compulsory education in these places will be proportionately greater.

The wastage in primary education of which bitter complaints are heard in every province can be easily remedied by the introduction of compulsory education. The Administration Report of Bihar and Orissa for 1934-35 has this to say on the subject: "Investigations made by the Special Officer in a number of districts in the course of the year dismally illuminated the infructuous nature of much of the expense on primary education in the past. It was

established that of every three children admitted to a primary school only one had made satisfactory progress after three years. Of the others one had remained tenaciously at the bottom of the school throughout that period, while the third had vanished, having completed his education." This wastage, which is common to all provinces, will be immediately stopped when compulsory education is introduced, and the administrative like the financial difficulties involved in such a measure when applied to municipalities will be much less.

The total municipal expenditure on education in Bihar was Rs. 4,16,000 in 1935-36, towards which the municipalities received a grant of Rs. 1,76,000. But the expenditure on primary municipal schools was only Rs. 1,19,000. The percentage of expenditure on education in the more important municipalities is very low; e. g. in Patna City and Monghyr 4.8; Gaya 6.1; Muzaffarpur 6.7; Bhagalpur 7.2; Buxar 7.7;

and Arrah 9.2; and it is obvious that unless the Government takes upon itself the burden of primary education the latter can never be universal. We, therefore, welcome the announcement of the Minister that the Government will itself meet the cost of compulsory education, leaving the municipalities to divert their slender resources to what is to them even a more urgent necessity, viz., sanitation.

Having introduced compulsory education in municipal towns the Government must turn its attention to rural areas too, for of the total population of 3,23,65,000 in the province only 13,33,000 or 4 per cent., live in municipal towns; all the rest live in rural areas. The municipalities are to be taken up first, because education in these areas can be tackled easily, but the problem of the rural areas, though vastly more difficult, cannot be postponed indefinitely, and we are glad that the Bihar Ministry is not going to postpone it either.

BENGAL TENANCY BILL.

TILLERS OF LAND STILL UNPROTECTED.

UNDER the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, as amended by the Act of 1928, the under-ryat was left without much protection, and the amending Bill passed recently by the Bengal Legislative Assembly does not propose to make any improvement in his position. The Act of 1885 placed limits on the enhancement of rent to be paid by the raiyats and protected them from eviction, but so far as the under-ryats were concerned, the Act left them without any effective protection. It provided no doubt that the rent of the under-ryats could not be enhanced by more than 50 per cent. of the rent of the landlord-ryats, but as it gave them no security against eviction (the Act provided that an under-ryat could be ejected on the expiry of the term of a written lease; or where there was no written lease, on mere notice expiring by the end of the agricultural year) there was in fact no limit to the enhancement of their rents. Another difficulty was experienced in making the slight protection which the Act purported to give a reality, viz., when the raiyats let out their lands in part it was almost impossible to determine whether the enhanced rent was more than 50 per cent. of their own rent. In explaining the provisions of the amending Act of 1928, Khan Bahadur Munim spoke of the 1885 Act as follows: "In the existing Act, although there is a protection against rack-renting, yet that gave them nothing because the under-ryats have no status, and, if an under-ryat did not agree to pay the rent which his landlord claimed for him, the result was that he was ousted. Therefore, that restriction in the Act was really a dead letter. During the course of settlement operations it was found that if the rent of an under-ryat was reduced under this Act the result was that on the following day the man was ousted from the land. And in many cases it was difficult to ascertain what the actual rate of rent for the particular plot of land sublet to an

under-ryat was; for a majority of under-ryats hold only a portion of the holding, and it is not possible to ascertain whether the plot has been let out at a rate of rent which, taking the particular plot of land, had reached the limit as given in the law."

The Act of 1885 provided that the under-ryat might acquire a right of occupancy if there was a local custom to this effect, but, Rai M. N. Gupta Bahadur says in his commentary, "as the burden of proving such custom lay on the tenant, he was really left without any protection against arbitrary eviction." The Bengal Administration Report for 1911-12 observes: "The under-ryat is not protected against eviction, and the protection afforded against excessive rental has been rendered nugatory in the law courts." This was fully anticipated when the Act was passed. Sir Stuart Bayley said at the time in the Viceroy's Legislative Council:

This class (the under-ryats) we have left as in the intermediate Bill No. II, with only the nominal protection of a fractional limit above the head-rent beyond which the lessor cannot recover in court. This is, to my mind, the most unsatisfactory part of the Bill, but the committee were unable to afford to under-ryats any real protection without subverting the customs and traditions attaching to the status. So long as they were liable to arbitrary ejection, there can be no protection against arbitrary enhancement, and the protection afforded by the Bill in practice only refers to arrears of rent. With the right to eject the lessor will always prefer this method of attaining his object to that of a suit in court, so that the protection, as I said, is nominal. In fact the only practicable method of protecting them would be by giving to under-ryats sub-occupancy right against the lessor, of the same nature though not necessarily of the same degree, as the occupancy riyat has against the tenure-holder above him. No such plan would, at the present time, be favourably received, as it is contrary to existing custom and is in that sense justly condemned as revolutionary. Moreover, the question is not at present of serious importance, though as population increases it is likely to become so; but I wish to say that in regard to the under-ryat I do not think the Bill can be

considered to be in any way a final settlement of the difficulty, and the next generation will probably have to reconsider his position.

At the time the 1885 Act was passed the raiyats were mostly actual tillers of the soil, but the conditions soon changed and the raiyats became increasingly mere rent-receivers from under-raiyats to whom they sublet their holdings. It was found some thirty years after the Act was passed that under-raiyats who were actually cultivating the lands and who had none but the nominal protection of the Act were as many as the *asli* raiyats. Sir John Kerr's Committee in 1921 described the evil inherent in leaving under-raiyats unprotected as follows :

Under the law as it stands, the occupancy tenant right can only be enjoyed by one person in the chain, and, as the law is not properly adapted to the complicated state of subinfeudation which actually exists, it frequently happens that the occupancy tenant right gets into the hands of the wrong person, and the cultivating tenant, who ought to have the right finds himself in the position of a tenant-at-will. It is this limitation of the legal occupancy right to a single individual among the numerous persons who may be interested in the land that is at the root of most of the difficulties experienced in the administration and interpretation of the Act in Bengal, and we are convinced that it is necessary to re-cast this fundamental provision of the Act, in order to meet the requirements of modern conditions.

The Government of Bengal thereupon brought in a Bill in 1925 giving effect to the Committee's recommendation, viz. that under-raiyats should, except in certain cases, be given occupancy right against their immediate landlords. The Bill also sought to give a legal right to the raiyat to transfer his occupancy holding. The Maharaja of Nadia, Revenue Member, in introducing the Bill, said: "With transferability made legal in this manner, there is a very real risk of raiyati holdings falling more and more into the hands of non-agriculturists, till the bona fide agriculturist is little more than a serf on the land he once called his own." The Legislative Council, however, did not show any inclination to accept this radical solution of the problem.

Then came the Act of 1928, which improved the position of the under-raiyats to a certain extent but not much, and which in any case failed to adopt the solution that the Bill of 1925 had proposed. It recognised as occupancy raiyats those under-raiyats who, under section 113, illustration 2, had acquired occupancy right by custom, but it also repealed this part of section 163, thus making it impossible for the number of under-raiyats with occupancy right to grow in future. This class of under-raiyats enjoy all the rights that are accorded to occupancy raiyats; for instance, their rent cannot be enhanced by more than 2 annas in the rupee, and that only once in fifteen years, and they cannot be ejected except on grounds on which occupancy raiyats can be ejected. As for those under-raiyats who had not by then acquired occupancy right, and they were by far the most numerous, the Act left the initial rent to an agreement between them and their landlord-raiyats, and limited subsequent enhancements to 4 annas in the rupee at intervals of not less than 15 years, while in the case of occupancy raiyats the

maximum enhancement could be only 2 annas. Raf M. N. Gupta Bahadur says: "There is hardly any justification to put the permissible rate of contractual enhancement (in the case of under-raiyats) as high as 4 annas per rupee of the previous rent when it is only 2 annas in the case of occupancy raiyats. The reasons which justify such periodical enhancement of rent are the same in both cases" (normal increase in the money value of the crop). The Act also provided that, in the case of an enhancement-suit, the maximum that the court could allow would be one-third of the average gross produce of ten years immediately preceding. This proportion too is much too high. As for security from ejection, the Act provided that those under-raiyats who had been in possession of their holding for 12 continuous years or had a homestead on it were not liable to be ejected at the expiry of the period of the lease, or where there was no lease on notice to quit at the end of the year, but they were entitled to remain on the holding like occupancy raiyats. They can be ejected on grounds on which occupancy raiyats can be ejected and on the additional ground of failure to pay arrears of rent. Those under-raiyats who have not been in possession for 12 years nor have a homestead on the land continue, as before, liable to ejection at the expiry of the period of lease or on notice to quit, but ejection can take place when the landlord requires the land for his own cultivation and not for subletting it to another under-raiyat.

No attempt is made in the Bill which passed the Legislative Assembly recently to improve the status of the under-raiyats, even those under-raiyats who have been on the holding continuously for 12 years. Their rent is liable to enhancement by 4 annas in the rupee, and the Bill does not propose any change in it. But an amendment moved by a Congress member, Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas, sought to give occupancy rights to all under-raiyats, making their rent non-liable to enhancement except on terms on which the rent of under-raiyats who had acquired occupancy right by custom or usage is liable, under-raiyats with occupancy right being to all intents and purposes occupancy raiyats. The number of under-raiyats in Bengal is now greater than that of occupancy raiyats, which means that a majority of the raiyats have become mere rent-receivers like the zamindars or tenure-holders, and the actual tillers of the soil are left without adequate protection. But the Ministry opposed this amendment, which was eventually defeated by 86 to 72 votes. The close division indicates that there is a good deal of sympathy even in the Coalition Party, from which the Cabinet is drawn, for the under-raiyat. All that the Revenue Minister, Sir B. P. Singh Roy, said in justification for the Government's attitude was that the present Bill did not pretend to make any radical changes in the present law, which would have to await the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry which the Government proposed to set up. But this is an unconvincing plea. In fact, the Kerr Committee had made recommendations on it and the Bengal Government was prepared in 1925 to assimilate the conditions under which a raiyat and an under-raiyat could acquire occupancy right and also the

incidents attaching to this right when it had been acquired. There was, therefore, nothing very revolutionary about the amendment moved by Mr. Biswas, and it is difficult to understand why the Huq Ministry opposed it.

The Ministry's position becomes all the more inexplicable when it is remembered that Mr. Fazlul Huq himself had proposed in 1928 to confer occupancy right on all under-raiyats. He moved an amendment, in the course of the debate on the 1928 Bill, for the deletion of what is now section 48G which deals with under-raiyats with occupancy right and the substitution therefor of the following clause: "Every under-raiyat shall acquire a right of occupancy in his holding in the same manner and to the same extent as a raiyat in accordance with the provisions of sections 19 and 20." This amendment is very far-reaching. A similar proposal was placed before Sir John Kerr's Committee and was turned down by it on the ground that it went too far. But Mr. Biswas's amendment was more modest than the Kerr Committee's recommendation which the Bengal Government itself had adopted. Why, then, should Mr. Huq have allowed his party to vote against the Congress amendment? The fact that the amendment was narrowly defeated is, however, encouraging. Non-official bills in the interest of the poor cultivators are to come before the Bengal legislature. It is to be hoped that the Government, instead of waiting for another inquiry, will

give its support to these bills and thus help in promptly removing a long-standing grievance which cries out for redress. Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, the Finance Minister, in defending the Ministry's action in turning down the amendment of Mr. Biswas, says that the Congress party was not really serious in taking up the cause of the cultivators; that it really stands for the middle classes whom the Bill benefits; that if it carried on an agitation for the people at the bottom, it would find that the Proja Party and some others in the Coalition party would bring in the kind of bills for which the Congress shows such outward concern; and that these bills would become laws sooner than the Congress would like. What Mr. Sarkar asserts may be true, but why should not the Ministry have taken the Congress at its word and supported its amendment, thus putting the Congress to the test? Will the Ministry even now support the Congress bills intended for the good of the cultivators or bring forward its own bill, if only (as Mr. Sarkar believes) to expose the insincerity of the Congress leaders? The general public is not concerned with the motives of either the Congress or the Ministry; what it wants is action in the right direction, and if such action is facilitated by a rivalry between the two parties to pose as the champions of the poor, it will only wish that the rivalry expressed itself not in mere words but in solid deeds.

SELF-SUPPORTING EDUCATION.

Larry: What is the use of giving land to such men? They are too small, too poor, too ignorant, too simple-minded to hold it against us: you might as well give a dukedom to a crossing sweeper.

Broadbent: Yes; Mr. Keegan; this place may have an industrial future, or it may have a residential future: I can't tell yet; but it is not going to be a future in the hands of your Dorans and Haffigans, poor devils!

—*John Bull's Other Island, Act IV.*

WHEN Mahatma Gandhi first propounded the idea of self-supporting education it looked as though the country was in no mood to take it seriously. But with his characteristic ability to launch the country on magnificent experiments about mighty illusions the Mahatma has won his way over the Congress Ministers in the matter of experimenting with the principle of self-supporting education. It was perhaps Dr. C. R. Reddi who pointed out in one of his recent speeches in Madras the mutual incompatibility of saints and successful government; and we can only wish that a similar incompatibility does not exist between great ends and unscientific means, even when the ends are not political, but purely educational.

Ever since the proposal was mooted seriously the country was agitated over the issue, and in the beginning the educationists betrayed as much gusto for its acceptance as a child would for a dose of castor oil. But since then, in consequence of the tearing and raging campaign carried on in its favour under the various types of the usual slogans of national education, useful education, patriotic pride

and all the rest of their kind, the thunders have cooled down into murmurs and the idea has won for itself the blessings of all sections of patriotic opinion. Practical men, principals of schools, economists, professors, educationists have all given their views on it and this new-born babe seems to have been put on the way for a robust life at the Wardha Conference with the triple graces of originality of conception, blessings of experts and the kindly patronage of Congress Ministers attending on it. In spite of all this, however, certain crevices and loopholes in the make-up leave doubters and cynics to doubt and nod and wonder if the question of reorganising a whole nation's education is capable of achievement with such adroit simplicity.

Now that the scheme has been accepted by the Congress Ministers through their representatives at the Wardha Conference, it is worth while examining some of its implications with reference to its practicability as a *self-supporting proposition*, which, for Mr. Gandhi, is the very crux of the whole scheme and "the acid test of its reality" (see the *Harijan* of 2nd October). Judged from this point of view—and it is essentially from this angle that the whole thing should be judged even because he regards the self-support principle as the acid test of its reality—the various opinions collected by him and published in the *Harijan* make a very interesting study in anti-climax. To start with, there is the opinion of Mr. Bhise, Principal of the S. P. Hakimji School, Bordi, which is run on the principle of giving instruc-

tion in handicrafts. He welcomes the scheme as the best interpretation of educational theories, details his own experience in not finding any difficulty in disposing of the surplus products, and concludes that his conviction that education must be made and can be made self-supporting is growing stronger. Only he does not tell us what exactly is the position of the school as a self-supporting institution *at present*, even when it enjoys the privilege of its being a rare specimen of its kind and therefore having to face no competition. There is the opinion of Dr. P. C. Ghosh, an economist, who, in supporting the principle of conscripting the educated, unearths the buried bones of the benefit theory of taxation. He, no doubt, feels enthused over the idea of national education, but believes that though the proposition appears to be theoretically sound, it should be limited to selected areas for one year. There are also a few useful hints on education by Mr. Manu Subedar (the *Harijan*, 2nd October) which are really very valuable and throw a floodlight of practical wisdom on the question of educational reorganisation, but in which no definite opinion is expressed as to whether or not it could be made self-supporting. Mr. K. G. Mashruwala, who rightly emphasises the moral and psychological advantages of an education imparted along with handicrafts and who would look upon the necessary expenditure as an investment for material and moral returns in future, admits frankly that he does not clearly see the way towards making a success of the self-support principle. Then comes the opinion of Prof. S. V. Puntambekar of the Hindu University who completely agrees with and even humbly pleads for Mr. Gandhi's suggestion, but feels doubtful about the economic value of the products of the schools and recommends that the State should spend money directly on educating the children rather than adopt the process of buying up their products. And finally he ends by driving a coach and six through the Gandhian scheme by pronouncing the verdict of historical wisdom when he writes that "two ideologies, one mediæval and the other modern, one pluralistic and functional and the other unitary and territorial, cannot work together." In the same issue is reproduced the opinion of a "high educational officer who wishes to remain unknown". He goes a step further and declares that "the underlying ideas are in some cases mediæval and in some cases based upon assumptions that would not bear examination." There is also the no less significant wording of the resolution of the Wardha Educational Conference itself, in that it accepts the principle subject, however, to the reservation that the Conference *expects* that this system of education will be *gradually* able to cover the remuneration of teachers. The words "gradually" and "expects" are very convenient, indeed, and are probably the contribution to the resolution of the politicians at the Educational Conference. On top of all these comes the presidential address from Sir P. C. Ray, whose address, according to the *Bombay Chronicle*, covers nearly all aspects of the problem of educational reorganisation except that of the self-support principle! The *Bombay Chronicle* calls this a regrettable omission. It would be regrettable indeed if

it were accidental. And if we are "patriotic" probably we have to draw the conclusion that this silence is more than half-consent. But then comes the doubt whether it is commonsense to say that a keen scientist and a keener business organiser like Sir P. C. Ray could accidentally omit to touch on just that point as the President of a Conference assembled almost for that very purpose. And if it is deliberate? Probably it is unpatriotic to press the point to its logical conclusion!

Now this body of opinions from all types of people is practically illustrative of the attitude of responsible men in the country vis-a-vis the Mahatma's ideal. It brings into relief two important aspects of the question. In the first place there is an undoubted recognition of the fact that education is badly in need of reform, and that reform should be in the direction of making it more practical, more useful and more of a type that would produce men and women of a self-reliant attitude and creative talents. To that extent there is common ground, and probably to-day no sane person could deny its crying necessity. But it is one thing to say that education should be made more useful and quite another to hold that it should be self-supporting. And on this latter point—the crucial question, the very essence so far as Mahatma Gandhi is concerned—the economists assume an attitude that is doubtful, the professor and "the high educational officer", an attitude that is negative, and the Conference itself an attitude that is political! But what use has the Mahatma for mere a priori reasoning? The great lover of social experiments brushes all this aside. The Conference, of course, endorses the principle subordinating collective reason to the Mahatma's flash of intuition; and a few months from today we may see all round us in at least the seven Congress provinces "self-supporting schools" supported by governments and private funds springing into existence, busy like ant-hills in summer, patronised by the Ministers, managed by patriots and manned by volunteers who—probably in their thousands—have already started sending in their applications to Wardha!

In spite of its being a product of intuition, and in spite of his inability to attach any credit to the a priori reasoning of those who are not convinced of its merits, the Mahatma has given us enough of a priori reasoning himself in support of his principle. And Mr. Mahadeo Desai has given a long quotation of a priori reasoning from Rousseau in favour of the principle (the *Harijan* of October 9th). We may leave poor Rousseau to his well-earned rest and examine the other parts of the reasoning offered in its support, and it is also to be hoped that responsible Ministers will be able to bestow enough thought on the idea before moving finally towards making experiments with the not very lavish resources of the poor men of India.

The strongest point in favour of the idea is the psychological and moral uplift that education, given side by side with practical work, would impart to its pupils. On its usefulness probably there can be no vital difference, although what particular types of

vocational training should be offered may depend on the particular types of economic ends one may wish to achieve. But when it is expected to be self-supporting, education becomes largely an economic question and shifts the emphasis towards maintaining a market value for the products of the schools. In that case not only economic calculations, but also economic valuations come to play an important and vital part. When it is desired to maintain an equation between the income and expenditure of the school. It all depends on the various factors affecting the income on one side and expenditure on the other. The income side will be determined by the profit that could be made by the sales; sales will be determined by prices; prices depend on costs; and costs depend on the technique of production and the efficiency of labour. Here the technique is the technique of village industries, probably dead or dying, and the labour the labour of children. And all these working in an environment of competition with products from lands armed to the teeth with machinery and science. Nothing but incorrigible optimism can drive us into believing that it can ever be a success and its impracticability so far as the self-supporting principle is concerned would be obvious to any one acquainted with even the elementary laws of economic science! If any one can convince the Mahatma of the fact that economics as a science has continued to exist even after Ruskin's "Unto this Last" and Carlyle's denunciations, and that there is such a thing as the study of economic values, however imperfect it may be, but yet governing the economic behaviour of men and nations, he will render a great service not only to this question, but to the wider and more important question of India's economic reorganisation. And judged in the light of economic science, the Mahatma's reasoning carries little conviction because it is "based on assumptions that would bear no examination."

Now what are these assumptions like? In the first place, as the source and foundation of all this there is the *faith* of Mahatma Gandhi in the possibility of an economic structure, based on handicrafts, which he believes, would "go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationships between the classes". While this economic paradise is to be very eagerly desired, the means proposed are merely a product of faith and fail to evoke any enthusiasm in any one suffering from the weakness of reasoning. If the achievements of khadi and the Village Industries Association are a sample of the effectiveness of the remedy, it is not a very encouraging sample. No doubt the Mahatma believes that the charkha has come to stay, overlooking, however, the political propaganda, the patriotic pride, the donations and charities, appeals from leaders, and at present the direct and indirect assistance of governments that go to keep it alive. It is rather like an individual that needs an injection everyday and a tonic thrice as many times to keep him going and collapses and is bound to collapse the moment these props are withdrawn. Now the proposal further is to reorganise our education so as to produce an economic structure

composed of similar economic invalids—the shortest cut towards economic suicide for the nation.

Then if we can pass by a number of his minor assumptions, viz., that a child could work for four hours a day at a vocation for 25 days in a month, that this labour will be able to earn at the rate of two pice per hour on the whole, that competition will not exist, that there will be little waste in raw materials and tools, that it will be possible to get in adequate numbers and at low price the services of teachers who will not be hirelings but volunteers of the angelic order—assumptions, all of which are extremely doubtful—there will remain two other major assumptions. The one is the belief that the State will absorb much of the produce, and the other that the people are expected to buy the products of the nation's children. It is all very convenient to say that the State should buy all these things and that it should guarantee employment to all those that are trained in State schools of this kind; but it is a different matter to realise such a State on this sordid earth. Even if it were possible, it is difficult to understand how a person who exhorts the Harijans to preserve every little bone and every little peel of orange in the name of economy can recommend the frittering away of the few resources of this Harijan country on experiments that may end in bankrupt schools and broken provinces. Again, it may all be very good to expect people to go on buying things they may not want at prices they cannot pay in the name of patriotism till eternity; and it is quite another to keep them doing it. And if ever they fail to do it, of course we shall be told that the fault lies with our moral values, which we shall be told must undergo a change. And while we carry on our experiments in changing the moral values of men and women whose morals are what they are, in spite of the Vedas and the Githa, Rama and Seetha, Christ and Confucius, Buddha and Gandhi, the efficiency-men will continue their pursuits in efficiency and may endeavour successfully to change the iron of our yokes into unbreakable steel.

P. S. NARAYANA PRASAD.

Review.

CO-OPERATION.

CO-OPERATION AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION IN INDIA. By M. KARAMULLAH KHAN. (Taraporevala.) 1936. 23cm. 286p. Rs. 4.

THE author admits in the preface that the information gathered in England had to be supplemented by personal experience of rural conditions in India. He also admits that the task would have been much easier had the attempt been made on the spot in India where first-hand and up-to-date information would have been easily available. He wishes that his study should be followed up by a more complete and thorough enquiry into the subject which might lead to a more accurate knowledge of rural conditions in India.

The figures all relate to 1925-27 (the book being written in England in 1928). One of the evil customs the author refers to as prevailing among the rural community is the dancing party on occasions of marriages. It is doubtful how far the average cultivator indulges in such a luxury. The small holdings bill of 1927 in Bombay is said by the author to have done much good, but it has not been passed into an Act. Ceremonies and unproductive purposes are mentioned as the cause of debt, while this theory has been exploded and it is agreed that these form a negligible cause of debt. The author refers to the figures of co-operative societies in India and concludes that they have promoted the habit of thrift and have brought about an improvement in the economic condition of members. No responsible co-operator has claimed for co-operation more than that it has exerted an influence in bringing down the rural rate of interest. Again he refers to the existence of 87 Taluq Development Associations in Madras and the Khed Taluq Association in the Madras Presidency. Madras has no such associations and the Khed Taluq is in the Bombay Presidency. He refers to the Provincial Co-operative Unions in India as having been modelled on the A. O. S. While the former have mainly educative functions and in a few cases supervisory functions too, they have not the powers of the A. O. S. of organising and auditing societies. He refers to the Trading Unions in the Madras Presidency which were formed in 1918, as having developed well, while most of them have been liquidated long ago. He gives the figures of the expenditure of the Government of India on the nation-building departments from 1921-26, thinking that such expenditure is incurred in the budget of the Government of India. The author should understand that these departments are under Provincial Governments.

The book is divided into three parts: Rural India, Co-operative Movement, and Reconstruction Policy. In the part dealing with Reconstruction Policy he recommends the establishment of an information bureau, Research Institutes, and proposes land colonisation, co-ordination of voluntary agencies and the department, and education and

propaganda as remedies for want of village leadership. The author describes a scheme of co-operative village organisations at the bottom which will relieve the Government of its duties of local administration, Co-operative District Councils, and a National Council of Social Service at the top. What the Government saves in the village administration, it can distribute to these new bodies; he also recommends special cesses to be levied for welfare work.

It is hoped that when a revised edition of the book is brought out, the assessment of the results of co-operation will be supported by facts, the information will be accurate and up-to-date, and the scheme of reconstruction will be more complete with full details of its working.

K. G. SIVASWAMY.

SHORT NOTICE.

GREAT EARTHQUAKES. By CHARLES DAVISON. (Thomas Murby.) 1936. 22cm. 286p. 17/6.

MR. CHARLES DAVISON who is known as an authority on seismology gives in this volume a comprehensive description of some of the greatest earthquakes of the last two centuries. Though the author has not given any basis for his selection, he has chosen some eighteen earthquakes for a detailed description. It is surprising that the Bihar earthquake of 1934 and the Quetta earthquake of 1935 have been excluded by the author from this volume. Both of these have been known for their magnitude and destructive power and certainly rank along with those chosen by the author. In case of each earthquake, the author describes the position of the epicentres, the intensity, the nature of shocks and after-shocks, the effects on the earth's crust, springs, rivers, and the loss of life and property. All these knotty problems have been presented by the author with the assistance of many diagrams, maps and illustrations in simple and non-technical language. This authoritative account will undoubtedly be of great use to the students of geography and geology.

M. R. DHEKNEY.

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