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## Topics of the Week.

### Ministerial Crises.

THE Government of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatoola has fallen and Sind has now formed another Government with Khan Bahadur Allabux as the Prime Minister. Both the out-going and in-coming Premiers were familiar figures in the old Bombay legislature and this Presidency has an idea of their reactionary politics. Sind has had a taste of the Hidayatoola Government for a year. It was a continuation of the old Bombay Government under his thumb with no policy, no principles and a record of patched-up political permutations and combinations. During his twelve months' Premiership, Sir Ghulam had to make up thrice the defections in his group by bringing in new elements to enable his Government to have the requisite majority. The political ambitions of Mr. Allabux could, however, no longer be suppressed and his group of twelve members broke away from the ministerial party. The Hindu group of ten was already chafing under the insult of not getting in a Hindu minister of their choice. The incompetence of the Ghulam Hussain Ministry and the personal grudges and ambitions of some of the Opposition leaders prepared the stage for the overthrow of the former which was achieved by a majority of one vote. We do not think that the change in the Sind Ministry has any political significance except that the Congress Party of eight has pledged its support to the new Government. We fear that the Congress Party will soon come to grief because the difference between the old and the new Governments is as good as the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. The new Premier is one of the richest zamindars and, whatever his professions, it is idle to expect him to carry out, even partially, the policy of the Congress on whose support his Government largely stands.

IN Bengal a similar situation of an intriguing character threatens to develop. The Hon. Mr. Fazlul

Huq, the Premier, whose moral fibre and political philosophy, or rather the lack of it, are no better than those of the ex-Premier of Sind, manoeuvred the support of the depressed class members of the Assembly and formed a Government. Now not less than thirty members from his Proja Party have left him and an equal number of the depressed class members have deserted him. His strength is thus greatly depleted. The Congress Party which is today the Opposition, is doing its utmost to take advantage of the intrigues in the ministerial group and, if possible, to capture the reins of Government. Mahatma Gandhi's presence in Calcutta, which the Congress Party is naturally trying to exploit to the utmost, has added to the piquancy of the situation. For securing the release of the detenus he must keep the Huq Ministry on the right side and, simultaneously, he must help his Congressmen to get into office. His inner voice will solve the riddle in his usual inscrutable way. Unlike the change in the Sind Ministry, the change in the Ministry in Bengal is fraught with utmost political importance. A Congress Government in Bengal means not only enormous strength to the other Congress Governments in the seven provinces; but it also means that the question of the release of political prisoners and detenus will assume a different character altogether. It cannot fail to have serious repercussions on the Punjab Ministry as well. The issue of federation from an all-India point of view will assume a more serious aspect. Further developments in Bengal will therefore be watched with considerable anxiety in interested quarters and keen interest everywhere.

### Mr. Shareef must go.

IF to the *Vividh Vritta* of Bombay must be given the credit of unearthing the infamous "Lokashakti" circular which added notoriety to Mr. Munshi's fame, and the *Sainik* scandal, the Nagpur newspapers deserve similar, or perhaps more, credit for announcing the premature release of an ordinary criminal convicted only last year to three years' rigorous imprisonment and a heavy fine for decoying a depressed class girl and criminally assaulting her. The convict is a triple graduate, was a Khan Sahab and an inspector of schools when he committed the offence. His conviction was upheld in appeal in the Sessions and the High Courts. The Minister of law and Justice in the C. P. Cabinet, the Hon. Mr. Yusuf Shareef, sanctioned the release of this convict and the latter was set free. The reason reported to have been given for the release is that the convict had to look after his helpless children, his wife having died of shock immediately after his conviction. Immediately after the release he crossed the C. P. border and took train for a neighbouring Indian State where, it is reported, he has since been appointed an officer in the education department. The story becomes complete when it is stated that the C. P. Cabinet was kept completely in the dark about this

shameful transaction. Indeed the Prime Minister is reported to have exclaimed that he came to know of it only when it appeared in the press.

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THIS narration leaves no room for doubt that the whole affair was a pre-conceived and pre-arranged game which amounted to a conspiracy between the Muslim Minister and the Muslim criminal. The action of the Minister who became a Congressman only on the eve of the formation of the Congress Government, is as criminal and diabolical as the offence of the convicted person was heinous. The use of section 401, Cr. P. C., is a grave abuse of the power vested in the executive authority and cannot be defended on any count, legal or moral. The judicial tribunals will become not only a farce but a costly fraud if an impression is created that the executive can temper with their decisions in the manner sought to be done in this case. If the Congress Government has any regard for maintaining the tradition of judicial impartiality and for morality, it is its clear duty to dismiss Mr. Shareef without a moment's consideration. Truth and non-violence, the very breath of the nostrils of the Congressmen and their Governments, has already received rude shocks since the latter took office; and we are anxious that no more addition is made to them. Otherwise they will completely destroy the whole of the moral foundations of Congress Governments. In a matter like this no expediency should be allowed to play any part; and we trust that neither the Congress High Command nor the local Government will allow it to interfere with their only duty, namely, the immediate dismissal of the Minister.

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#### Labour Committees.

DISCIPLINE from A to Z is the boast of Congressmen. But their Governments do not seem to have observed it in appointing labour committees. Their hand-to-mouth policy is visible almost everywhere. The labour troubles at Cawnpore forced the U. P. Government to appoint a committee which has not yet produced its report, although it was the first to be appointed under the new order of things. Its chairman, Babu Rajendra Prasad, leaves this committee—he has been practically absent from its meetings—before it produces its report and accepts the chairmanship of the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee. This is Congress thoroughness! A threat of a strike in Bombay compelled the Bombay Government to appoint its textile enquiry committee. Fortunately its personnel was such that it was able to produce its interim report so quickly that it could avoid the stoppage of work in the Bombay mills. The C. P. Government now comes forward and appoints its labour committee which has been asked to take the Bombay committee's report as a basis for its consideration. The Madras Government is so busy with its prohibition problem that it considers that all is well on its labour front, although the largest number of strikes have occurred in its province. The committees are no doubt doing useful work; but we cannot help feeling that there is no plan behind the Congress Governments. A good many of the labour problems have an inter-provincial aspect and it would have been well if the Congress Governments had appointed an inter-provincial committee to deal with such questions and left the purely local questions to the local committees. It is not yet too late; and we strongly urge them to consider our suggestion for what it is worth.

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#### House Rents and Landlords.

THE Bombay landlords have girdled up their loins for fighting the Rent Restriction Bill introduced

in the Bombay legislature. They have issued a long statement challenging the propriety of such a legislation and asserting that nowhere in the world does this legislation operate in normal times. Even in abnormal times they had resisted the legislation on the ground, *inter alia*, that it would discourage house building. Experience has completely falsified their contention. The house properties continued to multiply in almost all countries. We may be able to point out a country or two where rent restriction legislation obtains in the times we are living; but assuming that it does not exist, may we know whether the range of profits that accrues to the Bombay landlords from their house properties, obtains anywhere in the world? Even in Bombay itself the investments in housing yield a much larger return than that on any other kind of investments. The house construction has no doubt developed very rapidly during recent years; but it does not mean that the rents have gone down. In a congested locality like Girgaum, the rents have as a matter of fact risen after the repeal of the Rent Act. Even the principle of demand and supply point to the necessity of a rent legislation. The proportion of the new houses meant for the working and lower middle classes to the total number of new houses is certainly not such as to enable the law of demand and supply to come into operation. Rents have no doubt fallen; but the fall is discernible in the case of flats used generally by the upper middle and rich classes. Others still continue to suffer.

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A useful discussion took place the other day in the Bombay Legislative Assembly over the question of restricting the house rents. Although the Bombay Government did not show adequate sympathy with the classes on whose behalf the cry for rent restriction has been raised, they nevertheless announced that they would soon appoint a committee to go into the question. This is a welcome move and we appreciate it. With a competent personnel the committee should be able to prove the necessity for a rent legislation at least for the working and lower middle classes.

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#### The Singaneri Colliery Disaster.

COLLIERY disasters in India have become an annual feature with the resulting loss of many human lives. On the 12th March last, on the day of the Muharum, a fire broke out in the Singaneri Collieries in the Nizam State. On receipt of the information, the Manager descended with 75 workers into the mine to control it. The disaster took place soon after, resulting in the death of 45 persons. As it was a holiday, labourers were not working in the mines; otherwise the casualties would have been greater.

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LAST year the Government of India appointed a committee, with Mr. L. B. Burrows as Chairman, to inquire into the coal industry and to report, among other things, on measures which should be adopted to secure the safety of those employed in coal mines. Its findings are not complimentary to the managements of coal mines. The Committee attributed the disasters in coal mines to the unscientific methods of the company as much as to natural causes. The Committee revealed that "the Indian Mine Managers' Association told us that Managers at present do not have full scope 'because they are controlled by people who have no sufficient knowledge of mining and are liable to be dismissed if they were to refuse to carry out the orders of an owner even though the carrying out of these orders would mean unsound and unsafe working', others told us in confidence that they have on occasions been

faced with the alternative of adopting unsound mining methods or losing their livelihood". The Committee suggested certain measures to be adopted by the management for minimising such disasters. We would urge on the Government of His Exalted Highness the desirability of profiting by British Indian experience.

WE hope that the Government of the Nizam will immediately set up a committee of inquiry to go into the causes that led to the disaster and to recommend measures to avoid the recurrence of similar calamities. In constituting the committee we trust that workers will be adequately represented, otherwise the committee is not likely to enjoy the confidence of workers who are the persons most vitally affected by such disasters.

#### Government Interference in Salem.

THE question, how far the State should interfere in or control the affairs of local bodies in the provinces, has been brought to the forefront by the hitch between the Salem Municipality and the Madras Government over the question of accepting a tender for the pipes for the water supply scheme of Salem town. The Government of Madras sanctioned the scheme in 1935 at an estimated cost of Rs. 24 lakhs. The Salem Municipality called for tenders in the usual course from engineering firms and accepted the tender from the Hume Pipes Company whose pipes were recommended by the Chief Engineer to the Government of Madras on 7th July 1937. It appears that the Madras Government accepted the recommendation and refused to revise it as recently as on the 4th December. But only after four weeks, on the 30th of December 1937, the same Government directed the Salem Municipality to accept the tender of the Bhadravati Iron Works of Mysore, though it is costlier by 1,20,000 rupees. The reason advanced by the Government in favour of their suggestion was that in the opinion of experts the Bhadravati Iron pipes served longer than Hume pipes. The Municipal Council of Salem has taken umbrage at the interference of the Madras Government and the Chairman, the Vice Chairman and ten other Councillors have resigned in protest.

THE Government of Madras have issued a *Communique* on the 1st of March 1938, which, we must say, does not disclose in detail the reasons for the change in the attitude of the Government towards pipes of different makes. This is likely to be misunderstood in certain quarters as amounting to an unwillingness on the part of the Government to take the public into confidence. It states merely that "the Government went into the question carefully with the help of expert advice before they decided on the type of pipes to be used. They see no reason to change their opinion and have finally decided on cast iron pipes of suitable strength and capable of withstanding high pressure."

THE Government have the legal authority to interfere in matters affecting the local bodies in cases where expert knowledge and technical skill is required and in matters involving public policy. But what we would like to know in this case is the why and wherefore of Government's change in views on a particular matter. Is the Chief Engineer who recommended the Bhadravati pipes on the 30th December the same expert who recommended the Hume pipes on the 7th July last? Or did he recommend that pipes of either description may be used? We would like to know what made the

Government say on December 4th 1937, that they could not revise their order. Has there been a change in the personnel of the expert? If there has been no change, what is the reason for that expert now to change his opinion? Does the view of an expert change with the change of the Government in power? If so, is it safe in the interest of public policy to have such convenient experts who would suit their opinion to the party in power?

WE hope such is not the case in the present instance. But it is upto the Government to give the public fuller information so as to clear the misunderstanding and to allay public suspicions in the matter.

#### The Punjab Premier and the Shahidgunge Dispute.

SIR SIKANDAR HAYAT KHAN has shown courage and statesmanship in advising the Governor of the Punjab not to give leave for the introduction of Mr. Barkat Ali's bill arising out of the Shahidgunge dispute, which *inter alia* seeks to nullify the effect of the judgment of the Lahore High Court and to restore the Shahidgunge mosque back to the Muslims. The Bill in question was far-reaching in its character and scope as it sought to give its provisions retrospective effect. It was meant to be applicable to cases of all description, that is, to suits, appeals, and other proceedings of courts, decided or pending, concerning Muslim places of worship. Under the provisions of this Bill even cases which were decided a hundred years ago, could be reopened. On the face of it, it was a most reactionary and mischievous Bill. If such a right were to be conceded, its repercussions would have been disastrous. Sir Sikandar did well when he said that he was prepared to resign if the Bill was introduced. We agree with Sir Sikandar that legislative measures which would exacerbate communal feelings and make harmonious relations between communities impossible must be completely discountenanced by all progressive minded Indians.

WHAT is more gratifying than the attitude of Sir Sikandar is the response his attitude has aroused in the country. Hindu Mahasabhaites like Mr. M. S. Aney, a staunch Muslim belonging to the Congress like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and a leader of the Sikhs like Sardar Santa Singh, all of them with one voice welcomed the stand of Sir Sikandar. The temper thus created by the Punjab Premier augurs well for a happy and satisfactory solution of the Shahidgunge issue.

Even Mr. Jinnah, who a few months ago, wanted a special session of the Muslim League to consider the whole question, has come out with support to Sir Sikandar. How one wishes that Mr. Jinnah had thrown his unique position in the Muslim League on the side of the law before Sir Sikandar's lead! Had he done so, the history of this question might have been different.

#### Muharram Riots.

THE concurrence of the Muharram and Holi festivals has proved an ordeal to several towns in the U. P. and to Jubbulpore in the C. P. Communalism ran riot and gave Allahabad, Benares and Jubbulpore a bad time. In Allahabad the situation was so bad that the Leader had to come out in a reduced form for a day for the second time since its inception more than a generation ago. The Congress Governments in both these provinces had had to make use of almost every power under the law exercised by past executives and although the temptation to twit them on this by reminding them of their virulent opposition to such use when they were in opposition, is great, the

public can have nothing but sympathy for what must be proving an extremely humiliating time for them. Their humiliation and shame is shared by every right thinking Indian.

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WHAT is strange in these riots is the fact that Governments in the U. P. and the C. P. should have been taken by surprise by the recrudescence of communal fanaticism. Surely, the public has a right to know what the police were doing in these cities, and where were those "sources of information" for whom such special protection has been given by the Parliament in the Government of India Act. The concerted attack on Hindu localities in Allahabad leads to the distressing belief that these riots were a planned affair with brains behind them. If these suspicions are found to be true, then the nature of these occurrences assumes a sinister aspect. A curious feature of the riots in Jubbulpore is the fact that nearly a fortnight before the riots actually took place, newspapers in the C. P. published warnings about them. These warnings seem to have been unheeded and the responsibility of the Government is therefore all the greater for the loss of life and property in that town.

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IT is necessary to investigate how the rioters could make a sudden sortie, as it were, on Hindu homes in Allahabad. It seems a distressing confession to make, but there can be no doubt that occasions of prayer and the big crowds that gather for that purpose have been availed of by communal fanatics to incite mobs to rioting. The time has come when drastic measures will have to be adopted to check this shameful feature of our religious life. One of the precautions that Government might take is to post trusted investigators in places of mass gatherings, including prayer meetings, when Muharram, Id, Holi or such other festival days are approaching and to watch if any religious preacher is misusing his position of safety and honour to create disaffection between the masses on purely religious grounds. It is, we admit, a suggestion inspired by despair at the continuance of these riots, but such ills require adequate remedies and considerations of the *amour propre* of communities have to be put aside when the life, limb and property of the citizens are in danger.

#### Stock Exchange Reform.

THE resolution published by the Government of Bombay last week on the recommendations of the Bombay Stock Exchange Enquiry Committee records a definite step forward in the process of the reorganization of this Exchange. That this step towards reform is long overdue was clearly shown by the collapse of the whole organization in forward dealings early this year. The report of the Enquiry Committee was published last year in March. Initially the Stock Exchange Association met it with a "hartal" and a non-possimus attitude. Slowly, however, the need for doing something was brought home to them and after considerable correspondence with Government they have agreed to put into effect a large number of the recommendations of the Morrison Committee.

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THE recommendations of the Morrison Committee can be divided into two parts—one on which action can be taken by the Association itself and the other which require legislative sanction. Among the latter fall the question of the introduction of a compulsory system of margins and increased powers of control being given to Government. No immediate action is being taken on this group of recommendations, but all recommendations falling within the first

group are reviewed in the Government resolution and the action proposed to be taken by the Association indicated. The main aim of the recommendation of the Morrison Committee was to check the enormous extent of speculative over-doing taking place on the Exchange to-day. With this end in view the main reform suggested by them was the curtailment of the powers of the Board to interfere with the normal course of business. They had recommended that the Board should have no power to suspend the buying-in rule and the short selling except with previous consent of Government. There was general agreement that this was a crucial recommendation and should be definitely given effect to. The Association does not, however, agree to giving up these powers altogether. They want the use of this power at least for twenty-four hours and agree that its use for any longer period should be subject to the prior consent of Government. The modifications of the recommendations suggested by the Association are really not warranted by either the report of the Committee or the underlying principles on which the recommendations are based. Government have, however, agreed to the modifications in view of the fact that even so the curtailment of the powers of the Board is very considerable and in the hope that the powers thus left will in future be used with circumspection.

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THE other main point stressed by the Committee was that of the invalidability of bargains and they condemned strongly the principle of permitting speculators to compromise in order to avoid default which had gained acceptance in Bombay. For remedying this situation the Committee had suggested the strengthening of rules regarding the defaulters and we are glad to observe that all the recommendations of the Committee in this behalf have been accepted by the Association. Among the other recommendations the only important recommendation which the Association has been unable entirely to accept is that regarding the prohibition of speculative dealing for employees. Most of the other recommendations such as those regarding sub-brokers, authorised clerks, brokerage scales, membership term and dues, enlargement of the forward list, admission of the public, the numbers of holidays etc., have been accepted by the Association with modifications of a not material character. The Association have also accepted the recommendation that they should have no overriding powers over the Board. All this undoubtedly constitutes a very considerable advance over present conditions. It is hoped that the new rules will tend to reduce speculative overtrading to a considerable extent and will enable the Exchange to fulfil truly those public duties which theoretically it should. We also hope that Government will follow this up early by giving effect to these recommendations of the Morrison Committee—especially these in respect of compulsory margins—which call for legislative action.

#### Stamp Duty on Cheques.

BY introducing, and then postponing the discussion of, a bill to re-impose a stamp duty on cheques and also by announcing that the proceeds of the duty will be distributed among the provinces, the Government of India have put the Congress Governments and Congressmen on the horns of a dilemma. Both do not seem to be concerned with the merits of the bill; they look at it purely from the point of view which immediately concerns them. The Congress Governments are hard pressed for want of funds; any crumbs that come are to them a feast. The top dogs of the Congress cannot displease the capitalists who are affected by the bill. That the duty on cheques will

discourage the banking habits of the people is an argument which is dinned into the ears of the Congress High Command. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel has now ordained that the bill shall be opposed by the Congress Party in the Assembly. The proceeds of the duty are so small that it matters little whether the bill is passed or not. But we must state that the stamp duty on cheques is a direct tax and affects only those whose pockets are fat enough to permit them the use of the cheques system which gives their money an additional security. No objection can therefore be taken to a duty like this. But the Congress which has the sympathies of the poor on its lips, will not have it as it touches the pockets of those who provide it with the sinews of war!

#### The Present Constitution.

ADDRESSING a meeting of the Bar Association of Trichinopoly, Sir A. Krishnaswami Aiyar, the Advocate General of Madras, remarked that few people realised that the constitutional situation today was not merely that "provincial autonomy" was introduced, but that the "shackles of Federalism" had already been imposed on us without the Federal Government itself. Recent rulings of the Government of India, with regard to certain budgetary procedure had shown, he is reported to have said, that the Government of India was putting into force some restrictions even before Federation had come into being. Various authorities were erected as a safeguard against the democratic or quasi-democratic or quasi-democratic-cum-autocratic Federal Assembly. Even before such an Assembly had begun to function the powers of the existing legislature had already been circumscribed and defined.

EVEN as regards provincial autonomy under the Government of India Act of 1935, Sir A. Krishnaswami Aiyar said, some 60 per cent. of provincial legislation was subject to the approval of the irresponsible Government of India! He was referring to the "concurrent list", which, he said, covered practically all the material existing in Indian law, the Transfer of Property Act and the Civil Procedure Code. In as much as provincial law in the concurrent sphere was void if it was repugnant to the existing Indian law, some 60 per cent. of provincial legislation had to be reserved for the consideration of the Government of India. Any ameliorative measure might require some change in the Civil Procedure Code and, if it did, it had to be reserved for the consideration of the Governor General.

#### The Fifth Wheel in Mysore.

OBVIOUSLY in reply to the recent resolutions moved in the Mysore Legislative Council, the Mysore Government have announced their decision to appoint a commission to advise them on constitutional matters, both internal and external. The character of the commission has been announced in advance of its personnel. As much depends on the personnel, final comment on the subject must be deferred.

THE character of the commission is, we fear, very unsatisfactory. The commission is not to be an *ad hoc* committee to enquire into particular questions within a limited time and make recommendations, but a standing committee to which will be referred as and when the Government pleases such questions as the Government chooses to refer for advice. The need for a standing committee, wholly nominated by the Government, with no initiative to raise questions, is not clear, particularly as there are organs like the Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council

with certain amount of representative character and initiative. Government have certainly access to public opinion in these statutory bodies which are wholly or partly elected. A nominated standing committee is more useful to obscure public opinion than to reflect it. And it will be a positive danger to the State if the nominated members are nominated for long and indefinite terms. The Government Order does not state the principles underlying the nomination and the period of office of each nominee.

WHAT is required is a declaration by the Mysore Government that responsible government is the objective of constitutional development in Mysore and the subsequent appointment of an *ad hoc* committee, consisting largely of members elected to the Legislative Council and Representative Assembly and of some constitutional experts, to devise a scheme for the realization of the objective and to suggest whether Mysore should join the federation contemplated by the Government of India Act of 1935, and if so, what consequential changes in the constitution are necessary.

#### Knowledge Comes But.....

EXPERIENCE is, they say, the best education. Congressmen, however, will not use other people's experience to educate themselves; and their Governments are no exception to this vanity. The Bombay Government, for example, announced, immediately they took office, that the Ministers would share the Government bungalows so as to reduce the expenditure. This they did in Poona. When they moved to Bombay, each Minister was provided with a separate and spacious bungalow. The third class travelling which they undertook in the beginning, particularly on ceremonial occasions, has now given place to second class on the ground that the confidential documents which the Ministers carry with them could not be carried in the third class without risks. We are pleased that the knowledge has come; and let us hope that wisdom will not linger too long.

#### Moscow Massacres!

RAKOVSKY, Rykoff and Bukharin, who have respectively fifty, forty and thirty years of revolutionary work in and outside Russia to their credit, and fifteen others have now left the hell created by Stalin and are enjoying the fruits of their labour in the other world. Three others who had put in meritorious work in the maintenance of the present Communist State in Russia are undergoing long terms of imprisonment in the Soviet jails. Who can say that the trial which put an end to the lives of eighteen Soviet stalwarts is the last one in the series of trials which have already taken a terrible toll of the lives of those who with their blood helped to create the present Union of Socialist Soviet Republics? Who can believe that Stalin is now safe and is the monarch of all he surveys? Whoever tries to answer these questions will find himself faced with the following alternatives which Leon Trotsky has given in his special article to the *Hindu*:

Either all the old revolutionists—who led the struggle against the Czarism, built the Bolshevik Party, achieved the October revolution, led the three years' Civil War, established the Soviet State and created the Communist International—either all these figures, almost to a man, were at the very moment of their achievements, or in the years immediately following, the agents of capitalist states, or —

The present Soviet Government, headed by Stalin, has perpetrated the most heinous of crimes in world history.



EVEN those who look to the Russian experiment of Socialist Government with no small amount of sympathy will shudder at the periodical butchery that has been going on in the U. S. S. R. Knowing, as the world does, the glorious past of the accused in the Moscow trials, it is impossible to believe that their confessions were *bona fide* and genuine. And yet they come at every trial with the same monotonous precision and phraseology. If a much less severe treatment had been given to the communists in other countries for their agitation against the governments established by law, the blood of Russia would have been boiled with rage. Trotsky has in his article in the *Hindu* given a diagnosis of the present ills in Russia

which, all things taken together, seems to be accurate :

Each trial has given birth (he says) to a growing discontent, an alarm not only among the masses but among the Bureaucrats themselves. In order to beat down this discontent it was necessary to concoct a new trial. Behind this diabolical play we can perceive the pressure, still compressed but ever growing, of a new society which asks for freer cultural and more dignified conditions of existence. The struggle between bureaucracy and society becomes more and more intense. In this struggle victory will inevitably go to the people. Moscow trials are but episodes of the death agony of bureaucracy. Stalin's regime will be swept away by history.

## THE HUNS ON THE MARCH

### I

ON February 11 last all British and French newspapers entering Germany were confiscated at the frontier, presumably to prevent world opinion on the changes in the German Army Command being available to German readers. On the very next day Herr Hitler summoned the Chancellor of the Austrian Republic, Dr. Schuschnigg, for an interview in German territory. Unconscious of the threat which must have compelled the Austrian Chancellor to obey Hitler's summons like a lackey, British papers observed with tragic irony that "probably Hitler wanted to survey the ground for an Austro-German *rapprochement* before the Reichstag meeting on February 20." How cleverly Hitler dissembled his intentions is shown by the observations of foreign correspondents in Berlin and Vienna, the general tenor of whose messages was that the meeting between the two dictators foreshadowed an era of better understanding between the two countries. On his return from the interview, the Austrian Chancellor released all Nazis interned for the safety of the State, reconstructed his Cabinet including therein Nazis of violent convictions,—who, as after events proved, conspired for his own destruction. Four days after this apparently satisfactory settlement of the Austro-German tangle for the time being, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the British Cabinet, Mr. Anthony Eden, resigned in dramatic circumstances. This resignation followed, we may notice in passing, unparalleled and violent attacks on him throughout the German and Italian press. The resignation was hailed in both these countries as a triumph of their policies.

In words which ring with prophetic import in the light of the events that have followed, Mr. Eden told the House of Commons on February 17 :

We are in the presence of progressive deterioration of respect for international obligations. It is quite impossible to judge these things in a vacuum. In the light—my judgment may well be wrong—of the present international situation, this is a moment for this country (Great Britain) to stand firm, not to plunge into negotiations unprepared, with the full knowledge that the chief obstacle to their success has not been resolved.

And speaking about the causes that led to his resignation he added words that assume terrible significance to-day :

Within the last few weeks, upon most important decision of foreign policy which did not concern Italy at all, the difference was fundamental.

Now, what are the important questions facing Great Britain in her foreign relations? Italy and the recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia; Germany and her big stick methods *vis-a-vis* Austria; and the Spanish Civil War. In his speech Mr. Eden referred both to Italy and Spain, but did not say a word about Germany. There is some cause for the public to suspect that perhaps the British Foreign Office was not quite ignorant of the possible moves that Hitler might make with regard to Austria. If the suspicion is well-founded, British statesmanship has certainly played a black role in this tragic drama and must share the guilt for the blood of innocents flowing in Austria today.

The resignation of the British Foreign Secretary, the only man who did not knuckle under Hitler's big stick, seemed to have proved the signal for bold and sweeping measures, so dear to Hitler. Dr. Schuschnigg had agreed to much that Hitler demanded. But the bully grows only more truculent on what he is fed to keep him quiet. The Austrian Chancellor had refused to be a pawn in Hitler's game in all its entirety. On his return, he announced that the talks he had with Hitler were "satisfactory" and a "milestone to peace!" But he declared that he had gone the limit and that no more concessions could be given to Germany. And he released from custody not only Nazis but Socialists also! Confident that he would get a majority in a plebiscite he announced one to secure a mandate from the country in support of his policy. This was too much for Hitler who probably knew that Dr. Schuschnigg would get his majority and thus give another rebuff to his pretences for a pan-Germanic nation. There was no obstacle for a swooping blow on Austrian independence. He struck, and Dr. Schuschnigg resigned because of the threat of an armed invasion of Austria from Hitler if he did not do so. The Nazi legions marched into Austria which "yielded to force." Exactly a year after his declaration that he had scrapped the Versailles Treaty, Hitler was able to inform the world that article 80 of that iniquitous treaty guaranteeing the "inalienable independence" of Austria was dead.

## II

The German *coupe* has staggered the world and yet there is nothing that Hitler did of which he did not give clear notice many years ago. Unlike British and French statesmen whose foreign policy has been the product of a craven desire for peace at any price, Hitler has made no secret of his plans or his methods. Nor can it be denied that his actions in fulfilment of his programme, outlined years ago in his *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) have steadily pointed towards the present annexation of the Austrian Republic. Year after year, he has treated the victor nations of the war to a series of *tour de force*, which should have made them wise, had they the nerves or the necessary high fidelity to principles, to face the significance of German policy. The methods used by Hitler were simple and direct. On every question when the victor nations showed anxiety, he opened negotiations, made a conciliatory speech, extended a hand of friendship, and while they argued over delicate points of procedure, by a sudden resort to force, he presented them with a *fait accompli* and solved the question for himself, whatever the world might say. In successive stages,—in Saar, in the Rhineland, after the Dollfuss assassination, in Danzig, Hitler has played a part with astute foresight and effective audacity, knowing full well that his opponents valued their skins far more than their souls.

In an article in the *Time and Tide* which forecast the annexation of Austria, a writer asserts that :

The lines have already been laid down, and will follow the Austrian model, not open invasion, but the creation of an intolerable internal situation. Then Prague will be faced with an ultimatum: cantonal reorganisation on Swiss lines, which means a virtually independent Sudeten Deutschland, but independent of Prague, not of Berlin. Democratic Czechoslovakia which, under the inspiration of Masaryk and guidance of Benes, has resisted Fascist ideology and kept alive the ideal of free citizenship, will thus be shrunk to the size and influence of a Switzerland: Britain and France will have to swallow the fact with a little democratic coating. Switzerland is a democracy, why not cantons for Czechoslovakia? The dismemberment of the country will be coated in sugary phrases. Herr von Ribbentrop will find his advice to Herr Hitler, that there is nothing to fear, proved to the hilt. All those London parties at which he was assured that of course Britain would not lift a finger to help Austria or Czechoslovakia, in fact really preferred them to come under Nazi rule, will have done their dangerous work. Treason to democracy is none the less a betrayal because it is discussed in pleasant surroundings.

Czechoslovakia has already bowed to German *force majeure* and consented to cantonise her German territory!

## III

No statesman in Europe can say that since Hitler came to power he had not given enough warnings of his contempt for international obligations or his readiness to achieve by brute force what he could not achieve by ordinary methods of negotiations. One after the other, the clauses of the treaty of Versailles have been broken by him with impunity, and the world, conscious that that Treat was forced on a great nation in her hour of humiliation and defeat, acquiesced. So long as

his movements confined themselves within the bounds of the German Reich, he was perfectly within his rights to break down the iniquitous provisions of the Versailles Treaty imposed upon Germany by a vengeful France and vacillating Great Britain and U. S. A. No German statesman, not even the Socialist predecessors of Hitler, acknowledged that the Treaty was inspired by a sense of justice and fair-mindedness. It was conceived in hatred and could not but beget hatred of the blackest type from those who suffered under it. Germany's foreign policy, therefore, ever since the war, has been dictated by the belief that the Allies have themselves betrayed the Treaty by tricking Germany into the acceptance of its disarmament clauses while refusing to reduce their own armaments. The suspicion that it was a method to encircle a hapless and disarmed Germany by powerfully armed nations had no doubt sufficient warrant in the almost pathological fear entertained by France for her Teutonic neighbour and her attempts at pacts with nations round Germany. The Nazis naturally argued that as they had been humiliated by force they must win their proud position in Europe by force alone. "The League is good," said Goebbels in 1936, "but air-squadrons and army-corps are still better."

Hitler's Germany left no doubt of what use they would make of air squadrons and army-corps once they felt strong enough and safe enough to use them. The first act of Nazi Germany was to leave the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference in October 1933. Two years after, in 1935, universal conscription was enforced in Germany in defiance of Part V of the Versailles Treaty which expressly prohibited it. Articles 42-43 of the Treaty were thrown to the winds when she occupied the Rhineland on March 7th 1936. In November of the same year she seized control of the rivers and bridgeheads which the Treaty prohibited, and in the January of the next year she withdrew her signature from the Treaty and declared it ended by unilateral repudiation.

But nothing in these actions should have been a surprise. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler promised to destroy the Versailles Treaty which was "a shame and a disgrace," and which sanctioned "a frightful plunder of our nation"—a promise which he fulfilled to the letter. The seizure of Austria is, in fact, indicated in almost the opening sentence of that famous publication on the first page of which we are told that

German-Austria will have to return to the great German Motherland, but not for economic reasons. No, no! Even if reunion, looked at from that point of view, were a matter of indifference—nay, even if it were actually injurious—it would still have to come. Common blood should belong to a common Reich. The German people have no right to dabble in a colonial policy as long as they are unable to gather their own sons into a common State. Not till the confines of the Reich include every single German and are certain of being able to nourish him, can there be a moral right for Germany to acquire territory abroad whilst her people are in need.

Versailles, Locarno, Stresa, Berchtesgaden! Schleicher, Dollfuss, Fey! The path of Nazi progress is strewn with the scraps of solemn treaties and the corpses of great leaders who refused to bend their

knees and live the cowards, life shivering in despicable security purchased at the cost of honour.

There was a time when they would have stopped and taken counsel with the Allies, if the Allies had the magnanimity to recognise the grievance of the have-nots as just or the foresight to anticipate the course of future events. By failing both ways, the victors of the Great War have betrayed their bankruptcy of idealism as well as statesmanship. The spring-board of German bitterness was the Versailles Treaty, which has proved a veritable Pandora's box in European Chancelleries. Had one of the victor nations taken courage in both hands and recognised what was already a fact, viz., that the Versailles Treaty was dead and set about the reorganisation of the League with a clearer understanding of realities than was possible in the hate-poisoned year of the Armistice, there was just a possibility of cooler tempers considering the question of world peace. The time has now passed.

#### IV

And will Austria mark the limit of Nazi pan-German movement? Will Mr. Chamberlain guarantee that the surrounding nations in the East, West, North and South of the new Germany stand in no danger of similar gunmen methods being used against them for the satisfaction of the ideal of the Nazis? For we have to remember that the very first article of the Nazi faith says: "We demand the union of all Germans to form a Great Germany." And these "lost" Germans form an ever-present and continuous source of menace to the non-German nations of Europe. On every frontier of Germany there are little groups of Germans whom the Nazis want to absorb, not by migration into Germany, which would be unexceptionable albeit difficult but by annexation of the territory they live in. On the West there are Eupen and Malmedy under Belgium containing 49,561 Germans; in Alsac and Lorraine Germany claims there are 1,874,000 Germans; in the East there are 681,000 Germans in Posen under Poland; 426,400 in the Polish corridor; 300,000 in the Upper Silesia; 318,300 in Danzig; 105,000 in Memel; 40,000 in northern Schleswig; in Czechoslovakia there are the Sudeten Germans 3,124,000 in number; in the Italian Tyrol there are 300,000 Germans; in Switzerland 2,750,000; in Luxemburg 270,000; in Esthonia and Latvia 77,000; and nearly two millions in Rumania, Yugoslavia and Hungary and almost a million Germans in Soviet Russia.

Of the 15,000,000 Germans outside the boundaries of the Reich, by a simple *tour de force* Hitler has absorbed nearly seven millions. Does anyone imagine that his success in Austria will satiate him, or that the thought of disturbing the relations with almost all the nations on the German border would deter him? Fanaticism recognises no bounds of ordinary logic and has not the continuous success that he has enjoyed for the last five years tended to prove that the Nazis could do whatever they liked with the map of Europe? The perfection of Nazi technique is amazing. By ceaseless propaganda and open backing of

Nazis in foreign territories, by penetration and ruthless terrorism, Nazis have succeeded in Austria, and that success can only whet their appetite.

The world has the right to ask the signatories to the guarantee of Austrian independence, what they are going to do now. The Prime Minister of one of them, Great Britain, said not a fortnight before, and in justification of throwing over a high-principled Foreign Secretary, that he did so because the inconvenient and unbending fidelity of Mr. Eden to certain fundamentals clashed with his own conception of them. In describing his own views on certain aspects of foreign policy he stated two weeks before Austrian Independence was strangled, that the British foreign policy was based upon three principles:

First, on the protection of British interests and the lives of British nationals; secondly, on the maintenance of peace; and, as far as we can influence it, the settlement of differences by peaceful means and not by force; and thirdly, the promotion of friendly relations with other nations who are willing to reciprocate our friendly feelings and who will keep those rules of international conduct without which there can be neither security nor stability. (Italics ours).

Mr. Eden did not require anything more. He feared that his colleagues were only too eager to avoid trouble by putting their faith in promises and not in performances. He wanted to negotiate after he was convinced, not by words but by deeds, that the other party would respect and honour certain fundamental public laws in international affairs. The action of the Nazis is as complete a vindication of his distrust of the Dictators as it is a direct slap to the naive credulity of Mr. Chamberlain. And how is Mr. Chamberlain going to prevent the march of the Nazis with his faith in the Fascists' and the Nazis' sense of contractual obligations? It is already obvious that the vacillation of the Allies at this supreme moment has encouraged every bully in Europe to seize this opportunity of imposing his will on a weak neighbour by force of arms. Witness Poland's treatment of Lithuania. The forces of anarchy have entered the ring and collective security is as dead as Queen Anne.

It is believed that considerations of safety of the Brenner Pass would not allow Mussolini to tolerate Nazi penetration in the Tyrol. But the amazing astuteness revealed by the Germans in striking at Austria at a time when her erstwhile protector, Italy, lay weakened and exhausted by her Abyssinian and Spanish adventures, shows that Hitler knows when to strike. He missed once, when Italy moved her armies to prevent the economic unity between the two nations. France and Great Britain backed her then, and it is to be hoped that they have realised to their shame that the present situation flowed directly from that unwarranted attempt to throttle the natural flow of the economic life of another nation.

#### V

It is believed that the Great War would have been prevented if Grey, the then British Foreign Secretary, could have warned Germany that Britain would take up arms with France in defence of



Belgium. There are political thinkers who believe that a readiness to flourish the big stick would have saved many of the tragedies that have recently overtaken nations which relied too much on British friendship and the backing of the League of Nations. Abyssinia, Spain, China, all have gone to the wall because of the unwillingness of Great Britain to call the bluff of the bandit states of Europe. They are bewildered that Great Britain with a vast Empire and unlimited manpower, unrivalled economic sufficiency, and the matchless moral prestige that would naturally follow any attempt to check international anarchy, should hesitate to declare her willingness to take up arms in defence of a great principle and accept, with limp, anemic protests which deceive none, the introduction of a highly dangerous principle in international politics, viz., the anarchic self-sufficiency of nations and the recognition of brute force rather than peaceful negotiation as a weapon of settling disputes.

Great Britain and France, the two most vitally concerned nations, watched the rise of Hitler and Mussolini, it might be argued, because they could not prevent a people from choosing their own rulers from whatever political party they liked. But we think the reasons lie deeper than that. Statesmen in Britain in particular would prefer to watch the rise of a Fascist power in Germany and Italy far more willingly than that of a Socialist or Communist power. The probable reasons for such an attitude is perhaps due to, as Mr. Walter Lippman says in a penetrating article, their fear of a class war.

Offhand (said Mr. Lippman), we should expect the British Conservatives, now in power, to be the last people on earth to let themselves be slapped around by Mussolini and Hitler. For the English Conservatives are the historical English imperialists, and they would be the first to resent the rival ambitions of Germany, Italy and Japan. But today the English Conservative fears the idea of class war more than he fears the foreign imperialists. Hitler, Japan and Mussolini are territorial rivals, but their doctrine of internal order and discipline is not uncongenial to the English Conservative mind.

The extraordinary spectacle of Conservative British statesmen who would not hesitate to send a navy to avenge a petty British merchant, swallowing enormous humiliations at the hands of Fascist dictators, especially since the Spanish war, is explained thus :

... Always there is the paralysing thought that a Loyalist victory, as matters stand now in Spain, means a proletarian regime. It means the setting of a system which in its denial of freedom and democracy and in its technique of terror is as abhorrent to Liberal and Labour minds as the Fascist brand of absolutism. This same chill doubt has determined the attitude of the United Front movement in France, even when a Socialist named Blum is at the head of affairs.

The acquiescence of France and Britain is a living substantiation of the above analysis of the paralysis that has overtaken their foreign policy, and, in it they seem to agree with Hitler's own outlook on the European situation. In the speech which he delivered to the German Reich almost a year ago, March 7, 1936, to be exact, announcing the remilitarisation of the Rhineland and the repudiation of the

Locarno pact, Hitler stated in unambiguous terms that Europe was faced with divisions into two hostile camps, viz.,

That half which is built up of independent, self-sustaining national States of the people with whom we are bound a hundredfold through our history and culture, and with whom we should like for all the future, to remain bound just as with the free and independent nations of other than European continents. And in the other half that which is governed by that intolerant Bolshevik doctrine which lays claim to general international rule, a doctrine which preaches destruction even to the most eternal and sacred values of this life and the life hereafter, in order to build up another world, which, to us, appears horrible as regards culture and the appearance of its contents.

In short, Great Britain and France, caught between the Scylla of Bolshevism and the Charybdis of Fascism, would rather prefer the latter. And in preferring it, Great Britain has cast its lot with the pirates and bandits of internationalism. It has also taken upon its head the blood of countless Jews and non-Nazis. For whatever the treatment of its own nationals by the Soviet, it has not once shown a desire for armed intervention in other peoples' internal quarrels or for forced territorial conquest. This division of the world into two warring camps presenting a terrible alternative is perhaps leading us to those awful days of religious wars.

Or perhaps we are going to witness in our own lifetime the repetition of history when the Gauls swept down on Rome and destroyed a great civilization. Now the Huns are on the march and who can say where and at what they will stop ?

## \*DEBT LEGISLATION IN BENGAL

( Continued from the last issue )

### ILL-CONCEIVED AND HASTY LEGISLATION

PERHAPS realizing the inadequacy of their resources for doing what a State like Bhavanagar has done and is attempting, but more probably because of the limitations of the provincial autonomy, the provincial governments are content with measures like regulation of moneylenders and debt-conciliation. These measures including the Bengal Moneylenders Act of 1933 and the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act 1935 have all a family likeness. Some of them, like the legislation which is now on the anvil in the Madras legislature, seem to be ill-conceived while others are produced in hot haste. And if the country is to be saved the sight of 'still born' legislation or acts which are 'dead letters' or remedies which are worse than the disease, it is absolutely essential to have a comprehensive and foresighted policy and not to tinker with the problem in an empirical fashion. A vigorous and steady attack must be launched against all the ills to which village economy is subject—an attack which shall not desist until the goal of making the Indian villager materially, physically and mentally or morally happy, as the Prime

\* Debt Legislation in Bengal By Kumar Bimal Chandra Sinha. (M. C. Sarkar & Sons, College Square, Calcutta.) 1938. 25cm. 40p. Re. 1.

Minister of Bombay recently put it, is reached. In the absence of such a policy, a solitary measure or two will only be mere palliatives which may have the evil effect of creating a false sense of security and satisfaction for the time and damning any further effort in future. There is also the danger of still births and infantile mortality in such debt legislation going up.

These moneylenders Acts, Debt Conciliation Acts and the like have not yet had a sufficient trial and any opinion pronounced upon them, howsoever well considered one may try to make it, is apt to be found wrong. And yet their salient features must be examined and expression given to such criticism as is possible. A note of warning must also be sounded where necessary so that any hastily conceived legislation may not cause economic ruin.

On a close study of the provisions of the Bengal Moneylenders Act 1935, the first criticism that would occur to any one is that the Act as it has emerged from the Legislature is very suspicious of the machinery for debt conciliation created by itself. Unlike the C. P. and Berar Debt Conciliation Acts the Bengal Act introduces a needless diversity of courts, provides for appeals as a matter of right and treats pleaders with greater toleration. These provisions, read in the light of the debate in the Legislature in the course of which judicial qualifications in the presiding officers of the tribunals were insisted on, and the criticism of Kumar Bimal Chandra Sinha suggest that the Act has been the target of attack, to some extent at least, on communal grounds. And perhaps the fact that in Bengal the majority of creditors as well as zamindars are Hindus who apprehend injustice at the hands of a legislature where the Muslims are in a majority and from Debt Conciliation Tribunals with an executive bias has apparently given a communal tinge to the whole question in Bengal. A large section of the public would therefore seek safety in appeals and in the judicial experience of presiding officers. Otherwise one cannot understand why the simple and expeditious procedure prescribed by the C. P. and Berar Acts and Rules which the writer knows to be working quite satisfactorily was not adopted in Bengal. After all, these Debt Conciliation Acts are emergency measures and the essence of their success must lie in substantial and quick justice which they aim at. And if the tribunals set up by them and the procedure prescribed are but a 'pocket edition' of the ordinary Civil Courts and Civil procedure, the whole sanction underlying the new legislation ceases to exist.

It appears that the Act provided for compulsory settlement of debt, while the State did not intend to find any funds wherewith the debtors could be financed to pay off the creditor. This was considered by some of the legislators 'to be enough for the Council to throw the Bill out altogether.' I wonder whether it is really desirable that the State should intervene in the way Bhavanagar has done, i. e., conciliate the debt and substitute the State for the private creditor. But there can hardly be room for doubt that on practical consideration such State action must be

ruled out in every province in British India except perhaps Madras. The Government of Bengal, following that of C. P. and Berar, has however done the next best thing, namely, provided for a State agency for gradually realizing from the debtor the conciliated amount of debt in a certain number of instalments. When this is done the creditor should have no cause for grievance. And this arrangement of collection of instalments by a State agency is indeed likely to prove beneficial to the creditor as well as the debtor. Kumar Bimal Chandra Sinha has taken pains to show that in no country other than India does the debt legislation touch the principal of a loan: all that is provided for is reduction of interest to a fair level and allowing a suitable number of instalments. But if nothing more was to be allowed, then debt conciliation in India had better be not attempted at all. Because so many of our agriculturists are virtually no better than insolvents; and if the principal of their debt is not to be touched, there can be no salvation for them except through the Insolvency Courts, (and it is only through these Debt Conciliation Acts that a partial substitute for a Rural Insolvency Act is now being rendered available to the agriculturists). Thus with an insolvent debtor, the creditor ought not to grumble if his claim is so reduced as to be brought within the paying capacity of the debtor, the State undertaking to collect for him the reduced claim by instalments.

A special feature of the Bengal Act of 1935 is that it provides for an insolvency procedure for rural areas and in this it is distinctly an improvement on the C. P. and Berar Act. In the absence of such provision the Conciliation Boards in C. P. and Berar are often hard put to it to bring about agreement between creditor and debtor and to arrange for satisfaction of the conciliated debt even by a number of instalments.

The reduction of principal has been objected to on the ground that it would spoil the credit of the agriculturist. But this can also be said of much of the allied legislation that is being passed by many provincial governments in India. That the credit of the agriculturist will suffer may be conceded. But his credit has already gone too low and the new legislation will not cause any material deterioration therein. It is true that the credit of the good agriculturist suffers for no fault of his. But this cannot be helped. It is also possible to argue that the good agriculturist will continue to obtain better terms than others as before, even in the changed times. And there is a good deal of justification for the view that the heavily indebted agriculturist—that is to say the large majority of the agriculturists—may be more credit-worthy after a few years, that is after the mess of old debts and never-ending arrears is cleared and the results of allied legislation and executive action having rural development for their objective are consolidated. Further, facile credit can be a danger in the case of our agriculturists who have not the strength to resist the temptation to take a loan and spend it on entirely unproductive purposes or in a manner altogether beyond their means or beyond the real need of the

occasion. Again Sowcars or Mahajans may declaim against the new legislation and avow their intention to cease lending to agriculturists, but it does not require much shrewdness to see through their agitation and it may safely be hoped that before many years are out, business relations will return to normality. There are not many alternative avenues open to these moneylenders in which they will readily invest their money. It must also be remembered that those who introduce this kind of legislation and who support them all agree on the need for allied measures including the provision of a readily available and dependable agency which will meet all the legitimate requirements of the agriculturist mainly for productive purposes.

In the interest of the agriculturist of Bengal (and also of Bihar) it must be urged that Debt Conciliation Acts will fail to satisfy the needs of the situation if no adequate provision is made therein for settling the arrears of landlord's dues. As it happens, a large portion of a raiyat's debts in those provinces consists in or is the result of claims for arrears of rent. And can it be denied that the wretched condition of the raiyat in those provinces is largely due to absentee landlords who allowed their agents to extort all sorts of *abwabs* from the raiyat and to harass him in many other ways and who have generally failed in recent years to attend to irrigation works etc.? It must therefore be within the competence of Boards or tribunals constituted under the Acts to investigate such claims and to reduce them—even to reduce their principal if necessary—particularly where the raiyat appears to be insolvent. In this matter the provisions of the Bengal Act are not as clear or as far reaching as desired and it is to be feared that in Bihar where, as in Bengal, the Zamindars' party still commands a strong voice in the legislature (notwithstanding the presence of Congress Majority in the former), the provisions of the Bill which is about to be introduced in the Assembly will be found to be equally unsatisfactory. Such half-measures will, as said above, only add to the list of 'still born' legislation.

Only one more criticism of the Kumar Saheb remains to be noticed. He charges the Bengal Act of 1935 of discrimination against the creditor. In a legislation which is avowedly in the interest of the debtor-agriculturist, such criticism is without meaning. And yet one may reply that the honest and reasonable creditor need have no apprehension that his legitimate interests will suffer. At least this is the opinion of the authorities in C. P. and Berar where Debt Conciliation Boards have disposed of thousands of cases without any serious dissatisfaction among creditors. The sensible creditor cannot fail to realize that in the absence of this special legislation and the machinery for recovery provided thereunder he must need take recourse to the ordinary courts, incur a heavy outlay on costs and, after a great deal of delay and harassment, obtain what might after all prove a scrap of paper.

'I. C. S.'

## Review.

### THE NORTH-WEST PROBLEMS.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER, By C. F. ANDREWS. (Allen and Unwin, 1937.) 20cm. 208p. 3/6

Of the many expectations raised by the title of the book, one has to admit with regret, only a few are realised. There are 16 chapters in all and only five of them deal with the Frontier as such. Chapters about the League of Nations and Disarmament would have been quite out of place in this book had it not been for the subtitle "Contribution to World Peace." The burden of the whole book is that in a really self-governing India, there will be no Frontier trouble and no consequent air-bombing. Instead of nominations of the representatives of India on the League of Nations by the Governments of India and Great Britain, there should be real representation at Geneva from India.

By stretching one's imagination as far as possible, one finds it difficult to link up the two problems: India's N. W. Frontier and the League of Nations. Protests, only wordy protests, could at the most be made there even by the real spokesmen of India against the bombing from air on the civil population of the Frontier. Beyond that nothing can be achieved. The Frontier problem as it exists, would remain unaltered. But our learned author seems to believe otherwise. His solution of the problem—one does not really understand from the book what he means by it is very simple. When the control of the Frontier Provinces would pass into Indian hands, asserts Mr. Andrews, the Minister in charge of Defence, would naturally be a Muhamaddan and "the kinship of Islam may produce results which will be altogether on the side of peace."

Such an expression of pious hope betrays a complete lack of the grasp of the actual problem on the Frontier. It has very little to do with kinship of Islam or the fraternity of the Hindus. It is in main an economic problem. The extremely barren nature of the soil and the paucity of water are the two chief factors which go to make the Frontier troubles what they are. Hindu-Muslim controversy is only an interpretation by some vested interests. Nature has been unduly harsh and unsympathetic to the province as a whole, and the inhabitants have no honest means to earn a living there. Tendencies to loot or rob and to kill are therefore a product of the natural difficulties. So long as these are not solved, the Frontier problem will remain what it has been all these days. Complications have no doubt been added to it by the way in which British diplomats have tried to find a solution of it. None of these aspects have been touched by the writer in his book and that is why one is disappointed.

Great stress seems to be laid on the bombing from air on inhabitants of the territory known locally as 'Yagistan.' Complaints also are lodged in strong terms on the various military campaigns undertaken by the Government of India to bring to book the offending tribes or their leaders. To him who can read between the lines, such operations have a different purpose to serve. They are used as military manouvres under a legal cover and at the cost of the Indian tax-payer. Where else in the Empire could British military forces get such a golden opportunity to train themselves in the rapidly changing military weapons? This has been suggested to be the state

of affairs even by British observers of independent judgment. Mr. Andrews does not seem inclined to believe this.

A Christian solution of the Frontier problem has been suggested in passing by Mr. Andrews. By this he means to achieve peace there by sending Christian missions to work to educate, to supply medical help and above all to spread the Gospel. The Example of Dr. Pennel whose worth has been assessed at "two military regiments" has been cited. Any doctor, as a matter of fact, be he Hindu, Mussalman or Christian, would be welcome on the Frontier where the tombs of the dead Mullas and dust round about are the only means for curing any malady or healing any wound. In such a country, a kind doctor with the missionary zeal to serve, is sure to be worth two or more regiments. But it has to be remembered that the people of Yagistan have a particular dislike for the "Firanghee" since his manners are offensive both to the Hindu and Mussalman alike. Does he not eat beef to offend the Hindu and pork and ham to offend the follower of the Prophet?

Apart from this talk of a communal settlement of the Frontier problem which is primarily economical, it is necessary to know the complications created by the British method of handling the Frontier tribes. It is a well known fact that large sums of money are spent annually on the Frontier for paying the various tribes without exacting from them any work worth the name. There are the levies, the khassdars and many other types of tribesmen employed who are paid month after month for keeping peace! It is very doubtful whether British statesmen would have agreed to such a proposal were the funds to come from the British treasury. A cursory glance at the tall figures of expenses under the Watch and Ward and political expenses on the Frontier would convince any one of the utter waste of the sums so squandered on the barren soil of Yagistan.

Having been accustomed to receiving such subsidies for doing nothing, the tribesmen are naturally blessing the British rule in India. Any attempt to stop these regular payments even by the autonomous

Indian government or by the Muslim Minister in entire charge of the Defence of India, as Mr. C. F. Andrews believes, will naturally be resented very strongly and, if enforced, disturbances will surely follow. This is the crux of the Frontier problem, to which no solution has been offered. Why? The problem itself has nowhere been explained in all its aspects in the book.

The Brotherhood of Islam and the Traditions of the Hindus have been described in two different chapters in the book, wherein occurs a reference to the "toleration and peace-loving spirit" among the Muslims of India; the author believes that Muslims in India are far more tolerant and peace-loving than their brethren in Afghanistan, Persia and Iraq. As a matter of fact, the reverse is true. I speak from personal experience of weeks together spent in the company of all types of Muslim subjects of these Islamic nations around India. My confirmed opinion has been quite the opposite of what has been stated by our learned author. Evidently, he is relying on books and reports and perhaps is not speaking from first hand information.

For these reasons, the book which raised so many hopes has been a disappointment. Frontier problems have not yet been treated from the purely Indian point of view and the want of a book on the subject is still unfulfilled.

SHRIPAD R. TIKEKAR.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED.

A HISTORY OF PEACEFUL CHANGE IN THE MODERN WORLD. By C. R. M. F. CURTZWELL. (Royal Institute of International Affairs.) (Oxford University Press.) 1937. 22cm. 221p. 7/6.

PEACEFUL CHANGE: A STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL PROCEDURES. By FREDERIC SHERWOOD DUNN. (Council on Foreign Relations, New York.) 1937. 21cm. 156p. \$1. 50p.

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