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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

It was our misfortune a short time ago to have had to criticise strongly the press note issued by the Chief of Sangli warning his subjects against participating in outside agitation, and the press note was couched in such sweeping terms as to imply a prohibition of all criticism, reasonable or unreasonable, and all agitation, constitutional or unlawful, provided it was directed against either the British Government or other Indian States. This would have meant a death-blow to such a movement as that carried on with great ability and a rare sense of responsibility by the Deccan States Association, for the example of Sangli would most assuredly have been copied by other less advanced States. The Association, therefore, sent up, we understand, a memorial, requesting the Chief to define the scope of the prohibition in more precise terms, as it was incredible, the memorial is understood to have urged, that the enlightened Prince could have meant in truth to ban every kind of agitation from Sangli State. We are very happy now to announce that, in response to this request, the Diwan issued another press note on the 20th inst. explaining the Chief's intent in issuing the press note of 18th June. "What the Chief Saheb desired to advise his subjects by the press note to avoid," we are told, "was the adoption of methods calculated to bring on disturbance of the public peace of the nature witnessed at the Kupwad Mall on the 28th May last. The press note was not intended to stifle just and proper criticism and constitutional agitation." This is in our opinion entirely satisfactory and it is very gracious of Shrimant Sir Appasaheb Patwardhan to have amended the order in this manner. Perhaps

even more welcome to us than the amendment of the order, which in fact amounts to its revocation, is the spirit of responsiveness to public opinion which underlies the new press note. The Diwan's order is in our judgment a tribute to the judiciousness and spirit of self-restraint which the Deccan States Association shows in discharging a most delicate task; but it is even a greater tribute, we think, to the Chief Saheb's freedom from that impatience of criticism which characterizes, alas! too many of our Indian Princes.

South Indian
Floods.

WE cannot understand how in connection with the terrible havoc created by the recent floods in South India, the Madras Government has thought fit to ask of the Central Government only a loan of Rs. 35 lakhs, and out of that amount an advance of only Rs. 20 lakhs. This loan has been asked for it would seem, for "the restoration of communications, repairs of irrigation works and so on." We are not told who was responsible for the estimate, but considering the number of important bridges that have been destroyed or damaged, the sum appears to be ridiculously inadequate for the restoration of communications, let alone repairing of irrigation works. Then, no account seems to have been taken of the loans that it would be necessary for Government to give on easy terms to cultivators and others for removing silt from fields, building houses, &c. In Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts the removal of silt alone is estimated to cost not less than a crore of rupees. The Governor and the Executive Councillors recently visited the flood areas and assured the villagers of their genuine sympathy with their sufferings. They will not be able to give an appreciably concrete form to that sympathy with such a paltry loan from the Central Government. Meanwhile help to the poorest classes which the relief committees are giving has got to be pushed on with increased vigour in view of the north-east monsoon being in sight. We are very happy that H. E. Sir Leslie Wilson has shown his sympathy with this relief work by subscribing Rs. 1000 to the Bombay Fund. And now that the proposed Sheriff's meeting, whose only object could have been to strengthen the good work of the Fund, has been abandoned, we hope H. E.'s example will be widely emulated by all the influential citizens of Bombay.

Separation of Rail-
way Finance.

THE Government and the unofficial members of the Assembly are to be congratulated on having come to a compromise regarding the separation of railway from general finance. The desirability of the step for the efficiency of railway management was clearly enough recognised by the non-officials. But in agreeing to it they insisted on Government taking steps in connection with railway management that are vital to the national and economic development of India. These steps are the purchase of railway stores in India, so as to encourage the growth of the railway industry, Indianisation of the Railway services and the appointment of Indians to the Railway Board. It became necessary to insist on these steps on the present occasion because the separation of the railway from general finance means to some extent freedom from the detailed control and scrutiny of the Finance Department and the Assembly. These had no doubt their disadvantages, but they exercised a wholesome influence on railway policy. If the companies which were entrusted with the management of railways had worked them in the national interests of India and not in interests of British manufacturers it would not have been necessary for the representatives of the people to think of these steps now, nor even of the state management of railways. By the compromise resolution both parties have gained their object and the country will benefit doubly.

Taxes and the Poor.

THE prolonged discussion on the abolition of the Taxation Committee ended in the Assembly's accepting by 60 to 42 votes an amendment proposed by Mr. Jinnah which recommended the dissolution of the present Committee and the appointment in its place of a new "non-official body to examine the numerous points connected with the present taxation resources of the country, the economic condition and the position of the people." While not prepared to accept this amendment, Sir Basil Blackett welcomed Mr. Jinnah's suggestion that the Committee should report on the suitability of alternative sources of taxation without increasing the present level. He also said that he was all in favour of an economic enquiry, though he did not believe that the Central Government could itself undertake it. What precisely will be the influence of the Assembly's vote upon the present Taxation Committee, it is difficult to say, but in all probability it will lead to one or more members being added to it and its scope being somewhat widened. We admit the personnel of the Committee is not impeccable but the Assembly's opposition to it was altogether ill-advised. It is notorious that taxation in this country presses unduly upon the poorer people and that the well to do classes do not contribute a proper proportion of the taxes. There is urgent need for a responsible body to recommend the best way of shifting the burden on shoulders that can easily bear it. The secret of the opposition to the Taxation Committee lies in the unwillingness of the richer classes to bear their due share. The proposal for an economic enquiry, to which as such no one was

opposed, was only a camouflage intended to delay indefinitely the shifting of the tax burden. The Swarajists, as is their wont, gave all their votes to their well to do supporters and mere lip-sympathy to the poor.

* * * * *
 THE obituary notices of the late The Late Mr. Basu. Babu Bhupendranath Basu have done him full measure of justice and must have pleased his personal friends of whom he had many in England as well as in India. We are happy to endorse what has been said of his conspicuous ability, political moderation and grasp and devotion to patriotic work, though in later years it was in the employ of Government. In common with several others trained in the intensive methods of education of an earlier day, he retained to the end of his life an intellectual vigour and adaptability which kept alive his sympathetic and understanding interest in the swiftly moving affairs of the country. Cautious by temper, he would never allow the Bengali emotionalism with which he was richly endowed to carry him away in actual practice. The somewhat unbalanced language and sentiment in which he sometimes indulged were merely the evidence that his sensitive mind was absorbing the latest elements of thought around him; but he knew how to separate the solid from the merely vaporous part of the ideas. In him one never failed to see the artistic faculty of his province and the somewhat catholic range of tastes in studies. He had a sense of form in literary and other matters and occasionally one could even detect germs of the dramatic in dress and speech, but never so as to jar or displease the cultivated taste.

Barbarous
Kabul.

* * * * *
 THE stoning to death of an Ahmadi preacher by the decree of a religious court in Kabul is a rude reminder of the fact that though Afghanistan has become modern in the use of fire-arms and though it has been sending its students abroad for education, there is no such thing there as religious toleration and that under the sway of theocracy as barbarous punishments are meted out to heretics there, as disgraced the western world in the days of the Inquisition. Being for over a century in the enjoyment of a modern system of government there is a tendency in us too readily to assume that across the border life is not less tolerable than it is here. That, however, is not the case. It is rather disappointing that in commenting on the incident some of our Muslim contemporaries—we mean those representing educated Muslim opinion—should have been at pains to show that the sentence of the Kabul religious court is not in accordance with the spirit of the Koran. On that point the Moulvis of Kabul would have to be recognised to be as good authorities as any of our contemporaries. The right view to take is that a barbaric law is to be condemned because it is barbaric, whatever the sanction behind it. Otherwise you acquiesce in theocracy and there can be no progress or liberty.

African Land Com-
mittee.

* * * * *
 IT would appear that of the two African Committees appointed by Mr. Thomas, the one presided over by Lord Southborough concerns itself exclusively with East African matters, but the other presided over by Lord Islington—a good selection, in our opinion—is not a purely West African Committee. The latter may be better described as the African Land Committee and it is to inquire into the land

problems of Eastern as well as Western Africa. This body has on it at least two members—Messrs. E. D. Morel and Leonard Woolf—who can be safely relied upon to deal with absolute justice with the claims of the natives—and incidentally, we must not omit to repeat, with the Indian claims. And if other members are equally relentless in the application of a sound land policy to Kenya without any racial consideration and without being overawed by the exceedingly tenuous "pledge of successive Secretaries of State," of which the white settlers make so much, the whole of the Highland policy will be reversed, and with the reversal of the Highland policy all the whites' privileges will be shed almost automatically. Even if these sanguine expectations are not realised, the Indian settlers may reasonably hope that land development conditions will be stiffened and an unimproved land tax will be levied to break up the aggregation of large tracts of land in the hands of a few concessionaires. This would react very favourably upon the Indians, but, what is far more important, will be a great blessing to the natives. The terms of reference of this Committee are:—

To consider the systems of native tenure and usage of land existing in the British Colonies not possessing responsible government, protectorates, and mandated areas in West Africa and East Africa (exclusive of Somaliland), the laws now in force therein, and the effect of their application upon those systems, particularly in regard to the transfer of land to non-natives; to report what amendments, if any, in local usage are desirable, having regard to the present and future well-being of the native population and to the economic development of the dependencies concerned.

THE East African Indian National

Kenya Indians Enter
the Legislature.

Congress has resolved provisionally to accept under protest the nomination of one representative on the Executive Council and five on the Legislature. What determines them to suspend their boycott is the gain the Indian community has obtained in the indefinite suspension of the Immigration Bill and the possibility of averting the passage of certain measures, prejudicial to their interests, which are now before the Legislature. We are not disposed to quarrel with this decision, but if the Indians are to enter the Councils again, they must not, as they did heretofore, confine themselves to their own narrow communal and parochial interests. They must realise—thanks to the White Paper of 1923—that the salvation of Indian settlers will come only through the salvation of the native Africans, and from mere enlightened self-interest they must watch native interests as if they were their own and raise their voices whenever the exploitation of the natives is apprehended. The Africans have now only one representative in the Council in the person of Dr. Arthur, who, however, is rarely in evidence as a champion of native welfare. If the Indian members of the Council take it upon themselves to voice natives' aspirations and ventilate natives' grievances, they will cement such an alliance with the rightful owners of the soil as will stand them in better stead, even in advancing their own communal interests, than anything else that we can think of. Even on Indian questions, the former members of Council could hardly be said to have utilised the Legislature to its utmost extent, and if they now make the most of their opportunity and take a wider view of their interests than they have done hitherto, they will have no cause to regret their decision.

HINDU-MOSLEM UNITY.

THE eyes of all India and their good wishes will be turned towards Delhi where, under auspices of commanding authority and in circumstances of overpowering appeal to emotion, an attempt is being made to reach a durable understanding between Hindus and Moslems. A result so desirable in the interests of India's future no one would hinder of purpose. But it is possible for a passionate lover of his country to be unable to share the somewhat sanguine expectations that his countrymen may be led to form from the announcement made regarding the conference of leaders that will begin to-morrow. In the first place one may seriously question the suitability of the present Delhi atmosphere for the reaching of stable, just or wise decisions on matters which have afforded cause for violent feud and dissension during centuries. No one who loves human nature or respects Indian national character will fail to be struck by the heroism and iron will of the saint of Sabarmati which, recalling in some aspects certain well-known episodes in the lives of Sri Rama and Bhishma, lift the twenty one days' fast and penance to epic grandeur. But are people under stress of an emotion variously compounded of hero-worship, responsibility for a great life and morbid anxiety to reach memorable results within a prescribed time likely to be the safest judges of differences that reach down to the foundations of culture and religion? Will their decisions command general confidence, either now or in the future? The entire proceeding is in the nature of direct action of a type which is no doubt startlingly novel, but hardly more reassuring to the well-wisher of human progress than the types hitherto known.

The disputed matters between the two communities fall into two main divisions: those relating to political and semi-political affairs and those relating to religion or religious practices. The former vex the educated classes, the latter inflame unruly mobs, leading to riots and bloodshed. In common talk the distinction is lost sight of, and the tendency to treat the settlement of one set of disputes as though it involved the settlement of the other as well is more widespread than one would wish. In truth there is no organic connexion between the two, and the power of the leaders of the two communities to prevent the outbreak of violent hostilities between the rowdy sections, though often tried, has never been proved. One may assume that in the conversations at Delhi not only the relative proportions of the two communities in the legislature and elsewhere, but cow-killing and religious processions will receive due attention. Nevertheless one doubts that Hindu-Moslem riots will cease in consequence. It is a pity that when they occur the fact is used as an argument to stay political progress in India, and occasionally the communities have expressed a preference for the exercise of judicial or executive

authority by the impartial British official. But communal and religious rivalry takes obnoxious forms even in completely independent states. India, even when she attains home rule, may for a long time be harassed by internal feuds of more or less intensity. It is not in itself a legitimate or conclusive argument for continued domination by a foreign power. The significance of these disorderly events has been greatly exaggerated through three circumstances: first, the use made of them in political controversy to the detriment of India's advance; second, their magnitude on certain occasions; and third, the connexion they are vaguely supposed to have with the political and semi-political rivalry of the educated classes. The last cause is responsible for much of the poignancy of Mr. Gandhi's grief and self-blame. But it is largely unreal, and to the extent that it is real, it is not likely to be mitigated by the pacificatory decisions of the Delhi conference.

History will perhaps refuse to support the charge that the Britisher in India actually foments either religious or political animosity. To say that he profits by them is simply to say that he is human. On the contrary the great civilizing agencies that he has brought with him, the modern education that he has established and the representative institutions he has introduced have a healing and reconciling tendency which cannot be wholly frustrated by individual malevolence. This influence, however, is passive, and it is perhaps the case that it is incapable of yielding the positive good-will, which alone can bind together the various elements of a common nationality. What is wanted from the representative of British power in the future is not merely the holding of the scales, but active assistance in the work of mutual appeasement. He cannot vindicate himself at the bar of history by the plea that he prevented sanguinary civil war by general military disarmament or political disablement. His new role of guide, philosopher and friend of India in the path of self-government requires him night and day to help in the removal of all causes that prevent the growth of a complete concord. Otherwise his justification of delay in political reform by the existence of internal feud would be unredeemed hypocrisy.

This change on the part of the Britisher from the attitude of passive watchfulness to one of active pacification seems to be an essential condition of any permanent improvement in the domestic politics of India. It is a sad confession to make, but the sadness is lessened by the reflexion that it is not the result of any inherent moral defect in the Indian people, but in great part the evil inheritance of a long course of ill-starred history. Unofficial negotiation will carry us far, but not sufficiently far. At some stage an impasse will be threatened and can only end by the disastrous capitulation of one party or another. There seems to be almost universal agreement that the contestant communities of India must reach a

endurable pact before dominion status can come within sight. In the interval the British Government will *ex hypothesi* remain an independent entity with a policy and an ideal of its own. If the task of probing the causes of difference to the bottom and evolving a basis of reconciliation is to be undertaken with any certain prospect of success, it can only be in the legislatures of the land and in conciliation committees of the legislature with Government associated in the high endeavour. In the political distemper of the time, when distrust is general and good-will between the races has suffered shipwreck, can the Government of India assume such a high pedestal? Knowing that their domination of India cannot outlast the internecine quarrels among Indians, will the representatives of British power deliberately set themselves this task? It is the perennial question of the good faith of Britain. The answer will vary according to the answerer, but in every case it will be complex and involved.

EDUCATION IN INDIA.

PAINFULLY slow is the rate at which we are progressing in the matter of education—so slow indeed that you may well doubt whether we are progressing at all. In the year 1922-23, of which a concise report with important statistical tables was recently published by the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, the number of scholars in all institutions, recognised and unrecognised, rose from 83·83 lakhs to 87·91 lakhs, i. e., by only 4 lakhs or by about 5 per cent. A better way of looking at this progress is to compare the number of pupils with the population of the country. In 1922 the proportion of students to population was 3·393; in 1923 it rose to 3·48, i. e., by less than .1 per cent! If we had compulsory education in force all over British India, the number of students in the primary classes alone would have been about 15 per cent. of the population. Communities in India which have made education universal among themselves have 20 to 25 per cent. of their population under instruction. Among Europeans and Anglo-Indians more than 25 per cent. of the females are under instruction. Among the Parsis 23 per cent. of the males and 14 per cent. of the females are under instruction. Indian Christian boys in primary classes form 14 per cent. of the male population of that community. At the rate at which we are proceeding when shall we realise the not at all extravagant ambition of having 20 per cent. of our population under instruction of some kind?

The following table gives for the different provinces and administrations the percentage of students to population for 1922 and 1923:

		1922	1923
Madras	...	4.3	4.4
Bombay	...	5.0	5.0
Bengal	...	4.05	4.18
United Provinces	...	2.26	2.38

Punjab	...	3.03	3.75
Burma	...	4.26	4.23
Bihar and Orissa	...	2.38	2.48
C. P. and Berar	...	2.39	2.44
Assam	...	2.84	3.02
N. W. F. Province	...	2.3	2.5
Coorg	...	5.32	5.16
Delhi	...	4.0	4.2
Ajmers-Merwara	...	3.05	3.18
Baluchistan	...	1.69	1.71
Bangalore	...	10.4	10.5

The case of Bangalore is exceptional; it is an urban area and an important centre of Anglo-Indian education. Among the rest, it is remarkable that the little province of Coorg should hold the leading position. Its position is particularly remarkable because it is an altogether hilly district, depending for its economic life on plantations, where rainfall is heavy and communications are difficult. It is in most respects similar to Assam; only its inhabitants are far more progressive. Bombay and Madras come next in order but the distance between them is noteworthy. That the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and Bihar are behind the N. W. F. Province comes as a very disagreeable surprise. The greatest progress in any individual province during the year was achieved by the Punjab. Out of an increase of 4 lakhs of students in the whole country, as much as 1½ lakhs is to be put to the credit of the Punjab. The total expenditure on education from all sources increased from Rs. 18.38 crores to Rs. 19.04 crores. Of this increase of Rs. 66 lakhs, not less than Rs. 30 lakhs was incurred by the Punjab—mainly in expanding educational facilities in rural areas. This is indeed a credit to Mr. Fazl Hussain, the Education Minister.

What kind of progress are we making with compulsory education, for introducing which we were so keen even ten or twelve years ago? The following table reveals the position as it existed at the end of 1923:—

Province.	Date of Act.	Areas under compulsion.	
		Municipalities	District-Boards and Rural Areas.
Bombay	Feb. 1918 (for City)	5	—
	1920		
Bihar & Orissa	Feb. 1923	1	—
Punjab	April 1919	8	56 school areas.
Bengal	May 1919	—	—
U. P.	June 1919	8	—
C. P.	May 1919	1	1
Madras	Dec. 1919	7	—

The above table gives areas where compulsion was actually introduced and does not include those for which either proposals were merely sent up or sanction had been obtained. The best progress, it will be seen, is made by the Punjab, where a system has been introduced which is well worth the attention of other provinces:

"The Punjab Primary Education Bill (Act ?) permits of the introduction of compulsion in the whole or any part of

an area controlled by a local body; and in country districts the simple but effective plan has been adopted of starting with the smallest possible area, namely, that served by a single village school. The more enlightened parents who are already sending their sons to school are readily persuaded of the advantages to be gained by raising the school enrolment through compulsion, so that each class in the school may be entitled to have its own whole-time teacher, and the school itself may claim a decent building from the District Board. The example set by one village encourages other neighbouring villages to follow suit; and so in the Lyallpur District alone, which contains several canal colonies, no less than 57 school areas have on their own initiative adopted compulsory education."

Bombay was pioneer in the matter of compulsion and its Act of 1923 is in advance of the Acts of other provinces. But the present Ministry has held up progress by delaying the framing of Rules under the Act and by not giving sanction to the local bodies that have applied for permission to introduce compulsion. The chief difficulty everywhere is no doubt the lack of funds. But the remedy does not lie in waiting for something to turn up. Let retrenchment and economy be tried by all means, but let not the clock of progress be stopped for their sake. Our leaders must have the courage to propose new taxation and get the people to agree to it. One is glad to know in this connection that the local bodies of Madras have set a good example. No less than 55 taluka boards, one district board and 17 municipalities there have decided to levy an education cess under the Act of 1920.

Under the present voluntary system there is such great wastage of material, that it is worth our while to introduce compulsion only for preventing it. The number of children attending the first four primary classes in boys' schools was as follows:—

Class I	3,453,046
Class II	1,184,918
Class III	833,303
Class IV	593,301

It should not be supposed that two-thirds of the children that join Class I leave school before going to Class II. Even among Anglo-Indians and Parsis the number of children in Class I is about double that of Class II, the reason obviously being that the majority of the children are very young and take more than one year to qualify for promotion. But the strength of the three higher classes should be more or less uniform, and we find that to be the case among Anglo-Indians and Parsis and to a less extent among Indian Christians. As things are at present, about half the money that is spent on primary education may be said to be wasted, as not more than half the number of students who join a school get enough out of it to entitle them to be called literates.

The following example in self-help, again set by the Punjab, we hope, will be followed by the backward classes of other provinces. The Meos of Nuh petitioned the Governor "that a special cess might be levied on their community for the purpose of maintaining a secondary school. This being impossible, the community raised a voluntary levy

equal to 10 p. c. of the land revenue. Very few villages have failed to pay and there has been no complaint from the subscribers. With the help of the District Board 'a Meo high school has now been fairly launched and the dream of every Meo leader for a generation has been realised.'"

INDIAN EMIGRATION TO MALAYA.

WE are indebted to Mr. C. F. Andrews for allowing us to publish an advance *precis* of his forthcoming report on "Indian Labour in Malaya." His conclusions are as follows:

"Having regard to the remarkable improvement in health upon the estates during the last five years and also to the increasing number of Indian labourers who are now accustomed to go backwards and forwards to Malaya without any recruiting at all, I would advise that, provided political conditions can be adjusted, a further five years' experiment be allowed during which the following reforms should be effected:—

(i) The steamer passage shall be made quite healthy and decent for deck passengers.

(ii) A sustained effort shall be made to encourage family life and improve the education of children upon the estates. Indian settlements on the land shall also be fostered.

(iii) The general average of wages shall be raised to the standard laid down by the Planters' Executive Committee in 1920.

(iv) The whole question of restriction of toddy drinking together with co-operative thrift shall be thoroughly explored and action shall be taken accordingly.

(v) Kangani recruiting shall be brought to an end and a purely voluntary system introduced as early as possible.

The political considerations which would weigh most are as follows:—

(i) The appointment of Indian representatives on the F. M. S. Council.

(ii) Additional Indian representation on the Indian Immigration Committee.

(iii) The entire removal of the colour bar from the higher Civil Service.

(iv) The removal of the present impression that educated Indians are not wanted in the country but only the labouring classes.

(v) A pledge that the Banishment Ordinance of the F. M. S. will not be used against Indians for political reasons."

As for ourselves, we would whole-heartedly subscribe to these "Conclusions," which seem to us eminently fair and practical. As, moreover, Mr. Andrews describes them as having been arrived at "after consultation with Indian leaders," one may hope that for the next five years emigration to Malaya will be allowed to go on without a perpetual uprooting process "to see if the roots are growing alright."

As regards the sea passage between Penang and Madras, we have heard, that Holt's are anxious to supply a vastly improved service, if the Straits Government will award the next contract to them instead of to the B. I. S. N. Co. We sincerely hope that this change will be made; not only because all new brooms sweep well or because no

service could be worse than a B. I. one: but because the "Blue Funnel" boats all over the world have earned a reputation for the human touch in their treatment of passengers and crew alike, which certainly distinguishes them *toto cælo* from the heaven-born bureaucratic methods of the P. & O. and B. I. lines. As an example we may quote that every intending *haji* from the Far East goes on the *Haj* to Jiddah rather on a "Blue Funnel", than on any other boat.

As for the sex proportion, Rule 23 made under the Indian Emigration Act of 1923 fixes the number at $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. In 1911 the proportion for Indians resident in Malaya was 3: 1; the 1921 census showed that then already it had come down to 1.8 to 1—so it is obvious that the ideal set up by the Rule is in a fair way of being attained. All the more reason, in our opinion, why a mechanical application of Rule 23 should not be insisted upon by our Government. It should be remembered that under the same rule "any specified country may be exempted from the operation of this rule" and that Ceylon has actually been so exempted; and it seems to us that the special relations between India and Ceylon, which warrant this exemption, apply with almost equal force to Malaya. In this connection it is interesting to note that for the first six months of 1924 the sex proportion of emigrants to Malaya was 3'8 : 1, but of immigrant-returning to India 6'4 : 1. At all events, all mechanical rigidity only leads to immoral practices, as experience has shown over and over again. Mr. Andrews, we believe, has suggested instead that Malayan planters should pay "equal pay for equal work": an excellent idea which, we are confident, would automatically make recruiting of families still easier. Young emigrants naturally are loth to take their wives with them into an uncertain future: but, once it was known that women's work was highly paid in Malaya, compared with Madras rates, that scruple would disappear; and the whole question of sex-proportion would settle itself naturally.

The political claims put forward on behalf of Indians in Malaya appear to us both moderate and necessary; since only political representation can assure fair treatment.

On the other hand, we regret that Mr. Andrews has made no mention of any scheme whereby small-holding on the part of the labourer could be encouraged. Tamil colonization schemes in the past, it is true, have never led to much: but it does not follow that, because the Tamil peasant does not know what to do with a piece of Malayan jungle presented to him, he would not know what to do with five acres of rubber. If sugar plantations in Mauritius and elsewhere have ultimately been forced to parcel out their broad acres amongst their labour force, it seems daring to deny that a similar transformation of estates into small holdings is not indicated in Malaya: if not in the interests of labour, at least in that of the

rubber industry, whose present spoon-fed lingering on a Churchillian "restriction" *flat* can obviously not continue for ever.

However, that is another story: and meanwhile we can only repeat that we thoroughly welcome Mr. Andrews' "Conclusions" as far as they go both in the interests of the planters and of their labourers. The next word now is with the F. M. S. Government.

OPIUM POLICY.

IV.

The continued weakness of the Government of India position on the opium question has been, that it has allowed the considerations of revenue to overcome considerations of morality. The formula which it stands by, "Maximum of revenue with minimum of consumption," has necessarily had the fatal consequence of laying primary emphasis on the first part of the sentence to the weakening of the second. The maximum of revenue has, for a hundred years, loomed largest. Only recently, under the world's moral pressure, the minimum of consumption has begun to take its proper place and perspective. You cannot play a game of hazard with conscience, and allow the dice to be loaded against you at the start and yet expect to win the game. Christ has put the whole problem in one immortal phrase,— "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Furthermore, the question now does not affect India alone, or the East alone, but the whole world. Opium is not like gin and rum and whiskey,—bulky in quantity and very hard to conceal. A single person may bring into a country hidden in his clothes enough opium for a whole year's consumption for twenty or thirty drug addicts. Experience has proved, that no power on earth can effectively stop opium smuggling, when once the drug has been released and has come into private hands. Therefore, everything depends on stopping the cultivation. Here in regard to cultivation, the problem is much easier. For the white poppy fields are visible for miles and the acreage under poppy cultivation can be reckoned exactly to the fraction of a square yard. The Americans, who are practical people, are demanding the restriction of cultivation in the poppy-growing countries, because in this way only can there be effective restriction of the opium drugs themselves.

What opium addiction is like, has been told us at the "Hearing before the Committee of the House of Representatives, U. S. A." I will quote the whole passage:—

Mr. Porter: Describe briefly the mental and physical conditions of an addict suffering from the withdrawal of the drug.

Mr. Brewster: You mean in the process of what we call our 'cure'?

Mr. Porter: No, not exactly. You have seen cases, where the drug has been abruptly withdrawn from a confirmed addict, for, say, four or five days. Are you sufficiently familiar with that class of cases to describe the

physical and mental conditions of the addict during those four or five days?

Mr. Brewster: Well, that is rather hard to describe in medical terms.

Mr. Porter: I mean just as a layman would describe it. Do they require restraint?

Mr. Brewster: Yes, they require restraint. They are very nervous.

Mr. Porter: Is there nausea?

Mr. Brewster: Yes. Nausea, vomiting, profuse sweats. They are, you might say, almost like caged animals sometimes.

Mr. Porter: And mentally?

Mr. Brewster: Mentally, I think, they are almost in as pitiful a condition as a man with delirium tremens. There are times when they will do anything to get the drug.

Mr. Porter: Do you believe that many of the crimes of violence are due to addicts who are unable to secure the drugs and in their frenzy commit these crimes in order to secure money to buy the drug?

Mr. Brewster: In my opinion, I think there are a large number.

When we are informed, on the top of this, that according to the most careful and cautious computation there are more than a million men and women in the United States of America, who are in this very condition of drug addiction, it will not be difficult to understand how bitterly the American people feel towards a country, like India, which is cultivating the opium poppy over very large areas and is thus letting the opium poison loose upon the world. Canada has become almost equally opium cursed. The Canadians point to India as one of the chief sources of the supply of the poison, which plays such havoc with its younger generation of men and women.

Furthermore, it has to be understood, that this terrible calamity of addiction may happen to young men and young women and even children within a very few days of the habit starting and by no real fault of their own. This opium addiction may be indulged in quite ignorantly, and without any moral guilt whatever; but when once the habit is formed, then hereafter there is either needed a daily, life-long dose of the poison, or else the agony of a "cure" such as that which has been described above. Even after such a "cure" there is always the danger of the craving coming back, and the addiction being formed again. Every single witness in America agreed, that while an opium addict might be an admirable person, going on daily quietly with his work, so long as his daily dose was supplied, and often living for years as an estimable member of society, yet two dangers were always impending, owing to the tolerance of poison in the system: (1) The addict was liable to a physical collapse at any time; (2) The addict was liable to a moral collapse, especially if the craving came on suddenly and the drug was not procurable. At such a time, even a saintly person might become a moral pervert,—entirely irresponsible.

I have only once before, in my life, been obliged to study literature (in the form of personal evidence) so tragic and so intensely painful as that given in U. S. A. Government papers and reports

concerning opium addiction. The other occasion was, when I had to read the evidence for the 'white slave' traffic. The two evils are similar in this respect, that the victims are almost always altogether innocent, and yet these poor innocent people become suddenly involved in a life-long misery and shame. This nearly always happens in that beautiful period of youth, when everything in human life should be full of joy and gladness.

It is undoubtedly true, that there does not at present appear to be the same pressingly grave danger of addiction in certain human races, that there is in others. Yet whole nations have been known to break down under the test in the past, when temptation has been brought to their doors. Indeed it would be hard in history to find a clearer instance of the warning given by St. Paul, about moral offences: "Let him that thinketh that he standeth take heed, lest he fall." In India, the danger has been brought so near to our very doors and the possibilities of a collapse under the new strain of modern industrial conditions is so great, that no true lover of his country would dare with his eyes open for one moment to run the risk of a collapse such as has recently happened in China. A partial moral break-down has already taken place in Burma and Assam. Today, there is an imminent danger of the same opium danger spreading to East Bengal. The strong moral background of the Muhammadan religion] undoubtedly stands in its way, as a protection, just as it has done also in Malaya. In this matter Islam as a religion has a creditable history behind it. But the poison is so subtle; its addiction so suddenly and so innocently takes place, that it would be very unsafe to rely on anything short of complete freedom from the temptation. This can only be achieved by ultimate opium prohibition.

It is true, of course, that complete addiction, amounting to slavery to the vice of opium, cannot so quickly follow from eating raw opium as it can do from submitting to daily morphia injections, or daily inhaling heroin. But Coleridge, the poet, is by no means a solitary instance of opium addiction through eating opium itself; and I do not think that it can be doubted by any reasonable person, that the West has acted wisely and sanely and prudently in its own interests in stopping opium eating and opium smoking altogether. The Far East and India, however, in so far as they have been placed under the military control of the West (with the one notable exception of the Philippines) have been set in the very midst of the fire of temptation. It is an amazing fact, that India has not given way to the vice more than is at present apparent. But two provinces at least have given way, namely, Burma and Assam. There are other parts of India, that are even now tottering on the very verge of the fatal descent. The altogether strange and novel industrialism of the West, that has been now introduced in India, is throwing up new centres of population, where the opium vice itself is

rapidly spreading before our very eyes. Literally, hundreds of thousands of little children,—innocent babies,—are being drugged by their own mothers with opium every day, in order to keep them in a state of torpor,—there in the chawls,—while the poor mothers themselves go out to work. The time has not yet become too late to prevent the evil spreading further. The moral impetus which Mahatma Gandhi gave by including opium prohibition in his constructive programme has done wonders. In Assam alone it reduced in one year the consumption by 42 per cent. But these great effects can hardly, in such a matter, be permanent. They need the endorsement of legislation.

I would not, however, to-day plead for India alone, but for humanity as a whole. We in India have a unique opportunity of giving to the whole world almost the very first example of a world evil cured by international action. India should be the last party of all to refuse to take part in such a noble cause as this. India indeed has a special duty to take part, because under British control, she herself was a tool in the past for spreading (even at the point of the bayonet) the opium habit in other lands.

C. F. ANDREWS.

IS INDIA LIGHTLY TAXED ?

"INDIA is lightly taxed" is a facile remark oft-repeated and oft-quoted, rapidly gaining currency among people, who without caring to examine all about it, not only satisfy themselves but also sedulously propagandise and win neophytes whose zeal becomes proverbial. As is often the case, such statements, whose truth it is often difficult to probe, are readily believed in and acted upon so much so, that after a time, truth finds itself overgrown with a thick layer of shrubs and thorns that the search after it, however assiduous, becomes a lost endeavour. Leaving aside the globe-trotter who airs forth his views on the Indian political situation and India's economic condition, statesmen whose knowledge of Indian affairs if well used, is sure to bring credit, going home, lose that imaginative sympathy, which is quite essential for the proper understanding of the needs and conditions of an alien country. Strachey need not be classed among these statesmen but certainly his remark, "There is certainly no country in the world possessing a civilized government in which the public burdens are so light", cannot withstand close scrutiny, while the further remark, "In England taxation supplies 5/6 and in India not much more than 1/4 of the public income", must be more fully gone into.

The Indian Government derives its revenue from three different sources, namely, 1. Property, 2. Commercial undertakings, 3. Contributions from the people. The first category includes the income from lands, forests, railways leased out to and managed by companies, while state managed railways, posts, telegraphs, canals, monopolies of salt, etc., constitute the commercial undertakings of the state. Lastly the contributions from the people embrace direct and indirect taxes, the first comprising land-tax and income-tax, the second comprising customs, excise, stamp and registration duties. The railways, a decided liability for 50 years at the rate of a crore of rupees per year, have become since 1904 a valuable asset, and just at this time the separation of railway

from general finance is under contemplation. They come under two categories, as they are managed by companies or by the state itself, all of them being owned by the state. The railways under company management give a share of their profits. People obsessed with a desire for logical division and exactitude, are tempted to adopt the principle of division by dichotomy in classifying revenue into tax revenue (revenue from taxes) and non-tax revenue. Non-tax revenue comprises revenue from forests, opium sales, railways, irrigation works, post and telegraph and other minor items as departmental receipts and fees for services rendered to the public. Opium revenue once considerable, is now declining owing to the agreement with China and may dwindle into a vanishing quantity. The steady increase in the income from forests depends upon the utilization of forest products for industrial purposes. The management of public utilities like posts and telegraphs by the state has proved immensely useful to the people. The place of the English income-tax as a single tax, making a large contribution to the revenues of the country, is in India occupied by the land revenue with this difference that while the English income-tax is capable of adjustment year after year by being raised in times of stress and lowered in times of prosperity, the land revenue is subject to a periodical assessment of 30 years in areas other than permanently settled. In respect of annual adjustment, that which marks an approach to the English income-tax is the Indian salt tax, which by reason of its reaching down even the smallest incomes and its easiness of collection, offers an irresistible temptation to a financier confronted with deficits. One may wonder what the place of the income-tax is in the scheme of Indian taxation at present. At present its yield is not promising and a fear is even entertained in some quarters, that by reason of India being a country where agricultural economics still holds the field and by reason of the comparative slowness of development of credit and exchange transactions, the levy of income-tax may act as a handicap on India's industrialisation. Whatever it may be, Indians may feel assured that the taxes of the future are customs, excise and income-tax, while land tax may fast be taken back to the antechamber.

So much in general about Indian taxation. We shall now consider what after all is the substratum of truth in the remark that India is lightly taxed. Putting it aside as a wholly insupportable position is the better part of gross ignorance or wilful misrepresentation. The remark, as I consider it, is based on the assumption that land revenue is a rent. Here we need not enter into that unedifying and unprofitable controversy whether land revenue is a tax or not. For our purposes, it may be taken as a tax since it is a portion of wealth taken by the government, in spite of its utter disregard of the principles of progression or equality or equity of incidence and since it is primarily a tax on agricultural incomes or wages earned by agricultural labourers (as often the cultivators are) though properly speaking, they should be exempted from taxes, just as the artisans, shop-keepers and petty merchants are. Well, it is this assumption of land revenue being a rent, that occasioned the remark of the lightness of taxes.

Apart from the unsuitability of the comparison from the economic point of view, as indicated, we still proceed on the assumption—the temptation being so irresistible—that such a comparison may somehow be instituted. Here we encounter difficulties. There are certain postulates of Indian

taxation. India's poverty is one of them. Even eminent statesmen and financiers subscribe to this proposition. The following figures given by Sir M. Visvesvaraya in his address at the economic conference, are eloquent by reason of their silence:—

	Average wealth or property per head.	Annual per capita income.	Trade per head.	Death rate per 1,000.	Average expectation of life in year.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.		
United Kingdom	6,000	720	640	Below 14	45
Canada	4,400	550	510	" 14	44
India	180	52	23	Over 30	24

No wonder that in the face of these figures the standard of living is low, the efficiency of Indian labour is poor and the death rate appalling.

The second postulate is that the administration is costly. No less an authority than Mr. Fisher recognizes in his "Studies in History and Politics" that "The British administration in India is the costliest in the world and a not unnatural mark for Indian critics who complain of the heavy financial drain which it involves and in particular of the large sums devoted to the payment of pensions." It is easy to make out a case for enhanced salaries for people leaving their homes and serving in other lands; but at the same time even the worst enemy of Indian aspirations will have to admit that the Indian Civil Service is the costliest service. The Prime Minister in England—though as such, he is entitled to no salary, as the office is unknown to the constitution—gets only £5,000/- per annum. He is the highest officer but gets the salary of a High Court Judge in our country. Our presidency Governors are paid twice as much, while the Governor-General's salary is fourfold. Correspondingly high are the salaries of the I. C. S. and other services. The third postulate relates to the voice of the people in the affairs of the country. Without hesitation it must be admitted that a measure of responsible government has been granted and that India stands to profit by it. Unfortunately, however, the system of Government viz, dyarchy, has been found wanting and even responsible statesmen have pronounced an unfavourable verdict. Expenditure and taxation are thus not subject to effective popular control, and no scrutiny of the existing scale of expenditure so as to bring about economy, is possible.

With these postulates we shall proceed further. Behind the low Indian rates, something is lurking. Truth is there, i. e., the right way of testing the burden of taxation; for the figures may not be heavy while the burden may still be heavy, in spite of the low taxation figures, as will be seen presently. The right principle in arriving at the incidence of taxation, is to discover the relation between per capita income and per capita taxation. The figure for earnings divided by the population gives the per capita income, while the revenue divided by the population yields the per capita taxation. As regards the revenue, opinions are divided with regard to the items that must go in. English critics harping on the lightness of taxation proceed on the assumption that the land revenue is rent. Some Indian economists of repute are for deducting the non-tax revenue while they treat the land revenue as a tax. Again there are others who while including the commercial undertakings, delete opium and forests. Opium is fast diminishing by reason of agreement with China and it is difficult to find what portion of

the opium revenue is taxation, seeing that in the absence of Government monopoly the profits of cultivators and merchants are yet to be calculated on a sound basis. The forest receipts must also be excluded as they are uncertain and as they depend for their increase on the utilisation of the products for industrial purposes. To that extent we shall be erring on the safe side. Similarly interest, receipts by civil departments, military receipts, miscellaneous, and other public works must also be excluded. They all form fees or receipts on account of services rendered directly. The question whether a particular charge is heavy or light is beside the point. When the above are omitted, the items that enter into our basis of calculation are land revenue, salt, stamps, excise, provincial rates, customs, income-tax, registration, railways, post and telegraph, mint and irrigation. The total figures are given below for the following years.

1911	£. 50,321,000
1913	£. 55,410,000
1920	£. 86,832,600.

The percentage of taxation in India on average income is given below for various years:

Year.	Taxation per head.			Average annual income.	Percentage of taxation on average income.
	Rs.	as.	ps.		
1871	1	13	9	20	9
1881	2	2	3	27	8
1891	2	3	11
1901	2	10	2	30	8.8
1911	2	13	11	50	5.7
1913	3	1	6
1920	5	0	11
1923	6	7	7	53	13.5

Now for purposes of comparison with England the following figures for 1917 are furnished:—

UNITED KINGDOM	INDIA.
Population 45 Millions	250 Millions
Earnings £2,250 Millions	£600 Millions
Taxes £170 Millions	£45 Millions

In these calculations, non-tax revenue has been excluded, while land revenue has been included and local rates for England and India have been omitted. If they are added, the rates are enhanced by an equal percentage. Without them the percentage of taxation on income (i. e. the relation between per capita income and taxation) is $7\frac{1}{2}$ both for England and India, and what is the inference we have to draw? No doubt the per head taxation is smaller in India but certainly not lighter. When we speak of light or heavy taxes we have always in our minds the capacity of the people to bear the burden. Let us only turn once more to the figures furnished by Sir Visvesvaraya and we find therein that from every point of view either average income or wealth or trade, not to speak of other things, India takes an unenviable place as compared with the United Kingdom and Canada. One principle we have to remember is that the smaller the income, the greater the sacrifice, and the heavier the burden. The sacrifice of Rs. 6-8-0 for a man who has an income of Rs. 53 is certainly greater than that of Rs. 88 for a person having an income of Rs. 720. Another equally important principle that must never be lost sight of, is that the smaller the wealth, the heavier the burden, even though the taxation figures are lower. The average wealth of an Indian is Rs. 180 and that is nothing beside a sum of Rs. 6,000. A comparison between the two is not even approached by the disparity in size between a giant and a pigmy.

To conclude, the remark that India is lightly taxed is not warranted by the facts behind the figures, even supposing that a comparison between industrial England and agricultural India can be instituted. In theory and practice, that proposition is untenable and from the point of view of economics, the remark is as perverted as it is un-called-for, from the political point of view.

A. S. VENKATARAMAN.

THE WORLD OUTSIDE.

THE political *quidnuncs* have, I see, been pretty busy again on the question of an early dissolution of the British Parliament. Of course, the world being ruled with an extraordinary amount of folly, even such early dissolution is quite possible: but I certainly would say that it is quite one of the most improbable events and surely not one, which will be brought about by any party leader in cold blood. Why? Because no elections in Great Britain, whether held this autumn or next, nor even for some years to come, will be able to alter the fundamental fact that public opinion is fairly evenly divided between the three political parties and that as a consequence neither of these parties will get an absolute majority in the House. Last January I made bold to say that the odds were all on Mr. MacDonald's government lasting out the natural life of the present parliament: and I certainly find my opinion to-day, after six months' actual rule, only confirmed. For if no party can expect a landslide in its favour; if a fresh election would merely take some votes from the Tories and a few more from the Liberals and give them to Labour: who has anything to gain by it? That the Conservatives will not be allowed to rule, the events of last January have already demonstrated, that the Liberals can expect no indulgence from either Conservatives or Labour, hardly needs demonstration. For if anyone is it surely is the Liberal; that ramshackle party of bankrupt ideas, of the past, catering for people saddled with leaders with a past: yet protesting of the past, its progressivism and repudiating any backward orientation. Labour, youthfully looking forward, naturally has attracted to itself all the talents; the champions of the times and ideas of the past find their natural home in the Conservative party: where then is there any room still for the Liberal party of Mr. Asquith, let alone Mr. George?

YET Mr. George, who cannot rid himself of his *idée fixe* that a "red" scare will rally round him the bulk of the electors, has taken the occasion of the signature on Aug. 8th of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, to call for a *jihad* against MacDonald and all his works, vowing that he will bring down the House on those conniving at such pandering to Bolshevism. In the end all this froth of course will come to nothing: Parliament will ratify the Treaty and pass on to the next business in hand—and certainly not commit suicide. Meanwhile, it may be worth while to examine the Treaty somewhat closer. (For its full text see the *Russian Information and Review*, Aug. 16th). So Conservative a paper as the *Spectator* has praised it; so Socialist a one as the *New Statesman* has found fault with it. The Russian daily press has lamented that Russia has given away everything and got nothing; the British daily press has wailed that England has got nothing and given away everything. From all of which the impartial observer will deduce that the Treaty must surely be rather sound. What does the Treaty itself say? It con-

sists of four chapters. The first deals with all treaties ever concluded between Russia and Great Britain; it defines those that are now repealed by mutual consent; it reaffirms the rest. The gain in thus clarifying the international, legal position between the two countries is obvious and uncontested. Chapter two deals with fisheries and settles the long-standing dispute regarding British fishing rights in the northern waters of the Soviet Union. The latter had claimed a 12 miles' zone as a reserve for its own citizens; the British had insisted on a three miles reserve. The new Treaty compromises on a three miles' limit and a southern out-of-bounds line: and no critic has been able to impugn the compromise as anything but satisfactory. Chapter four deals with "Miscellaneous," the most important article being one "solemnly affirming the intention of the contracting parties to live in peace and unity, scrupulously to respect the undoubted right of a State to order its own life within its own jurisdiction in its own way, to refrain from" propaganda, &c., &c. Nobody has dared not to applaud these sentiments. So nothing controversial remains, but Chapter three.

THEN what about Chapter three? It deals with "Claims and Loan," and before dealing with it, let us remember that both at Genoa and later at Spa all the diplomats of the world had failed to find a formula, whereby on the one hand the Soviet would acknowledge the right of expropriated capitalists to compensation, and on the other the Western Powers the right of the Soviet to expropriate. In the present Treaty Mr. Pensonby and Mr. Rakovsky ingeniously hit on an article (6), which declares that by way of exception to the decrees of Jan. 28th, 1918, &c., the U. S. S. R. will satisfy the claims of British holders of Russian loans and of nationalized industrial businesses (art. 10) in ways specified later: which really is a solution as simple as the egg of Columbus. The fact remains, that nobody had thought of it before. The satisfaction of these claims is left to further negotiation between "The City" and the Soviet authorities: very properly too, since the higgling of the market is hardly one of the functions of a Foreign Office. It is "the City" that wants from the Soviet its money previously invested in Russia; it is the Soviet that wants from the city a big development loan: hence the Treaty provides, that when city and Soviet have agreed upon the former, the British Government will guarantee the latter. This guarantee is equitable, since the loan is expected to give a considerable stimulus to British trade and lead to an important reduction of unemployment in British industries. Yet since it is after all private investors' money that Russia needs today, Russia must needs satisfy the same investors regarding their previous investments in Russia. If these investors don't want a loan to be granted, they can frustrate it by not agreeing to the compensation offered. If they want compensation, they must needs agree to the new loan, since part of it will be needed for paying the compensation. In any case, the Treaty does nothing but put the matter in a nutshell, as far as the financiers are concerned; but it also isolates this financial question from all the other, political, questions and settles the latter by not allowing the former to encroach on them any longer. The whole arrangement is ingenious certainly, but as fair and commonsense as it is ingenious. Then why all this hysteria?

AGAIN, let us remember—that the Tsarist régime of recklessly contracting debts abroad had already made Russia bankrupt long before

the Bolshevik revolution. For years Russia had been paying old debts by incurring new ones: a process which had nearly reached its inevitable climax, when the War broke out. Hence the Soviet really only publicly announced, what already was a fact. Besides, let us not forget, that every country in Europe has confiscated, to a greater or lesser extent, its pre-War debts. Even immaculate England has taken off a 10% discount, whilst France has written off 60% and Italy 80%, not to speak of the total extinction of all German debts contracted in terms of the pre-War mark. Nobody grows hysterical about these confiscations; but when the wicked Bolsheviks do the same thing, all Western indignation immediately reaches boiling point. Why? Because they dare to be so indecent as to call a spade a spade? As a matter of fact, I think that with certain sections the anti-Bolshevik mentality has just become a habit: which alone explains why for instance the famous Riga correspondents still find a market for their wares. The thing is particularly ludicrous, since the logic of circumstances is forcing almost day by day Soviet leaders further and further away from Communism and back to an economic condition of things which is as much like capitalism as two pins. Mr. Arthur Ransome in one of his illuminating articles (*The Manchester Guardian Weekly* of Aug. 15) depicts Bukharin as officially delivering the funeral oration over Militant Communism, when he declared the "New Economic Policy" to be no longer a regrettable retreat, but the normal line of future advance; and the "N. E. P." not to be an amendment of Militant Communism, but rather Militant Communism to have been a merely temporary, war-time amendment of the "New Economic Policy". With such a new outlook amongst the rulers of Russia it becomes also understandable, why suddenly the formerly intransigent stalwarts of Muscovy have now quite meekly assented to come back to the old Amsterdam Trade Union International, which only the other day they denounced as traitors to the Proletariat. So again I ask, why all this hysteria about the Anglo-Soviet Treaty?

HANSRAJ.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE SECOND BERAR LIBERAL CONFERENCE.

A correspondent writes:—

The second Berar Liberal Conference is to be held at Yeotmal under the auspices of the Yeotmal District Liberal Association on 11th and 12 of October 1924. A strong Reception Committee consisting of the prominent Liberals of the District has been formed with Rao Bahadur R. G. Munde as its Chairman and Messrs. S. N. Bhalchandra and V. T. Deshpande as its General Secretaries. At a meeting of the Reception Committee held on 11th inst. at the bungalow of Rao Bahadur Munde several sub-committees were appointed to push on the work of the Conference. The local Town-hall which has got the capacity of holding about 500 people has been selected as the place where the Conference is to meet. The Presidency of the Conference was offered to Sir Bipin Krishna Bose of Nagpur, but he has expressed his inability to accept it on account of his ill-health and pre-occupation in the University work. The Reception Committee is in communication with some other politicians of all India fame regarding the Presidency of the Conference. It is expected that the Liberals in Berar will rally strong at Yeotmal to hold aloft the banner of Liberalism in this province. The preliminary arrangements of the Conference are almost complete and invitations have been issued to all prominent Liberals in India to attend the session. The session is expected to go a great way in consolidating the position of Liberals in Berar.

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