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Topics of the Week.

British Imperialism.

ON the Empire Day the Secretary of State for India, Lord Zetland, enlarged on the special virtues of British imperialism, contrasted British imperialism with the imperialism of the Nazi and Fascist Powers and asked with an air of triumph whether the Indian people, who always speak of destroying British imperialism, would prefer to go under the imperialism of the totalitarian States. But he ignored the fact that Indians do not think in terms of what foreign domination they should subject themselves to but place before themselves the goal of political freedom. All imperialism, whether democratic or authoritarian, is anathema to them, and they will not cease their efforts at destroying British imperialism on the ground that other imperialisms can be worse.

BUT, Lord Zetland says, under the British Empire India has been promised full self-government, the same as obtains in the Dominions. When the promise is redeemed imperialism will be robbed of its power for evil, since India, becoming mistress of her own destiny, can shape her policy just as she likes. There will then remain only a formal subjection to the British Crown which will place no restraints upon her power. This position a great many Indians accept and others will reconcile themselves to it, giving up a claim to titular sovereign independence when practical independence is achieved. The promise

of Dominion Status, given in 1929, was without warrant kept out of the recent India Act, which was intended to be an interim step to the attainment of the status. The promise itself is thus brought into question, even though the Secretary of State now reaffirms it, and so far as its fulfilment goes, the Act is a complete bar to it. No one now attaches any great value to official or Parliamentary pledges. The acid test of the Government's real intention to make India free would be to scrap the Act and place her in a position to attain freedom, if not immediately, within the next few years. Unless Indians get satisfaction on this, their one aim can only be to do everything within their power to destroy British imperialism.

Premium on Rowdiness.

IT is very unfortunate that the city of Sholapur should have been during the last week a scene of organised and unorganised rioting and street fights between the Hindus and the Muslims. As a result of these troubles, five persons have died and as many as 46 have been severely injured. It will be recalled that for some months past Sholapur had been practically the base of operations for the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj who are together carrying on a peaceful though resolute struggle for the political reform of the neighbouring State of Hyderabad. A big camp of Arya Samajists was set up at Sholapur and batches of volunteers used to be sent from there to Hyderabad where they offered *satyagraha* and got into the spacious jails of His Exalted Highness the Nizam. The whole proceeding was entirely peaceful and unprovocative.

ON the 21st of May last, it so happened that a batch of newly arrived volunteers, while passing in a procession past a mosque in Sholapur, continued to recite their slogans and did not stop the music. Enraged by this affront, two Muslims who were offering prayers in the mosque came out of it and remonstrated with the volunteers. One of them struck a volunteer with a stick across his arm and back. This incident started the ugly incidents which lasted for nearly four days in the course of which the District Magistrate of Sholapur promulgated the usual Section 144 of the Cr. Procedure Code prohibiting all meetings and processions, passed a curfew order between 7 p. m. and 6 a. m. and ordered the forcible disbanding of the camp of the Arya Samajists who had thereupon perforce to leave Sholapur altogether.

WE sympathise with Government in their endeavours to preserve the peace of Sholapur City

and prevent it from becoming a battleground for warring communities. However, what we cannot understand is the need which Government apparently felt to order the disbanding of the Arya Samajist camp from Sholapur. The Arya Samaj, it is admitted on all hands, was conducting its activities in Sholapur in quite a peaceful and orderly manner. If it had been otherwise, Government could have checked its lawlessness and might have been justified in doing so. It may be true that some Muslims of Sholapur dislike the activities of the Arya Samajists and it may also be true that this circumstance was responsible for the deplorable happenings of last week. But this is no justification for the wholesale deportation, so to say, of a section of the people who in no sense can be held responsible for what happened. The net result of Government's policy in this particular case has been that, if any of the Sholapur Muslims had the desire to see the last of the Arya Samaj in Sholapur, that desire has been fulfilled at least for the moment and the fulfilment has been brought about by the most objectionable methods of rioting and rowdyism. The right policy for the Government would have been to allow the Arya Samaj to function peacefully at Sholapur and take all the necessary precautionary measures to prevent the outbreak of fresh troubles. An uncharitable and pro-Hindu critic might read in the policy of Government more than it contains and even charge the Congress Government with the object of disabling the Hyderabad *satyagraha* movement which the Congress has boycotted. We would not go to that extent, but it must be confessed that Government have, in this affair, put themselves in the wrong. Would they have adopted an identical policy if a session of the Congress had been fixed to be held at Sholapur and similar rioting and communal strife had broken out at Sholapur just on the eve of the Congress session? We do not think so.

* * *

The Right Gesture.

IT is very refreshing to find that the present movement for responsible government in the Hyderabad State, though cold-shouldered by the Congress and actively opposed by the Muslim League, is gaining support, not only from communally-minded Hindus as is likely to be supposed, but also from nationally-minded Muslims. Mr. S. M. Abdullah, the leader of a similar movement in the Kashmir State, has issued a statement on the Hyderabad *satyagraha* in which he deprecates the perverse attitude of the Muslim League and even promises support to the Hyderabad movement. With a rare insight into the real problem he says:

When we agitate for the attainment of responsible government in Kashmir and expect others to help us in our cause, there is no reason why the people of Kashmir should not help the people of Hyderabad who want redress of their grievances. If Hindu, Sikh and Muslim Princes can sink their religious differences and meet at Bombay to protect their respective rights, why cannot the peoples of the Indian States help each other in their struggle? The people of Hyderabad have started an agitation and we assured them at the Ludhiana All-India States Peoples' Conference that if the necessity arose Kashmir Muslims would send *jathas* to Hyderabad. This declaration caused a 'flutter' in Muslim League circles, who, instead of advising the Nizam's Government to appoint an independent commission to enquire into the grievances of Hyderabad Hindus, have raised another alarm and requested the

Delhi-Simla gods to set the Princes' Protection Act in motion to crush the popular movement.

* * *

ALL people, except those who are either drunk with the thin sore wine of communalism or would like to exploit for their own ends the religious sentiments of the people, would agree with Mr. Abdullah in his views quoted above. As he points out, the real antagonism of interests is not between Hindus and Muslims as such but between the rulers and the ruled, between the oppressors and the oppressed, between the forces of feudalism and reaction on the one hand and the forces of democracy and progress on the other. Unfortunately, while the Princes view the situation in its proper perspective and take concerted action, the leaders of the popular movements have, in many cases, shown a singular lack of vision with the result that what should be a purely political and cosmopolitan movement has taken on a communal colour, thus giving an excuse to the Princes to put down the movement with brute force and an excuse to the Congress to boycott the movement. Mr. Abdullah's statement should come as an eye-opener to all those who still persist in basing their movement for political reform on religious sentiment or even communal virus. It would indeed be well for the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj who are conducting the movement in Hyderabad gratefully to welcome the sympathy and support extended to them by Mr. Abdullah on behalf of the people of Kashmir and in return promise support to them in their struggle in their own State. In such contests it is the forces of autocracy and those of democracy that are arrayed against each other and not, as is supposed by some, the forces of Hinduism and Islam.

* * *

Sind Debt Conciliation Bill.

IN Sind it is proposed to introduce a Bill for the setting up of debt conciliation boards to relieve agriculturists from indebtedness. The Central Provinces, the Punjab, Bengal and Madras have such Debt Conciliation Acts, but Bombay and Sind as part of it have none. Now, after the separation of Sind, the Bombay Presidency proper has proposed for adoption a more radical measure of compulsory debt adjustment; but Sind is going to try a measure of voluntary debt conciliation. The normal limits of debt that will become subject to the procedure of conciliation are Rs. 150 and Rs. 50,000; but these limits may be varied—downwards to Rs. 50 and upwards to any amount. "Agriculturists" to whom alone the measure will be applicable will be interpreted in the sense in which the term is understood in the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act, 1879. The debts due to co-operative societies are included within the purview of the Bill.

* * *

"THE Bill", as the statement of objects and reasons says, "provides for the appointment of conciliation boards in any district or part thereof. The basis of the Bill is a voluntary settlement, but it also provides that if a debtor makes a reasonable offer which is adopted by one-half of his creditors, the others may be compelled to agree to it. It confers special advantages on creditors who reach an amicable settlement with debtors, and penalises those who unreasonably refuse to do so, by depriving them of their costs in subsequent proceedings as well as of interest in excess of simple interest at 6 per cent. The Bill, though

framed with a view to the special needs of Sind, has been drafted after a careful scrutiny of the Acts of other provincial legislatures, and is believed to contain all their most satisfactory features."

* * *

THE claim made in the last sentence quoted above is hardly warranted. One thing in its favour is that it imposes a maximum limit on interest payable by the debtor. The clause in this behalf is :

In any scheme of debt conciliation under this Act, no creditor shall be allowed a greater amount in satisfaction of both principal and interest than twice the amount of the principal and, if the debt was incurred before the first day of June 1935, twice the amount of the principal due on the said date.

Again, debt conciliation boards, in deciding whether the creditors have refused a fair offer made by the debtors, are to take the following among other factors into account: "the fall or rise in the value of land and its produce in the locality; the reasonableness of the rates of interest; the onerous conditions, if any, subject to which the loan was granted." This is taken from the Madras Act.

DEBT conciliation boards are usually given power to penalise obstinate creditors if a certain percentage of the debtor's debts are settled by voluntary conciliation. This percentage is fixed in the Bengal Act at 40 per cent.; in the Sind Bill it is fixed at 50 per cent. Similarly, the Bengal Act provides that the boards should not bring the penalising sections into operation if the debt is reduced, in the process of voluntary conciliation, to an amount which is less than the original principal of the debt unless creditors to whom there is owing not less than 60 per cent. of the total debt agree to the proposed reduction. In the Sind Bill the proportion of the debt in which voluntary conciliation succeeds must be 75 per cent., if the penalising sections are to come into effect. As compared with the Bengal Act, the most notable and regrettable omission in the Sind Bill is that concerning insolvency. No measure relating even to voluntary conciliation can be regarded as complete without a provision about insolvency, which would enable debtors too heavily indebted to start life afresh.

ENGLAND AND RUSSIA.

PROBABLY within the next few days a close arrangement, a firm union, will be announced between England and France on the one hand and Russia on the other. It is only when the announcement is made that we shall know whether it is a complete triple alliance as the nucleus of an alliance of all peace-loving nations of the world against aggression or falls short of it. But the discussions about such an understanding with Russia are unduly protracted and are carried on, on the side of England, with an imperfect realisation of Russia's might which can be brought to bear in favour of the rule of law and against the use of unlawful force. In another column we give an extract from the weighty speech made by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons on 19th May, in which he describes how great is the value of the Russian military forces and how indispensable it is that these forces should be unreservedly at the disposition of England if she is to implement her pledges to Poland and Rumania and if she is really to build up a deterrent against aggression. In this debate Messrs. Attlee, Churchill and Eden and Sir Archibald Sinclair took the same line. None of them could understand why Mr. Chamberlain should show any hesitation in coming to an offensive and defensive alliance with Russia covering the whole of Europe, the East as well as the West. Without such an alliance, declared Mr. Attlee, England by her guarantees to Poland and Rumania would only "get the dangers without the advantages." Mr. Eden affirmed his conviction that "it would be a great gain to peace if an understanding could be arrived at between this country, France and Russia, and the sooner, the more complete, the more far-reaching that arrange-

ment, the better." Said Mr. Churchill, the offer made by Russia is a fair offer and indeed "a better offer than the terms which the Government seek to get for themselves; a more simple, a more direct and a more effective offer. Let it not be put aside and come to nothing." All these leaders showed how trivial were the excuses and misplaced the misgivings that were put forward by the Government either on their own behalf or on behalf of the countries to whom assistance had been promised.

The course of negotiations is not authoritatively known. But it seems that the British Government sought for a unilateral declaration from Russia that, in the event of an attack on Rumania or Poland, she would come to the help of those countries as Great Britain and France would do. The Soviet Government, on the other hand, insisted upon a tripartite alliance between England, France and Russia on the basis of complete reciprocity; that is to say, if Russia were attacked England and France would go to her help and if England or France were attacked Russia would come to their aid. Similarly, if Rumania or Poland or any other countries to whom England and France had given guarantees were victims of aggression Russia should be prepared to give them help to the fullest extent of her resources, and if, for instance, the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were the victims of unprovoked aggression England and France, like Russia, should make it their business to aid the countries attacked to the extent of their ability. In fact, this pact of mutual assistance between England, France and Russia should come into effect wherever in any quarter of Europe aggression would take place. In other

words, Russia appears to have stood out in these negotiations for the principle of collective security in the whole strategic field and refused to consider aggression in any particular country as a localised concern. The British Government, however, thought that such a complete alliance would impose too heavy a burden upon itself, and that in any case the burden could not be shouldered in view of the fact that an alliance of this character would be unacceptable to the countries to whom it has pledged assistance. On this second objection it put by far the greater weight. Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons defended his policy thus: "We were also aware that the direct participation of the Soviet Union in this matter might not be altogether in accordance with the wishes of some of the countries for whose benefit, or on whose behalf, these arrangements were being made. We would desire to have the collaboration of all these countries, and we do not want to have any division among them. . . . In this matter we are trying to build up, not an alliance between ourselves and other countries, but a peace front against aggression, and we should not be succeeding in that policy if, by ensuring the co-operation of one country, we rendered another country uneasy and unwilling to collaborate with us. . . . We are not concerned merely with the Russian Government; we have other Governments to consider." The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Butler while disclaiming any desire to name the countries which were opposed to a comprehensive military alliance with Russia, indirectly specified the countries when he said: "Let me take, for example, those who live in a part of Europe in between great Powers. There must be on their part, looking at it simply from the point of view of common sense, a natural hesitation before a decision for any definitive association with one of those great Powers is taken by one of those States. If there is hesitation in a State living in a geographical position of that sort, there is also similar hesitation of decision for His Majesty's Government."

It is true that Rumania and Poland are suspicious of Russia's intentions. Rumania was able to add Bessarabia to her territory from the Russian Empire at the end of the War. Poland, which was under Russian domination since the partitions, became an independent State after the War and was engaged in a fight with Russia even afterwards, i. e. in 1920. These countries are, therefore, afraid of penetration by Russia, though after the Revolution the Soviet Government has not shown any desire for expansion. But to say that Rumania and Poland dread Russia more than Germany is to indulge in unwarranted exaggeration. Mr. Raikes, for instance, said in the debate: "To-day you have a non-aggression pact between Rumania and Poland to fight for one another in the event of aggression by Russia. To this day you have no pact signed by Rumania and Poland that they will fight as a common front against

the advance of Germany. Until such a pact is signed I do not think it is unfair to infer that the fear of Russia, the fear of Soviet infiltration into what you call a capitalist State, is greater, even than the fear of Germany." Mr. Churchill neatly refuted this argument. "When M. Potemkin visited Warsaw we were led to believe from all that transpired that the conversations on all the matters involved were highly satisfactory. Therefore, I will not have it said and put into currency that Poland is an obstacle to agreement between Britain, France and Russia." After all, the assistance Poland would need in the event of an attack from Germany would not be in the form of great masses of Russian troops—Poland herself has a large and well-trained army—but in the form of munitions—aeroplanes, tanks, artillery, ammunition and equipment which Russia can supply. This kind of help Russia would give "provided that a triple alliance were set up. That is why M. Potemkin's conversations were satisfactory." Moreover, Russia's help is not only useful but essential; without it Britain's pledge is almost valueless. Recognising this, Britain ought to have given the pledge, as Col. Wedgwood pointed out, only on condition that Poland accepted Russia's help. This holds good of Rumania also. There is no reason either why Britain should not guarantee the independence of the Baltic countries as she desires Russia to guarantee the independence of Poland and Rumania; and this she can do without undertaking any additional responsibilities, as was clearly explained by Mr. Churchill:

The vital interests of Poland would be affected by the subjugation to the Nazi Power of the three Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The same is true of Russia. There is an identity of interests in respect of these States. Are we to be told that we shall increase our responsibilities by guaranteeing these Baltic States as well? You will not extend your responsibilities, or your burdens, by extending your guarantees to cover all these countries, at the point at which you have now got from the Baltic to the Black Sea. You are in it up to the neck already, and the question is how to make your system effective, and effective in time. I should have thought that at the point at which we have now reached, there is safety in numbers, and there may even be peace in numbers, provided that every State that is admitted makes its fair contribution and shows itself earnestly resolved to take all measures to maintain its independence.

"It is absolutely essential," remarked Sir Archibald Sinclair, "that we should protect the Northern flank of the peace front in Eastern Europe by ensuring that the Baltic States are not overrun."

Above all, it is necessary to build up an Eastern front, supposing Hitler goes West. Mr. Churchill emphasised this point. He said:

Unless there is an Eastern front set up, what is going to happen to the West? What is going to happen to those countries of the western front to whom, if we had not given guarantees, it is admitted that we are bound—countries like Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Switzerland? What is going to happen

to these countries? How are they to be defended if there is no Eastern front in activity?... Without any effective Eastern front, there can be no satisfactory defence of our interests in the West, and without Russia there can be no effective Eastern front. If His Majesty's Government, having neglected our defences for a long time, having thrown away Czecho-Slovakia with all that Czecho-Slovakia meant in military power, having committed us without examination of the technical aspects to the defence of Poland and Rumania, now reject and cast away the indispensable aid of Russia, and so lead us in the worst of all ways into the worst of all wars, they will have ill-deserved the confidence and, I will add, the generosity with which they have been treated by their fellow-countrymen.

REGULATION OF MONEYLENDING.

Following is the summary of two further lectures delivered by Mr. K. G. Sivaswamy, member, Servants of India Society, to the Andhra Peasants' Institute, Nidubrolu, last month.

A METHOD of preventing the growth of unproductive debt is to control the share of profit which the moneylender realises from land incomes for the credit he advances, or the articles he supplies for agricultural operations and for the domestic consumption of the agriculturist. The first attempt in this direction was made by giving the discretion to courts to reduce excessive interest so as not to exceed the principal of the loan. But this provision in law could be defeated by the collusion of the debtor and the creditor by converting outstanding loans into new loans at reasonable rates of interest. Many cases too may not come to the cognisance of the courts. If excessive interest is reduced by the courts, then it may be evaded by collecting it in so many other ways. Charges for expenses incurred in advancing a loan may be levied. Compound interest may be collected. Penal interest may be charged for default in payment. The principal amount due may be inflated in the bond.

The next step in the regulation of money-lending was to declare all these methods of accounting as offences in law. But the offences could be discovered only if the moneylender kept certain forms of accounts, issued receipts to the debtors, and kept the latter periodically informed of the state of their accounts. These provisions came to be insisted on since 1930 in the Moneylenders Acts. Certain special regulations were also found necessary in suits against agriculturists owing to their ignorance and illiteracy. A court finds it less difficult to investigate the advance of a loan, if there is a document giving evidence of it. The attestation by a sub-Registrar in registered accounts as proof of payment of consideration money to the illiterate debtors would again facilitate the taking of accounts of loans by the court. An illiterate debtor should be enabled to know the state of his accounts by instituting a suit before the court. He should have the facility to deposit a loan due by him in the civil court on any date, irrespective of any sti-

pulations in the bond. The interest due by him should not be allowed to accumulate unduly. To prevent any deceptive transactions and to enable the court to examine the debtor, suits should be instituted by creditors only in courts which operate in the area of residence of the debtor. Honest agriculturist debtors have suffered by the provision in law for their arrest and imprisonment while the poorer agriculturists are molested and intimidated to repay their loans by the lower class of moneylenders. The Moneylenders Acts have tried to prevent the abuses due to the ignorance and illiteracy of debtors by penalising these acts as offences.

LICENSING OF MONEYLENDERS.

But experience has shown that disallowance of costs and interest by courts in suits by moneylenders and convictions for offences by courts during the course of suits have not been able to check the abuses in moneylending. Recent legislation therefore has emphasised the registration and licensing of moneylenders. In the existing conditions of rural moneylending, it will not be possible to license all classes of moneylending. The executive authority should have power to inspect the accounts of all classes of moneylenders if abuses are to be prevented.

Recent legislation has attempted to regulate the share of profits of a moneylender which he can take on a loan by prescribing maximum rates of interest. With the registration of moneylenders, and the provision for supervision by an executive staff over moneylending, some amount of control can be exercised over rates of interest charged by moneylenders. But there can be no uniform rate of interest for all loans. They should vary according to the risks involved in the employment of capital, the size of the loan, the security offered and the nature of the loan whether it is in cash, or kind.

Preventive legislation either by way of a land policy, or by regulation of moneylending has necessarily to be preceded by curative legislation regarding liquidation of the past debts of an agriculturist. Legislation in the early days empowered the courts to take an account of the principal due, to grant a reasonable interest and spread the decreed amount over instalments. The machinery of special judges, or special conciliation boards was adopted to settle debts. Recent legislation has tried to scale down debts by calculating interest at a prescribed rate or by fixing the maximum recoverable amount as not to exceed twice the principal. In one province, lands have been sold in lieu of debts at pre-slump prices. A bill has been recently passed by the C. P. Legislative Assembly providing for scaling down the principal of debts on a percentage basis. All these methods have one fundamental defect that they do not scale down debts on the basis of the repaying capacity of a debtor, and to that extent help the richer classes to repudiate their debts

while failing to grant the necessary relief to the poorer classes.

Debt conciliation through the machinery of Boards nominated by the Government with the Revenue Divisional officers as chairmen, has facilitated an individual treatment of debts on the basis of the repaying capacity of a debtor. But these boards, or the Collectors on behalf of these boards, should have powers of adjusting the debts either by granting instalments by selling lands, or by temporarily alienating them. They should have power too to set apart a portion of a holding for the maintenance of the debtors when selling their lands. Compulsory scaling down of debts on the basis of a formula of two or three instalments, each instalment not exceeding the rent for the land, will be justifiable in the case of the subsistence holders whose incomes from land are the only security for future loans and which cannot be charged also for the repayment of past debts. Debts of uneconomic holders, tenants-at-will and labourers cannot really be adjusted as their poor resources will be just sufficient for their main-

tenance. Relief to these classes should come by a stiffening of the exemptions of saleable properties under the Civil Procedure Code, and by an enlargement of tenant rights.

Piecemeal legislation has not had sufficient effect either in protecting the agriculturist from his growing indebtedness or relieving him from his past debts. There is no use blaming legislation itself as having failed to help the agriculturist when comprehensive legislation has not been undertaken in any single province. Legislation by itself cannot solve the problem of organising agriculture so as to improve its productive capacity, minimise its risks, supply its equipment, and conserve the land income for the benefit of the primary producer. Reform in these directions should come by the building up of a proper organisation with necessary State aid and control. And with the provision of these facilities, the unproductive debt of the agriculturist will become productive and the return for the employment of capital in agriculture will reach a reasonable figure as in other profitable industries.

CIVIL LIBERTIES UNDER POPULAR GOVERNMENTS.

By DR. K. B. MENON.

Secretary, Indian Civil Liberties Union.

II.

SEDITION.

The law of sedition as it exists today has been unanimously condemned by all thinking people in India as a piece of reactionary and repressive legislation. Only two provinces—North Western Frontier Province and the Punjab—ever made any attempt to repeal this law. The Punjab Premier, the Hon'ble Sir Sikander Hyat Khan frankly said that "generally the policy of the Punjab Government was to prosecute people on charges of sedition when they preached incitement to violence." The term "incitement to violence" has been variously defined at various times by various governments and other bodies to suit the demands of changing times. Some of these interpretations have been of a highly controversial character, deviating as they do from the accepted juristic definition of the term. The Punjab and Bengal Governments have shown no scruples in prosecuting people for sedition. 23 persons were arrested in the Punjab under section 124A (sedition) during 1937 and 36 in 1938 making a startling total of 59 for the two years. The total number of arrests for sedition for the two years 1937 and 1938 in Bengal is 20, five being in 1937 and 15 in 1938.

An interesting situation has been created in Bengal by the view expressed by the High Court of Calcutta in connection with the appeal pre-

ferred by the editor and the printer of the *Hindusthan Standard* against their conviction on a charge of sedition in respect of an article published by them under the heading "Where is Bengal today." The judgment made it clear that Ministers do not constitute the "Government as by law established in British India" and that any attempt to discredit them or bring them into contempt does not amount to sedition. There is a considerable drop in the number of arrests during this year under sedition, but whether it is to be attributed to this judgment is not sure. It is rumoured, however, that "the Ministry are contemplating to insert a clause in the Official Records Bill seeking to give immunity to Ministers appointed under the Government of India Act from attacks in the Press or on the platform."

The prosecution of Mr. S. S. Batliwalla under section 124 A by the Madras Government for a speech at Venkatagiri in October 1937 created an unparalleled sensational situation. The subject was discussed threadbare by the public and by the Congress Executive and ultimately it was decided that, under normal circumstances, there should be no prosecution for sedition under the Congress Ministries except in clear cases of incitement to violence.

The Act passed by the Frontier Legislative Assembly repealing the law of sedition in February 1938 did not receive the attention it deserved.

More tragic is the fact that this lead has not been followed by the other Congress provinces.

POLICE.

We have by no means seen the last of the Secret Police with the transference of the police portfolio into popular hands. Some of the Provincial Ministers have eulogised the services of this department and have openly advocated the necessity for its continuance. Shadowing, reporting speeches of political workers and house searches are common practices in many of the provinces. Ludhiana (Punjab) Magistrate in a sedition trial in Aug. 1938 drew the attention of the Government to the "injustice" which was being done to speakers by allowing ordinary constables to report speeches. The United Provinces Government alone have abolished the system of police reporting at public meetings.

Police have often interfered in strikes on the pretext of protecting property rights. The current charges that strikers are guilty of extensive violence are refuted by a recent study by the American Civil Liberties Union. "The record is plain," concludes the Union's Bulletin, "that the vastly greater violence is against strikers, not by them." The facts available of the condition in India seem to support the above contention. Lathi charges and police firing have not been infrequent in industrial disputes. Three notable ones during the period under review may be mentioned. The first happened on 19th October 1937 when the Bombay (Mahim) Police opened fire to disperse, it is reported, a group of tannery workers who were fighting among themselves on Union issues. The next is the police shooting at Chirala in Madras in February 1938 in connection with a strike in the I. L. T. L. Company's factory. The crowd was treated to a couple of lathi charges before the police opened fire. Two of the leaders were killed on the spot and another expired in the hospital. The third was in connection with the General Strike in Bombay on November 7, 1938, organized immediately after the passage of that much condemned Industrial Disputes Act by Bombay labour to register their emphatic protest.

The use of firearms by the police in dispersing crowds is taking an unusually heavy toll of life. Eight persons were killed on the average every month in 1938 as a result of police shooting in British India and the Indian States taken together. During the five months ending in May 1939, the mortality averages to twelve a month. These are shocking figures without a parallel in the civilized world. More shocking is the fact that departmental enquiries whenever and wherever undertaken have invariably exonerated the police of all blame. Life of the citizen should not be held so cheap by any sane responsible government. More humane ways should be devised to disperse unarmed crowds.

RESTRAINT ORDERS.

It is interesting that the bulk of orders passed in the Punjab restricting movement or restraining speech during the two years under review were served on Congressmen. The next group that comes for partial treatment at the hands of the Punjab Government are the Socialists. The concern of the Punjab Government, if one may indulge in a generalisation from the facts available, seems to be to prevent the influx of radical ideas into the province. Nearly two hundred restraint orders stand to the credit of the Punjab Government which is about fifty per cent. of the total orders passed by all the other governments put together.

It is impossible here to tell the whole story of repression in Bengal. The Huq Ministry took charge of 2,700 detenus and 1,260 political prisoners when they accepted office. The Ministry deserves to be severely censured for not expediting their release. The last batch of detenus was released only in the last week of August 1938, a year and five months after the Ministry came into office. The adamant attitude of the Ministry on the question of the release of political prisoners is even more reprehensible. This is one of the few provinces that have political prisoners still unreleased. Restraint orders give one a fair idea of the nature of the problem the province faces. While the Punjab is obsessed with the thought of keeping out radicals, Bengal is confronted with the dual problem of combating labour unrest with the allied problem of keeping out the so-called agitators. Her restraint orders therefore are directed mostly against labour leaders, Congress workers and socialists.

Restraint orders in the Congress Provinces are almost exclusively issued in connection with labour disputes and Kisan troubles. There was a sudden increase in strikes immediately after the acceptance of office by the Congress Ministers. It was met by a wide-spread and punitive use of the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code. Despite public protest the use of section 144 Cr. P. C. in labour disputes has been fairly frequent in all parts of the country to restrict speech, movement and assembly. Picketing is not prohibited but is often prevented by the use of some section of the criminal law, as for example, the law against obstruction of traffic. The culminating piece of legislation in this regard, the Bombay Industrial Disputes Bill, now an Act, was introduced in the Bombay Legislative Assembly in September 1938. Both in the Assembly and outside, the bill met with very strong opposition. It has been universally condemned as a repressive piece of legislation calculated to deprive labour of its long-won rights to organise and to strike.

BAN ON THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA.

No province has taken any step to lift the ban on the Communist Party of India or to re-

move any of the disabilities under which the Party has been labouring for the last several years. There are reasons to believe that some of the provincial governments keep close watch on the activities of the members of the Party. No serious efforts, however, have been made to prevent them from functioning unofficially and underground. Both Madras and Bombay Governments made it very clear in the *communiqués* they issued immediately after the assumption of office that "they will not permit the dissemination of class hatred and ideas involving the use of organised or unorganised violence in the furtherance of any object." This is a vague statement full of mischievous possibilities. The only incident that has since taken place that indicates any change of attitude or possibility of a change of attitude towards the Communists or their activities is the statement issued by the Congress Ministry in the United Provinces in connection with the demand of the Employers' Association of Northern India to put a stop to all communist propaganda in Cawnpore. The U. P. Government in the course of their reply said that "Communists have been openly carrying on their propaganda and seeking election to the legislature on Communist tickets in civilised States such as the United Kingdom and that the suppression of communist opinion in India would be unjustifiable." If this attitude is continued there is hope of the ban being lifted some time in some of the progressive provinces. The U. P. Legislative Assembly with the support of government benches recently passed a resolution recommending to the U. P. Government that the ban on the Provincial and District Committees of the Party should be lifted and that as regards the Central Committee of the Party the matter should be taken up by the U. P. Government with the Government of India.

The position today is anomalous. The Congress Party, whose executive is the Congress Ministry, counts among its membership a large number of communists. They are also allowed to occupy important positions on Congress Committees. They have not been interfered with in any way nor their further entry checked. Again when March 20th is observed all over India as the Communist Day and resolutions are passed urging the lifting of the ban, prominent Congressmen are known to participate in these meetings. It is difficult under these circumstances to reconcile this position with the statement the Hon'ble Mr. Morarji Desai made in the Bombay Assembly on behalf of the Government of Bombay on February 13th, 1939 in reply to a question asked by Mr. R. N. Mandlik. Mr. Desai said that the ban was originally imposed by the Government of India, that no order in this respect was issued by the Bombay Government, that the Congress Government did not think it advisable to recommend the lifting of the ban to the Government of India and that it was not in public interest to disclose the reason for not making such a recommendation.

THE CRIMINAL TRIBES ACT, 1924.

There is no Act that violates more flagrantly the essential fundamentals of human rights than the Criminal Tribes Act. Its approach is unscientific, its provisions are cruel and its operation is monstrous. The Act confers unbridled powers on the executive free from all judicial control. Even the powers given to the High Court by the Government of India Act to protect the rights of the people from interference by an over-zealous executive have been violated by section 7 of the Act. Any tribe, gang or class of people may be declared as a Criminal Tribe by the local Government which may then subject the members of such a tribe to the inhuman provisions of the Act. The members of such tribes, for example, may be asked to report themselves at fixed intervals, notify their place of residence and change of address and to take out a pass when leaving the limits of the village. The Government of Assam as late as November 16, 1937 declared the gang commonly known as "Athangiri Gang" in the District of Sylhet to be a Criminal Tribe as in the opinion of the Government the tribe is engaged in the systematic commission of non-bailable offences. In branding such large aggregations of people as criminals, often peaceful citizens have also come to be registered as criminal tribesmen because of village factions, personal spite, police prejudices and the ignorance of local conditions on the part of the District Magistrate.

This Act, according to good authority, has been a handy instrument of oppression against political workers, labour leaders and kisan organisers in the Punjab and Bengal. One glaring instance may be quoted. The District Magistrate of Noakhali on September 1, 1937 ordered Syed Ahmed Khan, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Bengal, to be registered as a member of the Criminal Tribe on the report of the Sub-Divisional Officer, Mr. M. N. Das. It is interesting to note that the registration of a Criminal Tribe's member is always ordered *ex parte*. He has no right or means of knowing the charges against him. He has no right of appeal. All that he could do is to petition to the same District Magistrate who ordered his registration to remove his name from the register. That such an inhuman and irrational law has remained unrepealed so long under popular Government is, to say the least, surprising.

CONCLUSION.

What, in brief, is the position of civil liberties after two years of popular government in the provinces? The following conclusions are more than warranted by the facts presented in this review:

1. There is no free Press in India. Press functions under the constant fear of securities being demanded or those taken being forfeited.

Its liberties are in danger of being further abridged.

2. Any person can be arrested and sent to jail for saying or doing things which would hardly be held to constitute an offence in democratic countries.

3. Freedom of association is severely restricted and may be denied altogether by the executive.

4. Labour and Kisan organisations function under serious hardships. They are penalised and maltreated by the police for legitimate activities.

5. A severe and unintelligent censorship is causing intellectual starvation and stagnation. Tampering with personal mail and spying by the Secret Police are not uncommon.

6. There are on the Statute Books more than forty repressive laws which place the liberty of the individual at the tender mercy of the executive.

Little is served by urging the handicaps of the Constitution to delay or deprive the people of their elementary rights of citizenship. The only question we ask of those who are the custodians of our rights and liberties is whether they have utilised to the fullest extent the resources made available by the Constitution to ensure to the people their rights upon the maintenance of which depends our democracy. A cursory glance through the *Press Communiqués* issued by the Indian Civil Liberties Union from month to month will convince anybody that there is no perceptible decrease in the aggregate volume of breaches of civil liberties all over India. Civil liberties, particularly freedom of thought and expression, are the means by which mankind climbed from barbarism to civilisation. These are human rights not restricted to those who agree with us. It is especially, as Justice Holmes put it, for the thought we hate.

Review.

PROHIBITION IN PRACTICE.

REPORT ON THE WORKING OF PROHIBITION IN THE SALEM DISTRICT. By C. JAGANNATHACHARI (Registrar, Annamalai University.) 1939. 18cm. 104p.

THE Madras Prohibition Act came into force in Salem in October 1937; and the present report on its working was completed in September 1938. The period of study is brief; but still Mr. Jagannathachari has been able to obtain sufficient evidence to conclude that "Prohibition has been a substantial boon.....The economic gain has been on the whole considerable.....It has improved the moral and social welfare of the masses. The sponsors of the Madras Prohibition Act may well take courage and strength to extend Prohibition to other districts and to devise the necessary

measures of taxation to implement this important item in the programme of the Indian National Congress." This is a comforting conclusion, and it is interesting to examine the materials on which it is based.

At the outset Mr. Jagannathachari gives an account of the legal and administrative aspects of the Prohibition Act. In the course of it he gives some interesting figures relating to offences against Abkari Laws before and after Prohibition. These figures show that "while Prohibition increased the crimes connected with the sale, possession or smuggling of drugs, the position regarding illicit distillation and illicit tapping has not deteriorated but has improved." Elsewhere, however, it is admitted that many cases of illicit distillation are undetected.

In the next part of the report, the economic conditions of the people after the introduction of Prohibition are studied. For this purpose the author has selected a few "normal" villages in three taluks of Salem. The family budgets collected there show that as much as 35 per cent. of the family income was spent on liquor before Prohibition, and that drink was the direct cause of indebtedness in 40 per cent. of the families. The post-Prohibition budgets reveal clearing of debt, increased expenditure on cloth and food, increased savings, and similar beneficial transfers of expenditure. By a somewhat crude method of calculation the author estimates "the increased purchasing power" due to Prohibition at Rs. 75 lakhs. We feel that instead of such estimates, it would have been better to have reproduced a few typical family budgets in detail. It is true that a few interesting family histories are given; but they lack detail.

Another interesting part of the study relates to the effect of Prohibition on the persons employed in the liquor business. The following figures are given: Out of 39,922 persons who were formerly dependent upon toddy tapping, 22,109 have taken up "agricultural occupations", and sweet-juice tapping; 1717 have left the district, and 2699 adults are without employment. We are not satisfied with these figures. We would like to know more about these "agricultural occupations" which have absorbed such a large number of persons; we would also have welcomed more information regarding the earnings to be had in these occupations. This whole study relating to employment, which we believe to be highly important, has been performed least satisfactorily.

In the last part of the report, general improvement in family relations and social life is recorded. A fall in petty crimes is also marked.

On the whole, this study of Prohibition is interesting, though not completely satisfactory from the point of view of statistical method. It does not appear that the investigator has studied and made use of the Prohibition studies in other countries. We feel that an economic study of prohibition should give prominence to three aspects—employment, transfer of expenditure, and efficiency of the worker. Statistical material bearing upon these three aspects requires more care in collecting and handling than is evident in the present report.

T. M. JOSHI.

Miscellany.

MILITARY IMPORTANCE OF RUSSIA.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S GREAT SPEECH.

The following is taken from a speech made by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons on 19th May:

We have guaranteed Poland and Rumania. Think of that as a military proposition to begin with without Russia. Poland has a frontier of 1,500 miles to defend against Germany. The Maginot Line is only 600 miles down to the Mediterranean, and Poland has no Maginot Line. Germany will choose her point of attack on that 1500-mile front. Where is she concentrating? If Poland is attacked from Danzig, Pomorze or from Silesia, what help can we render? I would like to put that question to the General Staff. I asked a question the other day and I had no answer, whether the General Staff were consulted as to the military possibilities of redeeming that pledge before it was given. I think the House ought to know that. If so, how could they send reinforcements to Poland? Aeroplanes—they would be faced by a more formidable air fleet, unless we have Russia. They could not send a single tank or a single gun. How are you going to redeem that pledge without Russia?

Again I ask, were the General Staff consulted before that pledge was given, and if so, are they prepared to say on their own responsibility that, without the aid of Russia, they can redeem it? The same thing applies to Rumania. The Polish army is a very considerable army, and if they were as well equipped as the Germans, I believe they could put up a fight. But they are not. Poland is a comparatively poor country. It has neither the financial nor the industrial resources to enable it to throw up great defences, to turn out great guns, to construct tanks or aeroplanes. Will the Government tell me how they are going to do it without Russia?

I will put the other side of the case now—if Russia were in. There has been a campaign of detraction of the Russian army, Russian resources, Russian capacity, Russian leadership—a regular campaign of detraction. A good deal of it has been in public, but most of it has been in private. We shall never forget the Lindbergh episode. He is a very amiable and attractive man, who was the agent and tool of much more astute and more sinister men than himself. He went from one Member of Parliament to another saying that he had been to Russia. He had been there about a fortnight, I think; he had not seen any of the great leaders of Russia, and he could not have seen much of the army and the air force. He came back and told us that the Russian army was no good and that Russian factories were in an awful mess. There were a great many who believed it—except Hitler.

There is a reluctance, which I think is a mistake, on the part of people who do not want to know the facts because somehow or other they contravene their theories, to acknowledge the tremendous change that has occurred in Russia, industrially and militarily. In 1914, I had to deal with them in their manufacturing capacity; I had a great deal of business to do with

them. They were as bad as anybody I have ever met. In 1914, their manufacturing capacity was negligible. The money they had was not spent for the purpose for which it was given—just the opposite. Anyone who has read the story knows it well. Their army was a very brave one. They lost 6,000,000 in casualties, largely because they were not well led, in two or three years. They were badly equipped, and their transport was a complete welter. Even then they had a great arsenal, the Putiloff Works. I remember discussing it with the late Monsieur Albert Thomas, the Minister of Munitions for France. He went to Russia, and he told me that it was hopeless there. He had been through those great works, and he said that there was no arsenal in France where the machinery was as good as in those works, but nobody knew how to use it.

What has happened since? Since then, mostly under American and German instruction, they have had men trained. Their educational system has been completely revolutionised. Each year they turn out from the Universities 600,000, and of those, 120,000 are boys who have been trained scientifically and technically. Their industrial output is ninefold what it was in 1914. The same thing applies in other fields. They have the finest air force in the world, they have an extraordinarily powerful tank force. And they are offering to place all this at the disposal of the Allies provided they are treated on equal terms. That is all they are asking. Why is not that done? You distrust them. Have they no ground for distrusting us? Every pact we have entered into since 1931 to deal with a situation like this, we have broken. We have given in to the dictators in every incident—Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czecho-Slovakia, Spain, Albania. We have given in, and we would give in now were it not that public opinion is roused at last. But if they say, "Let us put these distrusts on one side, let us work together," why should not it be done? Why this wavering? Why these delays? What they say is that they will come in on the same terms as France. If France is attacked on the Southern frontier, the South-Eastern frontier, the Western frontier, we defend her.

Russia is only asking for exactly the same terms. She will come in whole-heartedly, with the whole of her tremendous force, provided we say that France, ourselves and Russia shall be in on exactly the same terms. Let there be no distinction between one and the other—no insulting distinction. What is the good of this political snobbery that only wants to help a proletariat Government provided you do not rub shoulders with it? The issues are too tremendous for that. To say simply she must come in with a guarantee here and must send her troops there—that is not a full and whole-hearted alliance. Why do we not make up our mind, and make it up without any loss of time, that we shall come to the same terms with Russia as we do with France? If you do that then I should say—though it is a dangerous thing to predict in a world like this—that the chances against war would go up. If they are fifty-fifty now, I should put it at ten to one against war, if the Government have got the courage to face criticism, whether it comes from their own side or elsewhere, and the French Government the same. I know what is happening. I know what happened in France when we were dealing with Czecho-Slovakia. The Government there hinted to their supporters, "We would not have done this had it not been for Britain". We are getting the same thing here. We are getting the same thing in the newspapers. It is being hinted, we would be prepared to do it, if it were not for France. Let us take a resolve, a clear one, and, above all, a prompt one, to deal with the situation.

BOMBAY AGRICULTURAL DEBTORS RELIEF BILL.

DECCAN SABHA'S REPRESENTATION.

THE class of agriculturists proposed to be relieved of debt by this Bill is that of cultivating owners. It is right to exclude rent-receivers; and it would not be practicable to include tenants-at-will and agricultural labourers in the proposed scheme. But the exclusion of tenants upon whom the conferment of a protected status is in contemplation would not be justified. Perhaps the class of protected tenants is meant to be covered by "permanent tenants" referred to in clause 2 (7) (c); but if not, it ought to be brought within the scope of the Bill. The upper limit placed on the amount of individual debts in respect of which relief will be afforded, viz. Rs. 15,000, is reasonable; but there should be no lower limit as it would deny relief to a large number of agriculturists who need it. The upper limit should, however, apply to total debts and not merely to secured debts, as provided for in clause 23.

The method of giving relief that the Bill follows is that of compulsory adjustment of debts. Debt adjustment is compulsory only in so far as creditors are concerned. For debtors it is not compulsory, since if the latter refuse to become members of resource societies they can escape the coercive processes allowed in the recovery of adjusted debts. It is possible that some debtors would prefer leaving their debts unadjusted to having instalments of even their scaled down debts realised as arrears of land revenue. And such debtors it would be well to leave alone.

The relief that the debtors stand to gain, in the first instance, is that, in determining the debts payable by them, the debts will be lowered. An account will be taken separately of principal and interest by going into the previous history of the debt and calculating interest at the rate of 6 per cent. simple, if the contractual rate is greater. The rate of interest is fair and is calculated to bring much relief to the debtors without doing injury to the real interests of the creditors. It is usual to allow a higher rate of interest in the case of unsecured debts; but, in view of the fact that the Bill makes provision for the recovery of unsecured as well as secured debts, no serious objection can be taken to a uniform rate. It is satisfactory to note that the Bill provides for the application of the *damdupat* rule in the determination of the debt due, and that this rule applies to paid as well as to unpaid interest. In the Bihar Moneylenders Act this form of the law of *damdupat* is provided for, and so in the Assam and Bengal Moneylenders Act Amendment Bills and also in the U. P. Agriculturists and Workers Debt Redemption Bill. Such a provision in the present Bill is justifiable.

After the debt payable by a debtor is thus determined, it is scaled down to his paying capacity. At this stage he will obtain further relief provided the

Act is administered in the proper way. The paying capacity will be determined with reference to a certain mechanical formula; it will be fixed at eighty per cent. of the value of the aggregate property of the debtor. There is clearly a disadvantage in determining the paying capacity in relation to the debtor's capital assets instead of in relation to his annual income. But the first method seems to be proposed in order that the work of debt redemption may be carried on expeditiously all over the Province under simple rules. However, the all-important factor of income will have to be kept in view by the Debt Adjustment Board while making the award. It is presumed that the normal method that would be followed in arranging for repayment of debt would be to order payment in twenty-five annual instalments at the outside, and that sale of property even in part would be exceptional. The Bill itself provides in clause 60 for the sale of the debtor's property only when such sale is in his interest. It would be the duty of the Board, therefore, so to fix instalments as would be well within the capacity of the debtor to pay from his income, and in doing so the paying capacity determined at a percentage of the value of the property would not be of much help. One thing that must be definitely provided for in the Bill is that, while paying his debt, the debtor will be left with sufficient income to maintain himself and his family. Not only this, but he should be placed in a position to pay off any loans that he may have to borrow from a resource society for his current needs. If the instalments are fixed without making due allowance for these minimum requirements, the result will be that the debtor would be compelled to make defaults and would consequently have to be declared an insolvent under clause 62 (2).

In this connection the scheme of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act, 1935, may be commended to the notice of Government. The ordinary method in Bengal is for the Debt Settlement Board to settle the debt by voluntary conciliation; but when the Board finds that the debt thus settled is such that the debtor cannot repay it within twenty years, it has power to declare the debtor to be insolvent. And if it does so, it may reduce his debts to such amounts as it considers that he can pay within a period not exceeding twenty years, in which case "the sum to be paid in each year shall be fixed by the Board at an amount which, in its estimation, is likely, in a year of normal harvest, to leave to the insolvent, as provision towards his maintenance, one-half of the surplus which remains from the value of the produce of his land after paying to the landlord the current rent due for such land." And in those cases in which the Board thinks it undesirable to arrange for the payment of an insolvent's debts from his surplus produce, it may direct that his property shall be sold and the proceeds utilised towards the payment of his debts, in which case "it shall set aside, as provision towards his maintenance, not more than one-third of the land held by

him in his direct possession exclusive of the land occupied by his dwelling house : provided that, even if he holds less than three acres of land in his direct possession, the Board shall thus set aside not less than one acre of land so held exclusive of the land occupied by his dwelling house." A similar provision is to be found in the Bihar Moneylenders Act, and it is not confined to insolvents, but extends to all agricultural debtors. It is to the effect that a minimum of an acre and a maximum of one-third of the total area of the judgment-debtor's land should be exempt from attachment or sale in execution of a decree. The scope of the provision should be enlarged in the Bill under consideration and it should be enacted that, in fixing the instalments payable by an agriculturist debtor, the Board shall see that as much income is left to him as is required for the maintenance of himself and his family.

Provision is made in the Bill in clause 67, based upon section 29 of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act, for exempting such property of the insolvent as is necessary for his support or residence from the insolvent's property which the Collector can take into his possession for a maximum period of seven years for management and for paying off the creditors. But this provision in the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act has remained a dead letter and may prove even more so in the case of the present Bill. In the new clause added, however, i. e. clause 68, which provides for the insolvent's property being placed in the possession of the creditors for a period not exceeding fifteen years for recovery and discharge of his debt, no such exemption is made. From the heading to this clause which reads " Possession by the creditor of debtor's property not required for his support", it would appear that the exemption of a minimum amount of property has been omitted from the body of the clause through oversight. The omission should be supplied.

The Bill contemplates that Government would make arrangements, as the statement of objects and reasons has it, for current crop finance of those debtors who are relieved of their prior debts through co-operative societies or bodies or associations approved by Government. It is calculated that the finance required for the current needs of agriculture alone exceed Rs. 30 crores, and the needs of agriculturists whose debts are within the limit laid down in the Bill will be considerable. It may be assumed that Government has satisfied itself that arrangements can in fact be made to satisfy these needs. The co-operative societies which are to provide finance will have to be multi-purpose societies arranging for the marketing of produce, etc. For this purpose a large administrative machinery would be required, and of the feasibility of this also Government may be presumed to have satisfied itself. Anyhow no scheme of debt redemption on a large scale will be successful unless it is accompanied by a scheme also

for the provision of finance for current requirements. The reduction of debts that would follow on putting the Act into execution will be so great as to cause a very severe restriction of credit of agriculturists, and they would find it almost impossible to borrow from their former creditors. Provision of current finance in other ways is thus a pre-requisite of the success of any scheme for debt adjustment such as the Bill embodies. It is well that the Bill has kept this aspect of the question, viz. the creation of a new machinery of rural credit, prominently in view.

Here only the main features of the Bill are considered. If the few changes that have been suggested above are introduced, the Bill will be a really bold and beneficial measure and will give much relief to the sorely-trying peasantry.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

- THE PAPACY IN POLITICS TO-DAY. By JOSEPH MCCABE (Watts.) 1939. 20cm. 196p. 1/-
- GORAKHNATH AND THE KANPHATA. By GEORGE W. BRIGGS. (Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, Calcutta.) 1938. 18cm. 380p. Rs. 4-8.
- K. T. PAUL, CHRISTIAN LEADER. By H. A. POPLEY. (Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, Calcutta.) 1938. 18cm. 254p. Cloth Rs. 2-4 and Paper Rs. 1-8.
- SELF-RESTRAINT VERSUS SELF-INDULGENCE. Part II. By M. K. GANDHI. (Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad.) 1939. 21cm. 147p. Re. 1.
- THE MAHAR FOLK. By ALEXANDER ROBERTSON. (Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, Calcutta.) 1938. 18cm. Cloth Rs. 3 and Paper Rs. 2.
- THE CRISIS AND THE CHRISTIAN. By NATHANIEL MICKLEM. (Student Christian Movement Press, London obtainable in India for the Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, Calcutta.) 1938. 18cm. 60p. 1/-
- THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF COMMUNISM. By R. PALME DUTT. (The Hogarth Press.) 1938. 18cm. 44p. 1/-
- INDIAN EDUCATION IN ANCIENT AND LATER TIMES An Inquiry into its Origin, Development and Ideals By F. E. KEAY. (Oxford University Press.) 1938. 18cm. 204p. Rs. 5.

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