

THE Servant of India

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

The Great Refusal. THE protracted debate on the Indian demand closed on Monday last amid much disappointment and exasperation of feeling. The Home Member undid at one stroke his own remarkable work of patience and conciliation during the last two years. With an answer nearly as non-possimus as could be, he might have adopted a genial and pleading tone, but he chose the manner of the pugilist and hit right and left, not omitting the youngest and least noteworthy among his opponents. The result was that he had more interruptions by way of personal explanation from offended members than any half a dozen speakers together had during the life time of the past Assembly. Doubtless he came through it all with his credit for adroitness and readiness greatly enhanced, but the Assembly broke up in a fit of ill temper and ill-will scarcely paralleled hitherto. The vote in favour of Pandit Motilal Nehru's amendment was 76 against 48, two remaining neutral, which is as decisive a defeat as could be expected after Sir Malcolm's desperate efforts at detaching the Independents from the Swarajists and the Muhammadans from the Hindus. It is difficult to imagine how the Labour Government could have countenanced this unyielding attitude of the Government of India and yet the impression was produced that such was the case by the long extract which the Home Member read to the Assembly from an apparently cabled dispatch from England.

Welcome discipline. THE presence of forty five Swarajists accustomed to discipline and combined voting has almost given the Assembly a new character. Its predecessor could not always assert its ascendancy over the Executive, because largely the individual member applied his own mind to the topics that came up and generally voted as his inclination lay, not minding so much whether he voted for or against the Government. Of course on special subjects, where the patriotic bias came into spontaneous play or was stimulated by an outburst of rhetoric, it had no difficulty in outvoting Government. During the last few days nothing is more remarkable than the ease and readiness with which the majority declares itself. No great display of fluency or plying of the patriotic sentiment is now necessary. The position of an irresponsible Government, which trusts to carry on without a permanent majority but counting on the support of chance groups of members is no longer tenable. Government have now to face a fixed majority which acts with almost mechanical precision and must seek a way out of the difficulty. How is this possible without a definite constitutional advance?

The Council of State. THE Council of State roused itself to a pitch of self-assertion over the Reciprocity Bill of Dr. Gour. It was widely believed that the motion to refer it to a select committee was the result of a desire to hold up the bill if not altogether to throw it out. The Minister in charge vigorously repudiated any such intention and even went to the length of saying that though with a little difficulty the Government could work the bill. The Council had become seized of the merits of the measure and wondered why the Government did not in that case accept the bill even if they were unwilling to make it their own. By agreeing with the Assembly and passing this comparatively innocuous measure, the Council of State has to some extent checked the tide of unpopularity rising against it.

The Nizam's Claim. IT is not usual to publish in the papers, so soon after it was written, a letter of the kind addressed by H. E. H. the Nizam in October last to H. E. the Viceroy regarding the retrocession of Berar. Whether this unusual course was prompted by the nature of the reply, if one has been received, we do not know

It shows, however, that the Nizam is beginning to appreciate the value of public opinion. We hope he will cultivate it not only outside his Dominions but also within, and not only for purposes of propaganda but also for healthy criticism. He will do it best by removing the ban which he has placed in his State on several vernacular and Indian-edited English newspapers. The Nizam's plea is that the assignment of Berar in 1853 and the perpetual lease of the territory in 1902 are both invalid, having been obtained by the British by unfair means, that the assignment of 1853 was obtained by a military threat and the perpetual lease of 1902 was agreed to by the late Nizam when alone with Lord Curzon and under the influence of his domineering personality. His Exalted Highness goes a step further and says: "Even if my father had willingly agreed to the settlement of 1902, I claim to be entitled to question its validity as beyond his constitutional powers, for he had no authority, in the circumstances, to alienate any part of the territories he held in trust for his people and his successors." It gladdens one's heart to hear the Nizam describe the ruler of a state as a trustee of the people's interests with limitations to his constitutional powers—whether he recognises all that in practice or not. We do not, however, propose to consider the merits of the question. Even if we had before us not merely the statement of the plaintiff but all that the other side had to say, we should hesitate to pronounce judgment. For, the means by which territories were acquired, whether by the British Government or the Nizam or some other ruler or nation, cannot generally stand examination by the canons of modern civil courts. What we are most concerned to point out here is that even if a court of law gave its verdict in favour of the Nizam, the British Government have no moral right—and according to the doctrine of trusteeship referred to above by the Nizam, no legal right—to transfer the administration of Berar without ascertaining the wishes of the people. For a *State* is not property like an *estate*. It exists for the good of the people and can exist only with their consent, whether expressed or implied. How that consent is obtained depends upon the stage of political evolution which the people have reached. The methods adopted a hundred years ago or in a backward Indian State will not suit the people of a British Province to-day.

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The Nizam seems to have recognised this and his offer to concede to the people of Berar "on the restoration of the Province, a larger co-operation in the administration than at present enjoyed anywhere in British India" is obviously intended to get their consent for the transfer. For, addressed to the Viceroy, the offer could hardly be consider-

ed relevant or wise advocacy. It is for the people of Berar to decide whether they should welcome this opportunity of obtaining almost complete Home Rule, though under the Nizam, or whether such popular government as they are now enjoying under the British, with the prospect of rapid advance in the near future, should be preferred to Self-government under the Nizam. Sir Ali Imam, in canvassing the support of the Press for this transfer, pleads that "if real and genuine autonomy is secured to even a small province in our country a beginning will have been made of the ultimate realization of the goal that inspires all political groups over the whole of India." The difficulty is that one cannot be sure of "real and genuine autonomy" under an autocratic ruler like the Nizam. He has so far introduced no representative institutions in his own dominions. Unlike the Maharajas of Travancore and Mysore, he is very far from gravitating to the position of a "constitutional monarch." He believes in active personal rule, as his *firmans* daily and uncomfortably remind one. How can the people of Berar accept the Nizam's offer of autonomy to them at its face value when there is nothing like liberty of person or speech in Hyderabad itself, and when the census report proclaims a steady decrease of literacy during the last twenty years, owing undoubtedly to the emigration of self-respecting people? If the Nizam began administrative reforms forthwith, giving his Hindu subjects a fair share in the appointments, and brought up his administration to the level of Mysore in ten or twelve years, then it will be time enough for the people of Berar to consider the Nizam's proposal seriously, or for outside publicists to plead with them on the Nizam's behalf. At present the question seems to be a simple one: a bird in hand or two in the bush?

* * *

THE National Missionary Council of India having become the National Christian Council of India, its organ, the *Harvest Field*, has now also changed its title to "National Christian Council Review". In its February number to hand an article by the editor, the Rev. W. Paton, on "The Opium Traffic of India: the next step", bulks largely. It deals with the production and consumption of opium in India and its export from India; the international action taken on the opium traffic; and the position of India, from the official and from the prohibitionist point of view: and is full of general facts and figures, though silent on the physiological effects of the drug. "The next step" apparently is prompted by an appeal of the China Christian Council and the International Missionary Council to the National Christian Council of India to collaborate in bringing about international suppression of the whole traffic, and consists in a request for information as to what the truth is about the use of opium in India; and what the real opinion

A bird in hand or two in the bush?

of Indians is on the subject. As regards the latter point, we are inclined to agree that "there is no effective opinion against the use of opium in India". The reason for this clearly is that there are no facts before the public, but only statements coloured by the personal preconceptions of those that make them. We wholeheartedly agree therefore with Mr. Paton in the urgency of ascertaining "the actual effects of opium eating in India." It is quite conceivable that the use of opium in certain doses and in certain forms may not be injurious: much as is the case with nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, theobromine, arecoline &c. On the other hand it may be always injurious. Surely the facts are scientifically ascertainable: before all things then is it needful that they should be ascertained and authoritatively set forth. No right thinking Indian but will support the demand made for eradicating all the abuse to which opium and its derivatives is put: the unfortunate fact remains that the very term "abuse" has never been scientifically defined, and we only hope that Mr. Paton and his friends will succeed in obtaining at last that solid basis of fact without which even the best-intended superstructure of propaganda must ultimately collapse.

* * *

THE Gokhale anniversary was celebrated in Poona as usual on the 19th inst. by the Servants of India Society and the Deccan Sabha. The latter convened a public meeting, which was largely attended, Prof. V. B. Naik of the Fergusson College being the principal speaker. On that occasion the Secretary of the Gokhale Hall Trustees made a statement about the progress of the Fund, which we print in another column. The public of Poona are very much indebted to H. H. the Aga Khan, who was an intimate friend of Gokhale's, for having headed the subscription list with a handsome contribution of Rs. 10,000. Nor can one speak too highly of Mrs. Dhavale's donation. We only trust that their example will be largely followed and that we shall soon have in Poona a fitting memorial to Gokhale's unexcelled services to the country. Even apart from this, the Hall, which will presumably be available for public meetings and functions, is a great desideratum in Poona; and if one is to judge from the calls already made on the site of the Hall with such buildings as are on it, there can be no doubt that the building will become a centre of progressive movements in the Deccan. But for this a sum of three quarters of a lakh is necessary, which, considering the large number of friends and admirers whom Gokhale has left behind, should be soon forthcoming.

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THE KENYA STRUGGLE.

IN accordance with the resolutions passed by the East African Indian Congress last month, our countrymen in Kenya have refused payment of the poll tax. This has naturally led to the Government there taking action against the Indian community. But the latter are quite firm and thoroughly self-reliant, as Mr. Vaze who has gone there to acquaint himself first hand with the state of things there, bore testimony in these columns last week. In a crisis like the present it is of the utmost importance that Indian opinion of every shade should give unstinted support to our fellow-countrymen on the other side of the ocean. Non-payment of taxes is no doubt an extreme step, but it is a perfectly constitutional one. It would be relevant to remind our readers on this occasion, our fellow Liberals particularly, that this opinion was clearly expressed by the late Mr. Gokhale at a great meeting in Allahabad in 1907. It is not a step to be lightly taken, nor is it practicable in every place. But our brothers in East Africa, who alone know where the shoe pinches, have given their best thought to the matter and fully realise the consequences of their action. Let us trust their judgment and not offer arm-chair advice. When the heart of Bengal was lacerated by the partition of that province, its people launched a vigorous boycott of British goods without consulting the leaders of other provinces, and though some of them were not in favour of it at the time, they all felt it their duty to stand by the afflicted people of Bengal. Similarly, during the passive resistance struggle in South Africa, the people of India gave unanimous and unstinted support of every kind. Not only the people but even the Government of India fully realised their duty at the time and Lord Hardinge unhesitatingly placed himself at the head of the movement. Therefore let there not be a single Liberal but will resolutely defend and support the extreme action which Indians in Kenya have been compelled to take in the last resort and let this support be expressed in the clearest and most emphatic manner, so that it may be made perfectly clear to the world that India stands solidly by the Indians in Kenya in the action they have taken.

The Government of India should realise that no question affecting India is more important than the status of Indians in Kenya and that the time is come for Lord Reading to follow the example of Lord Hardinge and openly defend the action of the Kenya Indians. It is very regrettable that the overseas committee, for which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru fought so valiantly against odds and the chances of whose success are rendered much brighter by the Labour Party coming into office, has not yet been appointed and its personnel disclosed. The situation does not brook delay; the committee should be appointed immediately.

It is highly desirable that Sir B. N. Sarma should head the committee for several reasons. Firstly, the world at large and the British Commonwealth in particular, must be impressed with the feeling which India attaches to the subject and it can be best shown by deputing one of the Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council to be at the head of the committee. That will indicate the importance attached by the Government and the people to the subject. Secondly, it is reported that at the last Imperial Conference General Smuts twitted Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru that he was not even an ordinary member of the Government of India and refused to treat him on a footing of equality with the other members of the Conference. That is indeed a defect of the constitution under which India is being governed and it is not India's fault. All the same, as General Smuts made a point of it, the reproach should be removed to the best of our capacity. We have nobody corresponding to the Premiers in the Dominions. The next best thing is to depute a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. There may be legal difficulties in adopting such a course but they are not insurmountable. There have been several instances of Executive Councillors going out on deputations. Sir Mahadev Chaubal served on the last Public Services Commission and returned to the Bombay Executive Council. Sir Muhammad Habibullah of the Madras Council is just now on another Royal Commission. Sir Charles Innes represented India at the Imperial Economic Conference, though it is true that he left India on sick leave. Some way must be found, and it can be found, to send a Member of the Viceroy's Council. As for the person, Sir B. N. Sarma is the best person for it. As a non-official Indian politician, who accepted office, his sympathy for the Indian case cannot be doubted. Further, he brings to the subject a knowledge, obtained in the course of his official duties which no non-official can claim to. He must know more fully than the public have been made aware of how bad is the plight of the Indians, and how wicked the action of the whites. It would not be in keeping with the dignity of the position he holds that he should be any other than the Chairman of the committee. His appointment as Chairman will greatly appeal to the sentiments of Indians. Thus considered from every point of view, his heading the committee seems to be the best under the circumstances.

CONFIDENCE.

Mr. MACDONALD, meeting the House of Commons on the 12th for the first time as Prime Minister, announced that the new Government was going to pursue "a policy of confidence"; and again on the 15th, concluding an interview he had granted to Mr. Sauerwin on Anglo-French relations, he repeated: "Let us work with confidence." "Confidence", then, is to succeed "honesty", as honesty succeeded

"tranquillity". Whence is this confidence to spring? As for the large masses of the English people it exists already. "Old Mac has been right before; probably he is right again now" is the general attitude of his people towards him. To understand that, one must try and remember how only a few years ago his name was execrated as a "Pro-German" and a "Traitor" up and down the length and breadth of the British Isles. Let us remember that even his own constituency, which is now as safely his, as Carnarvon District ever was Mr. George's, only five years ago put him at the bottom of the poll. And to day that man, whose very name made so many English people foam at their mouth, is Prime Minister of the realm; that man is universally assured, though holding only a minority of votes in Parliament, that no change of Government is desired now, whatever dialectical sparks may fly in the House, and as a seal of national approval—*more anglico*—the king sends his eldest son to lunch with that self same man as his host at No. 10 Downing St. And remember also, that Mr. MacDonald does not hold his present position, because people have short memories: the very opposite is the truth. After having been gulled for five years of war and five years of peace by the men who made both, a disillusioned people has deliberately called for the outstanding figure amongst those men, who from the very start stoutly opposed the one and the other. "Old Mac was right then."

Take another point. Mr. MacDonald to day is Prime Minister, because he is the leader of the Labour Party. Yes—but he also happens to be the party's creator. He was the first Secretary of the "Labour Representation Committee," (consisting of representatives of the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation, the Fabian Society and the Trade Unions) which was formed for the purpose of returning "Labour" representatives to Parliament. Remember that until 1893 the Trade Unions abhorred politics and that if there was one thing which they abhorred more, it was Socialism. The tradition was for people, who for industrial purposes were trade-unionists, to be for political purposes Liberals. Keir Hardie in 1893 founded the Independent Labour Party, so called because its sole aim was to make the Labour Party independent of the Liberals, and definitely set out to commit the Trade-Unionists to Socialism. But let us remember that at that fateful Trade Union Congress the three I. L. P. delegates who succeeded in persuading the Congress to adopt a definite Socialist platform, were led by Mr. MacDonald. And Mr. MacDonald's, to quote a fine sketch from the *Spectator* of January 26st (by Capt. R. Berkeley), "is a tremendous personality irradiating sincerity, a strong and original intellect, above all perhaps an infectious enthusiasm, a power of infusing into his speech a compelling quality of conviction." So Mr. MacDonald won the day, though the process was anything but easy: apart from the I. L. P., the

Labour Party until 1908 on principle still included non-Socialists. Socialism was thought to scare away adherents and was treated by Trade-Unionism accordingly as a purely academic issue. Again Mr. MacDonald and his associates in the I. L. P. contended that more, not less, Socialism was needed. They had their way in 1918 when the whole party was re-cast to become from a purely class party of manual labourers a nationwide party of all people who wished to "secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry": and as a result the Labour vote, which had been 63,000 in 1900 and five lakhs in 1910, rose in 1918 to 23 lakhs, and at this last election to 44 lakhs. "Old Mac was right then."

"Old Mac" inspires this confidence now, because for thirty long years of public life he himself has never wavered in the confidence he himself placed in his principles. As he said in the already quoted interview to the *Matin*, he has always been "strongly idealistic and has believed in the possibility of human progress." This strong strain of religious idealism is now made the principle rock of offence by all his bantering opponents, who from Lord Curzon downwards seem to imagine that they have quite dismissed the subject when they have proved it to be "idealistic." Mr. MacDonald, however, happens to possess a wider humanity than any of his opponents: he knows poverty from his own experience, but he knows easy circumstances too. "No head of any government," said Mr. Masterman in the *Manchester Guardian* of the 28th ult., "possesses more first-hand, stored-up knowledge of cities and men, or a larger personal acquaintanceship with the people of various politics, creeds and races." As a consequence, and although he is probably the best read Prime Minister of modern times, Mr. MacDonald does not deal in those fanciful abstractions "Capital," "Labour," "France," "India," "Unemployment" and all the rest of them. To him the problems usually pigeonholed under such labels are human problems, questions affecting this Bill Smith and that Sandy McTavish, this Alexandre Millerand and that Gopalrao Gokhale and the millions of their fellows, distinguished and undistinguished, who however are all human beings, just like you and me. He therefore has no use for stratagems and the complicated "formulas" beloved of diplomacy. Courteously and frankly, he deals even with M. Poincaré as man to man, and has confidence, that, when so approached, all outstanding questions are naturally soluble. His opponents and predecessors are obsessed by the fact that oblique rules the world: contemplating the resultant chaos, Mr. MacDonald refuses to assume that therefore only more oblique will reduce it to order. On the contrary, he has every confidence that obedience to the laws governing the private relations of man and man must likewise serve in his political relationships. Only obedience to the physical

laws of nature has enabled man to achieve those "conquests of nature" of which our machine age is so proud: is it really likely that conquests of a cultural, political and international nature are possible as long as violence is being done to every moral principle? Mr. MacDonald is one of those men who does not believe it and his compatriots anyhow are quite ready to let him make the experiment. "Old Mac has been right so often: why shouldn't he be now?"

Aloof from all sordid motives, indifferent to wealth and birth, with that indefinable attraction which comes of great sorrow nobly borne, "with unflinching intellectual courage, and with that dogged faith in the good sense of mankind that usually goes with his rather stern type of idealism" (to quote Capt. Berkeley again), Mr. MacDonald has taken up the reins of his great office, not with elation, but with a sense of the terrible responsibility entailed, as he said himself in the statement issued after the division which had sealed Mr. Baldwin's fate. Yet even that responsibility cannot quench his confidence—a confidence not in himself, as lesser men would have—but in that Righteousness, which alone compacteth the world and can keep it in its divinely-ordered course: and out of this confidence he appeals to Britain, to France, to all mankind, to "work together with confidence."

THE INDIAN ECONOMIC CONFERENCE.

II.

OF the questions discussed at the Conference, the one that called forth the greatest amount of eloquence, and occasioned not a small degree of heat (unaccompanied, alas!, by a corresponding amount of light) was that of the Currency. In a lengthy paper on the "Government of India and its Currency Policy" Professors P. A. Wadia and G. N. Joshi argued for the immediate introduction of the Gold Standard. There is, according to them "nothing so tragic in the entire history of British rule in India as the light-hearted and reckless manner in which her currency system has been meddled with by her foreign rulers since 1893. They impeach Government on five counts: (1) Its policy has been determined by the single idea that the sole object of a sound currency is to secure the stability of the exchange value of the rupee—an assumption fundamentally wrong and misleading. Any one who is familiar with the elementary principles of currency knows that a sound system of currency has to supply certain basic needs; it has to serve as a standard measure of value, a medium of exchange, a standard for deferred payments, and a store of values. The Gold Exchange Standard which was developed by 1899 aimed at securing only stability of exchange, and completely ignored the primary function of a sound monetary system, viz, stability in the purchasing power of the monetary unit. (2) By introducing an artificial monetary unit whose face value was greater than its intrinsic

sic value, Government reduced the savings of the masses by 40 per cent. (3) The profits of the silver coinage were kept in England for the ostensible purpose of stabilising exchange, but in reality to finance British commerce, and immense sums were disastrously frittered away by being locked up in securities that depreciated. (4) For the last thirty years the gold that should have come to India in settlement of the international claims has been artificially prevented from flowing to India by the Secretary of State's sale of Council Bills over and above his normal requirements, thus compelling the people of India to accept payment in a depreciated currency. Lastly, (5) the system has failed miserably to achieve even its professed object,—the stabilisation of exchange. It therefore stands condemned, and must be replaced by a genuine gold standard. And the present time is propitious: the present favourable balance, the present price of silver and the world demand for India's food produce and raw materials and the strength of her various reserves make up a combination of forces which will never recur in the future for realising the object of a sound monetary system.

There are some points in this argument which will be conceded at once. It is, for instance, a matter of very just complaint that the Gold Standard Reserve is kept in England, and finances British industry and commerce. Again, it is a perfectly sound answer which the authors of the paper make to those who have evinced a new-born admiration for the Gold Exchange Standard, and who are holding it forth for the imitation of Europe—a fresh instance of that light which proverbially comes from the East: the answer, that is, that the Gold Exchange Standard is only advocated for Europe as a *pis aller*, and that every European country would fain return to the Gold Standard as soon as possible.

On other points agreement will not be so general. It is true that the closing of the mints in 1893 was prompted primarily by the financial difficulties of Government, and that the object aimed at was stability of exchange; but does it follow from this that stability of the internal price-level was sacrificed to stability of exchange? Would the internal price-level have been more stable if the mints had not been closed in 1893, and India continued to have a Silver standard? There were men who believed in 1893, there are men who believe even to-day, that this would have been the wisest policy; that of the two precious metals silver has, through the centuries, been the more stable; and that the fall in the gold price of silver after 1874 was due, not to the depreciation of silver, but to the appreciation of gold. Our authors, however, are not among these. They are believers in gold. They think that the wisest course to follow after 1893 was the adoption of a Gold Standard. But (speaking only of the period 1900–1914, during which the Gold Exchange Standard was effectively maintained), it is difficult to see how this would

have made any difference at all to the price-level, for the silver rupee was during this period just a gold coin weighing 7.5 grains. In short, though acting primarily with a view to stability of exchange, Government cannot be charged with having sacrificed stability of the internal price level to stability of exchange; for in truth these two cannot be kept apart: they are intimately connected with each other.

It is often thought that Government had it in their power to inflate the currency by the sale of too many Council Bills, and that this led to a rise in the internal price-level. This is also the meaning of the charge, which the authors of the paper make more than once, that for the last thirty years Government have been defrauding India of her just share of gold. "From year to year India possesses a favourable balance;.....India can insist on being paid in gold under power of self-determination,"—if she were not defrauded of this by her Government. But if the currency were inflated, this would inevitably result in a lowering of exchange and Government could not maintain the latter at 1s. 4 d. except by reducing the superfluous currency. The position of India in this respect would not be different from that of any country which had temporarily received too large a volume of the precious metals. Again, if India is a creditor country, (Prof. Hamilton indeed denied this in the course of the discussion), what can prevent her from importing gold? The gold could be intercepted by the Secretary of State, and it could go to the Gold Standard Reserve, only when the Indian exporter preferred to be paid in the internal currency to being paid in gold, the only gold, therefore, of which India can properly be said to have been defrauded is the gold in the Gold Standard Reserve, and this, it has already been said, has long been justly a matter of complaint.

One cannot agree, either, with the authors of the paper when they say that the closing of the mints in 1893, and the artificial maintenance of the rupee at 1s. 4d., amounted to "reducing at a stroke the savings of the masses by 40%." If the savings were in rupees, people gained, not lost, by the appreciation of the rupee; if in bullion, they did not lose by that appreciation, except to the slight extent to which silver must have further depreciated on account of the closing of the mints. The true charge against Government's action is, not that it reduced the savings of the masses, but that it was, however disguised, an all-round increase of taxation.

Lastly, what about the future? Few would deny that the introduction of a gold standard is a "consummation devoutly to be wished." Sir Basil Blackett said in his Bombay speech that this is also the goal before Government. If so, is not the present time propitious, as Professors Wadia and Joshi urge? True, there are difficulties; there are in the country some 300 crores of rupees, and some 180 crores of notes, which will demand conversion into gold. But our trade

balance is favourable, and our reserves strong. The idea of the introduction of a gold standard, does not, therefore, seem impracticable. It would mean some deflation, and consequently depression of trade, but the country must be prepared to pay this price if it wants the inestimable blessing of a sound currency.

R. P. PATWARDHAN,

THE DELHI SESSION.

(FROM OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

DELHI, 16TH FEB. 1924.

THE absorbing topic of political India continues to be the question of constitutional advance. Almost every day there are meetings held, which are, however, confined to the elected members of the Assembly; its nominated members and the members of the Council of State being excluded. Besides the private deliberations of the Nationalist party, there are the open debates in the Assembly which have already taken two days and will take at least one day more, i. e., next Monday. There is further the National Conference promoted by Mrs. Bessant, which is expected to meet next week. Mr. Huq, the Bengal Minister, has also invited a meeting of the Ministers to consider the political situation. The Governors of Assam and the Central Provinces are here in Delhi. The new Secretary of State is expected to make a statement about India in Parliament next Tuesday. The political future of India is certainly not suffering neglect.

The debate on the National Demand which was resumed on Wednesday last was conducted in a tone different from that of the day previous. In the place of calm, businesslike but determined speeches of the 8th, the speeches of the non-official Indians were passionate, rhetorical, declamatory but sometimes rising to real eloquence as in the case of Mr. Chamanlal, who captivated the house by his manner, though not by his matter. If Sir Purshottamdas and Pandit Malaviya heated up the atmosphere, Mr. Patel ushered in the tempest. He threw overboard all the restraint, compromise and suavity of his chief and thundered abundantly. Most of the speeches of the Independents were a vigorous denunciation of British policy in India, and the consequent need for Swaraj. Mr. Patel's speech will be a sore temptation for the Home Member to drop his persuasive and friendly tone of Friday last and adopt a militant and retaliatory tone with disastrous consequences, of which Mr. Patel had a taste when the Home Member quoted from the *Bombay Chronicle* a speech in which he was reported to have wished to uproot the British administration, while he was asserting in the Assembly that he certainly depended on the British troops in India against trouble on the frontiers. It was left to Pandit Motilal to restore in some measure a peaceful atmosphere. He refused to dive into past history, recent or remote. He was concerned with the present constitution, which left the Executive supreme, and that it must be ended by

self-determination of India. The Nationalist harmony was rudely disturbed by discordant notes from three nominated members, who opposed the resolution on communal grounds.

Persistent rumours of cables from England about a Royal Commission have created a problem for the Nationalist party, which may test its unity. Three schools are contending for preference among the Indian politicians, one advocating a royal commission, another a round table conference and the third the National Convention. The Swarajists seem to prefer a round table conference, because it conforms to the principle of self-determination, and at the same time gives a place to Government in it. The National Convention conforms to self-determination, but does not find place for Government. The royal commission violates self-determination. The Independents would accept with a good grace a royal commission, which will do the work in a more businesslike manner and be more acceptable to Parliament, and if proper evidence is led before it, give us almost all that we want. They are willing to forego the flattering notion of self-determination, provided they get what they want. But those that advocate the National Convention and a round table conference put as much stress on the method as on the results.

Under such circumstances, it is surprising how Mr. Nehru's amendment left the personnel of a round table conference to Government. How do nominations to a royal commission made by the Secretary of State take away from self-determination, while nominations by the Government of India to a round table conference do not? It is answered by some Swarajists that they trust the Government to make good and really representative nominations. Even the most conservative of Liberals have repeatedly complained that what a generous Parliament gave, a bureaucratic Government in India took away. But for Swarajists to put their faith in a "satanic" Government to make right nominations, is something very surprising indeed. But this is one more instance of the anomalies and compromises of the situation.

Some Swarajists, who are keen on a round table conference, would in case the Government refuses such a conference, fall back on the National Convention and prepare a scheme of Swaraj on their own hook, without the assistance of Government, while adopting obstruction in the Assembly. Hopes are entertained that when once a royal commission is announced, the Independents will bring round the Swarajists to accept it.

Significance is attached to the repeated adjournments of the debates on the National Demand. It is said by some that Government welcomed the gain in time to communicate with the Secretary of State with a view to liberalise their offer; while others attribute a sinister motive to the Government that if only they let the politicians talk sufficiently long, dissipated tendencies would assert themselves and break up the unity of

the different parties, interests, and communities, which have combined together more in a fit of frenzy than in solid understanding. Perhaps there is some truth in both. Col. Gidney and Moulvi Abdul Kassim have arrived and made speeches in the Assembly opposing the resolution. The Raja Saheb of Muhammadabad is also here, it is supposed, to advise the Muhammadans. Some Muhammadans seem to insist that a Hindu-Muslim pact must precede a united demand for further advance and Mr. Jinnah's influence may not prove strong enough to curb this enterprise.

Compromise is essential in practical politics and everyday one comes across instances of it here. A resolution actually congratulating the Labour Government on their accession to office was supported not only by the Independents but also by the Swarajists, in the persons of Pandit Motilal Nehru, and Pandit Malaviya is actively canvassing support from them for a deputation to England. This welcome change is due partly to the need for unity between the Independents and the Swarajists. The result, if not the cause, of the spirit of sweet reasonableness on the part of the Swarajists is that it puts Government in the wrong if it refuses a generous response.

The ease and certainty with which the Government is defeated when the Swarajists make up their mind, is characteristic of the present Assembly. It is impossible now for the Government to depend on chance combinations of groups and individuals to carry their point. It must be very depressing to the Government to suffer defeat after defeat, irrespective of the merits of the case and it would be more than human, to expect its members, who after all are human, to work with enthusiasm under such circumstances of refined cruelty.

Mr. Ramachandra Rao's resolution that important contracts entered into by the Government with companies for the working of railways and mails by sea etc. was carried against the Government, as also Mr. Jinnah's resolution about Stores' Purchase as amended by Mr. Wilson. So also the resolution about facilities on railways. But in all these cases the Government's position was weak and the Swarajist leader cannot be fairly accused of blindly moving his steam-roller.

Sir Malcolm Hailey deserves the thanks of social reformers for the various bills he is after all introducing with a view to bringing the age of consent from 16 to 18 in the general law of the country. It is rumoured that the select committee has reported favourably regarding the raising of age in the matter of punishing the seller and purchaser and procurer of minors for immoral purposes, while deleting the section referring to kidnapping for the present. As the law stands, motive has no place in Sec. 361 which refers to kidnapping. A change here will take away the liberty of a girl under 18 to contract even a marriage, if she is

unable to obtain the consent of her legal guardian. This allegedly is opposed to Muhammadan law and also prevents a progressive Hindu widow with a reactionary guardian from marrying again until she is 18! On the other hand it is admitted that there seems to be a nefarious trade in certain parts of Northern India for kidnapping girls and selling them in marriage in distant parts.

The Council of State deserves some notice this week. It has passed the Reciprocity bill which was passed in the last session of the Assembly at the instance of Dr. Gour. It was feared that Government might oppose it as in the Assembly or find means to shelve it, but actually remained neutral. A vigorous speech from Mr. Sastri decided the issue for the House and the bill was carried.

It is not often that Art finds a place in the debates of the Legislatures. The Council of State discussed Mr. Pheroze Sethna's resolution that the mural paintings in the Government House in the New Capital should be entrusted to Indian artists, preferably the students of the Bombay School of Art. Incidentally it was mentioned that Sir Edward Lutyens was opposed to Indian painting. It is to be hoped that when the work is actually taken in hand, artists from all over India, particularly the leaders of the Bengal School of Painting, will be consulted.

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, JAN. 31st 1924.

MR. THOMAS has come very nearly to making a capital blunder at the very beginning of his official career. We all appreciate him as an industrial leader of great ability and foresight, and we are glad that he did not lead his union into joining the great railway strike that has just been ended by a compromise that could easily have been arranged without any strike at all. He is a skilled negotiator and easily one of the foremost of the trades union leaders. But as a Minister he has still his spurs to earn. He told an audience this week that, when he went over to the Colonial Office to take charge, and explained to the accosting guardian of the official portals that he was the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, that sceptical subordinate, turning in pity to a colleague of similar rank standing nearby, remarked: "Ere's another of them blokes suffering from shell-shock." Now Mr. Thomas is not suffering from shell-shock, but he is not at all well-informed of the principal matters to be dealt with by his department or of the party commitments in regard to those matters. For instance, on Tuesday he met a group of journalists representing (we are told), the Dominions and Indian press (though, so far as I am aware, not a single representative of the Indian owned and edited press was invited), and talked to them about his policy at the Colonial Office. In answer to a question about the Kenya Indian problem,

Mr. Thomas assured his hearers that he was convinced that the doctrine of native trusteeship should be maintained, and added that he proposed to follow his predecessor's White Paper policy, as at present advised. In the form in which this statement appeared in the press yesterday, it was clear that some grave misapprehension would undoubtedly be created in India, unless it was modified and conditioned in many important respects, and I learn that Mr. Polak, on behalf of the Indians Overseas Association, made immediate representations in that sense to the India and Colonial Offices and to the Prime Minister, reminding them that there was a definite pledge of revision by the Labour Party, made only six months ago by Col. Wedgwood at the direct instance of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and that the Colonial Office are under obligation, in terms of the Imperial Conference decision, to receive the representations of the Committee to be appointed by the Government of India. I have reason to believe that Mr. Thomas's real purpose was to make it clear that, in his opinion, native interests must prevail, and that he did not intend to commit himself to the White Paper policy as regards the controversy between the Indian and white communities in Kenya. The Secretary of State for India is, I have reason to know, alive to the dangers of any commitments by the Labour Government in the sense of the White Paper decisions. I am informed that the late Government, before leaving office, had definitely turned down the Kenya Immigration Bill. I understand that the Secretary of State for India had throughout taken the view that no Immigration Bill is required in view of the stationary character of the Indian population. It is to be hoped that one of the first actions of the new regime will be to postpone giving effect to the new franchise law, in order to reinvestigate the whole question of a communal franchise, which the Kenya Indians have properly refused to accept.

Now that more time has passed enabling a better knowledge of the new Secretary of State for India to be obtained, I learn from those who are in a position to judge that he is most highly thought of as a man of strength and excellent mental equipment. He had a very high reputation, as a man, an administrator and a practical social worker, during his West Indian days. There it was that he formed a good opinion of the economic and social value of the Indian immigrant, and he is the last man to be stampeded with the argument that the advent or the stay of the Indian in Kenya is a natural economic menace to the African negro. I am strongly of opinion that the new Ministry should be given, not only the chance to which, as a matter of common fairplay, they are entitled, but that they should be encouraged to follow the path of progress and that they should be armed with the weapons that will enable them to put to rout the reactionaries. It would be just as foolish for the impatient idealists on your side to force their hands, inevitably in the

wrong direction, as for the reactionaries on your side, as the Liberal papers warn us, to attempt to drag us into hostilities on the north-west frontier and endanger our relations with Afghanistan. It is certain that the Councils cannot be wrecked. If they could be, then the Government would go on nevertheless, and reaction in India would undoubtedly, in the circumstances, have the support of all parties here. The British left wing would not seriously count. On the other hand, it would enormously encourage the friends of Indian reform and constitutional progress if the new Councils were worked for all they are worth. There are a lot of genuine friends of India. They occasionally go wrong, and sometimes egregiously wrong, and then they are genuinely contrite. Their occasional vagaries could quite easily have been prevented or at any rate modified, had there been the necessary well-equipped London organization for which we have clamoured for so long. But it is useless to think that any effective work can be done here either by immature politicians, or by ill-informed and ill-mannered agents, or by yells, shouts, and threats, or by going to the people who can do little but obstruct. It is your best representatives, of whatever party, preferably those who have some knowledge of the psychology of the Britisher, that alone can do the work that so badly needs doing, and in the right spirit. It is useless telling the Britisher that you suspect his every action and motive, and then ask him to behave like a gentleman. He will retort that whatever he does will not convince you that he is one. If, on the other hand, it is made clear to him that the best is expected of him, that India wishes once again to hold him in the highest respect, that his good faith is the greatest asset towards the re-establishment of mutual confidence, he will certainly respond, and past decisions will not be allowed to stand in the way of what commonsense demands.

Mr. Hope Simpson's address, the other day, at the National Liberal Club, is just the sort of reasoned argument that appeals to thinking men here. Indian aspirations cannot be expected to weigh nearly so strongly with an Englishman as the conviction that change is necessary in the interests of good and efficient government. Having brought home this conviction to him, it will be easy to appeal to his sentiment, for he always likes to have a good moral reason for covering up apparent inconsistencies. I would therefore seriously appeal for a reconsideration of the tactics that have found favour in many quarters in India of late, and urge upon the political leaders the desirability of dropping generalisations broadcasted at a distance, of which few people take any notice, and rather adopt the older and better tried method of personal argument and discussion on the spot. I cannot think of a better time than the present, before opinion in governing circles has set and crystallised, to come face to face with the British leaders and talk over the immediate needs of the

Indian situation. Of this, I think, you may be practically certain. Congress resolutions will carry little weight here. It is in the Assembly that the voice of India will be listened to. If merely obstructionist tactics are persisted in, they will simply disgust and carry just the opposite conviction to that which the obstructionists are seeking. On the other hand, a Government that sets the utmost store by constitutional methods and that has achieved office itself by the adoption of those very methods in the face of much temptation to try a short cut, is bound to listen attentively to the demand put forward through the usual constitutional channels for further constitutional advance in India. I can give the most positive assurance that some of India's best friends in the Cabinet will urge that only the authentic voice of India in the Assembly deserves consideration at the hands of the Labour Government. It is quite useless to assert and reassert that we ought to know all India's grievances and if we don't, so much the worse for us. Those grievances ought to be brought home, in season and out of season to us, and to those who, in turn, represent us from time to time in Downing Street and Whitehall, in the only way that British constitutionalists recognise. Silence and sulking, abuse and neglect of opportunity, will achieve no positive results. But they will secure very unfortunate and undesirable negative ones.

The telegram from Bombay, to the effect that Mr. MacDonald has sent a message to India, in the course of which he is stated to have said that "he refuses to be cowed by threats of force or policies designed to bring the Government to a standstill", is not readily understood here, for no such message has appeared in the English press. Whether he delivered such a message or not, it is certain that no British Premier could possibly say less, and if he has sent such a message, Mr. MacDonald can rely upon the support of all parties in the sentiments thus expressed. Nothing could be more foolish, from the point of view of Indian constitutional reform than to antagonise the Labour Party and make it impossible for the Liberals to support whatever measure of reform the Labour Government may be contemplating, and of which they have so far given no indication.

In the light of the arguments coming from South Africa and elsewhere in the Dominions on the subject of the effect upon economic and sociological conditions consequent upon Asiatic immigration—I have even heard some of the very arguments used by a distinguished Bengali with reference to the incursions into Calcutta of the Marawari community—the following remarkable revelations concerning sociological changes in the industrial areas of Scotland made by the Rev. Dr. Cameron, in a press interview following on a lecture last night at the Essex Hall, on "The Race problem in Scotland", are of special interest. He said that the annual rate of non-British immigration into Scotland was increasing so rapidly that in a measura-

ble period of time the country would be an alien land in sympathy with the Republicanism of Ireland. "So serious is the situation," he pointed out, "that the two most powerful bodies in Scotland, the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church, have unanimously decided to urge upon the Government to 'inquire into the situation, with a view to the preservation and protection of Scottish nationality and civilisation.' A memorandum has been prepared for presentation to the Prime Minister, and he will be asked to receive a deputation. "To-day," continued Dr. Cameron, "there are approximately 650,000 Irish people in the industrial belt stretching from Greenock to Dundee, but chiefly on the Clyde. The trouble is that wherever the Irish go they create slums. In Scotland the non-British races are inferior people. Statistics show that since 1920, approximately 50 per cent of the persons convicted in Scotland were Irish; in 1922, 44 per cent of the patients in the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, were Irish. Englishmen," he concluded, "must now face the plain question: Are you going to turn adrift from their land one of the most efficient races of the Empire? If not, something must be done to regulate the immigration into Scotland of non-British peoples."

Now this is not at all as easy as it looks. The "non-British" peoples to whom Dr. Cameron refers, are actually white British subjects. It will be a novel thing in British political experience for the people of this country to be asked to limit the entry into any part of Great Britain of white Britishers. It is not as though such immigration comes direct from the Irish Free State. It may come via Northern Ireland, and that is still constitutionally a part of the Britain directly governed by the British Parliament.

Whilst the suggestion may come with great force to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in his capacity of a son of Scotland, I am not so certain how it will appeal to him in his capacity as Labour leader and head of a Labour Government. We have hitherto regarded Clydeside and the other Labour strongholds in Scotland, upon which Mr. MacDonald must largely depend for his support, as being pre-eminently Scottish, especially when judged from the Doric accents of Mr. Kirkwood and his friends in argument or defiance across the floor of the house. But Dr. Cameron's remarks indicate that the Scottish Labour vote is very largely, and perhaps predominantly, Irish, in fact, and this shows yet one more of the dire consequences of the policy of privilege and repression pursued by successive Tory Governments in Ireland. We have not yet come to the end of the long and ugly story.

THE GOKHALE HALL, POONA.

The Trustees desire to take this opportunity for making a statement as to the progress so far made with the scheme of the Gokhale Hall, Poona, which was formally inaugurated this day two years ago. During the time that has since elapsed, promises of support amounting to about Rs. 60,000

were secured, out of which nearly Rs. 41,000 have already been collected.

It will be remembered that on a similar occasion last year, an announcement was made to the effect that the whole of the premises now in the occupation of the Deccan Sabha had from that day belonged to the Trustees. This, it is needless to point out, meant that the loan of Rs. 30,000 from the Poona Bank together with the interest charges thereon which came to about Rs. 1500, taken for the purpose of purchasing the valuable site for the proposed Hall, had been duly repaid. An additional sum of Rs. 1000 was required for meeting expenses connected with the sale deed, travelling, conveyance, printing stationery and the like. The amount at present in the Bank to the credit of the Hall is nearly Rs. 9000.

The Trustees cannot allow this occasion to pass without offering their grateful thanks to His Highness the Aga Khan for his promised handsome donation of Rs. 10,000 towards the funds of the Hall. They also desire to express their sense of appreciation of the generous contribution of Rs. 5000 made by Mrs. Anandibai Dhavale (Mr. Gokhale's daughter) for the same purpose. These contributions together with the money in the Bank form a valuable nucleus of the building fund of the Hall and the Trustees hope to be shortly in a position to have the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the proposed building.

The site for the Hall having been secured, it is estimated that the building alone will cost nearly three-quarters of a lakh; and the Trustees appeal to the generous and charitably disposed public to co-operate with them in giving Poona before very long a Hall worthy of the great name after which it will be called and of the historic city in which it will be located.

D. V. AMBERAB,
Secretary to the Trustees.

February, 19, 1924.
Deccan Sabha Rooms,
1013, Sadashiv Peth, Poona City.

CORRESPONDENCE.

BOGUS DEGREES.

TO THE EDITOR THE SERVANT OF INDIA

The ambition of young University students to get higher degrees such as Ph. D., D. Lit. or M. D. is really praiseworthy. In all foreign and even in Indian Universities of repute residential and other necessary qualifications are required on the part of candidates for such degrees. These requirements are slackened only in the case of learned persons of established literary and scientific fame such as Dr. Bose, Dr. Tagore, etc. To acquire these degrees from foreign countries such as America, France and Germany through post by paying a certain amount of fees is really lowering the standard of higher education in this country. Especially is it degrading and demoralising for our educated men to aspire to get such degrees in Sanskrit Literature and Sanskrit Philosophy from countries like America where no Sanskritists of fame are living now. For the last five or six years one Oriental University of Washington, U. S. A., is making a flourishing business of selling Ph.D. degrees to educated Indians who are desirous of having such degrees after their names. As far as I know many gentlemen of repute and even College Professors and one Shankaracharya have up till now obtained such degrees from America from the said University.

These gentlemen have rather raised the status of this degree than getting their own status raised in any way by taking the Ph. D. degree of the Oriental University of Washington. In connection with this University the American College Bulletin for December 1923 states that a fraud order has been issued against it by the Post Master General of New York. He says that this is a scheme for obtaining money through the mails by means of false and fraudulent pretences and promises. It is of course no fault of these gentlemen that they were deceived by such a Bogus University.

I greatly desire that our young students should aspire for real degrees earned in India or Europe by sheer merit and solid work. Some Universities in India have instituted such degrees and those who are charmed by the glare of the Ph. D. should go in for it by fulfilling the conditions here. The public also should understand their responsibility and refuse to recognise high-sounding degrees obtained by mere correspondence from unknown foreign Universities. If great foreign Universities give these degrees as a mark of respect then the question is quite different. Those who have got degrees now from the Oriental University should renounce them publicly and set a good example to our young men.

G. M. CHEPLUNKER, M. A.
Poona City.

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This pamphlet is published under the authority of the Daxini Sansthan Hitvardhak Sabha. It contains a full report of the debate in the Legislative Assembly at the time of the introduction of the Bill, in the Council of State at its passing and in the House of Commons on the motion of Col. Wedgwood, M. P. It contains all the published Government papers pertaining this question; the evidence given on this subject by witnesses before the Press Laws Committee; the petitions presented to Parliament on behalf of the Daxini Sansthan Hitvardhak Sabha, Kathiawar Hitvardhak Sabha and the Progressive Association of Bombay. The articles of Messrs. N. C. Kelkar, Mansukhalal Metha and G. R. Abhyankar dealing with this question are fully reproduced. Press opinions from about 25 leading papers are given in a separate Appendix. In the introduction the Government case has been fully examined and the unsoundness of its arguments exposed. Price Rupees two. Postage Extra.

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