

# THE Servant of India

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

OUR heartiest congratulations to the Government and people of the Punjab on the appointment of Lala Harkishenlal as Minister. One of the most outstanding personalities of the Punjab, he is a gifted financier, whose schemes for the industrial development of his province would have borne excellent fruit, had not the jealousy and malice of his Anglo-Indian rivals found strong support in the arch-bureaucrat of that unfortunate province. One has only to recall that his People's Bank which was ordered to be wound up met its liabilities fully and left a little surplus. No one in the Punjab suffered more wrongs at the hands of the O'Dwyer Government than he did; a martial law tribunal even convicted him of waging war against His Majesty! If any person may be excused for being bitter against the British Government, it is he. Yet he refused to be led away by the non-co-operation movement and risking much unpopularity sought election to the Reformed council. With a magnanimity worthy of him he put away his personal feelings and as an old congressman recognised the scope which the new councils offered for the service of his motherland. His appointment as Minister is about the best event in Sir Edward Maclagan's programme for the restoration of peace in the Punjab. It is significant that at the same time Mr. Thompson, Sir Michael O'Dwyer's Chief Secretary, is going out of the province as chairman of the railway police committee.

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“ONLY those who prefer to break stones to learning in institutions dominated by a wicked Gov-

ernment will be the pioneers of India's freedom.” This is Mr. Gandhi's reply to a young enquirer who voiced the difficulty of a section of students, who, while fully believing in non-co-operation, did not know what to do, if their parents refused to support them. We agree that the soldiers of freedom should be prepared to do stone-breaking and what is even harder and ordinarily considered more derogatory work. But it is important that before engaging in a war which is fraught with serious consequences to the country, Mr. Gandhi should assure himself of the stamina and morale of his army. As a test we would suggest that he should put some of his spirited recruits—those who have spurned the State-aided or State-controlled 'slave factories'—to stone-breaking or spinning and weaving rather than to propaganda work at the expense of the Khilafat Committees. If a sufficient number stand the test, it will be an agreeable surprise to many parents as to the capacity of their sons and they too may be expected to join the forces of non-co-operation.

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THE Hon'ble Mr. Lalubhai Samaldas's proposal for “the immediate establishment of a separate department of Government to watch and safeguard the rights and interests of Indians in overseas dominions and colonies” will, we hope, secure the hearty support of his colleagues in the Council of State. This work is now done by the Commerce member of Council who has several other important things on hand and naturally claims only a part of his attention and time. This is unsatisfactory. The difficulties of our countrymen overseas are being added to every day and it is essential that the Government of India should possess a first-hand knowledge of the disabilities and indignities under which they have to labour in the different colonies. As it is, the Government has to depend for information about these things either on the Government of the colony concerned or on responsible non-officials who have acquainted themselves by personal visits with the Indian problem as it exists in those countries. This places the Government in a clearly disadvantageous position; for while the information derived from the latter source is as a rule reliable, that from the former is bound to be coloured by an anti-Indian bias. The solution seems to be that when the new department comes into being, it must send out some of its officers to study the Indian problem on the spot

and must maintain in colonies in which Indians have settled in large numbers permanent official agencies whose business should be to keep the Government in India closely in touch with the events there as they affect Indians. It is the absence of such an agency in Fiji, for instance, which is responsible for the withholding of real facts connected with the Indian riots of February last from the Indian public and also, to some extent, for the unreasonable attitude of the Government of India towards the non-official demand for an enquiry into their causes and the methods adopted to suppress them. The new department, if it sets about the business in the right spirit, can do much to relieve the anxiety of the public with regard to their fellow-countrymen in the colonies.

LORD READING'S appointment as India's next Viceroy betokens a proper appreciation on the part of Great Britain of the need of the hour. The Indian situation is one of extreme delicacy at the present moment and the faith of the people in the sense of justice and fairplay of the British people has never stood so low. The injustice in the matter of the Punjab, England's failure to redeem her promise in respect of Smyrna and Thrace, the iniquitous currency policy of the Government, the treatment of Indians in the colonies and the present high cost of living are some of the potent causes of the unrest which is so much in evidence everywhere. Oppressed by a feeling of utter helplessness, the people—we mean those who are in the Congress—have declared in no uncertain voice for non-co-operation. We make no doubt that the movement is politically unwise and suicidal; but it is equally clear that it will deal a heavy blow to the moral prestige of the Government, howsoever feebly it may be conducted. It is only a Viceroy who would command public confidence by reason of his past record and his eminent position in English public life that would be able to avert a crisis. To these qualifications Lord Reading joins a highly judicial frame of mind, which he will doubtless bring to bear on the problems that might come up for solution.

DR. GILBERT SLATER, President of the Indian Economic Conference held at Allahabad during Christmas week criticised the Government of India's currency policy as follows:—

"The Government of India had been dealing with the subject in a manner which appeared to indicate that those who had been responsible for Government's policy were neither students of economics themselves nor had they been in the habit of consulting economists with regard to their action. In the first place it appeared to him that the principle that the economic science had to teach them was that the exchange, if it was permanent, was all right, no matter if it was high or low. All they wanted was a stable exchange. What was deadly to Indian as well as to other interests was that the present exchange should be violently fluctuating. That was the present exchange position in India. The Government set to work by selling Reverse Councils when the ratio of the rupee was disastrously high. That seemed to him to be the great mistake that the Government of India could make. It

appeared to him that it was one of the fundamental principles that if a Government was going to buy rupees, it should buy them at the market price and should not pay a fancy price. As a matter of fact the Government of India had been spending five million sterling for buying rupees. In other words the Government had thrown some five million pounds into the pockets of exchange banks and certain other people quite unnecessarily. So many millions of the taxpayers' money had been wasted and thrown away."

It is to be hoped that the Government will so change their currency policy as to prevent what Dr. Slater characterises as "a waste of the taxpayers' money."

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THE returned soldiers' agitation in New Zealand for more stringent immigration restrictions has resulted in the introduction into the legislature of that colony of an Immigration Restriction Amendment Bill. Though mainly designed to prevent Chinese immigration into New Zealand, its provisions can be set in motion against Indians who might wish to go there for purposes of permanent residence or even for that of a short visit. If it is passed into law in its present form—as is understood to be the case, it will make it impossible for any one other than of British or Irish birth or parentage to claim admission into the Dominion without a permit. The provision requiring a would-be settler or visitor to post his application for a permit from the country of his residence leaves little hope that the application will as a rule be favourably considered. According to the Bill, the discretion to grant or refuse a permit rests with the Minister of Customs, whose decision is to be regarded as final, being unappealable. Power is taken under the Bill to exempt a nation or a people from the permit provisions; but he would be a bold man who would assert that Indians will be so exempted, at any rate in their existing political condition. The provision to invest a single Minister with the "arbitrary power to interfere with the rights and liberties of even British subjects" has occasioned a good deal of adverse comment in England and the *Round Table* goes the length of characterising the Bill as "one of the most arbitrary and reactionary measures ever introduced in a British community."

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MR. N. M. JOSHI of the Servants of India Society, who was recently awarded a C. I. E., has declined the distinction with thanks. In doing so, he has written as follows to the Viceroy:—

"My work lies mainly amongst mill-hands and the backward classes whose confidence would be more easily given to persons whose way of life is not far remote from theirs. Besides the ideal of renunciation and poverty for which our society stands seems to me to be somewhat incompatible with a title which is constantly affixed to one's name. For these reasons I request that I may be pardoned if I am unable to accept the title. It would in ordinary circumstances be superfluous, but in these days of non-co-operation it is well that I add a prayer that the motive which prompts my refusal of this honor be not misunderstood."

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## ECONOMISTS IN CONFERENCE.

BY THE HON'BLE PROF. V. G. KALE.

THE Indian Economic Conference which held its fourth session during Christmas at Allahabad did not attract as much public attention as it deserved. Its proceedings were not reported except in the local press of Allahabad, and its session passed off practically unnoticed as if the work of the Conference was carried on for the amusement of a few academic economists and was not calculated to promote the welfare of the country. Politics have ever a greater fascination for educated people who are inclined to interest themselves actively in the solution of public questions, and at the present juncture in the history of India, political discussions are at a special premium. The winning of *swarajya* in as short a time as possible has now become a passion with a few sincere and devoted albeit impatient and unpractical patriots and it has become a fashion with a very large number to avow that all reforms, political, social and economic, must wait till that supreme end is attained. But even without this preoccupation, few were the educated people who were either interested in the elucidation of economic problems or were competent to discuss them. There has always existed a deplorable dearth of devoted economic students in India. And yet there is no class in the community which does not find its well-being affected by the prevailing economic conditions. Consumers protest against and bewail the high prices of necessities of life and the working classes are discontented with their low wages. Merchants clamour against the exchange policy of Government and people who are anxious to work the Reforms Act successfully so as to bring nearer the day of the establishment of full responsible government, are at a loss to know how to handle the financial situation. But attempts at a systematic study of economic questions are rare and are not encouraged by the attitude of Government which is indifferent to the public demand for economic investigation and action based thereon. Government in India being irresponsible and bureaucratic is self-sufficient and self-satisfied. It resents the interference of economists and politicians alike with matters which, in its opinion, concern only itself as the custodian of the best interests of the dumb and helpless masses of India. Thus the lack of interest exhibited by the bulk of the educated classes, the want of capacity to handle scientifically the complex problems which confront the country and the aloofness amounting, in many cases, to contempt for popular criticism on the part of Government, combine to discourage any effective discussion of economic questions which are so vital to the healthy and rapid development of India.

A ray of hope, however, comes from the deliberate endeavour which is being made by the Indian Economic Association to stimulate economic study and to impress its importance on the

minds of the Government and the public alike. Very naturally, the Association has not yet struck its roots deep and spread its branches. Much of the little strength it possesses is due to adventitious causes which may weaken or disappear at any time. It requires a larger membership, and more funds if it is to accomplish anything tangible. Enlightened people engaged in industry and trade must support the work of the Association and the younger generation among the educated class ought to take greater interest in its self-imposed task. The Nagpur Congress as much as the Madras Liberal Federation found it necessary to pass resolutions on the exchange and currency policy of Government, the latter bestowing its careful attention on the fiscal and the labour problems as well. Whether we win *swarajya* in nine months or in nine years, there is no escape for the country from some of the most knotty economic questions that the world is confronted with. And if our progress as a nation has to be on sound lines, we cannot afford to neglect a careful investigation of economic and social conditions, with a view to discovering efficient remedies for their improvement. In his opening speech as President of the Allahabad session of the Economic Conference, Dr. Gilbert Slater had many suggestive remarks to make in this connection. He showed how difficult but useful was the role which the economist filled and found fault both with the Indian Government and the Indian economists for not having discharged their duty properly during the past few years. He strongly criticised the Government of India for their mishandling of the exchange question and remarked that 'those who had been responsible for Government's policy were neither students of economics themselves nor had they been in the habit of consulting economists with regard to their action.' This is a mild paraphrase of what we have said above regarding the inordinate confidence of Government in their own wisdom and their lofty contempt for the criticism of informed public opinion. The fault which Dr. Slater laid at the door of economists was that 'during recent years they failed to express their views adequately in such a way that the ordinary man could understand and appreciate the economic questions.' This blame may not be quite undeserved; but what chance can economists have of securing a public hearing on any question of importance when their opinions and counsel have been systematically flouted by Government? Economists have cried themselves hoarse over Government's mistaken policy in the matter of finance, trade, industry, exchange and currency and theirs has been a cry in the wilderness. True, they can and must carry on their work of popular education and also of the education of the Government regardless of the prospect of a sympathetic response. The Allahabad Conference discussed a number of topics of first-rate importance and it is hoped that the work of the Indian Economic Association will steadily command greater support and respect.

## THE EAST AFRICAN DESPATCH.

## III.

(Concluded from our last issue.)

ONE point in the Government of India's Despatch needs explanation, owing to those peculiar circumstances in the British Administration of East Africa, which may be overlooked in India itself. The Despatch accepts the retention, for the present, of an official majority on the Legislative Council. This is stated as being necessary in order to safeguard the rights of the native Africans.

It must be remembered, that, while there are only a few thousand British and a few thousand Indians, there are probably more than 4,000,000 African natives. In order to show how necessary it is, that the rights of these Africans should be protected, and amply protected, by Government, I would call attention to the one outstanding fact in East Africa, namely, that for the last twenty years incessant efforts have been made, by the European settlers, to obtain some legal sanction for enforcing their will upon the helpless African natives, in order to drive them out of their 'reserves' and make them work under compulsion, by 'forced labour,' on the large European estates. This demand for 'forced labour' has gradually been pressed to such a point by the European settlers, that even the Government officials themselves have partly given way,—after stoutly resisting the European pressure hitherto,—and only the British Imperial Government at Whitehall now stands between these four million African natives and what may become any moment a form of virtual slavery. The Bishop of Zanzibar has most nobly protested against this; and the whole affair is being taken up in England, with some of the old fervour of an anti-slavery crusade. For the freedom and prosperity of millions of human beings is at stake, and the issue is still doubtful.

To show very plainly the character of the danger of this European menace, I will give an illustration from an Indian estate, where the opposite state of affairs is prevalent. I have myself lived on Mr. Abdul Rasul Alladina Visram's *Shamba*, near to Jinja, in Uganda. The utmost freedom has been given me, while living there, to examine for myself all the conditions; to question the African natives by interpretation; to go in and out among them. I have rarely seen a happier and jollier set of people. They numbered, I believe, over a thousand. The reason for their contentment was, that they were well paid and well fed, and were allowed to keep their own national ways, as much as possible, without interference. They were also never flogged with the *kiboko* (rhinoceros hide whip). Mr. Alladina Visram's manager was a Gujarati. There was not a European on the estate. All sub-managers were Indian. The eagerness everywhere on the part of the African natives themselves, to be given work under Indians, was so great, that, I was told, sometimes hundreds would come and present themselves

to Mr. Alladina Visram's manager beyond the number of workers required. Yet the *Europeans* declared, that they could not get labour without compulsion; and for many years past the Europeans of Uganda have obtained the use of forced labour by Government aid. It must be added that the *kiboko* is frequently used by Europeans and the wages offered are much lower than those given by Mr. Alladina Visram.

My own opinion is, that the Indian members of the Legislative Council, both in East Africa and in Uganda, will usually side with the African natives against the European settlers. But one cannot always be certain of this, especially in technical matters, where intimate knowledge is required; and there are technical points about the treatment of African natives in the 'reserves,' with regard to which the Government officials are certainly at present the best fitted to give advice. I have no doubt at all, in my own mind, that the Indian elected members of council will strengthen Government's hands in their African native policy. I have no doubt also, that, in matters of elementary human justice and equality, the Government officials will side with the Indian members for the protection of Indians against European aggression. Personally, therefore, I cannot see any other alternative at present than to give the Government officials the direct responsibility for the protection of African native interests, and for that purpose to allow them under the new constitution a small working majority. It may be objected, that, according to my own statement, the officials have just given way under pressure on a vital issue. That is true; but I do not think they would have given way, if there had been a strong Indian vote to support them.

It has further to be remembered, that the representative system of Government, as far as the European community is concerned, is only two years old, and, in the case of the Indian community, it has not yet been started. Where the knowledge of administration is necessarily so weak, it is probably best, for a few years at any rate while experience is being gained by the new legislators, to retain the official majority. But I do not, of course, look forward to its permanent retention. As soon as possible, Africans themselves should have their own elected members, and in the long run the African vote should predominate.

I have some further proposals to make which may well come at the end of this article. While the Government of India Despatch did wisely in dealing only with these main questions,—the franchise, race segregation and land restriction—and while any other method of procedure would have led to weakness and confusion, it must be steadily borne in mind, that, as soon as ever these great issues are settled in our favour (as they certainly will be) other points will immediately arise. Some of these will still have to be fought out from India itself. For, it will not be sufficient merely to win the franchise for Indians

and then to leave them alone. This will not be practical, because, for many years to come, the Indian vote will be comparatively weak. It will only grow powerful as the years go on. Then, they can be left to themselves, but not till then.

The most important of these further questions will be to obtain direct places for Indians in the Administration. At present, the whole superior Civil Service is drawn from England. Only very subordinate clerks' posts are open to Indians. The same is true also of the Government Uganda Railway. I came across some scandalous cases of Indians being absolutely blocked in their promotion, as soon as they reached a certain level. One of these scandals was in Kisumu, on the banks of the Lake Victoria Nyanza. An Indian had fulfilled the whole duty of a certain important post to the satisfaction of every one, while the European was on furlough. But he had received as an Indian less than half the substantive pay, while doing this full duty. He could never hope, however long he served, to obtain the post itself, which was reserved for a European. I found everywhere attempts being made, as far as possible, to 'Europeanise' the services, leaving only the poorest-paid subordinate posts for Indians. This is the old 'hewer of wood and drawer of water' policy over again, and it must be vigorously resisted.

I had continually in my mind the question, whether this issue, namely, the demand for a fair proportion of Indians in all the Government Services, should not be made a main issue. But I have a practical objection against over-loading a programme. I have seen how many programmes fall to the ground through being top-heavy. Therefore, I very reluctantly gave this a secondary place.

But, the very moment that we win our three original demands, I would urge very strongly indeed that equality of status requires that the Civil Service and the Railway Service and the Judicial Service and the Municipal Services—that all these Government Services *must* be thrown open to Indians, without any distinction of race or class or creed.

At one time, I was ready to admit (before I had gained my full experience) that the Administration in East Africa should be predominantly British. In a conversation with the Acting Governor of Uganda, on December 23, 1919, I admitted this to him as far as I remember, though I gave him no written statement, and the conversation was informal and non-committal on both sides. But my further experience, up and down Africa from one end to the other, has convinced me, that I was quite wrong in this verbal admission. I feel certain, that the Indian administrator would be successful in his dealings with the African natives. I believe now very strongly indeed, that the Indian, who has had the highest type of education and training, would be better understood and better appreciated by the African native than many of the present European administrators. What is more, I am certain that the Indians as a

whole will not receive their true position in African society, until an equal share in the actual Administration of East Africa is given to them, not as a concession or as a privilege, but as a right.

In this connection, I cannot emphasise too much the importance of maintaining a high standard of Indian men and women in East Africa, and not allowing our slum population to drift across the sea from Bombay to Mombasa and Nairobi. This is not fair to the Africans themselves, in their newly developing country, and it gives a bad name to Indians. When once the equal status of free citizens has been acknowledged and accepted, efforts should be made to *direct* the emigration. One form of such direction would be the opening up of suitable posts in the different Services of East Africa.

C. F. ANDREWS.

#### THE U. P. VILLAGE PANCHAYAT ACT.

THOSE who may be under the impression that in passing their Village Panchayat Bill into law, the Government of the United Provinces were merely reviving the old institution will find that such a belief has no foundation in fact. For, in introducing the measure, Mr. Keane, the member-in-charge, took particular care to point out that it was not as if they were going to build on old foundations. It was a case of beginning from the beginning. Their enquiries had showed them no traces of any indigenous panchayats possessing any definite powers with regard to the management of village affairs and it would be wrong to suppose that the institutions that would come into being as a result of this Act have anything to do with the old ones of the same name. Under the circumstances the expectation that the Act would reproduce all, or at any rate, most of the features of the old institution is not justified.

Perhaps the most important duties associated in the public mind with the institution of panchayats relate to the trial of petty civil and criminal cases. Such a power vested in panchayats has generally the effect of securing for the villagers cheap justice and of bringing it to their very doors. It promotes solidarity among the people of the village and ensures the corporate character of village life. A village panchayat, therefore, to be a real living factor in village life must be invested with reasonable judicial powers and it is a matter for satisfaction that the U. P. Act provides for the bestowal of such powers on the new bodies. It goes further and ensures exclusive jurisdiction for them in their own areas, no court taking cognizance of any suit which is triable under the Act by a panchayat. The ignorant are secured against avoidable harassment on the part of their enemies by the provision of such safeguards as the prohibition to inflict under any circumstances a sentence of imprisonment. The provision to allow no parties to be represented by lawyers will result in the prevention of an unnecessary waste of their money by litigants and will ensure equal opportunities of defence for all alike. The Act

does not preclude the possibility of some cases being sent to the Collector. It is in reference to some of these that the prohibition against lawyers appearing even before 'any other court' is likely to cause hardship. Lala Sukhbir Singh's efforts to induce the Government to amend the Bill so as to permit the appearance of lawyers at courts other than panchayats proved unavailing.

But while this part of the Act may on the whole be regarded as satisfactory, we are afraid we cannot speak equally approvingly as regards the other provisions. It is a case of the Government taking away with one hand what they have given with the other; for a perusal of the several provisions reveals the fact that far from making these bodies really elective, they have left too much to the discretion of the Collector. He may establish a panchayat whenever and wherever he likes; he may nominate as members whomsoever he likes from the village; and even the Sarpanch is to be nominated by him! Our experience of the use of such powers of nomination by district and other officers in the past is far from hopeful. In municipalities, in district and taluka local boards and even in legislative councils, they have in the majority of cases nominated only such people as would be subservient to them. It is no wonder therefore that these provisions aroused considerable opposition in non-official circles. This found vent in the amendment which Pandit Gokaran Nath Misra, who was not a member of the Select Committee, moved in the Council. It recommended the substitution of election for the nomination of the members of panchayats; but met with the fate which is generally reserved for all non-official attempts at introducing improvements in official measures. This amendment was objected to on the ground that if the new bodies enjoying judicial powers were made elective, it would be throwing open judicial appointments to election—a thing which could find no parallel even in the most advanced countries. The analogy of Bengal where two-thirds of the panches are elected could not help the advocates of election; for there the Government reserved to itself the power to nominate two or more panches to exercise these powers. Election as a means of securing as panches people who enjoyed the confidence of the village folk having been thus ruled out, the utmost that could be got out of the Government was an assurance, which will be embodied in the rules to be framed under the Act in this behalf, to the effect that the Collector will be asked to make these nominations after ascertaining local opinion; and for this the people of U. P. have to be thankful to Mr. Chintamani. It may in passing be noted that even in the Select Committee itself there was no lack of effort on the part of non-officials to persuade Government to yield to the popular demand for elective panchayats; but the startling fact is recorded in the proceedings that the sense of the Committee was against the proposal! The Committee consisted of

an equal number of Europeans and Indians. It would be interesting to know who were the Indians that were opposed to it.

It will thus be seen that wide discretionary powers in regard to the constitution of panchayats are left in the hands of the Collector. Another of Pandit Gokaran Nath Misra's amendments, if carried, would have resulted in fettering his discretion only to this extent that he would have been compelled to start panchayats at least in such villages or village groups as had a recognised school within their boundaries. But the Government was averse to limit the powers of their district officers even to this extent.

A comparison of the main provisions of this Act with those of the Bombay one is instructive. In Bombay not only has nomination been discarded and panchayats made wholly elective; but the franchise has been so far widened as to entitle every adult male to a vote. It is true that the Bombay Act does not contemplate the exercise by village bodies of any judicial powers; but there is nothing in the Act which would seem to rule out such a proposal, should the reformed Government feel disposed to put it forward.

The duties of the U. P. panchayats as defined in the Act will be to arrange for the 'improvement of education, public health and the supply of drinking water.' They will also have to look after the 'maintenance of village tracts and works of public utility.' Lala Sukhbir Singh sought by means of an amendment to have their scope so widened as to include within their sphere of action 'the supervision of pounds and of the duties of Chaukidars.' It cannot be said that this would have greatly added to the functions of these bodies. On the contrary the advantages of bringing the village chaukidars under popular control were many and should have weighed with the Government. It is to be regretted that this proposal was also defeated.

But disfigured as the Act is with several defects and lacking in real popular control as the panchayats in U. P. are likely to be, it cannot be doubted for a moment that they will afford a very desirable training ground in the art of self-government for the people in rural areas. It is a pity that the new bodies are not to enjoy any powers of taxation. The Act makes them depend for their resources on the charities of local bodies and the local Government in addition to such income as judicial fees and fines might yield. This will not go a long way in enabling them to efficiently discharge their duties. With the development of a sense of self-respect among the villagers, however, this arrangement is sure to cause dissatisfaction among them and will have to be modified before long. For the Ministers under the Reforms Act will have to find money for so many different schemes of public welfare that it is doubtful if even with the best of intentions in the world they will be able in the immediate future to help them by means of

financial subventions on a liberal scale. Nor may it be practicable for them, especially in the present temper of the public, to have recourse to fresh taxation on a considerable scale. But it is not from this point of view alone that the withholding of taxation powers from these bodies is to be deplored. The granting of such powers to them would have quickened real public interest in them and would have developed a sense of responsibility among the people much sooner than it would now do.

Even as it is, the Act deserves to be welcomed and worked with a view to deriving the greatest possible benefit from it. On the side of the Government the responsibility for its administration will rest with the Indian Minister and there is every reason to hope that in U. P. everything possible will be done to make it a success. In this connection we would like to lay particular emphasis on a suggestion made by Mr. Chintamani on the occasion of the third reading of the Bill—a suggestion the late Mr. Gokhale had originally made before the Decentralisation Commission and one which has been since put into effect in Madras. The suggestion is this that an officer somewhat on the lines of the registrar of co-operative societies should be appointed, whose business should be to select suitable areas for the establishment of these bodies. This officer should go round in a missionary spirit and do everything to popularise the scheme of the Act. We have no doubt such an officer working under the direct supervision of a man like Pandit Jagat Narayan will be able to help in bringing home the benefits of these bodies to the people.

A DEMOCRAT.

### A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, DECEMBER 22.

#### THE EAST AFRICAN INDIAN SITUATION.

The Indians Overseas Association has been very busy in a campaign on behalf of the East African Indian settlers. It was known, of course, that the Government of India's despatch had been received at the India Office, the fact having been elicited in question and answer in the House of Commons. It was assumed that the despatch would prove to be the basis of energetic representations on the whole question to the Cabinet. It is not, I think, sufficiently realised that the policy announced by Lord Milner, last July, is his policy alone and not that of the Cabinet. So far, the Imperial Government have not expressed any opinion in a matter that has, until now, been the subject of dispute between two of the great Departments of State. But that condition of affairs could not, of course, last, especially in the light of what was practically the challenge of the Government of India, and the Cabinet cannot now long delay at least a provisional decision, which should be of far-reaching importance. It is whispered that among those who appreciate the Indian point of view to the full is Mr. Winston Churchill,

whose tribute to the Indian settlers, in his book, "My African Journey," was a very striking one. It is rumoured that certain Members of Parliament, who are well known for the sympathetic interest that they take in the question, have been trying to secure a hearing from the Prime Minister, and that they have not been altogether unsuccessful in their attempts. It is certain that the matter will not be allowed to rest, and I shall not be surprised if the conclusions arrived at by the Cabinet give a great deal of encouragement to those who are looking for a satisfactory settlement of the question from the Indian point of view, though a complete settlement may not be immediately feasible.

#### REPORT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMISSION.

I learn also that the South African Commission is not expected to report this side of the New Year. Now that the Union is faced with an election that may, in its results, affect the whole after history of the country, it is, I imagine, very unlikely that General Smuts will allow the report to become public until after the elections, for if it be in any degree favourable to the Indian community, as, I am reliably informed, is not unlikely, the Nationalists, under General Herzog will undoubtedly use it as a whip to flog into activity very ugly racial and party passions against General Smuts and his new South African party. So we may have to wait for some time still, and possess our souls with as much patience as the circumstances allow.

#### NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT.

There is yet one other matter of inter-Imperial importance of which it is necessary to take notice. It is uncertain whether the New Zealand Immigration Restriction Act, that has just been passed in that Dominion, differentiates in terms against His Majesty's Indian subjects. The whole question appears to be a matter of legal interpretation. But, I believe, that the Dominion Government has given the Imperial Government certain assurances regarding the effect of the new law in certain matters of detail. In the first place, I understand that it is not the intention of the Colonial Government to issue Orders in Council differentiating in favour of any race by the removal of immigration disabilities on a wholesale scale on a racial basis. The form of permit to be prescribed by the regulations under the Act will define no distinction, whether of nation or colour. Lastly, it is not intended to prevent the entry into New Zealand of the wives and families of Indians already domiciled, and it is believed that the New Zealand Government have repeated their statement on the subject, dealt with in the Governor-General's despatch of November 6, 1918, in reply to an inquiry of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in pursuance of the resolutions passed at the Imperial War Conference of 1917. To that extent therefore, the situation is reassuring. But it does not go all the way, and we must await further information on crucial points.

## THE IRISH SITUATION.

It is difficult to say anything at all definite about the position in Ireland. There is no doubt that public opinion in this country was becoming gravely exercised about the murders and reprisals there. It was realised by sane people in both countries that to continue along these lines would not merely bring about a settlement, but would result in chaos and anarchy, thereby indefinitely postponing any settlement and breeding hatred and discord that would still further separate the two peoples almost beyond all hope of reconciliation. On the other hand, the majority of the British people were strong supporters of Mr. Lloyd George's Irish policy, and the pro-Ireland meeting addressed recently at the Albert Hall by Mr. Asquith was not truly representative of the feelings of the bulk of the electors. Most Britishers feel a strong sense of resentment against the Irish people. They have very little historical sense, for the most part, and they cannot, therefore, appreciate the Irish point of view. It is this lack of imagination on our part that often leads to acts of unwitting cruelty and injustice. But it is useless to philosophise on matters about which people feel very strongly and it is the wisdom of statesmanship to realise facts, however unpalatable they may be. Some of the facts to be reckoned with, from the British side, are that the Irish were not conscripted during the War; that Nationalist Ireland did not supply its fair quota to the Allied armies that were fighting a common enemy; that whilst the British people were being increasingly severely rationed, the Irish had food in plenty; that whilst the British worker was at the front and British industries closed down or converted to war-industries, the Irish workers were engaged in earning a peaceful livelihood beyond the risk of danger, and the Irish industries were prospering immensely; and, finally, that at the very time that Britain was at death grips with the enemy, certain elements in Ireland were seeking to betray Britain to that enemy and even engaged in active rebellion, which held up in Ireland a number of troops badly wanted on the Western Front at a critical period of the War. These things rankle in the minds of the average Britisher, and it is hard to convince him of the validity of historical causes of Irish lukewarmness or to appreciate the secret assassination of devoted servants of the Crown engaged in a highly unpleasant duty, many of them, indeed, being themselves Irish and Catholic. We have to reckon with these strong prejudices on all sides of this apparently interminable controversy. It was not unnatural, therefore, that the Prime Minister, determined to make one more attempt to find a solution, should have separated his policy into two interdependent parts—conciliation and repression. He holds out the olive branch of peace with one hand, and with the other the sword of martial law, in an attempt to repress the murderous gang that is outraging all honest people's feelings and estranging sentiment from Ireland. At the same time, the

horrible reprisals taken by the police forces of the Crown in Ireland have shocked an increasing number of people here, and it is significant, after the burning of the central part of the city of Cork, attributed by local opinion to the "Black and Tans", with what truth we may see when the examination of the military tribunal has been made and its report published, that the very first proclamation under Martial Law was an order announcing the death penalty for offences against the person or property of private citizens, and the "Black and Tans" have been removed from Cork and replaced by the regular military forces of the Crown. It may seem strange that one of the principal intermediaries between the Sinn Féin organization and the Cabinet is a very well-known American journalist. He has undoubtedly rendered very valuable services to the cause of Anglo-Irish peace and Anglo-American friendship. The Christmas season comes upon us with the hope that the Government of Ireland Bill, which will almost immediately become law, will be made the basis of negotiations for a permanent peace, and that it will later be modified in such a way as to reunite these two countries and the two great divisions of the Irish people.

## INDIAN AFFAIRS IN ENGLAND.

There is very little in the way of Indian news to retail. The Conference of Labour organizations on the subject of India, organized under the auspices of the British Committee has come and gone. It has done a certain amount of good in spreading news of India among the workers of this country, but I very much doubt whether any substantial advantage will accrue to India in consequence. On general principles Labour requires no conversion, though it was a pity that in a sense the Conference passed a vote of censure upon the Labour Party which has deprecated non-co-operation. I doubt very much whether Colonel Wedgwood and Mr. Spoor will change their views as a result of the resolution passed by the Conference. It seems rather ridiculous of an irresponsible, casual, and by no means representative gathering such as this was should, in this irresponsible manner, have sought to encourage a movement which they cannot have studied and from whose consequences they will be immune. There was, I am glad to say, a little plain speaking from one or two of the orators on the subject of the attitude of Labour as a whole and of individual British workers in India when it comes to a conflict of interests. There is little doubt that, in such cases, there is little to choose, from the Indian point of view, between British Labour and British Capital. The unfortunate feature of the work of the British Committee is that it persistently ignores the fact that the Labour Party has very little chance of being returned to power for many years to come, and that, meanwhile, what India wants is an immediate change of attitude on the part of the bureaucracy. One would have thought that policy would have suggested the desirability of making a



reasoned appeal to those classes of people in this country who maintain the present Government in office and will install the next one.

"SQUANDERMANIA" CAMPAIGN.

At the present time there is in most of the papers a "squandermania" campaign. It is being rubbed into the minds of the tax-payer in this country that his taxes are far too high and that the State funds are being wasted in extravagance. It is desirable that this phenomenon should be properly appreciated in India. This country is relatively a rich one, though there is an increasing amount of unemployment arising as one of the most natural by-products of the War. Yet the British people, highly developed politically as they are, and enjoying the advantages of a pretty democratic constitution, feel the necessity of keeping the Government under constant and most careful watch in regard to the expenditure of public monies. Criticism is rife and expected. That it is equally necessary, even though often badly directed, is evident. But if this is the case here, how much more is it necessary in the case of a poor country like India, which ought to insist upon the most careful and economical expenditure of the country's funds. I suggest this as a theme for the Indian press to write upon *ad nauseam*. The people of India, I venture to think, cannot be too insistent upon asking for an account of the stewardship of their monies, expended both in India itself and elsewhere, ostensibly on her behalf.

DR. MANN ON INDIAN TEMPERANCE.

Dr. Harold Mann, the other day at Lord and Lady Olwyd's, said some pungent things on the state of the temperance movement and its prospects in India. He thought that the problem was one of increasing difficulty because of the British people themselves, very largely. It was essential to send to India as Viceroys and Governors men, who were committed to the highest temperance principles. Temperance societies in India had not been a very pronounced success principally because, with Indians, it was preaching to the converted. The advisory committee in Bombay he regarded as pure camouflage. The greatest problem of all for the moment was the financial difficulty, which held up local option. He would not be a party to any substantial addition to the financial burdens of the peasantry. He insisted that in any solution of the problem Europeans must be prepared to give up their own drinking of liquor in the interests of the country. Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson added that the financial difficulty was much exaggerated, as the cost of the liquor revenue far exceeded the revenue itself.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE CONGRESS CREED—AN ALTERNATIVE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA

SIR,— Despite protests from several quarters, the Congress has taken the extraordinary step of changing its creed; and it will henceforth work for the attainment of *swaraj* by all

legitimate and peaceful means. What kind of *swaraj* the Congress wants to see established in this country has not been made clear in the new creed and the rejection of the amendment which sought to put the word 'democratic' before *swaraj* leaves one in doubt as to whether it is real democracy that the Congress as at present constituted is aiming at. Else why should it have fought shy of that word, whose addition would have, if anything, cleared up the position? Whether the *swaraj* that the Congress stands for is going to be within or without the British Empire is also a matter of doubt. But on this point Mr. Gandhi has made his position quite clear. He does not desire a severance of the British connexion for its own sake. His one anxiety in life is that Indian life should be respected as much as European, or, to be more precise, British life, and that Indians should be the absolute equals of their British fellow-subjects in all respects. If he could gain his object by remaining within the Empire, he would have no objection to India remaining a part of the Empire. In short, he wants Indians to be in their country what Britons are in theirs—an ideal, by the way, which the late Mr. Gokhale had enunciated on many occasions. In this case, Mr. Gandhi would have achieved his object by merely demanding for India full Dominion status. The advantage in using this phraseology is that it is more intelligible to the people from whom we have to obtain *swaraj* and that it accurately sets forth our demand. There need be no doubt in the mind of anybody as to what we want when we ask for full Dominion status. According to a writer in the *Nation*, it implies a position of absolute equality with England, securing to the Dominions a voice in the determination even of her foreign policy and in that of such questions as the making of war and peace. It also confers on them complete legislative autonomy, "the doctrine that the British Parliament was the sovereign legislative power for the Empire no longer holding good." The British Government on their part have evidently seen the necessity of effecting a change in their constitutional relations with the Dominions; for on July 9, 1919, we find Lord Milner speaking as follows:—"The only possibility of a continuance of the British Empire is on a basis of absolute out-and-out equal partnership between the United Kingdom and the Dominions. I say that without any kind of reservation." On June 17, 1920, he accepted the right of the Dominions to legislate for themselves without any kind of interference by the British Parliament in the following words:—"There is no kind of authority which in practice (whatever may be the theory of the Constitution) the Parliament and the people of the United Kingdom claim any longer to exercise over the Parliaments and peoples of the self-governing Dominions. We frankly accept the position that we are partner nations of equal status."

In respect of foreign affairs, the Dominions have built up new conventions, which the writer in question describes as "exceedingly important." To quote his words, "These conventions are: First, that in respect of what we may call 'group' matters (that is, vital questions of foreign policy in which formal action by the Crown involves each State of the group, such as a declaration of war, the ratification of a treaty, etc.) the Crown shall not take action unless advised thereto by each responsible Government of the group of States. This convention has been formulated by the Dominion Governments, accepted by the British Parliament, and put into operation on a number of occasions. As will be seen, the convention implies unanimity on group questions. 'There is no power in the Constitution as it exists,' Lord Milner said in his speech just quoted, 'to impose the will of the majority upon one dissentient or recalcitrant member. If they are not agreed, common action is not possible.'"

"The second convention", he proceeds, "is that in respect of 'National' questions of foreign policy (e. g. commercial treaties, immigration, merchant shipping, the appointment of diplomatic agents) the Crown shall set in motion on behalf of the Dominions the sovereign powers vested in it, on the advice and responsibility of the Government of the particular Dominion concerned."

If Dominion status means all this, is it an unworthy ideal for India to work for? Of course, it is needless to point

out that the old creed which defined the goal of the Congress as the attainment of self-government on the lines of the self-governing dominions of the British Empire, was wide enough to enable the Congress to secure for the people of this country absolute equality of treatment with the people of Great Britain.

POLITICUS.

## SELECTIONS.

### MR. SASTRI ON RACIAL DISTINCTIONS.

THE Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri moved the following resolution at the National Liberal Federation of India held at Madras during Christmas week :—

That, in the opinion of the Federation, the inauguration of the new regime conferring a measure of self-government on the people of India must be signalled by a comprehensive measure abolishing all distinctions in law based merely on the race of the individual and urges, in particular, that the provisions in the criminal law of India conferring upon Europeans and Americans certain special privileges and rights must be repealed at an early date.

In doing so, he said : The first part of the resolution urges that as we are to be declared masters in our own house in a few weeks' time, it is right and appropriate that everything in this country should be so ordered as if we were really masters in our house and that other people should live here on terms only of equality with us, not certainly on terms of any special privilege or right as compared with masters in their own house. If we are going to have responsible Government in our country and the laws are to be made by us, it would be an absolute incongruity if all those laws were not at once removed from the statute book which declared expressly that we, the law-makers of this country, were to be inferiors to any body of people from outside. Last time when we were up at Simla I gave notice of a resolution similar to this to be moved in the Imperial Legislative Council. We all knew at the time that it would be impossible for the Government merely upon notice of a resolution to bring in a law for the purpose of effecting our wish. We also knew that even if our resolution were at that time accepted, it would take perhaps six months or a year to give effect to the resolution and it could not have been carried into effect except in the new regime. Our object however in bringing forward this measure in the last days of the bureaucratic Government was to give the bureaucracy an opportunity while yet they had unmitigated power to remedy these wrongs. As an earnest of their desire to invest with reality the half arrangements to be made for responsible Government, we invited them to declare by acceptance of our resolution, that they were really willing that the coming Reform Act should be an Act conferring self-Government upon us, and to prove that, they could do nothing better than say : 'we are quite willing to shatter these fetters. That, however, was not to be. Some of you may think that the result was not made clear, because the resolution was not moved under certain circumstances which I need not mention to you. Even if the resolution had been moved, it would not have been accepted. The special immunities enjoyed by European and American subjects in India are mentioned in a special chapter in the Criminal Procedure Code and special provisions are made to distinguish them from Indian people inhabiting this country, giving them certain modes of trial and other advantages which they had never been slow to avail themselves of. In the first place, the nationality of the presiding judge of a Court, unless he was a District Magistrate or a Sessions Judge or a High Court Judge, must be European in order to be able to try a European, American or British subject. In the mode of trial a European subject has a right to demand that he should only be tried by a jury composed of his own countrymen. Justice is defeated nearly always when Europeans are tried by a jury of their own countrymen. This sort of thing has gone on for so many years and papers are full of cases of that kind and hardly a month passes without some judicial

scandal reminding us of what we are in our own country. It is not only in India which is a dependency of England at present that they ask for special privileges and immunities. In Japan and other countries, European residents enjoyed special privileges known as the consular jurisdiction. Each nation had its own special courts and often the presiding judges were not trained as judicial officers, with the result that scandalous offences were perpetrated by Europeans against the people of the country; but they were invariably treated with neglect. The whole thing came to a head in the early days of the Japanese revival when the humiliation of having European offenders let off every day proved intolerable to Japan and after a long course of negotiations, Japan secured her judicial autonomy and the consular jurisdiction was abolished. The Japanese system of jurisprudence was somewhat crude and Japanese judges were not always known to be honest and offenders never got their due in the courts of Japan. But such a thing could not be pleaded in India. Here the system of jurisprudence is English, so much English that we are often tempted to complain against it. Judges here are all men trained in the English system and they have now established their reputation without challenge for complete probity and Europeans cannot pretend that they will not get justice in courts presided over by Indian judges. On the occasion of the Ilbert Bill agitation, with the aid or connivance of the military, the European community in this country made complete arrangements for apprehending the Viceroy, putting him on a boat and transporting him across the seas to England. It is that community which is now supposed to be teaching us the art of patience under suffering and of hopeful constitutional agitation till the end of the chapter. When we brought our resolution last session, it was generally demanded of us in Simla, whether we desired to start afresh all this Ilbert Bill agitation, and we were fully threatened with a revival of such an agitation if we pressed the resolution up to the point of voting. A great deal of pressure was brought to bear upon Mr. S. Sinha and myself to withdraw the resolution and we did so, not for the reason that these people put forward. It is amusing to recall some of the special pleadings. I had a visit from a European friend in those anxious days. He came literally on a high horse and without sending in a card, he shouted my name. Duly I appeared before the noble visitor and took him inside my room. 'Look here', he began, 'we are just now giving you a measure of Self-Government, we are going to trust you; is this the reward that we get, viz. that you want these racial distinctions to be instantly abolished?' I gave him a suitable reply. The result of it was that in a couple of minutes the gentleman began to converse in a somewhat chastened mood. The kind of arguments that he advanced is interesting. He said 'You are imprudent to ask for this change. Nowadays Indian judges are afraid of Europeans; you know that. Europeans are not so afraid of their own community, so that when a real European offender appears before a European judge, it is probable that that judge would have the courage to convict him and award him a suitable punishment; whereas if an Indian judge was there he would not dare to convict, so that as a matter of prudence you had better let the present condition of things continue.' How much truth there is in that argument I leave it to you to judge. I do not believe that it is absolutely without truth, and that is because of the present state of things. In the new regime, things would be entirely different. It is not servility that will bring promotion to a judge, but absolute impartiality and courage in the conduct of criminal cases. His next argument was that Europeans live in their society with peculiar customs, modes of life, etc., so that an Indian judge would find extreme difficulty in appraising at the true value the conditions surrounding a case. I reminded him that if it were the case that an Indian could not understand a European case, what should be the difficulty of one who did not possess the advantages which an Indian possessed. An Indian invariably knows his English very well and tries to understand English manners and customs and is equipped to understand European peculiarities, whereas a European often showed his pride by professing contempt for Indian ways and saying even at the end of thirty years in India : 'I begin to

understand India somewhat.' He does not understand our language and manners. Nevertheless it did not appear at all strange to this visitor of mine that in nearly every case a European could try an Indian accused, while an Indian judge is unfit to try an European accused. He said that the facts are against us and that an Indian accused invariably prefers a European judge to an Indian judge. That is a matter the exact measure of the truth of which you must judge. There is some truth in it. I do know of many Indians who are proud of saying that a European is generally more impartial than an Indian. But there is one reason which will explain a great many of these cases. An Indian in a comfortable situation who happens to have done wrong and fears justice, naturally shrinks from appearing before an Indian who can almost instinctively find out where this probably lies, and an Indian is not so easily hoodwinked when he is on the Bench as a European is. As if to crown his argument my visitor told me: "What you desire can be obtained in the natural course of political evolution in this country. Do not create bad blood. An attempt is being made to Indianise the service very rapidly and an European accused must naturally in such circumstances be placed under the jurisdiction of Indians as sufficient European judges would not be available." All these are ingenious arguments brought up to support a weak case. The reality is that a European thinks that his prestige would suffer seriously if he lets himself to be tried and convicted by an Indian. Time has come when a European can trust us to do him natural justice and reliance need not be placed on exceptional cases.—*New India*

#### TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

IN his first of a series of two articles that appeared in *Young India* under the heading 'The Revival of Handicrafts in India,' Mr. Andrews traces the causes of the decline of the Indian village. The first and by far the most important reason is, in his opinion, the heartless manner in which even in times of scarcity the land revenue was collected. While searching through the Historical Records of the East India Company a short time ago, he came across a statement which does not appear to have been published so far. It throws a flood of light on the way in which the early administrators of the Company succeeded in keeping up revenue collections at a high level; and has interest for us at the present time only in so far as it gives us an indication of the way their minds were working. The province of Bengal was visited by a severe famine in 1770. It had resulted in reducing the population by at least one-third, the necessary corollary being a decrease in cultivation. Under such circumstances one would naturally expect a corresponding, if not greater, reduction in revenue collections. The facts, however, were otherwise. Not only was there no decrease in the collections of 1771, but they even showed an increase over those of 1768, as the figures quoted in the Government despatch itself clearly show. This would have filled anybody possessing an ordinary amount of compassion or pity for the sufferings of others with shame; but Warren Hastings and his councillors unblushingly mention the fact of increase in revenue being due "to its being violently kept up to its former standard."

A writer in a recent issue of the *Hindustan Review* draws attention to the obvious injustice and unfairness involved in India, which has no State church, being made to bear the expenses of the Ecclesiastical department, which serves only the Christian community in India. Section 25 of the new Reforms Act prohibits any discussion of "expenditure classified by the order of the Governor-General in Council as (a) ecclesiastical, (b) political and (c) defence" in either chamber of the Indian legislature, except with the permission of the Governor-General. The yearly expenditure on this department amounts to nearly two million rupees and is evidently an unjust charge on Indian revenues. The Government of India are supposed to be holding these in trust for the Indian people and it is needless to remind the Government that a trustee can never be too careful as to the way he expends his ward's money. Let the Government prove by their action in this behalf that they are prepared to defend Indian interests even when they come into clash with those of England itself. It is only by removing such unfair burdens that they can make us feel that we are masters in our own house and it is by allowing a free discussion of the matter in the Indian Legislature that the Government can satisfy reasonable people that there is no desire on their part to disallow debates on inconvenient subjects by the exercise of the exceptional powers vested in them.

THE chief characteristic of the first census of Japan taken on October 1 last was, according to the president of the Census Bureau, that the initiative was entirely left to the people. Such a census had been under the contemplation of the Japanese Government ever since 1902 when they had gone so far with their preparations as to pass a census law requiring all people to fill up the census blanks handed to them on October 1, 1902; but the outbreak of the war with Russia frustrated their plans and no census could be arranged till eighteen years later. The law in question made it obligatory on the people to register themselves by filing up the schedule, the three hundred thousand officials engaged in connection with the census only handling the reports prepared by the people. Those who may feel disposed to doubt the accuracy of the census taken in this way will be surprised at the satisfactory character of the result. "That the people measured up to their responsibilities and showed an appreciation of the Government's efforts," says the president, "is evidenced in the correctness of the schedules, for scarcely any omissions have been detected in them. There were not a few cases in which those who had so far neglected to report to the municipal or town or village registry offices, came forward of their own accord and filled up the census schedules. . . . Therefore it may not be too much to say that the recent census-taking, though it has been the first organised one in this country, has been pretty successful, thanks to the realisation of the necessity of census on the part of the nation at large."

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