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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE debate on Indian Labour in the British Parliament last week was infructuous, but it indicates the keen interest which the Labour Party in England is taking in the welfare of labourers in India. The sincerity of that interest is doubted in some quarters, for in the past the Manchester Chamber of Commerce showed great solicitude for the welfare of the Bombay mill-hand, only in order to deprive the Bombay mill industry of the natural advantages it possessed over Lancashire. We do not believe that such selfish motives exist in the case of Labour M. P.'s. Mr. Grundy's motion was: "The conditions of labour and wages in India are so serious as to call for such changes in the Indian constitution as to secure votes for and representation of the workers and peasants of India in both the Assembly and the Legislative Councils". The conditions of labour are no doubt bad and wages low, but we are unable to see how Mr. Grundy's proposal can remedy them. If labour is not at present directly represented in the legislatures, it is not due to any unwillingness on the part of Government or opposition from the educated classes, but to the fact that even industrial labour is not sufficiently organised, while agricultural labour is altogether unorganised. In addition, it is almost wholly illiterate and very ignorant. Labour has therefore had to be represented indirectly by nomination and, it cannot be said that so far such representatives have failed to look after the interests of labour. Nor have the legislatures, particularly the Assembly, been unresponsive, as is shown by the readiness with which the recommendations of the League of Nations are being given legislative effect to. No

change of constitution is therefore called for in the interests of labour.

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THE labourer in India gets a very low wage and consequently his standard of living is low. If he organised himself effectively and at the same time increased his efficiency, he would be able to get a much higher wage in organised industries. The state also could then help him by requiring the capitalist to provide proper housing, medical aid, sickness and unemployment insurance and other benefits. Such schemes cannot be thought of at present because the industries are unable to bear the charge and they will continue unable to bear the charge, until the efficiency of our labour is greatly improved. Even so, there is a limit to the benefits that could accrue from collective bargaining and state intervention. By these methods you would no doubt be able to rectify unfair distribution of wealth, but unless the total production of wealth is sufficient to maintain the whole population in tolerable comfort, there can be no real increase in wages or the standard of living. The Under Secretary of State mentioned the annual income per head in India as Rs. 60, the figure arrived at by Sir M. Visvesvaraya. Some economists put it higher and Prof. Gilbert Slater puts it at Rs. 100. Even if we accepted the last figure and spread the income evenly on the whole population, each family would get for the whole year only Rs. 450, calculating 4.5 persons per family. In other words, in the present economic state of the country, the highest minimum wage theoretically possible for a whole family is one and a half rupees per day, taking 300 as the number of working days in the year. If Sir M. Visvesvaraya's figure be taken, not even one rupee would be available. Thus unless production is greatly increased, there can be no appreciable rise in the standard of living. This increased production has to take place in the field of agriculture as well as of industries. The average educated Indian is sufficiently aware of the need for industrial development, but even more important and affording greater scope is the development of agriculture.

* * *

IN one of the illuminating articles which he is contributing to the *Times of India* on the subject of reforms, Mr. Chintamani points out how, by placing the finance department in charge of an executive councillor,

practically the system of divided purse has been brought in force in the provinces. The proposal for introducing the system, which was made by the Government of India, was turned down by the Joint Select Committee; but the latter had not the perspicacity to see that by making one in charge of reserved subjects a Finance Member, the same system would be revived in another form. For it would be but human if, in the circumstances in which he found himself, the Finance Member showed some partiality to the reserved departments and looked a little askance at the transferred. He could also put a veto upon schemes to which a Minister might have given administrative sanction and thus bring to naught all that a Minister might have planned. The Joint Committee had apparently foreseen this difficulty to some extent and had therefore recommended the appointment of a joint finance secretary. This was, however, a palliative which was not found serviceable in any province. None of the difficulties which were actually experienced by those who undertook to carry on the administration had been unforeseen by them. They had, before being called to office, protested most vigorously, as witness the National Liberal Federation's resolutions on the subject. The subsequent experience only adds point to the criticism then made. This reform falls well within the restricted sphere within which the Government of India's committee is working, and we hope therefore that it will see its way to remedy this defect, which does not call for any structural changes in the Act but merely an amendment of rules.

MAHATMA GANDHI in last week's *Young India* opposes the boycott of Empire goods as a measure of seeking justice in the matter of the Kenya decision. He disapproves of it because it is unpractical, but above all reprobates it as a measure inspired by hatred and ill-will. We do not for the moment propose to deal with the Mahatma's criticism to the effect that it is not possible to carry out the boycott effectively. Supposing all that he says on this score is true, it would at best be an indiscreet decision. But his other criticism that it is an immoral decision compels serious consideration, as we still cherish the ambition, though we are "co-operators," of having some little regard for morality. And on thinking the matter over, we feel that Mahatmaji's reasoning is vitiated by confusion between anger and hatred. This subject has been treated in the abstract in our issues of September 13 and 20 of last year, to which we would request the attention of the curious. And it would perhaps be useful to reproduce here an extract from S. Thomas Aquinas which we gave on that occasion to elucidate the difference between hatred and anger. Both seek to inflict injury upon those who have done a wrong, but whereas hatred wishes them evil for evil's sake, anger wishes them evil as a means of just vengeance. S. Thomas says in

"Summa": "The object of anger is the same in substance as the object of hatred; since, just as the hater wishes evil to him whom he hates, so does the angry man wish evil to him with whom he is angry. But there is a difference of aspect: for the hater desires evil to his enemy as evil, whereas the angry man wishes evil to him with whom he is angry not as evil, but in so far as it has an aspect of good, that is, in so far as he reckons it as just, since it is a means of vengeance. Hatred implies application of evil to evil, whereas anger denotes application of good to evil."

DR. SUN-YAT-SEN, whose death was reported last week, was one of the greatest men not only of China but of the whole world. Born in 1866, he studied for medicine at Hongkong from 1887 to 1892 and set up practice at Canton. His heart, however, was in politics, and after the defeat of China by Japan in 1894 he and seventeen others formed a secret association for the overthrow of the Emperor, under whom they believed no progress would be possible. The members of the association were soon caught and beheaded, all except Dr. Sun, who soon managed to escape and reach London. There in 1896 he was kidnapped by the Chinese Embassy to be secretly deported to China for execution, but his English friends came to know of it and secured his release through the then Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury. After that he constantly toured in various countries and visited every colony of the Chinese, with the object of getting support for his cause. He risked every peril, and under various disguises he traversed, mostly on foot, every nook and corner of China enrolling friends, establishing secret societies and appointing agents. The revolution came at last in 1911, and when the Emperor abdicated the throne an appreciative public elected Dr. Sun President of the Chinese Republic. But he soon discovered the enormous power and influence of Yuan-Shai-Kai and in the interests of the country, resigned his Presidency in Yuan's favour and assisted his government. Later, military governors usurped power and chaos intervened. But before blaming Dr. Sun for having brought about a revolution without being able to restore order, one must remember the vastness of the country, its population, its backwardness and other factors. He cannot be blamed for not having achieved what probably no one could have achieved. But he did succeed in one thing. By his influence with Foreign Embassies he secured for China non-intervention from European powers and Japan. In 1921 he was elected to the presidency of the southern Government at Canton, which he held until death. Selflessness was the chief trait of his character and was the secret of his great influence with his own countrymen and outsiders.

STORES PURCHASE.

WHEN it is remembered that the Government of India purchases annually over 10 crores worth of stores, and when one considers the influence of such large purchases on the industrial development of India, the stores purchase policy of the Government is a matter of no small significance to the people. The new rules published in the Gazette of India of the 6th instant are the result of the recommendations of the Stores Purchase Committee which reported in 1920.

The Committee found that though it had been the policy of the Government to give preference to stores manufactured either wholly or substantially in India, the realisation of the policy in practice was defeated by the Stores Purchase Rules which required on the part of the individual purchasing officers a close comparison with foreign articles, and by the absence of a well-qualified and well-equipped agency to make purchases in India, with the result that stores, which are either manufactured in India or could be manufactured with some stimulus, continued to be purchased from England. The realization of the policy of Indian preference depended on the creation of an adequate organization in India which in turn depended on the determination of the Government to push through their professed policy. The Committee accordingly recommended that there should be a radical change in the Stores purchase policy of the Government, viz. that the centre of gravity should be shifted from London to Delhi, and that there should be created and developed in India an adequate Stores Department which within five years will become the chief office and reduce the present London Office to the position of a branch office subordinate to the head office in Delhi. The Government have accepted the Committee's recommendation to attach a preamble declaring in more emphatic terms their policy to be to make purchases with a view not only to economy and efficiency, but to encourage the industries of the country. So far so good.

But the recommendation vital to the realization of this policy the Government have not yet seen their way to accept, viz. the establishment of the chief Stores Department in India and the reduction of the London office to a branch office. During the debate on the Stores policy in the Assembly on 14th February last, the Hon'ble Mr. Chatterjee and the Hon'ble Sir Charles Innes contended that though the Government were keen on developing the Department in India, it was the Legislative Assembly and the Retrenchment Committee that were responsible for refusing the money necessary for it; and he claimed credit for Government for setting aside the Inchcape Committee recommendation and deciding in favour of a rapid development of the department. With all goodwill, we find it rather difficult to accept this story at its face value. Mr. W. S. J. Wilson had anticipated and met this argument about want of money to develop the department in India. He

observed, "My suggestion to that, Sir, is that the money is spent now, that we do not get services in London for nothing. We pay for them, either directly or indirectly and if the money is spent, our desire is that it should be spent in India." Large sums of money will certainly be wanted if the Government proposed to maintain intact the London office and create another in India. On this matter, which was specifically raised in the debate, no unequivocal reply was forthcoming from the Government to the effect that they intended to reduce the London office, to a branch of the office in India. It follows, therefore, that the Government have no intention at present to do so; and yet, that is vital to the oft emphasized policy of the Government to encourage Indian industries. The Government is again laying itself open to the accusation that their faith in their policy is feeble. Nor is this suspicion dissipated by the antecedent circumstances. Firstly, there has been an enormous delay in framing these rules; the Committee reported in 1920 and the Rules were promulgated in 1924, though there is very little in the new Rules to justify this delay. Secondly, in the words of the Committee, "the Government of India have not been generally successful in the effort made by them, from time to time, to procure relaxation of the Stores Rules, in respect of the encouragement of local industries and of the local purchase of imported stores, and this failure has been contributed to largely by the influence of the Stores Department of, and the consulting Engineers to, the India Office." It would have cleared the atmosphere very much if the resolution giving cover to the new Stores Purchase Rules had mentioned, as the Committee desired, that the Secretary of State had accepted a convention to delegate to the Government of India full control over stores purchase. All these circumstances give room to the suspicion that the heavy hand of the vested interests in London, is throttling the policy of the Government of India.

The New Stores Purchase Rules are certainly more liberal than the old. It is sufficient if the price of purely indigenous goods is "reasonable"; it need not be "not unfavourable". In purchasing articles partly manufactured in India, it is no longer necessary to institute a close comparison in price between them and similar articles available in London, or an enquiry as to whether a "substantial" part of the manufacture is done in India—conditions which in the past have effectively deterred purchasing officers from going in for them. But in the absence of a rule, similar to Rule No. 1 as drafted by the Committee, which provides for the supply of the necessary information regarding the resources in India for such purchases, and which compels officers to avail themselves of the Stores Department in India, the new Rules are not likely to improve the situation appreciably.

The Resolution is moreover silent with regard to the other recommendations made by the Committee which are very necessary to stimulate

manufacture in India, namely, the guaranteeing of orders for a definite period, the placing of orders at specially favourable rates for a limited time and the securing of favourable railway rates, besides protection to new industries.

With regard to all stores not manufactured in India, the Rules still look to London as the main and primary source of supply. The old rules only permitted the purchase in India of foreign goods within certain financial limits when such articles are already in India and their price compares favourably with the London price. The new rules permit, for the first time, the purchase only of plant and machinery and the parts thereof, from branches and technical agents in India of approved foreign manufacturers—not mere commercial importers—under certain conditions, which include that it should not cost more to purchase locally than from London; and that the local branch has a staff of mechanical experts, who can erect and repair the machinery it supplies. Though it is apparent that it is best in every way to purchase direct from foreign manufacturers from their places of manufacture, this departure in the new Rules is justified by the reason that foreign manufacturers will be induced to start branches in India, which will eventually develop into manufacturing centres, and thereby help the industrial development of this country. That is also the reason why purchases are not permitted from importers, pure and simple.

But it appears to us that this change in the policy will be more an excuse than an inducement for foreign manufacturers to open branches in India. As long as they are sure of orders coming to them, irrespective of their having branches in India or not, and as long as they do not derive any special advantages by opening branches in India, there is not much inducement for them to do so. The Committee advocated local purchases wherever possible, not even excluding rigidly the mere importer in fact, they would leave the Chief of the Stores Department in India absolutely free to purchase from whomsoever he liked, the manufacturer direct, or his branch in India, or the importer—or through the London Stores office, with a strong bias, however, in favour of local purchase—and they advocated special advantages for local manufacturers, which would be a strong inducement not only for Indians to start new industries but also for foreign manufacturers to open factories in India. The policy of the Government in the matter of foreign stores and, for the matter of that, the purchase of all their stores, remains materially unchanged,—purchase from London. They have just opened the doors a bit wider for local purchase. There is no inducement for it, much less a determined diversion towards local purchase. We will therefore be looking in vain for any rapid industrial development in India from the Government's new policy of stores purchase.

"GIVE THE NATIVE HIS LAND."

WE see welcome signs of a movement on the part of Missionary bodies in Kenya to obtain a partial redress of the wrong done to the natives by the land policy of the Kenya Government. At the beginning of British rule enormous grants of land were made to Europeans, who were for the most part not genuine farmers interested in development but speculators whose only concern was to sell away the land subsequently at a profit. Many of these were freehold grants at nominal prices, or if leasehold, leases were given for unconscionably long periods at ridiculously low rents. Later, the conditions were made a little more stringent and a precaution was taken that no individual could accumulate great tracts of country, but at the same time a wholesale spoliation of the natives was effected by marking off the whole highland area for the exclusive occupation of the whites. The highlands which cover about a tenth of the total area of Kenya, were set aside for alienation to the whites, who numbered at that time only about 2,000, and even now of the 7466 sq. miles that have been alienated to Europeans, only 429 sq. miles, or barely 6 per cent, have been brought actually under cultivation by them. These figures will make plain what a dog-in-the-manger policy the Kenya Government is pursuing by forbidding not only original grants, but subsequent transfers of land in the highlands to the non-whites.

But the injustice done to the natives goes much deeper. They are not only ousted from the best available land in the country, but even what remains to them is not theirs, according to the white-made law. They do not possess at present legal title even to an inch of land in their own country. It comes about in this way. Among the natives no individual ownership of land was recognised. All land belonged to the community as a whole and was held in trust by the chief and elders. According to the native customary tenure every individual within the community had a right to cultivate as much land as was necessary for himself and his family, but the ultimate ownership of land was vested in the community as a whole. Now the British Government, who did not object to giving away huge areas of land in fee simple to European land-jobbers, professed to maintain intact the native laws and customs and decided that no private titles to land could be allowed in the native reserves. But was a tribal or communal ownership of land legally recognised? No. The land law of 1915 declared all land occupied by the native tribes and all land reserved for the use of members of any native tribe to be Crown land, and the Government further took to themselves the right to dispose of it as seemed best to them. The section runs thus: "The Governor-in-Council may at any time by notice in the Gazette, if satisfied that the whole or any part of any land so reserved is not required for the use and support of the members of the native tribe for which it has been reserved, cancel such reservation as regards the whole or a part of such land and

thereupon the land, the reservation of which has been so cancelled, may be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of under this Ordinance. Provided that such notice shall not be published unless the approval of the Secretary of State shall have been first obtained." The net result of these proceedings was that no member of a native tribe could individually lay claim to a single acre of land, nor could all the members of the tribe do so collectively. The State was the owner, not of all land in the Colony (that would have been quite a sound measure of land nationalization), but of all land still left to the natives, and the Secretary of State was given the sole power to curtail the amount of native landholding at his pleasure.

It must not be supposed that though the Secretary of State is given the power, it is unlikely that he will ever exercise it. The white farmers in Kenya depend mostly upon an active use of this power to obtain an adequate supply of native labour. The European witnesses pleaded hard before the Labour Commission of 1912 that their labour difficulties would be removed only if the Government cut down the native reserves so that the natives would be forced out to work on the European farms. Several witnesses told the Commission in 1912 that the native reserves were being fully used at the time and would be quite insufficient for native requirements within a few years. And yet there was no question of enlarging the reserves, but only of abridging them still further. The white farmers' plea was not accepted in so many words by the Commission, but the effect of the recommendation it makes is none else. It says that the reserve should be so limited in area as to hold "sufficient land for the present population only," which means plainly that when the population grows, it should be forced to go out to work on European land. The law of 1915 says that the Governor-in-Council (and the Council now contains a very powerful non-official European element) may reduce the extent of a native reserve if he thinks that it is too large for the needs of those who live on it. Now why are native reserves to be so closely restricted while no limit is to be put upon European holdings? Is all the highland area required for the needs of the present white population? Is the area already granted to the Europeans made use of by them? On what principle of morality can the Kenya Government restrict the land in native occupation in this way and at the same time reserve the highlands exclusively for the Europeans, when the area already alienated to them is twenty times that actually cultivated? If the principle of beneficial occupation is to be applied to the natives, it ought to be applied equally to the Europeans as well.

In the interests of the natives two reforms are urgently required: first, that ample land, adequate to the needs, not only of the present but of the next few generations, will be made available to them; and second, that this land should be made secure

beyond all possible doubt. At present it is patent that they have insufficient land in the native reserves, and whatever land is held by them is held on sufferance. There is no guarantee whatsoever that the Government by administrative action will not deprive them of part or even whole of it. It is therefore of the utmost necessity that some criteria should be discovered to determine the amount of holding to be allowed to any race and that these should be applied to all peoples, white or black, without distinction of colour. And, further, whatever land comes to be thus allotted to the natives, the Government should pledge itself to maintain the inviolable character of it, which can best be done by giving them the title deeds for its possession. It is utterly inexcusable that, in the name of preserving ancient custom, the Government should make the native absolutely dependent upon their goodwill for his land. The Government's solicitude for the excellent native system of communism in land would be admired if they had not allowed European adventurers and filibusters to infringe native rights. Having, however, permitted a wholesale invasion of their rights and forced a capitalistic system of society upon them, it is sheer cant for Government to refuse legal title on the ground that the ancient system did not recognise it. In fact if the trusteeship idea is to be faithfully carried out, the Government ought to rid the country of the landlordism which they have forced upon it, themselves developing the land which the natives are unable to exploit and devoting the proceeds thereof to the betterment of the natives. It is doubtful if Missionary bodies will suggest such radical measures, but it is very gratifying to learn that they "have decided to embark upon a definite and widespread campaign in Kenya and at Home to secure amendment of the present land laws in the Colony as affecting the question of native land tenure."

S. G. VAZE.

ARIFF BOARD REPORT.—II.

WHEN the new plant is in full operation the Tata Company will produce nearly half a million tons, i. e. one per cent. of the total production of steel in the world. This new output is nearly five times that of the output in 1917. Considering the complaint made against the Company with regard to their bias in favour of highly paid Europeans, it is reassuring to be told that good progress has been made in replacing Europeans by Indians. In 1912-13 there were in all 140 Covenanted Europeans; in 1921-22 the number is reduced to 74.

The component parts of the total cost of steel per ton are as follows: Rs. 100 per ton works' costs, Rs. 30 per ton overhead charges and Rs. 26 per ton manufacturers' profits. The fixed capital expenditure of the Company in 1927 will be 15 crores. The growth of coal production and iron-ore production in India has been very slow. In 1911 nearly 13 millions of tons of coal were produced; while in

1922 only 19 millions were produced. The total iron-ore production which was nearly 4 lacs of tons in 1911 was only 6 lacs in 1922.

The total cost of fabricated steel in India is Rs. 310 per ton. The imported steel is likely to enter India without duty at Rs. 250 a ton and the 25 p. c. duty will raise the price to Rs. 312 a ton. This therefore gives the needed protection. The Indian manufacturer cannot produce a wagon for less than Rs. 4400 and as the price of the imported British wagon is likely to be Rs. 3700, a bounty of Rs. 700 or more is adequate to allow the Indian manufacturer to compete successfully with the foreigner. The bounties proposed by the Board begin with Rs. 850 per wagon and then recede by slow degrees to the figure 440 at the end of 5 years. The decrease of the amount of the bounty is based on the certainty of a fall in the cost of production as experience is gained and the output is increased. This in our opinion is too optimistic. It is not good policy to count upon falling costs in an industry which is quite new and which itself is dependent on the precarious price of the protected steel. The bounty should be fairly uniform for all the five years.

As a result of the proposed duties it is expected that imports will fall and detailed estimates of these are given for all dutiable articles. The total imported fabricated steel at present is 65,000 tons; with the increased duty, it will be reduced to 55,000 tons. The net imports of steel bars at present are 135,000 tons and with the new duty will be 115,000 tons. The reduction in the imports of galvanized sheets is very small. The imports of wire-nails would be reduced from 12,000 tons to 10,000 tons.

Out of the total Indian consumption of about 6 lacs of tons nearly 50,000 tons are supplied by India and 5½ lacs are supplied by means of foreign imports at present. It is expected that in 1926 the total consumption will be at the same figure but 2½ lacs of tons will be supplied by India and only 3½ lacs of tons by foreign countries. The customs revenue derived from steel products is at present 1 crore 30 lacs of rupees. In 1926 it will rise to 1 crore 48 lacs. In tin plates taken alone there is a marked decrease in the expected revenue from 20 lacs to 13 lacs of rupees owing to the great increase of Indian production.

Out of the total burden imposed on the consumer, 57 lacs are taken by the general consumer, 50 lacs fall on Railways, Local Governments, public bodies and Indian States, 24 lacs fall on the jute and cotton industries and 34 lacs fall on the other industries. Amongst these the most important are the coal mines, the tea industry, and the engineering firms. The jute industry alone will share the burden to the extent of 7½ lacs.

The cost of a locomotive manufactured in India exceeds the cost of an imported locomotive by 30,000 rupees. A protection of Rs. 30,000 per locomotive means a 40 p. c. *ad valorem* duty, as the cost of a good British locomotive to-day is nearly

Rs. 80,000. The Board shrinks from this on the ground that one of the conditions laid down by the Fiscal Commission, viz., a large home market, is lacking. Unless 200 locomotives are produced in a year, production would not be economical, and Indian railways are not expected to utilize more than 100 locomotives per year. We think a beginning might be made by each Railway building some of its locomotives in India even at a higher cost. This would avoid all complications of duties and bounties.

The effect of the protection of steel on railway expenditure is to raise the working expenses by nearly 30 lacs of rupees. This cannot be said to be a serious addition for all the railways in India. In the case of an engine costing Rs. 6,000 the additional cost due to the proposed protective duties will only be Rs. 100 or nearly 2 p. c. of the cost. Thus it cannot be said that the protection to steel is so fatal to machinery as to cause serious apprehension. In the case of a firm manufacturing jute machinery the Board has calculated that the additional cost to the firm on account of increased duties would only be Rs. 1600 or 2 p. c. of the total cost of the iron and steel bars used by the firm. In the case of the jute industry it is calculated that the increased cost per loom due to higher duties on steel is only Rs. 112 for a total cost of Rs. 9,000. The total burden on the whole jute industry imposed by the new duties is Rs. 7½ lacs and this for a prosperous industry is hardly an item worth considering. On the whole there is no reason to suppose that protection to steel would seriously prejudice the industries generally.

The Tin-plate Company expect to have a total capital cost of 160 lacs in a short time. Within a year the Company has shown great progress and at present six mills are in operation. The Company supplies 28,000 tons of tin-plate, *i. e.* nearly half of the total demand in India. The Company is asking for protection on the ground that a large number of high-salaried workmen have to be employed. The price of imported tin-plate is about Rs. 20 per box, while the estimated cost of the Indian article in 1925 will be Rs. 24. A duty of Rs. 60 a ton is proposed by the Board which works out at Rs. 3 a box.

The Indian Steel Wire Products, Limited, has asked for protection in order to meet the competition from Germany and Belgium. The total cost of production per ton for the Company is calculated at Rs. 296 per ton and adding Rs. 24 as profit it would be Rs. 320. The price of the imported article works at Rs. 260 per ton. A duty of Rs. 60 on all wires and nails is recommended by the Board. The high duty is necessitated by the circumstance that the actual production is very small. The Board expect that when the full output is reached no protection will be required and the industry will be able to stand on its own legs. In our opinion it is too much to expect an infant industry to reduce costs so quickly as to dispense with protection.

On the whole it appears that the Board has recommended duties which are barely sufficient to give the needed protection. Any upsetting of costs, however slight, would make the protection ineffective.

V. N. GODBOLE.

SEPARATION OF RAILWAY FINANCE.

II.

WE gather from clause 3 of the Government resolution that the proposal is to make the formation of the depreciation reserve dependent on the surplus profits being available. If so, it is entirely wrong in principle and vicious in practice. That a contribution to the depreciation fund should be taken into account not after but before arriving at surplus profits, and that the amount of this contribution should be determined not by the existence or the size of the surplus profits but by the life period of the railway property, do not require to be enunciated as new principles, especially to a department which has never tired of professing to run the railways on commercial principles. There are at least two recent Indian Committees of Enquiry which have endeavoured to impress on the Government of India the absolute necessity for a strict observance of the principles. We give below the relevant extracts (italics ours):

"Now in every commercial concern Capital expenditure and Revenue expenditure are constantly intermixed. And a prudent board of directors... takes very good care that Revenue is debited with its full share. The principle is clear that by the time the useful life of an asset or a building has expired, its full original cost should have been written off out of Revenue.

This has not been the case on the Indian Railways. There are scores of bridges with girders unfit to carry train loads up to modern requirements; there are many miles of rails, hundreds of engines, and thousands of wagons, whose rightful date for renewal is long overpast. Their cost has not been written off. They stand in the books at the original figure. The Government has formed no replacement reserve. It is not now physically possible within a short period of one or two years to replace all the plant of which the economic life is exhausted... The position due to the unwise methods of the past must be redressed gradually. It will never be redressed under the present system... but only when commercial accounting methods are introduced in the management of a commercial undertaking.

In our judgment, a financial system which produces these results stands self-condemned... Railway management is a highly technical business. It should be placed in the hands of those who understand it." (Paras. 67-69 of the report of the Indian Railway Committee of 1920-21).

"We... are of opinion that it should be laid down that each railway should make adequate provision every year for the maintenance and renewal of its permanent way and rolling stock. The funds so earmarked should be debited to working expenses and carried to a suspense account which could be drawn on as necessary to meet current requirements, any unspent balance being carried forward from year to year. Unless some such arrangements are adopted and strictly adhered to, it will not, in our opinion, be possible to say whether the railways are earning an adequate return on the capital outlay and there will be no effective check on ordinary working expenditure.

"It is necessary, however, to make special provision to overtake the present arrears, as no funds are available in suspense accounts... We consider that the best course will be that each railway should credit a suspense account with a portion of any surplus funds available, after payment of interest and sinking fund charges, for the specific purpose of overtaking arrears of renewals. This provision should, we think, not exceed the average annual amounts which would be necessary to overtake the arrears in five years."

"The underlying principle of a Renewal Fund is to ensure that adequate financial provision is being made for depreciation and this is particularly necessary in the case of railways which are rapidly expanding. In such cases, it is obvious that there is a great difference between (a) the financial provision which would be made against depreciation and (b) the amount which should be spent annually." (Paras. 7 and 24 of Part II of the Indian Retrenchment Committee of 1922-23.)

Again, in Section I of chapter II of Sir William Acworth's report dated 1923 on the Reconstruction of the Austrian State Railways occurs the following:—

"On the other hand, there are debits against the railways which are not at present brought into account. First and foremost, they must form a renewal and depreciation reserve. No business undertaking can strike a proper balance of profit and loss till after adequate provision has been made for the wasting and depreciation of its capital assets."

We can understand the expediency, although not the inevitability, of placing the obligation to make good the heavy accumulations of arrears of depreciation on surplus profits, but we cannot understand why the current depreciation also should be provided for as a normal procedure out of surplus profits, in spite of the fact that the whole weight of the universal law of commercial accounting demands that the credits to the fund should be obtained by corresponding debits to working expenses. The provision in the resolution to use surplus profits must, in these circumstances, be specifically limited to arrears of depreciation and cannot be given a permanent place amongst the uses to which surplus profits are to be put.

As regards the provision for building up a reserve out of profits for writing down and writing off capital the necessity here also is only temporary. As pointed out by Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas at page 1558 of the Legislative Assembly Debates, Volume IV, losses on account of depreciation, etc., of stores in stock should be written off from year to year and not allowed to accumulate. Provision for a reserve for such losses as a permanent feature postulates that the losses on account of stores, which remained unnoticed over a series of years until they have now accumulated to no less than the huge sum of Rs. 3 crores, will normally recur. This postulate cannot be accepted in a scheme which is professedly businesslike and the scope of this reserve must be specifically limited to the contingency which has arisen.

There are two other purposes on which surplus profits are under the scheme of separation proposed to be utilized, and the existence of accumulated surplus profits is made a condition

precedent to the fulfilment of those purposes. These purposes are:—

- (a) the improvement of services rendered to the public, and
- (b) the reduction of rates.

This is all right so far as it goes. But it must be remembered that the measures of comfort and convenience at present provided by the railways, particularly for third class passengers, is below the minimum standard and that the manipulation of rates and fares by the Executive has not, in the past, been above grave suspicion. Under the scheme of separation the railways are to be managed under the forms of a Company, which, at p. 3756 of the Legislative Assembly Debates, Volume II, Mr. Ginwala humorously described as Messrs. Innes and Company, and the resolution constitutes an informal contract between the Legislative Assembly and this informal Company. The Assembly in this scheme occupies the position of a giver of monopoly and, as such, it must first obtain recognition, statutory or otherwise, of its right of regulating the services given by the railways and the payments demanded by them; so as to protect the travelling and the trading public using the railways from exploitation by extortionate charges, unjust discriminations in rates and fares and failures or delay to provide reasonable facilities.

Clause 4 of the resolution, in virtue of its own wording and in the light also of the remarks in paragraph 15 of the Memorandum by the Chief Commissioner and the Financial Commissioner for Railways on the Separation of the Railway from the General Finance, constitutes what is to all appearances a curtailment of the right of the Assembly to require its previous sanction to expenditure in excess of the accepted provision in the Budget, on the mere ground that such expenditure will not necessitate "a demand on the Assembly for additional funds as in the case of other departments, since the railway administration will be responsible for finding its own revenues." The voting of a grant by the Assembly implies three things, acceptance of the necessity for the work, approval of the cost of the work and sanction to the appropriation of funds. The mere existence of funds as earmarked for railway purposes cannot be regarded as a sufficient justification either for anticipating or treating as formal this three-fold sanction of the Assembly, which must preserve its right to consider the demand and vote it on its own merits as in the case of the other departments. We quite agree that, for the reasons given in paragraphs 7 and 15 of the Memorandum, a commercial concern cannot be run on the basis that the ordinary revenue expenditure, i. e. operating expenses, in a particular period of 12 months is not to exceed a fixed figure, since such expenditure is largely affected by conditions of traffic which cannot be foreseen and that if a larger outlay promises increased returns, the rigid limitation of expenditure may result in nothing but loss. But the demand made for freedom to exceed the budgeted provision covers the whole field of railway expen-

ditures instead of being limited to operating expenses only. The real difficulty could quite easily be get over by the Assembly conceding to the railway administration the power to exceed the budget provision for operating expenses within a fixed percentage of the traffic receipts.

As regards clause 5 of the resolution, the only suggestions we have to make are that the railway demands should be split up into a larger number and that the number of days now available for their discussion should be increased. In this connection we would invite a perusal of the first 4 pages of the Servants of India Society Pamphlet No. 8, "Railways and the Budget" and paragraph 22 of the report of the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts of 1921-22.

Coming to the last clause of the resolution, viz., No. 6, we do not see what advantage will be secured, from the point of view of the non-official members in the Assembly, by placing the estimates of railway expenditure in advance before the General Advisory Council which is after all composed of members selected by the Executive from the two Houses and whose proceedings are not published. We would suggest that the railway estimates be placed before a special Railway Finance Committee formed on the lines of the Standing Finance Committee, and that the proceedings of that body be made available to the members of the Assembly.

The result of the consideration which we have given to the Government resolution may be summed up in the form of the following amended resolution:—

"This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that in order to relieve the general budget from the violent fluctuations caused by the incorporation therein of the railway estimates and to enable the railways to carry out a continuous railway policy, the railway finances shall be separated from the general finances of the country in the following manner:—

(I) An account shall be made up showing, as far as possible, the amounts spent from the inception of railway service to March 31st, 1924, out of revenue for capital purposes and on account of losses, with compound interest thereon at 4 per cent. per annum, minus the amounts appropriated by the general revenues as railway profits during that period with compound interest thereon at the same rate. This account shall be added to from time to time as may be necessary in terms of (VI) below.

(II) The railway debt shall consist of two parts, viz., (a) debt taken from the public and allocated to the railways, and (b) debt taken from the taxpayer as in (I) above.

(III) On the debt as in (II) (a) the railways shall pay to the general revenues in full the interest charges which shall be the first charge on railway earnings.

(IV) On the debt as in (II) (b) the railways shall pay to the general revenues as the second charge on railway earnings a minimum of Rs. 4½ crores increasing by Rs. 20 lakhs a year by way of interest.

(V) The general revenues shall further receive from the railways one-fifth of any earnings remaining after the payments in (III) and (IV) above, subject to the condition that, if in any year railway revenues are insufficient to provide the amounts in (III) and (IV) above, the one-fifth there will not be payable by the railways until such deficiency has been made good.

(VI) Any difference between the amount due as interest calculated at 4 per cent. per annum on the debt in (II) (b) above and the amount paid to the general revenues as per (IV) and (V) above, will be added to the amount of that debt.

(VII) In no case shall the railways be required in any year to make a payment as per (IV) and (V) above in excess of the interest due on the debt for the time being as per (II) (b) above.

(VIII) Any earnings that exist after payment of these charges shall be available for the railway administration to be utilised in—

(a) forming reserves for—

(i) securing the payments in lean years as per (III) and (IV) above,

(ii) arrears of depreciation as existing at present,

(iii) writing off losses incurred up to date on account of depreciation, etc., of stores in stock,

(b) the improvement of services rendered to the public,

(c) the reduction of fares and rates.

(IX) The railway administration shall be entitled, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the Government of India, to borrow temporarily from capital or from the reserves for the purpose of meeting operating expenses for which there is no provision or insufficient provision in the revenue budget, subject to the obligation to make repayment of such borrowings out of the revenue budgets of subsequent years, and subject also to the condition that the ratio of the additional operating expenses to the estimated additional gross earnings does not exceed the ratio adopted in the budget.

(X) In accordance with recent practice the figures of gross receipts and expenditure of railways will be included in the Budget Statement. The proposed expenditure will be placed before the Legislative Assembly in the form of demands for grants, the number and description of the demands being determined by a small committee of the Assembly. The number of days allotted for the discussion of these demands shall be not less than seven, and on a separate day or days among the days so allotted the Member in charge of Railways will make a general statement on railway accounts and working. Any reductions in the demands for railways resulting from the vote of the Legislative Assembly will not enure to general revenues, i. e., will not have the effect of increasing the payments as per (III), (IV) and (V) above for the year.

(XI) The Railway Department will place the estimates of railway expenditure before a Special Railway Finance Committee to be constituted on the lines of the Standing Finance Committee on some date prior to the date fixed for the commencement of the discussion of the demands for grants for railways."

ECONOMY.

REVIEW.

THE BOMBAY POLICE.

THE BOMBAY CITY POLICE. A HISTORICAL SKETCH. 1672-1916. By S. M. EDWARDS, C. S. I., C. V. O. Oxford University Press. Pp. 223. Price Rs.6.

Mr. Edwards was formerly in the I. C. S. and was Commissioner of Bombay City Police from 1909 to 1916. In the preface he says that he was prompted to

write the present volume "by the knowledge that, except for a few paragraphs in Vol. II of the *Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, no connected account exists of the police administration of the City."

He might have added that those paragraphs also were his, for he is the author of the *Gazetteer*. He is thus in every way qualified to deal with the subject and has succeeded in writing a very readable history. To police officials and magistrates, particularly of Bombay City, it is, of course invaluable. But the general reader also will find it highly interesting on account of the light it throws on the state of administration before 1856, the memoir-like treatment of succeeding period which has enabled the author to endow it with much human interest, and the insight it gives, though from a policeman's point of view, into the various problems that concern the peace and welfare of the City, such as the elements of criminal population, communal troubles, prostitution including white slave traffic, smuggling, gambling in its various forms, &c.

The island of Bombay having come into the hands of the East India Company in 1668, a militia was formed in 1669, in which all owners of land were required to serve except "the Brahmins and Bannians" who were exempted on money payment. The primary object of this militia was to assist the regular garrison in military defence, but until 1771 it looked after also police functions. In that year it was converted into a regular police force with 48 officers and 400 privates and furnished a night watch. It is interesting to read that it was the duty of these policemen, who were mostly Bhandarie, not only to arrest all robbers and house-breakers but also "to seize all Europeans without passes and all *coffrees* (African slaves) found in greater numbers than two together or armed with swords, sticks, knives or bludgeons." Rewards were offered ranging from Rs 10 to annas 8 for the arrest of runaway slaves and of soldiers and sailors absent from duty or found drunk after 8 p. m. Captured runaway slaves were put to work on fortifications or aboard cruisers for a year, and, if not claimed by their masters within that period, they were shipped to Bancaea in Sumatra,—so that it paid the E. I. Company to offer the rewards. From 1771 to 1855 several attempts at re-organisation were made, but the police, including the European element in it, were notoriously inefficient and corrupt, and crime, which was rampant, was not appreciably checked. Before 1812 the head of the police enjoyed extraordinarily wide powers. He could arrest, try and sentence a person to flogging, hard labour in chains or banishment, or remit the sentence at his sweet will, without keeping any record whatever. As to crime, "Gangs of criminals burned ships in Bombay waters to defraud insurance companies; robberies by armed gangs occurred frequently in all parts of the Island; and every householder of consequence was compelled to employ private watchmen, the fore-runners of the

modern Ramosi and Bhaya, who were often in collusion with the bad characters of the more disreputable quarters of the Town." One cause of this criminality was drink. A visitor to Bombay in 1838 wrote, "on a moderate computation every sixth shop advertises the sale of toddy."

A new era in the police administration of the City was ushered in by the appointment of Charles Forjett in 1855. as head of the force. The outcry against the police was so great at that time that Lord Elphinstone resolved to put an end to it by every means and made a most happy selection. Forjett was a Eurasian brought up in India. He was a genius of a police officer, with a wonderful faculty for languages and disguises. "A story is told to illustrate his powers of disguise. He once told the Governor, Lord Elphinstone, that in spite of special orders prohibiting the entrance of any one and in defiance of the strongest military cordon that His Excellency could muster, he would effect an entrance to Government House, Parel, and appear at the Governor's bedside at 6 a. m. Lord Elphinstone challenged him to fulfil his boast and took every precaution to prevent his ingress. Nevertheless Forjett duly appeared the following morning in the Governor's bedroom—in the disguise of a *mehtar* (sweeper)." By his disguises he got into close touch with those who were acting as go-betweens and receiving bribes on behalf of the police, all grades of whom were corrupt, and by thus supplying reliable evidence enabled the Government to purge the service of bad men in upper and lower grades. By his acuteness and personal courage he broke the gangs of robbers and ruffians and put an end to open lawlessness. Before Mr. Forjett's régime, according to Mr. K. N. Kabraji who is quoted by Mr. Edwardes, "on the Esplanade, under the very walls of the Fort, occurred instances of violence and highway robbery, which went practically unchecked. Not a few of the offenders were soldiers. They used to lie in wait for a likely carriage with a rope thrown across the road, so that the horse stumbled and fell, and then they rifled the occupants of the carriage at their leisure. It was Mr. Forjett, whose vigilance and activity brought all this crying scandal to an end". Even greater than all this was the work done by him in the days of the Mutiny. During the days of excitement day and night he walked about the City in disguise, and whenever he found any one talking exultingly of the successes of the mutineers, he would arrest him on the spot, blow a whistle, which brought three or four policemen and the man would be marched off. "In his dealings with the *badmash* element, Forjett received invaluable help from the Kazi of Bombay, from a Muhammadan Subahdar of police and from an Arab with whom he used, when disguised, to visit mosques, coffee-shops, and other places of popular resort." He also discovered a plot on the part of some Indian troops to mutiny during the Devali, but as the General in charge, with whom Forjett had severa

differences, refused to believe him, he took the commandant of a regiment to a hiding place and enabled him to hear the details of the plot. As a result two ring-leaders were blown from guns and six accomplices were transported for life. Forjett received a formal letter of thanks from Government—nearly years two after the event. He retired in 1864 to spend the remainder of his days in England. The grateful public of Bombay voted him several addresses and a valuable purse. All that he got from Government, however, was a commission in the Army for his son and permission to receive the purse. Mr. Edwardes thinks it curious that such an admirable servant of the state was not rewarded with a Knighthood or other honours. But the explanation is simple enough—he was a Eurasian!

It is not to be expected that such a genius would be available on every occasion to occupy the post of Commissionership. More than forty years elapsed before one approaching him in acumen and capacity for disguises could be found in Mr. Hartley Kennedy, who held the office from 1899 to 1901. He devoted special attention to white slave traffic and the kidnapping of minor girls for immoral purposes. He told off special detectives to watch European brothels and steamers of foreign shipping-companies, and making a free use of the Aliens Act, had 30 foreign pimps and procurers deported in 1900 and 37 in 1901. Disguised as an Arab or a *pardah-nashin* woman in *burha*, he wandered about the City after night-fall with some of his agents, and paid surprise visits to police stations and chowkies to discover negligence and other short-comings of his subordinates and acquaint himself with the activities of the criminal population.

Not the least interesting chapter of the book is the one dealing with the regime of the author himself. He was the first I. C. S. officer to occupy the post and carried out the reorganisation of the service. He had an exciting time of it in dealing with cocaine-smuggling, a serious Mohurram Shia-Sanni riot, the visit of His Majesty the King-Emperor and the conditions created by the war. And he has enlivened the chapter with enjoyable humour. Speaking of the precautions he took at the time of the royal visit, he says, that he remanded to jail 'the majority of the well-known hooligans and bad characters, to the number of 400', and that another 300 voluntarily left Bombay to escape the jail—a procedure against which something surely can be said. Naturally some of subordinates were even more over-zealous. One of them prohibited occupants of houses to look out of the window on the royal procession, and in consequence an elderly Mussalman lady interviewed the Commissioner and obtained from him a written permit! A good story of a 'loyal welcome' is told which was given to Lord Chelmsford on his arrival in April 1916. Spontaneous enthusiasm being absent, a Superintendent of Police resolved nevertheless to give a loyal welcome to the in-coming Viceroy by impressing all the ba

characters of both sexes in his division to appear in clean clothes at the Sandhurst Bridge. "As the new Viceroy's carriage swept out of Queen's Road on to the bridge, the signal was given and a hearty burst of hand-clapping, punctuated with cries of *shabash*, rose from the crowd of disreputables at the corner." For this exhibition of loyalty they got a reward of 2 annas each.

V. V. S.

MISCELLANEA

THE BHIL CONFERENCE.

THE following Presidential address was delivered by Mr. C. F. Andrews at the Bhil Conference at Dohad on the 17th instant:—

My words, to-day, will be very brief; but I hope they may help you in a practical manner. First of all, I would like you to understand that I come not in my own name, but as a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. He himself would certainly have wished to be present here; because his love for you is very deep indeed and your own love for him is very deep also. But he has been so ill that he is quite unable as yet to take any railway journey. When I consulted him, he urged me very strongly indeed to come here to preside and he gave me a message to deliver to you in person. His message is this, that you should stick to the soil, cling to the land cultivation as much as you possibly can, and remain children of the soil—cultivators and farmers. He himself loves to be called a farmer and a weaver. He would urge you also, while you stay on the land, to take up spinning and weaving in every household, and in this way become independent men and women. With all my heart and soul I commend this message to you, and ask you to think over it well, especially the youngest of you, who are tempted by higher wages to go into the towns and to desert the country.

The second point, which I wish to mention is this. There are certain bad practices, which are objectionable to every civilised man. Some of these are still practised by you. But, let me tell you, that you are able to give up those without losing your own independence; nay, rather, by giving up those bad practices, you will be winning your independence. The following are among these bad practices:— Drinking of intoxicating drinks, and taking of drugs like bhang and opium are always vicious habits. They should be given up entirely, if you desire sincerely to practise self-purification. Again, among certain tribes, the eating of all kinds of flesh, even of dead and diseased animals, has been common. This is a bad custom, and it is certain to lead to evil consequences of disease and death. Thirdly, with regard to your marriage customs, if you wish to enter any organised religious community, it will be necessary for you to regard marriage as a truly religious ceremony and a sacrament which cannot be broken. I do not wish to blame you in any way for any customs, which you have had in the past. They were customs, which you inherited from your fathers, but all the same every one of us has to change according to the change of the times in which we live. While mentioning these things, which have been bad customs, and asking you to give them up, at the same time I implore you to keep religiously your good customs and not to give them up on any account. Some of these customs are as follows:— you are living in the open air a good, healthy, vigorous life. You are not, therefore, attacked by many of the diseases which are met with in the towns. You also enjoy your free life in the country and possess splendid physical strength. You do not purchase luxuries, but have very simple habits. Your life is, on the whole, a contented one, because you live in such good health. Therefore, I implore you, do not change these good habits for mere greed of money, or because in the towns there are other

attractions. Believe me, you young men, the country life is ever so much the best; the air of the country is far more healthy than that of any town. Even if you get five times the wages in the towns, it is not at all worth throwing away good health in order to get more money. I know that some times the pinch of poverty is very keen indeed, but even this could be relieved by giving up habits of drink and joining together and helping one another instead of borrowing money from the money lender getting into debt. This method would be far better than that of going away from the land.

Where my own work is at Santiniketan, in Bengal, I live every day close to the aboriginal tribes called the Santhals. Nearly every day I go past their villages and watch their quiet independent lives. I have seen the same Santhals in Assam, and in Calcutta, and in other parts also, where they have become hired labourers under big employers of labour, and I have been very deeply saddened to note the change that has taken place from happiness to misery, and from health to disease. I have spoken to them and asked them if they would not like to go back to their Santhal villages. They have said: "Yes, indeed we would like to do so; but we are in debt." I have asked them: "How much wages are you getting?" They have mentioned a fairly big sum, but they have told me, at the same time, that it is all eaten away in their extra expenses.

During the last ten years I have learnt to love these neighbours of ours in Bengal, the Santhals. My friend Mr. Pearson gave up a great part of his life to them. He loved them with all his heart. I know that if it were possible for me to come to live among you, I should love you also in the same manner. Therefore, I am not speaking to you from a distance as one who does not know you. My own strong advice to you, after all my experience, would be exactly that which Mahatmaj has given me, as a message, to tell you. *Cling to the soil, stick to the land, and do not desert the country for the town.*

I wish to say one more word before I close, not perhaps so much to the Bhil community itself, as to those who rule over them, especially the ruling chiefs. I know that the greatest of all evils in this part of the country, as well as in other parts is the evil system of Begar. For many years, I have been engaged in fighting a hard battle against this evil system; and at one time I had to face the question of imprisonment while struggling hard against it. Both with regard to the Kumaun District, near Almora, and in the Kotgarh hills, and in other parts of the country while working along with Mr. Stokes and others, I have done my utmost to expose the evils of this Begar system in order to bring it to an end. Once I was on the very point of coming to Rajputana, having been requested to do so by my friend, Mr. B. S. Patil, for whose work among the Bhuils I have the greatest possible regard. My duty then was to help in putting an end to the Begar and Rasad systems; but unfortunately on one occasion just as I was starting, I was taken ill and could not come, and on another occasion I was suddenly called away to East Africa. If ever, however, in the future it is at all possible for me to take up this work, I shall certainly do it. But I would beg the chiefs and rulers of the different States very earnestly, if I may do so, to take in hand this question of Begar themselves, and if possible to put an end to it themselves. I would also ask them never for a moment to think that the revenue of a State can prosper on a revenue made from the sale of liquor or opium or bhang. Such a form of revenue unquestionably brings infinite evils in its train. It demoralises the State, making its agricultural labourers themselves demoralised and corrupt.

To you who have to suffer from Begar, I would only say one thing. Whenever labour is wrongly and unjustly imposed upon you, you should unite together in seeking to overcome the injustice. A united resistance to wrong is the best way to overcome it.

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