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### TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

Bhor-dom and Freedom.

FEW people outside the Deccan would have heard of the State of Bhor, which is the biggest among the numerous smaller States in Maharashtra; but it has now earned a name all over the country by its ukase prohibiting a delegation of the Deccan States Association from addressing a public meeting within its borders—which ukase the delegation felt it necessary to disobey! The Bhor administration has paid the British Indian Government the most flattering compliment by issuing in its territory a proclamation equivalent to the Seditious Meetings Act, though one may be sure during all these years there was never held, nor proposed to be held, a meeting in Bhor which did not intend to pour the grossest adulation on the Chief. Anyhow, there was the prohibitory order, and the Deccan States Association, formed some months ago for the purpose of agitating in a perfectly constitutional manner for the introduction of representative institutions in the Deccan States, had to ask for permission to tell the people what the M.-C. Reforms Report contemplates doing in regard to Indian States. The required permission was asked for in due form; of course the State officials could not be so foolhardy as to grant the permission straightaway without close inquiry as to the intentions of the applicants. The inquiry was made and elicited an answer that the Association merely wanted to explain to the people the chapter in the Reforms Report dealing with the States. That the purpose of the Association was so innocent would seem only to have added to the embarrassment of Bhor, for no reply was received to the application for a long time after it was dispatched.

Driven to Disobedience.

CONSEQUENTLY, the Association sent a deputation to Bhor in order that it might wait upon the Chief

and signify the Association's willingness to accept any terms he would like to impose. The only answer, however, that was vouchsafed to them was that Bhor must be preserved sacred from public meetings of any kind. A large concourse of people had already assembled, and the deputation proceeded to the place to tell them that all their requests had been refused. Then the deputation again sent word to the authorities offering to go back on that occasion, if the authorities should promise to allow them to speak on a subsequent date. The authorities might themselves select anyone from amongst them as a speaker, the speech to be made would be sent to them in advance, it might be censored by them as they chose; but let there be a public meeting on the question of "Reform in Indian States." But the Bhor officials could not be moved from their determination to prohibit meetings of all kind, then and thereafter. The deputation thereupon naturally felt that they had no recourse left but to assert their right of public speech by civilly disobeying the prohibition order. The Deccan States Association's delegation was composed of prominent members of all the parties in the Deccan—Liberals, Nationalists and two sections of the non-Brahmans corresponding to the Madras Presidency Association and the South Indian Liberal Federation of Madras. The very fact that such sharply contrasted groups of politicians who do not ordinarily find common action possible joined together in a campaign of political education in Indian States, and, when balked in their first endeavour by an arbitrary order of the Bhor State, compelled to offer civil resistance to it, affords ample justification both of the unexceptionable character of the propaganda and of the respectful but firm defiance of the order to which they were driven by the perversity of the State officials.

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No-one will accuse the five members of the Select Committee on the Oudh Rent Bill who felt constrained to withdraw themselves from the Committee of a desire to indulge in histrionics or wantonly to injure the Committee's prestige. The action was taken in the last resort as a protest against the U. P. Government's secret compact with the Taluqdars, and because, in face of such a compact, the presence of any members in the tenants' interest on the Committee becomes an absolute futility. The initial mistake on the part of the Government

was that they entered into negotiations with the Taluqdars, leaving severely alone the other party to the dispute, viz. the tenants. This naturally aroused warm protests from those who were anxious to safeguard the interests of the tenant class. The one-sided consultation with the Taluqdars was sought to be justified by the Governor of the United Provinces on the ground that the Taluqdars were devotedly attached to British rule, that they gave away largely to public charities, that they were a very influential body, owning as they do half of Oudh. This is no doubt an excellent reason for consulting the Taluqdars, but not for neglecting to consult the tenants. Sir Ludovic Porter explained away this omission by pleading that the Board of Revenue and the Commissioner of Fyzabad had already sent in their opinions on the Bill. These opinions are no doubt favourable to the tenants, but does that dispense with the necessity of consulting the tenants themselves? Both the Governor and the Finance Member finally pointed out that the tenants' representatives would have an opportunity of pressing their views in the Select Committee and in the Council.

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To promise that tenants' representatives would in future be admitted to a consultation along with the representatives of taluqdars does not correct the injustice of their original exclusion from it, but the promise at any rate showed that, whatever the negotiations with the taluqdars might have been, the Government had come to no decision, that the question was still an open one and that there was a possibility of the Government agreeing to confer hereditary rights on tenants if a strong case was made out for such a policy. On that understanding the champions of tenants, though sore at the partiality which the Government had already shown for taluqdars, agreed to serve on the select committee. In the select committee, however, the Government announced that they could not accept the hereditary principle unless it was also accepted by the taluqdars. This was certainly a distinct breach of faith on the part of the Government, and when it was asked that the declaration should be embodied in the select committee's report, the Government refused, seeing that this declaration was directly contradictory of the promise the Governor and the Finance Member had made before. In view of this fact the members in the select committee naturally thought that their utility as members of the committee had come to an end and they left in protest. The Government in this affair have laid themselves open, not only to a charge of breach of faith, but also of having made a garbled version of what took place in the select committee, in order to put the blame on the protestants. There is no doubt that the country will warmly support the action of the members who withdrew.

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Dharwar Firing  
Case.

THE refusal by the accused to lead evidence in this trial no doubt rendered the work of the Court easy from the narrow legal point, but it leaves the judgment without any moral support. Holding that there was an unlawful assembly, the Judge concludes that all the accused who were present at the time of the commission of various offences were criminally liable, whether they actually took part in committing those offences or not. And as for evidence of their presence, the Judge repeats the formula, in the case of most of the accused, that "so and so states that he was at the meeting throughout, but calls no witness to prove this: the prosecution evidence is thus un rebutted, and I find him guilty of the offences with which he is charged." This no doubt is good law, and the Judge say with a show of reason: "If the prosecution have made out a case against the accused, they are entitled to a conviction if the evidence is un rebutted, and the accused if innocent have only themselves to blame if they are convicted on account of their refusal to call witnesses to prove their innocence." Still, the fact remains that the judgment is to all intents and purposes an ex parte judgment and fails to produce the conviction in the public mind that justice has been done.

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Unexplained  
Points.

THE Judge has gone out of his way to record a "finding" that the firing which took place on the occasion was absolutely necessary and did not exceed the necessities of the situation. This dictum has absolutely no value and has no evidence to support it. There are several ugly facts in regard to the incidents which the Judge has not attempted to investigate: e. g. (1) an armed force was collected at 6-30 p. m. on the fateful day, when no disturbance had taken place; (2) if the police apprehended serious danger at so early an hour, why was no magistrate apprised of it? (3) how could the *tatti* be set on fire three times when all along there were armed policemen "who stood on the edge of the gutter between the *tatti* and the main road?" (4) a policeman in mufti was found among the wounded; (5) firing took place in all directions, and even from the verandah of the police *thana* where no riot is alleged to have taken place. All these points and many others are material to the inquiry, and yet without the slightest attempt at inquiring into them, the Judge claims to have ascertained the facts. The statement of Venkatesh Tiwari [Ex. 121 on the Congress Commissioners' file] raises a presumption against the police, which no Government which cares for its honour can afford to ignore. A high official, himself concerned with the affair in a prominent manner, admitted that, in the absence of defence by the accused, the Sessions Court's judgment, however good in law, would fail to satisfy the outside public and that he would himself advise Government to take steps to justify the firing to the public. Only an independent investigation can secure such a result.

## DISORDERS IN MADRAS.

THERE can be no greater condemnation of Lord Willingdon's administration than that, in a large part of the city of Madras, there should be no security of life or property for over three and a half months and that the Government should be unable to restore peace and order even with the aid of additional police and the military. Time and again it has been pointed out that, next to the strike itself, it is the partiality of the police and labour officials for the Adi-Dravidas that has established this state of anarchy in Madras. But prestige has made Lord Willingdon blind and he will not see the true remedy. In the adjournment discussion which Mr. Thanikachela Chetty raised on the subject, he asked some questions which the Home Member ought to have answered. From the 30th of June to the 5th of October crudely fashioned swords, made out of iron hoops of cotton bales, had been freely used, mostly by the Adi-Dravidas. The police had searched the houses of some Hindus and Muhammadans and found nothing, but did they search the houses of the Adi-Dravidas or the mills where they were believed to have been manufactured? In the several riots between the Adi-Dravidas and others, how was it that the police had invariably killed and wounded only the latter? The self-complacent answer of Mr. M. C. Raja, leader of the Adi-Dravidas, to this question was that his followers were not in the disturbed area, were not riotous and were not bent on mischief! We admire his genius for ignoring facts.

The Home Member, Sir Lionel Davidson, assured the Council that even the Moplah revolt had not exercised the Government to a greater extent than these disturbances in the city of Madras. He was unable to accept any of the suggestions that had been made. To appoint a Committee of the Council to inquire into the question fully was impossible, because its personnel could not command universal acceptance. It was suggested that the mills should be asked to close down, but that would throw some hundreds into the streets 'with a heart to fight.' The transfer of police and labour officers was demanded, but the demand could not be conceded though he would be good enough to enquire into any complaints. Government had done their best and it now depended on the residents of that part of the city to bring about agreement between the parties at issue which were now no longer strikers and non-strikers but caste factions. It is a wonderful statement that Sir Lionel made. What gave a caste and communal character to a quarrel which was purely economic? The belief that the mill-strike was due to non-co-operation, that it was intended to paralyse the Government. This belief was shared by Mr. Raja, the officials of the police and labour departments, if not by Members of Government themselves, and by the mill authorities, and they all thought it necessary to combine against the strikers. The special encouragement thus given to the Adi-Dravidas made them aggressive on the one hand and exasperated the caste Hindus and Muhammadans

on the other. The attitude of Government has so spoiled the mill authorities and the Adi-Dravidas and so enraged the strikers that universal acceptance of a committee of enquiry has become well-nigh impossible. But we see nothing impossible in asking the mills to close down temporarily or transferring the officials concerned—excepting an impossible idea of prestige. Now several thousands are thrown into the streets with a heart to fight. The addition to their number of a few hundreds by closing down the mills will not be serious. As for the Adi-Dravida heart to fight, it will give way if the special support of Government is removed; and it must also be remembered that the heart to fight is not the monopoly of the Adi-Dravidas: the caste Hindus and Muhammadans also have it and Government action has been strengthening it. If the mills are closed down, in the interests of peace and order, some special compensation to the Adi-Dravidas may be thought of as they are handicapped in finding temporary employment. And once they are closed down and the police and labour officials are transferred, all the parties concerned will be brought into a mood to desire peace, but not until then. We do not need Sir Lionel Davidson to tell us that the people of the locality should bring about peace between the factions. We want him to justify the existence of a Home Member to the Government of Madras.

Meanwhile, the report of the Ayling Committee has been published which was appointed 'to enquire and report on the disturbances which took place in the Perambur division, Madras City, on and after the 29th June 1921 and the measures taken to restore order.' The report has lost most of its value because the evidence led before it was all one-sided, the representatives of the strikers having ill-advisedly boycotted it, and because two of its three members, both Indians, have written separate notes condemning the general action of the police, though they hold that firing was justified. By far the most valuable evidence was given by Mr. Lobo who was then the Chief Presidency Magistrate. His evidence being hostile to the police, it is believed that he was therefore subsequently transferred from Madras, a procedure which has not added to the local Government's reputation for fair play. The chief value of the report therefore lies in the two notes of its Indian Members, the facts contained in which are so condemnatory of the police that one wonders why they signed the report. Those facts are sufficient to explain why the trouble has now become a communal feud and how necessary it is to transfer the officials concerned. Mr. T. M. Narasimha Charlu mentions a number of cases in which the police were obviously partial to the Adi-Dravidas and hostile to the caste Hindus and Mahomedans, such as the former being allowed to carry knives and sticks and attack innocent way-farers, attacking the latter in the presence of the police, prosecution for incendiarism being launched against a caste Hindu who was found lying near a water tap with a dozen injuries on his person obviously inflicted by Adi-Dravidas who

had suspected him to be an incendiary, cases of petitions and complaints from caste Hindus being treated as waste paper &c. And yet he comes to the astonishing conclusion that the police were not partial but only appeared to be so, rather unfortunately. The note of Dewan Bahadur R. Venkataratnam Nayudu is characterised by a deference to his lawyer colleagues, which is misplaced in a gentleman of his culture and experience. Its concluding paragraph shows how little the Commissioner of Labour protected labour and how entirely he reduced himself to a Protector of Adi-Dravidas.

According to statistics furnished to the Committee, 418 huts were destroyed by the several fires: of these 269 belonged to the Adi-Dravidas and 149 to others—67 of the latter belonging to Chuklers. Living under similar conditions, they were all undoubtedly of a similar station in life. But how glaringly unequal the relief afforded to these two sections of equal sufferers! Over and above contributions made by philanthropic persons, a sum of twenty thousand rupees of Government money was spent on feeding and sheltering the Adi-Dravida occupants of the 269 huts; whereas the occupants of the other 149 huts received attention to the extent of Rs. 100! What way this one-sided measure will interpret itself to the average mind, what light it will present the authorities in to the public view, what mutual feelings it is likely to foster between those living and toiling together as neighbours, need not be dilated on.

But the Government of Madras is blind and sees no reason to transfer the officers concerned—though complaints will, of course, be enquired into. After having tried his Home Member for over three and a half months in vain, we would suggest to Lord Willingdon to leave the matter in the hands of Sir P. Theogaraya Chetty and the Ministers, and we promise he will see peace and order restored in a couple of weeks, including the settlement of the strike. But there is one formidable obstacle—prestige!

### THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE, AND AFTER.—III.\*

IT is quite clear from the accounts which have reached me from East Africa, that the resolution passed at the Imperial Conference, in London, on the Indian Question,—by which all the Dominions, except South Africa agreed to give to Indians domiciled within their territories equal status,—has startled the Convention of European Associations, which has its centre in Nairobi, East Africa. This refusal to endorse the South African policy of racial aloofness has completely reversed the position taken up only a few months previously by Lord Milner. It is this, which has so disturbed the Europeans in Kenya Colony. What is even more significant, it has divided for the first time, on a vital issue, the Colonials in Africa from the Colonials in the other British Dominions. This division may lead to still further consequences.

I have already shown, that, for Australia, New Zealand and Canada, this new resolution passed recently in London means practically very little.

\*Previous articles in this series appeared in our issues of October 6 and 13.

These Dominions have now finally received, in return for it, the very thing that they most wanted, namely the absolute power to restrict all Indian immigration. To them, with this restriction in force, a small handful of domiciled Indians, as citizens, is rather a convenience than otherwise. It means that these Indians will be more rapidly absorbed in the general population.

But to a very large number of European settlers in South and East and Central Africa, such an admission of equal status must imply the surrender of a race-principle, for which they would be almost willing to die rather than allow it to be thus abandoned. Whether this divergence between European Africa and the Canada-Australasia group of Dominions is only temporary and slight, or whether it is the beginning of a fundamental cleavage, yet remains to be seen.

One thing is perfectly clear to me. This step, which has now been taken by Australasia and Canada, is no solution of the Indian problem. It is only a palliative. It is nothing but a slight relief to an intolerable wound. There is still the 'White Australia' policy and the 'White New Zealand' policy, and the 'White Canada' policy, which are held almost as a religion. The anti-Asiatic racial barrier still remains. Not long ago, for instance, a very slightly added influx of Sikhs from the Punjab into Canada caused an outcry which led to the bitterest hostilities. Still more recently,—only within the last few months,—a slight increase in the number of Indians who entered New Zealand from Fiji brought about in New Zealand also a 'white race' panic, which resulted in new reactionary legislation. This 'white' policy, which Australia, New Zealand and Canada still cling to with all their power, is in reality just as fatally disruptive of any common citizenship in the British Empire, as the African Colonials' refusal to allow equal status to domiciled Indians in their country.

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was right in proclaiming, in season and out of season, that the weak surrender of this right of entry by Indians into the Colonies was itself the first step down the hill. From the day when it became legally impossible for an Indian citizen to put his foot on shore, at Durban or Capetown, at Sydney or at Vancouver, on account of the 'White race' policy, from that very moment, so Sir Pherozeshah Mehta predicted, the foundations of the British Commonwealth were undermined. In spite of every inducement that might be offered, by way of compromise, Indians, he declared, ought never to acquiesce in such a fundamental loss of status.

I look back now on those days that are gone by, and I remember, with regret, how I agreed with Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Gandhi against Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, at the time when that momentous decision was taken and this very right of entry into South Africa was surrendered with a view to obtain concessions for domiciled Indians in Natal. This compromise lay behind the whole of Mr.

Gokhale's mission to South Africa in 1912. This compromise was the actual 'give and take,' which Mr. Gokhale then put forward for acceptance in different South African Conferences and speeches. I was enthusiastic over the success of his visit in the year 1912-13. It seemed a brilliant victory. But I have no enthusiasm for that compromise to-day. Indians, as I have seen with my own eyes, have gained nothing substantial by it in South Africa. And if the Indian delegates have gained a slight advantage by it at the recent Imperial Conference in London, yet it may be well questioned, if this gain itself has at all compensated for that fundamental sacrifice of principle involved in the admission of the 'White Australia' policy as the basis of all negotiations. For it must not be forgotten that only when yet once again the Indian delegates had repudiated all claim to enter freely into the Dominions, was any talk about equal status for domiciled Indians made possible. This is an unpalatable fact; but it is true.

I wish, in this present article, specially to deal with the East African problem, in the light of the Imperial Conference. Rarely has such a sudden reverse been experienced, as that which has happened to the Europeans in Kenya Colony in the course of a few months. Fate seems to have been specially unkind to them, because the very instrument which they expected to use against the Indian settlers has turned in their own hands and out them. Some one among their numbers in the year 1919 had discovered, in some newspaper, the Reciprocity Agreement which had been passed in July, 1918. Unlike the Europeans in South Africa, these East African settlers had carefully studied this Agreement, and had taken out just that section which appeared to suit their own purpose. They thought, that they had found in it a way, by which they might stop Indians from coming into East Africa at all. It was a fatuous thought, because East Africa was still under the Colonial Office and had no independent government of its own. But they did their utmost, at the end of the year 1919, to use this weapon of the Reciprocity Agreement for the purpose of keeping the East African Colony as a kind of European preserve. The phrases used in their document, which was called 'Petition re: Indians,' are so significant, as an indication of their mentality, that I shall venture to quote one rather long passage in full. The document is attested by the leading European settlers at Nairobi, in January 1920. It reads as follows:—

"Whereas the Imperial Conference, at a meeting held on July 20th, 1918, in London, considered the question of the reciprocal migration between India and other component parts of the British Empire, and passed four resolutions, of which the principal is as follows:—

"It is the inherent function of the Governments of the several communities of the British Commonwealth, including India, that each should enjoy complete control over the composition of its own people by means of restriction on immigration from any other communities."

"And thereby has recorded the final judgment of the British Commonwealth, that the principle of self-determination shall govern immigration, and the composition of populations,—we, the Convention of Associations, representing the White Community of the Country of East Africa, pray His Excellency the Governor to approach the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, so that the functions, thus solemnly pronounced to be inherent in the Government of this British Community, may be exercised by declaring forthwith, that the right of self-determination rests with the European Government of this country, acting for the Europeans and in trust for the Native peoples, and should ask the Secretary of State to rule that the position should not be prejudiced by giving any system of franchise to Asiatics, nor by allowing them to acquire land (except in townships on short leases), nor by the employment of Asiatics in Government work. And that steps should be taken at once to restrict Asiatic immigration, in order that this stronghold of European colonisation, in Central Africa, may stand beside her sister colonies in her Asiatic policy.

"And further, we beg His Excellency the Governor to make known to the Imperial Conference, our earnest petition, that to the conquered territory, formerly called German East Africa, the same policy towards the Asiatic be applied. . . . We can conceive of no transaction more immoral, and more certain to recoil on our heads, than the betrayal to the Asiatic of a section of the African peoples, whose destinies have fallen into our hands, and who are at present unable to protect themselves. We submit, that to buy off the Indian, or other agitation, at the expense of the Natives of Africa would be a policy, neither wise nor honourable."

It is a singular irony of fate, that this very Imperial Conference, whose judgment has been here described as "the final judgment of the British Commonwealth" has now given a verdict against them on the question of equal status for Indians domiciled in the country. It is pertinent to ask, whether the Europeans in Kenya Colony will now be ready to accept this new resolution passed by the Imperial Conference as "the final judgment of the British Commonwealth." Instead of this, what we really find at present is, that they have immediately sent a Delegation to General Smuts, at Pretoria, in order to avert what they feel to be an impending disaster.

It should be carefully noted that their interpretation of the word 'Governments' (as used in the Reciprocity Agreement) is misleading. The 'Government' of Kenya Colony, in major affairs, such as those of Immigration, is vested in the Colonial Office. Kenya is not a self-governing Dominion. The Colonial Office has the final voice, both with regard to equal status, and also with regard to Immigration. The whole argument of the above paragraph, which I have quoted, is vitiated by this oversight.

The Tanganyika Territory has now been given its new constitution under a Mandate. At least the mandatory form of Government has this one advantage. It renders the restriction of Indian immigration practically impossible. For India is one of the original signatories of the League of

Nations and has an independent status in the League. It follows,—so I have been authoritatively told,—that under the terms of the Mandate itself, Indian nationals cannot be excluded without a breach of the Mandate. It follows also, that no amalgamation of Kenya Colony with the Tanganyika Territory in one 'Middle Africa' is permitted. All the terms used above about this 'conquered territory' being a 'sacred trust' committed to the 'White Community' fall to the ground. I believe it is also true, that as soon as Tanganyika receives a representative form of government, Indians cannot be kept out from the electorate. They will receive, as a matter of right, under the Mandate, equal status.

It is interesting to look back on the aims and plans with regard to German East Africa which were then being formulated in Nairobi. The ambitious design was outlined of consolidating Kenya Colony, Tanganyika, Uganda, Nyasaland, North Rhodesia and South Rhodesia into one central Dominion, equal in size to the Dominion of South Africa, which could be called the 'Dominion of Middle Africa.' From the whole of this territory, Indians were to be rigorously excluded because of their 'contamination' of the indigeneous African. All the ports of Africa were to be strictly guarded, and not an Indian was to be allowed to land. The policy of 'Asiatic exclusion,' which had been adopted in South Africa, was to be the policy of this Middle Africa also. "A consolidated Middle Africa," we read, "would constitute *in British hands* a permanent strategical barrier. . . . Apart from such strategical and material advantages, the Union of the British territories of Middle Africa would powerfully promote *the spreading of the British ideal*, which we are convinced is what the best interests of the people of Africa demand." The italics are mine, and they show clearly the aim which was contemplated.

It is as clear as possible, that the Kenya European settlers, who have been thwarted in these larger and more ambitious schemes, have not yet been finally defeated. They are now determined to raise the cry of. 'The Asiatic Menace,' throughout the length and breadth of Africa from the equator to the Southern Cape of Good Hope. The consolidation of Middle Africa, which is here spoken of will now be attempted in a different manner namely, through a common opposition to the so-called 'Asiatic invasion.' Every power of press and platform propaganda will be used, and racial passions will be excited, in order to attain this end. I have seen the power of such propaganda in Africa and it would be foolish to minimise its significance.

What is the duty of Indians, who love their own country, in face of this storm of opposition which is soon to burst in Africa? To me, it has been a matter of long and painful experience to find out how much the Indian community abroad itself needs strengthening in the matter of Education. Everything possible should be done to give the

best training to the younger generation of Indians in Africa. I have appealed to the Government of India, both by personal entreaty and through the public Press, to send out an Educational Commissioner, in order to take every advantage of the different facilities offered for Indian children all down the African coast and to create new ones. If the Government still wish to retain that confidence of the Indian people, with regard to their African policy, which Mr. G. L. Corbett has done so much to strengthen, they will not delay at all in carrying out this most necessary measure of help. An Educational Commissioner should start without delay. Those who have had experience in these matters are agreed, that no more timely and affective help could be afforded.

Furthermore, it is needed, that the people of India themselves should now give to the African situation their most careful, continuous and intelligent study. They should realise, that, with the great acceleration of ocean travel, the striking phrase which was once used is becoming literally true,— "The future of Indian Expansion is in Africa."

C. F. ANDREWS.

Shantiniketan.

(To be continued.)

#### WOMEN'S PROPERTY RIGHTS.

WE sincerely welcome the Bill that Mr. Kale is shortly going to introduce in the Bombay Council with the view of improving the status of Hindu widows. The Bill, as it stands, is, we are afraid, too comprehensive to be easily acceptable to the generality of Hindu males. But we are sure that if the principle of the Bill is once accepted by them they will have to let the principle carry them to such lengths as are deducible therefrom logically. We consider that justice to Hindu women has been consistently delayed for so many centuries, that we need not, now that our eyes are opened to the enormity of the injustice, grudge them the fullest measure of justice—particularly when we sincerely feel convinced that the innate purity of the Hindu woman will very rarely let her abuse the liberty conceded to her and that greater liberty will only evoke in her mind greater responsibility.

Let us explain why we consider that the generality of Hindu males will not easily accept the Bill. Mr. Kale says that he wishes personally to give women absolute rights so as to place them on a footing of equality with men, but that he has framed his present Bill as a modest measure of reform on the existing unjust law. In his statement of objects and reasons, Mr. Kale says that the first clause of his bill is intended to place a widow in Bombay on the same footing as a widow in Bengal. As a matter of fact Mr. Kale's first clause is so worded that a Bombay widow will get far greater powers by this Bill than Bengal widows. This is so by reason of the fact that a joint family in Bombay embraces a far larger meaning than in Bengal. It is well known that in Bengal even where the

property is ancestral, a father is supreme master and does not form a joint family with his own sons. It is quite otherwise in Bombay, where a father and sons do form a joint family. The logical result of this distinction will be obvious. Suppose A has ancestral property in his hands and has a son B. On B's death leaving a widow, the daughter-in-law will be at liberty to claim half-share by partition from the father-in-law A, because the son himself could have claimed a similar partition in his life-time from A. Such a contingency is impossible in Bengal, for there the father and son did not form a joint family. Supposing further that in the same family the father died leaving his widow and son B, a very usual case. Then at present the widow i. e. B's mother is entitled only to maintenance, but after Mr. Kale's Bill passes, the mother could still claim a moiety from her own son—a contingency impossible in Bengal.

It is only in the case of joint brothers that a widow's rights will be similar to those in Bengal, but as between father and daughter-in-law, or between mother and son, the women will have far greater powers. We indeed personally do not object to this. We consider it extremely unjust to the mother that she should be reduced to the position of a mere dependant as soon as her husband dies and that her own son should have the whole property centred in him. We consider it quite just that the mother should be owner of the moiety during her life. But though we personally welcome this change, we are afraid this change will be the means of causing a revolution in people's ideas of inheritance on this side. For this Bill will have created in the mother, or rather the widowed mother, a regular coparcener along with the son himself.

Much more revolutionary would be the second case. Supposing A has two sons B and C, and B dies leaving a widow. Then at present such widow is treated practically as *non est*, for her rights are a mere pittance for food and clothing. But after the present Bill passes such widow will claim a third share—a claim that will go so very sorely against the grain of most of the Hindu males on this side as to be declared preposterous!

Let us now turn to the second clause in the Bill. This practically raises widows to the position of full owners when they have obtained the sanction of the court. At present the widows of even separated members are not full owners. The reversioners are always casting envious glances at the properties in the hands of the widows. Such estate is technically called the widow's estate. Mr. Kale, however, wishes to wipe off all widow's estates as soon as such widows have armed themselves with a Civil Court's Sanction. A new set of machinery will have to be created as to how the widows are to obtain such sanction. Indeed, we are afraid, the Courts will be almost inundated with these miscellaneous proceedings. For widows will naturally wish to try their best to raise themselves from the status of mere life-tenants into that of full owners at liberty to alienate. Mr. Kale further wishes to

include not only charitable objects but also those of legal necessity in his list of reasons that will confer higher powers on widows.

We believe that the practical result of the second clause of the Bill will be to raise widows to the status of full owners and that practically there will be left no such people as reversioners. Widows will either bring forward legal necessity or failing that, they could pretend to be generous and charitable, and offer to give away the properties to some humanitarian societies so as absolutely to prevent the properties going back after their death into the hands of their male reversioners. So practically when once the widow gets into her own share, that share is absolutely gone away from the male reversioners. It will be in very rare instances that such property could come back into the family. And so practically the whole fabric of the latter day judge-made law as to a widow's limited power of enjoyment and the reversioner's rights of interference with such enjoyment and obtaining injunctions to restrain waste and the law about accumulations will be practically swept off clean.

Let us now go further and see whether the present Bill will have any effect on the Law of adoption. And here also we believe that the result will be almost a revolution, inasmuch as most of the latter-day judge-made law of adoption will have to be swept off equally clean. Let us show how this result must follow.

We shall take only the simplest case *viz.* that of two brothers A and B living as a joint family. When A dies son-less, B takes at present the whole estate, giving only maintenance to A's widow. If A's widow has to adopt, she is at present required to obtain B's permission which in these days is generally impossible to procure. So B practically gets the whole estate. After the present Bill passes, A's widow will get by partition half of the estate. The question will then arise as to whether such widow after partition is to be still considered as the widow of a man that died undivided or is to be considered as the widow of a man that died divided. Very probably the latter view will have to be accepted, and in that case the widow will be at full liberty to adopt without any permission from her husband's brother. In that case, all the judge-made law as regards consent of *sapindas*, and as regards exercise and extinction of power will naturally go away.

But on the other hand, let us suppose that the other view prevails and it is held that when the widow gets actual partition, she is still to be looked upon as the *widow of an undivided co-parcener*, and so still requiring consent from the remaining coparceners. Here also the widow will have in her hands a very potent weapon to force the coparceners to give their consent. She has only to threaten to hand over her property to Prof. Karve's Indian Women's University in case of their refusal, and the coparceners will be thus forced to give their consent.

So in either view, when once the moiety goes into the widow's hands, it goes for ever without any

chance of the reversioners ever getting it back. Even in the solitary case of mother and son where the mother will be precluded from adoption her property will be absolutely at her own disposal and the son, if he wishes it back after her death, will have to see to it that the mother is kept highly pleased with himself and his wife all along. This latter contingency we particularly view with thorough satisfaction, in as much as it will be the means of securing to the widowed mother the respect and consideration which is always her due, but which is hardly ever accorded to her in these degenerate times.

In this way every son-less widow will have in her hands her husband's share of joint family property and will be fully at liberty either to adopt or give away such property to charity. Such would be, in our view, the logical effect of the innocent looking little Bill proposed by Mr. Kale on the general every-day ideas of Hindus as regards a widow's estate. And it is with the full consciousness of such results that we want all educated Hindus to accord it their hearty support. The present Bill will thus in a way furnish an acid test to the sincerity with which our Nationalist friends generally talk of liberty, equality and fraternity. Would they be preaching those ideas from the house-tops and yet shrink with horror as soon as they are asked to extend those same ideas in actual practice to their own brothers and other women-folk? Would they still be claiming liberty for themselves and denying it in the same breath to their women folk? Let them remember that Christianity and Mahomedanism have long given to women folk absolute powers of their own property and that it is Hindus alone that have still retained the narrow view of women being incapable of owning property. It is only under Hindu law that a woman is treated as a perpetual minor or a perpetual idiot capable only of maintenance but not capable of fully enjoying property. Would the latter-day Hindus, after a century of liberal education in Western ideas and after their own long-lost hoary tradition of reverence for women still refuse to come into line with other civilized communities and still claim to treat their women as chattels? We think that the sincerity of their professions for the ideal of equality will be proved only by their readiness to welcome efforts to raise their women folk to a pedestal of all equality with themselves. Any attempt to depress or suppress women any longer will brand them as hypocrites, and we trust sincerely that the general mass of educated Hindus will seriously think a hundred times before they offer opposition to the present and other bills of a similar nature.

K. K. GOKHALE.

P. S.—Since the above article was in type we learn that the Bill proposed by Mr. R. R. Kale has received hearty support from Shrimant the Chief Sahab of Oundh who has already embodied it in a legal enactment in the Oundh State. We beg

to offer our most sincere congratulations to the Chief Sahab upon the spirit of appreciation of woman's hardship thus evinced by His Highness and fervently hope that other States in the S. M. country will follow suit and thereby set a good example to the Legislative Council in Bombay.

### UNEMPLOYMENT IN ENGLAND.

THE spirited protest of the courageous Mayor of Poplar ( Mr. George Lansbury ) and his Coucucillors has drawn attention to the unspeakable meanness of a society, which in big cities like London puts the rich in one borough and the poor in others and then has the callousness of calling on the poor to maintain their own poor, whilst of course the rich have no poor to maintain in their Westends. Mr. Lansbury and his friends are to-day in Brixton Jail for refusing to levy rates on people incapable of bearing them : which may be law, but certainly not justice. Of course the protest of Mr. George Lansbury and his colleagues, who prefer to sacrifice themselves rather than the people for whom they are trustees, is bound to prevail in the end and is prevailing already, to judge by the latest news. The repeal of the reactionary Act which took Poor Relief from the L. C. C. and handed it over to the London boroughs, whose municipalities at that time seemed " Labour-proof," is a foregone conclusion now : not that the position has not been a scandal all along, but that nobody so far had the courage to rivet public opinion on it by an act of passive resistance, as Mr. George Lansbury and his colleagues have so splendidly done. No law can in the end stand when men prove in their own persons that it punishes, not for doing evil, but for doing good. Yet how many are there sufficiently heroic to allow themselves to be so punished, in order that a mischievous law may be reduced to absurdity? Hats off to George Lansbury.

The other George ( he of Downing Street, not of Brixton Jail ) in the meantime is hard put to it, how to exorcise the spectre of Unemployment, of which the Poplar incident is only one aspect. If it is clear that Poor Relief in London cannot be made a sectional charge, the fact emerges equally that it can only be tackled successfully on a nationwide basis. But it may be asked, is there any moral liability on the part of the Society to maintain people who happen to be out of work? The type of mentality which makes itself vocal in " Middle Class Unions," " Anti-Waste " candidatures and Reuter's telegrams, took it for granted that, once the coalstrike and other " industrial unrest " was settled, the country would settle down to business and to another spell of prosperity. The official figure of 1½ million unemployed in England ( and six millions in U. S. A. ) months after the end of the last strike should give these people pause. Why are the people unemployed? Because there is no demand for the production of goods. Why so? Because people cannot afford to buy them. Why cannot they afford to? Because they are unemployed. Why they are unemployed? And so we start



again and can go on *ad infinitum*, round and round the same vicious circle. Boards of Poor Relief Guardians controlled by the Labour Party have tried to give unemployment relief on a generous scale, say £3 a family per week, which would keep people not merely alive, but in a minimum of decency. Needless to say, there has been a general howl mostly by persons who have never yet tried to keep a large family on £3 a day let alone a week, about the "bolshivism" of so outrageous a policy. Yet, passion aside, how ever is the normal supply and demand going to be re-started, unless it is just by this means, *i. e.* to enable everybody to buy what he needs? Once one has got the money to buy what one badly needs, one will go and get clothes, boots, food, etc.: there will be a universal demand for these articles, which the manufacturers will be only too glad to supply. They will not be able to do this of course, without employing more "hands": and as this is done, unemployment is thereby automatically reduced.

The pundits of Capitalism of course are aghast at such an idea. For what would happen to cheap wages? If a man was kept in decency without work, how much more attractive would terms offered to him have to be, if they were to induce him to work? In fact could anybody be induced to work at all? This argument conveniently forgets that maintenance is only claimed for the workless; once work has been found and unreasonably refused, all claim for continued maintenance naturally lapses. Unemployment of course is of the essence of Capitalism, and not merely a bye-product of it. For unless there is a steady reserve of unemployed people, the employed cannot be frightened into acceptance of low wages, etc. Unless dismissal means pushing a worker over the brink into the mire of unemployment and replacing him by one whom a term of unemployment has reduced to docility and submissiveness, wage standards agreeable to capitalists can obviously not be maintained. Conversely and practically, the late war has shown that once work is not capitalistically, but nationally organized, Unemployment disappears. Everybody then worked primarily for production, not for profit, though God knows enough profiteering was tolerated as a bye-product.

During the war, whether in the army or outside, everybody worked with a will; there was never a suggestion of the bulk of the nation being "unemployable" or "workshy", or "insolent and lazy"—the epithets to which we have immediately reverted, once the war was won. During the war, everybody tried his hardest—because he was working for service, for something worth while, and not merely for profits, whether his own or somebody else's: and mostly of course it still was somebody else's. But anyhow, every worker counted, was made much of as a patriot, as a "Hun strafers," as a fine fellow and a hero, who deserved a corresponding standard of life. It is one of the saddest facts in this black chapter of human perverseness, that the only occasion, when economic sanity at home has

been attempted and to a large extent achieved, was for the purpose of indulging the more effectively abroad in an orgy of wholesale killing.

The wheel has come round its full circle and nemesis is overtaking at last the people who thought they had discharged their duty to the war "heroes" by making promises to them. How did it all happen? First of all, there was the cry of Big Business to be rid of State control, so as to get back to "normalcy," *i. e.* to production, not for meeting the requirements of consumers but of shareholders. So, off came control. Next, it was claimed that taxes had to be reduced; that with the existing Excess Profits Duty and a Capital Levy looming ahead, "enterprise" (*i. e.* greed) was stifled. So, off came taxes. But, strange to say, with less taxes coming in on the revenue side, the expenditure side began to tip violently in the direction of National Bankruptcy. Thus was raised the hysterical cry of "Anti Waste"; and "Anti Waste" being of course intensely patriotic, there could naturally be no question of cutting out Army, Navy and Air Force. No; if something had to be cut out, it was naturally money proposed to be "wasted" on education, housing and all that nonsense of turning the country into a land fit for heroes to live in. So out it came; some with a jerk, like the one which precipitated the Miners' strike, or the other which led to Dr. Addison's resignation, or to the repeal of the Agricultural Act. Other items, totalling nearly thirty million pounds, though voted by Parliament, were simply not spent. Even a modern "statesman" might possibly have foreseen that ruthless cutting out of all such productive work would necessarily throw large masses of men out of work. But why worry about to-morrow? To-day it's the cry for anti-waste: let us pacify them to-day. And the unemployed? Well, let's give them doles. Thus it was done—but, unfortunately for these opportunists, the "to-morrow" has come round already: doles threaten to swallow up more than the productive work itself would have cost, and so? Well, let us embark on some of those pigeon-holed transport plans or suspended electrification schemes. And housing? Yes. Including school houses, of course. And employing more men in agriculture? Quite so. And the money for this? More taxes? My dear fellow, don't ask. To-morrow's the day for that. To be sure, capitalism is a mighty fine system—for lunatics.

OPIFEX.

### A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 29.

THE LYTON COMMITTEE.

THE *Times* heads a paragraph dealing with the news that the Legislative Assembly has refused to grant the supplementary vote for the projected Indian tour of the Lyton Committee a "Rebuff to Mr. Montagu." I have no doubt that the Secretary

will take the "rebuff" with his usual equanimity. He will doubtless say, with more politeness than Stead would have said, that the Assembly, having the power to make mistakes, is entitled to make them, provided that India recognises that she must bear the loss. Apart altogether from the merits of the Assembly's action, upon which, of course, I express no opinion, and for which a great deal may undoubtedly be said, the independence of the Indian Legislature will come as an eye-opener not only to hostile critics in this country, but to others in India as well. Evidently, the Assembly is not the gathering of dependent incompetents that its enemies never cease to declare it to be. The other resolution in regard to the disposal of Aden must also have caused some fluttering at the India Office, especially as Mr. Montagu has for some time been in negotiation with Mr. Churchill as to the conditions upon which the proposed transfer was to take place. The India Office will now have to take other ground, and it will be interesting to see whether and how the Government of India and India Office will reconcile themselves to the new situation. Reverting to the Students' Committee resolution, the criticism is suggested in the *Times* that a singular feature of this use of the power of the purse against the author of the Montagu Act, is that the Committee was appointed as a direct result of adverse criticisms of the Students Department in this country when the Budget was before the Assembly last March. The terms of reference to the Committee, it is alleged, manifestly contemplated that the investigations would extend to India, for they directed, *inter alia* examination of the constitution and working of the advisory committees in India and their future relations to the provincial Governments. All arrangements had been made to leave for the Indian tour on October 29, but these have now had to be cancelled, as the tour cannot now take place. I understand that the Committee have not had time to consider the matter, but it seems reasonable to suppose that they will report on the basis of their thorough examination of the situation on this side. It may still be necessary for this or another Committee to continue the investigation in India. However, that is, as Mr. Montagu would say, for the Indian Legislature to decide. As to the reasons that induced the Assembly to reject this vote, these have not yet been divulged, and it is useless for the moment to speculate about them.

#### THE KHILAFAT MOVEMENT.

The Near East disputes and their repercussion upon the situation in India are being more closely examined in the Press, the general feeling being that some sort of settlement is necessary at an early date, in order to restore peace and prevent the further devastation of an already largely devastated country. And it is also recognised that the longer the problem remains unsettled, the more difficult must be the position of the authorities in India. The news that the Mussalman divines in India have authorised the distribution in their

name of the prohibited *fatwa* is likely to loom large here, coming so soon after the Moplah rising, which will shrink into insignificance, if there is a widespread response on the part of the Indian Mussalmans to the call of their religious leaders. People here, whilst being desirous of doing nothing to make the situation in India more difficult, will certainly expect and insist that the Government of India will allow nothing calculated to encourage disaffection in the Indian army or stimulate any section of the population to violent demonstrations against the Government. The *Glasgow Herald*, in an article that is likely to be widely accepted among all classes here, says: "The political power of Islam, whether vested in a country like Turkey or in a community such as is represented by the Mohammedans of India, is unmistakably great and tends, if anything, to increase. We have now to reckon with it under conditions which can hardly be called favourable, and a very great deal will depend upon the manner in which Lord Reading and his colleagues handle the developments that have already apparently taken shape. Their difficulties and responsibilities will be enormous, and if they proceed strongly as well as promptly they will merit, and should receive, all possible support. If Islam's political activities run in the direction of seducing serving soldiers from their fealty, they must unquestionably be dealt with by methods as far removed as possible from weakness and procrastination." At the same time it is only right to point out that the Bombay correspondent of the *Times* cables that the *Indian Social Reformer* points out that "almost all non-official and educated Mohammedans think that the Caliphate question has been pressed far beyond its legitimate value owing to Mr. Gandhi's insistence on it as a way to *Swaraj*, adding that no Mahommedan ruler in India is supporting the Caliphate movement."

#### THE UNEMPLOYED PROBLEM.

Just now the most interesting subject, from the point of view of the general public, is none of these matters, but the unemployed question. Even the Irish problem has sunk into the background, for the time being. Mr. Lloyd George has still to send his final letter to the Sinn Fein leaders, and it is said that the Dail is impatient that it has not yet been despatched, the fear being expressed that it might, if too long delayed, mean that more difficulties would be placed in the way of a conference which everyone really wants. It is wonderful how people have been breaking their shins through stumbling over set phrases which have no real relevancy to actual facts. One begins to wonder whether, after all, high sounding phrases, however high their ethical import, do not, in the long run, do more harm than good. Poor Mr. Wilson certainly is incorrigible in the matter, and it may be that Mr. de Valera, or his evil genius, Mr. Arthur Griffiths, who is regarded as a fanatical England-hater, as are most of the other non-Irish leaders of Sinn Fein, may be equally incorrigible in a bad cause. The important thing is to get at the earliest

moment round the conference table, and cease to deal with "reflections", as the *Westminster* cartoonist unkindly remarks, but with realities.

As to unemployment, the situation is really critical. The London Labour Mayors saw the Prime Minister, who gave them a long interview up in the remote fastnesses of Scotland. They have come away dissatisfied. But it would appear that whilst they seemed to imagine that the problem was one to be faced by the taxpayer, the Prime Minister appeared to think that the rate-payer ought to foot at least a portion of the heavy bill. The *Westminster* tritely remarks that it is another way of saying the same thing, for the taxpayer and the ratepayer are ordinarily one and the same individual. The fact is that the Prime Minister could not at the time give a definitive answer, for he has all sorts of experts to consult and all kinds of schemes have to be examined from many different points of view. It is all very well to say that there ought to be no unemployment, but there cannot be employment so long as British goods are either too costly or the British worker will not work fairly or the consumer cannot afford to purchase the British commodity. What the consumer, whether British or foreign, most needs is a square deal.

## REVIEWS.

### SHORT NOTISCE.

*Paper Boats*: By MR. K. S. VENKATARAMANI, (The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar.)

We wonder whether the writer of these short sketches of South Indian village life, which have obtained a generous foreword from Mrs. Besant, really looks upon them as paper boats, for in the preface he speaks of their reaching distant ports under able captaincy with his cargo of strange and fragile flowers—incidentally leaving us in doubt whether it is the boats or the cargo that are his. But in truth they are paper boats and it would be too ambitious to hope that they would reach any ports. Paper boats, however, are a child's promise of skill and enterprise and in that light we welcome the little volume. The writer seems to be blessed with a single eye: he finds everything happy in this ancient country, except something in the life of 'my neighbour. To illustrate his supreme satisfaction we may refer to his 'Jagath Guru.' This *Sanyasin* of the 'most ancient and selfless order of monks in the world'—though he moves out 'in utter stateliness and pomp accompanied by horses, camels and elephants—knows everything in the world, 'from the Imperial craft of British statesmanship to the travail agonies of Soviet Russia, from the scientific method of agriculture in modern Japan to the most trivial sartorial details of the day in Paris.' Also, though he is the holiest of Brahmins, he transcends the distinctions of caste and creed. 'The poor and the pancham are as dear to his heart for social and economic reclamation as they are equal for spiritual knowledge. And yet people speak of untouchability? We admire the writer's bold imagination but if it should be serviceable to him or to his country it should be made to approximate a little more to reality. The writer has undoubted literary ability and we look forward to further production from his pen.

### TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THOUGH the Finance Member of the Bombay Government disclaimed any intention of making the expenditure on the Prince of Wales' visit lavish, the

Princely Extravagance.

proposal to spend as much as Rs. 8¼ lakhs upon it cannot but be looked upon as sheer extravagance. The arrangements at Apollo Bunder, he said, were to be on the same scale as when Their Majesties visited India in 1911. Surely there is some difference between the Prince's tour and Their Majesties' Coronation visit, and also between pre-war and post-war conditions. It is proposed to spend no less than Rs. 3 lakhs on a temporary pavilion to accommodate about 3,000 persons for a couple of hours and Rs. 2 lakhs on the illumination of public buildings. Such proposals the Finance Member prefaced with the remark that the Prince was a true democrat who wished to meet the people with as little ceremony and ostentation as possible. The democratic Prince would surely be more pleased if the money was spent in his name on useful institutions like hospitals than on a tamasha. But the reasons given by the Finance Member for this expenditure were even worse than its lavishness. Frontier unrest, Moplah rising, riots in isolated places, &c. have been magnified and distorted, it would appear, so as to convey a very wrong impression of the condition of India to distant countries. Representatives of the chief organs of the world's press were accompanying the Prince, and should our expenditure not be such as to give them a correct idea of the happiness and prosperity of the people? Another reason adduced was that if economy was practised on this occasion the financiers of the world would doubt the financial stability of the Government of India. It is, indeed impossible to improve on such reasoning! Only, no journalist worth the name, and least of all a financier, will permit himself to be gulled by a tamasha.

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