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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

Responsive Co-  
Operation Party.

AS a result of the Conference of the Responsive Co-operationists at Akola on Sunday and Monday last, a regular party of Responsive Co-operation has come into existence pledged to oppose consistent and persistent obstruction and to accept "all places of power, responsibility and initiative". The main question which this Conference was called upon to decide was whether the new party would be a close corporation of a few individuals or would be thrown open to all who believe in the constitutional and parliamentary method as opposed to direct action and would thus be made the rallying-ground for all who are unable on conscientious grounds to acquiesce in the policy of non-co-operation or indiscriminate obstruction that rules the Congress at present. This question has, however, been left undecided, and to the extent that a definitive answer is afforded, it is decided in an exclusive sense. For the Conference came to the conclusion that in Maharashtra, Barar and the Marathi-speaking part of the Central Provinces, the membership of the new party would be limited to Congressmen, freedom being given to other provinces to extend the membership to non-Congressmen if they so chose. It must seem strange to all rational thinkers that a movement, which in its essence represents a revolt from the Congress and from the latter's offshoot—Swarajism, should yet make membership of the Congress an indispensable condition of one's adherence thereto. It would be just as reasonable to insist that no one would be admitted to Protestantism who did not still hang on to the Catholic Church.

The severance of the ties which bound one to Congress as a necessary qualification for admission into the fold of a new party which makes opposition to Congress principles its chief concern is of course an arguable proposition, but we for our part are unable to see reason in making it as necessary for a responsive co-operator to be formally connected with Congress as to be opposed to its works.

ASSUMING that there is some reason in it, this condition ought to be enforced in every province, but it is not to be. Only in three provinces will it be required of every would-be responsive co-operator that he shall not have seceded from the Congress, but in other provinces this requirement may be overlooked. We are sorry that lack of principle thus stamps the very birth of this new party. The determining factor in applying or waiving this condition of admission into the Responsive Co-operation party in any province is not the soundness or unsoundness of the condition, but the strength of the party's position in that province ("this party leaves the question to be determined by each Congress province according to the conditions prevailing therein with special reference to the desirability of making the party strong, popular and effective, whether membership of the party shall be confined to Congressmen only.") In other words, the leaders of the party say in effect to Liberals, Independents and National Home Rule Leaguers or Conventionists: "We are numerous enough in Maharashtra, Berar and the C.P. (Marathi) without your joining us: we shall therefore keep you out in these provinces. But in other provinces we are weak—where we exist: and there we shall seek an accession of strength from your ranks." Apparently, a sound enough policy from the party point of view, but from the principle point of view? To the latter plea the party seems to say, "Hang the principles; all we care for is some position for ourselves." The party will soon find that this is not even good strategy, for men who take it upon themselves to carry on a crusade for a particular doctrine, especially for men who exist as a party only in these three sub-provinces.

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WE wish all success to the Assembly Regulation III of 1818. in its efforts to secure the repeal of the obnoxious Bengal Regulation III of 1818. It is a measure intended for use, in very different social conditions, but comes handy to the executive in order to get out of the way inconvenient agitators. This is a clear abuse of the powers which it confers on the Government; and leaders of all shades of Indian opinion have combined in demanding that it should no longer disfigure our statute book. To represent under such circumstances any Indian leader, much less one of the late Sir Surendranath Benerjee's standing, as its supporter, as an

overzealous member of the heaven-born I. C. S. actually did in the Assembly, is gross distortion of facts. The Home Member made it clear that the Government are not yet in a position to do without such extra-judicial powers as the Regulation in question conferred upon them. Lala Lajpat Rai did well to point out that this was nothing but an admission of impotence on the part of Government. The plea of special circumstances requiring special measures was also advanced by the Government. If so, let the Government go to the Assembly and convince it of the need for such special powers instead of using antiquated measures intended for use in unsettled conditions of society for depriving peaceful citizens of their liberty. The Home Member admitted that "the powers under the Regulation must be used with extreme discretion." Apart from the misapplication involved in putting the Regulation in motion against political workers, one wonders whether the Government can maintain that this condition has always been satisfied. The cases of men like Lala Lajpat Rai and Babu Krishna Kumar Mitter, will convince all dispassionate observers that the liberty of the subject is encroached upon by the executive on very slight pretexts. It is such unjustifiable restraints on the liberty of well-known political leaders imposed by the Government in times of even moderate turmoil that are in a considerable measure responsible for the present estrangement of feeling between the rulers and ruled in India; and unless the situation is to be aggravated still further, the Government would do well to agree to the proposed repeal.

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PROHIBITIONISTS will not find

The Madras Excise  
Debate.

much cause for rejoicing in the protracted excise debate in the Madras Legislative Council last week. The Council has passed a milk-and-water resolution which will satisfy nobody. It asks Government to declare total prohibition as their ultimate goal to be reached within twenty years by reducing the number of toddy-shops and following what is known to us in this presidency as the rationing system. Other means of reducing liquor consumption are not ruled out; but an amendment in favour of local option was deliberately rejected by the Council! We do not think this will enhance its reputation as a body representing progressive Indian opinion in this matter. If it was anxious not to embarrass the Government by a too sudden disturbance of their finances consequent upon the grant of local option, some means should have been found to safeguard them against such an eventuality. But to set one's face definitely against local option is to withhold from the people the right of self-determination even in matters of minor importance. In this connection note must be taken of the view expressed by such a responsible Ministerialist as Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair, who thought "it would not be necessary to introduce new taxation for making up the loss in the excise revenue." His view evidently is that with proper retrenchment and remission of the provincial contribution, the Government would be in a position to do without additional taxation. Whether this would in actual practice be so or not, it is clear the Council was far from wise in voting against local option.

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The public must have on this occasion expected from the Minister some definite announcement as to his own policy. Indeed he was challenged on the floor of the House to produce it; but he had nothing constructive to offer. No wonder one member went so far as to charge him 'with a very weak and half-hearted temper-

ance policy." We do not think the picture is at all overdrawn. It was the Minister's clear duty to place before the Council for its approval a comprehensive excise policy; and if it was turned down, to resign his seat and seek re-election on his own programme. Sir A. P. Patro did neither, though that did not prevent him from indulging in destructive criticism with regard to the alternative methods of reducing the consumption of liquor suggested by non-official members. A time limit was both "undesirable and unpractical"; and had moreover not been recommended even by the Bombay Excise Committee, though, for a wonder, that Committee was anxious to see the goal reached within a measurable distance of time; viz. 20 years at the outside! As for local option, it "had done no good in Scotland in the direction of reducing consumption". While we do not know the Minister's grounds for saying so, it does seem to us that his view differs very much from that of some Scottish missionaries, whose experience of local option in their own country is more hope-inspiring. In regard to the rationing system, he tried to frighten its advocates by vague references to "the experience of Bombay" which "must be a warning to this presidency." He was careful not to make specific mention of the evils connected with rationing, which should make the Madras Council hold its hand. Possibly he had in mind the so-called growth of excise offences. It has yet to be proved that this is due to the rationing system. And even granting for argument's sake that it was so, is it really an insurmountable difficulty? We wish the Minister had come forward boldly to lead the non-official movement in the direction of total prohibition instead of merely sitting on the fence. But the fact that members of the Cabinet refrained from voting shows that the Government had not finally made up their minds, one way or the other, which is of course far from saying that they have an open mind on the subject.

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Bengal Ryots'  
Conference.

THE Press in Bengal did not give the address of Dr. Naresh C. Sen Gupta at the Second Bengal Ryots Conference which met last week the attention and publicity it deserved. Dr. Sen Gupta in his presidential address dwelt at length on the economic evil and social waste of the Permanent Settlement and the necessity of overhauling and simplifying the land system of Bengal. Ever since the Cornwallis Dispensation the land laws in Bengal have sanctioned abuses, maybe unwittingly, until, as Paul-Dubois observed in the case of Ireland, 'those abuses have accumulated to the point of identifying supreme legality with supreme injustice' and created rights which 'though they may have remained legal, have ceased to be legitimate'. Dr. Sen Gupta, naturally enough, is not satisfied with the Tenancy Amendment Bill now in the Committee stage in the Bengal Council, but does not on that account advise its rejection. Evidently, he is not one of those 'patriots' who will shelve everything until the advent of Swaraj in their own private sense. He advised the ryots acceptance of the Bill in so far as it is beneficial to them and elimination of unjust and mischievous clauses in the Bill. Dr. Sen Gupta further appealed to his audience in connection with the Bengal Primary Education Bill not to wait for compulsory education until the Government finds money by retrenchment to finance the scheme, for that will amount to the permanent postponement of education. He suggested that the Zemindars and middlemen who usurp five-sixths of the actual land revenue paid by the ryots should bear the cost and

that an education cess should be imposed for this purpose.

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*Measured their Responsive Strength.* If in the municipal elections in Bombay City the Congress party suffered very bad reverses, some prominent political leaders (among whom must be reckoned the president of the Congress) coming in, so to say, by the skin of their teeth and some others being kept out in the cold, this party inflicted a very severe defeat on the party of Responsive Co-operation in the Council election in Nagpur City. The candidate run by the Congress-cum-Swarajist party was an almost political cipher and his rival, who contested the election in the interest of Responsive Co-operators, was a leading politician—Mr. Bhawani Shankar Niyogi, who has attained the eminent position of President of the City Municipality. This was really an election to test the comparative strength of the two parties, for merit was all on the side of Responsive Co-operation and nothing but the label on the side of the Congress. The issue was really one, as *Forward* put it, between Congressmen and seceders from the Congress, and the prestige of the Congress carried the day for Mr. Nilkanth Rao Udhoji against the overwhelmingly superior personal claims of Mr. Niyogi. In Nagpur, therefore, the Congress or the Swarajist party must be declared to be immeasurably stronger than the responsive co-operators. By the way, do not the leaders of the latter party see that in spite of their illogical insistence on every member of their party being in the Congress, they are regarded by Congressmen as seceders from the Congress? Really they are worse than that—they are rebels against the Congress. Will they now realise the absurdity of their position and give up the self-imposed restriction that every mutineer against the Congress should still remain in the Congress? If secession from the Congress is such a black sin, still blacker must be the sin of revolting from its authority.

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*Profit of Quinine.* THE League of Nations Health Section Bureau at Geneva, it appears, have failed in their efforts to persuade the Dutch Government to regulate the quinine ring at Bandoeng, Java, where nine-tenths of the world's supply of quinine is produced. The Bandoeng factory is believed to have evolved processes of quinine manufacture which it jealously keeps secret. The Government of Bengal have cinchona plantations at Mungpoo and Munsong and there are possibilities of extending the area which at present is 3035 acres. We do not know how far the Java monopoly in quinine affects the price of Bengal quinine. From the report of the Cinchona Plantations and Factory, Bengal, 1924-25, it appears that the Government of Bengal made a profit of Rs. 4,42,934 during the year, the total receipts and expenditure being Rs. 7,76,560 and Rs. 3,33,626 respectively. As an industrial enterprise, this profit of nearly 125 per cent. is no doubt considered as very satisfactory by the Government. But it is most damning to the Government of a province where the death rate from malaria continues to be about one million and several millions suffer from the disease throughout the year. In our opinion, the sale price of quinine should be at once reduced to its cost price or less, if possible, by granting a subsidy. The Government of Bengal may well find some other fields for displaying its abundant business ability in making profits, but let it not be in the manufacture of a medical specific like quinine. For in a very real sense profit out of quinine is profit out of death and ill-health of poor sufferers from malaria.

## INDIA'S OPIUM POLICY.

IN his opening speech to the Council of State, the Viceroy outlined the new opium policy of the Government of India. Government propose to reduce progressively the export of opium for other than strictly medicinal and scientific purposes so as to extinguish it within a definite period, and to discontinue auction sales as soon as the agreement for direct sale now under negotiation with the Government of French Indo-China is concluded. We heartily welcome the decision. The Viceroy has briefly indicated the reasons for the change and we must wait for the debates in the Legislature to know the reasons in full. Meanwhile we welcome the decision, because it is in response to public opinion as it expressed itself recently in India, and because it is generous where it need only have been just. It will also shut up the mouths of the ill-informed and fanatic opium reformers all the world over, and especially in America, who, without justification, have defamed India. By this generous action India will rise in the estimation of world public opinion, which is more often swayed by sentiment than by solid facts.

We, however, own to a few doubts which we wish cleared up. The Viceroy mentioned Article I of the Protocol of the Second Opium Conference at Geneva among the reasons. The Article demands that steps should be taken to prevent smuggling of opium from being a serious obstacle to the suppression of opium smoking. Is it a fact that the smuggling of Indian opium is now a serious obstacle, and will the stoppage of licit export by Government diminish the evil? We fully sympathise with the Government's desire to "obviate the complications that may arise from the delicate and invidious task of attempting to sit in judgment on the internal policy of other Governments," and to ensure that opium imported under an Import certificate is not re-exported for illegitimate use to other countries. We should, however, like to know how, if some Governments in the past have not been overscrupulous in the grant of Import Certificates for "legitimate use," the Government of India proposes to insure against similar conduct in issuing certificates for "strictly medicinal and scientific purposes." Would the export for "medicinal and scientific purposes" obviate the delicate and invidious task of sitting in judgment on the conduct of other Governments? If the Government of India is to avoid this task, the League of Nations must ration the importing countries and inform the Government of India accordingly. Is the League ready to do so? Be this as it may, is there a "strictly medicinal and scientific use" for Indian opium? Is there a demand from other countries for Indian opium for this purpose? The Report of the Indian Delegation to the Geneva Conference says that "when prices are normal the opium used for drug manufacture is mostly European, Turkish or Persian, because these have a higher morphine content than Indian opium."

It would have given us greater satisfaction if the new policy would put us right in the League of Nations. But it does not. It must be remembered that the League has no fault to find with the *current export* policy of the Government of India: in fact it is much in advance of the League requirements. India's unfortunate position of isolation in the League is due to the fact that she has not agreed to prohibit opium-eating without medical prescription in India. Further, as long as raw opium can be obtained without medical prescription, the Government cannot possibly prevent the smoking of opium, to which it is pledged. It is greatly to be regretted that the new policy has nothing to say on the sub-

ject of internal consumption in India.

By the decision to stop export for medical purposes—which, by the way, we are fairly sure will not benefit the consumer and only result in putting the money much needed in India in the pockets of the opium traders in Turkey and Persia, and which perhaps may involve India in some fresh taxation—the Government of India will have done much less than half, and that too the lesser half, in rehabilitating India in the estimation of the world. Government would have served India better if they had devised measures to limit the internal consumption to strictly medical and scientific purposes, even if they had let alone the present export policy.

## TENANCY LEGISLATION IN BENGAL.

By Syed Erfan Ali.

### I—HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

THE land system of Bengal is so intricate and a compromise of so many divergent characteristics that a brief résumé of its historical development is necessary for a proper understanding of the system. It was a day fraught with immense possibilities of mischief, when Lord Cornwallis declared the zemindars as proprietors of land in 1789 in contravention of the ryots' proprietorship of the land subject only to the State's right to the levying of land-revenue, a tradition hallowed by immemorial antiquity. The Hindu and Moslem rulers always upheld the ryots' proprietorship of land; it never occurred to them to make agriculturists mere serfs on the soil. Zemindars, most of whom held "conditional office, annually renewable and recoverable on defalcation" (to quote the words of the minute of the Board of Revenue of 1786), and who "represent," according to Baden Powell, an eminent authority on Land Systems in India, "a late—if not the latest—development in land interest, and was the localised outcome of a dying and corrupt system of State management", were made the actual proprietors of the land. There is enough evidence on record to show that the proprietorship granted to the zemindars was not absolute; it merely gave them a *servitus*, while the *dominium* was left intact with the agriculturists. The evil of the system arose out of the incomplete definition of the term "proprietorship," as given to the zemindars, in the Government regulations. If there have been any glaring examples of iniquity, any flagrant breach of the sacred traditions of justice and if millions suffered at the vagueness of a law, it will be found in the use of the expression "proprietorship" in the Decennial Settlement of 1789-1790 and the Permanent Settlement of 1793. The effect may be gathered from the following despatch of the Court of Directors of 15th January, 1819, which runs:—

In the consideration of this subject it is impossible for us not to remark that consequences, the most injurious to the rights and interests of individuals, have arisen from describing those with whom the permanent settlement was concluded as the actual proprietors of the land. This mistake (for such it is now admitted to have been), and

the habit which has grown out of it, of considering the payments of ryots as rent instead of revenue, have produced all the evils that might have been expected to flow from them: They have introduced much confusion into the whole subject of land tenures, and have given specious colour to the pretensions of the zemindars, in acting towards persons of the other classes as if they, the zemindars, really were, in the ordinary sense of the words, the proprietors of the land; as if the ryots had no permanent interest but what they derived from them.

The adverse effect of the Settlement with the zemindars was due to the fact that while the authorities explained all the liabilities of the zemindars to the Government, they merely depended on their good sense to treat the agriculturists with moderation and justice. Here there is no dearth of good wishes on the part of the Government for the prosperity of the agriculturists and for their immunity from oppression. But pious hope and exuberant trust could not make amends for the gap in the legal enactment. So when Lord Cornwallis proposed to make the revenue payable by the zemindar perpetually fixed without definitely settling the relation between the zemindar and the ryots, Sir John Shore (later on Lord Teignmouth), who had the vision of a practical statesman, vehemently opposed this step. But the word of caution and prudence was lost upon Lord Cornwallis and the Board of Directors. In the full indulgence of their pious hope that the zemindars would be "prudent trustees of public interest," they issued the Permanent Settlement Regulation, which dubbed the zemindars as proprietors of land with a perpetually fixed land revenue. That Lord Cornwallis was not utterly forgetful of the rights of the ryots, although he had not the practical instinct to define them clearly in the Regulations, may be gathered from his minute. He says:—

Neither is the privilege, which the ryots in many parts of Bengal enjoy, of holding possession of the spots of land which they cultivate, so long as they pay the revenue assessed upon them, by any means incompatible with the proprietary rights of the zemindars. Whoever cultivates the land, the zemindars can receive no more than the established rent, which in most cases is fully equal to what the cultivator can afford to pay.

In order to emphasize the point, it may be mentioned that *abwals*, or cesses over and above legal rent, which were levied during the days of confusion, were allowed to be consolidated with the rent proper, but any future imposition of the nature was interdicted. Vagueness once more caused in the defeat of the better side of the purpose of the sponsors of the zemindary system. Historians record how the oppression of the zemindars grew heavy upon the poor agriculturists and how Government began to aid by more perverse regulations the tyrannical hands of the zemindars. Misery grew apace in the rural areas and at last in 1859 Government determined to intervene. But the intervention, which was proclaimed to be in favour of the ryots, actually strengthened the hands of the zemindars. They gave the stamp of legality to illegal acts perpetrated by the zemindars with unlimited powers. The grant of the right of having fixed rent and fixed tenure for those who were in possession of the land continuously for twenty years and the recognition of the right of occupancy on fixity of tenure (and not rent) to agriculturists having twelve years' occupation of land, acted in the nature of a limitation and an unjust compromise of the right of fixity of tenure and rent meant for all agriculturists, as the passages from the minutes of Lord Cornwallis, quoted before, will clearly show. The action of the Cabal legislature is all the more inexplicable in the face of the fact that that noble reformer and patriot—Raja Rammohan Roy—argued with his usual vehemence in 1831 that fixity of rent and tenure is the first step towards the prosperity of the agricultural masses. In reply to a question he said:—

The new system (the zemindary system as established by the Permanent Settlement of 1792) acted upon during the last forty years has enabled the landholders to ascertain the full measurement of the lands to their satisfaction, and by successive exactions to raise the rents of the cultivators to the utmost possible extent. The very least I can propose and the least which the Government can do for bettering the condition of the peasantry is absolutely to interdict any further increase of rent on any pretence whatsoever.

The Bengal Tenancy Act, which is undoubtedly an advantage over the Rent Act of 1859, was vitiated by the same pre-supposition that favour was being shown to the ryots and that the zemindars had a free charter to every conceivable right on land and that the ryots were more in the nature of serfs whose interests were not recognised by the authors of Permanent Settlement. The late Mr. R. C. Dutt, a recognised authority on the land system, pleaded ten years before in 1875, when he was a member of the heaven-born service, in his admirable book "The Peasantry of Bengal", that a permanency of tenure and rent for the agriculturists is the most preliminary step for the prosperity of the dumb millions. He wrote:—

The only one and only one way left before the Government:—to estimate the importance of the general rising correctly,—to grapple the problem intelligently—to newly create the status of the zemindar and the raiyet in a definite manner,—to enact the Permanent Settlement between the zemindar and the raiyet as a permanent settlement has been effected between the zemindars and

the Government. In the face of the crisis that is staring rudely at us, half-hearted legislation would be useless and worse than useless. . . Let the rate of rent now payable be carefully ascertained after an extensive survey and let such rates be fixed for ever. . . This would be a bold step but we believe it to be truly beneficial to the country.

But neither this reasoned argument nor the bold stand which the Right Hon'ble Syed Ameer Ali, P. C. (then Mr. Syed Ameer Ali) made in the Imperial Legislative Council, was of any avail. If the persuasive eloquence and the able exposition of the rights of the agriculturists by the Right Hon'ble Syed Ameer Ali had been accepted, the present confusion in the land system would have been set at rest. But between an acquiescing Government and the recalcitrant zemindars, some of whom were in the front rank of public life, and a *zemindar*-ridden *intelligentsia*, the rights of the ryots were disregarded. The object of drawing this historical background is to show how the ryots are suffering from historical wrongs and to show that the aim of a scientific legislator should be to restore to the agriculturist all the powers, which he inherited through immemorial tradition, not as a matter of mere grace but as a matter of an inviolable right. The zemindars were meant to be contractors of land-revenue and as such entitled by the Permanent Settlement to a fixed 'praghana' rent. Let them restrict themselves to this their legitimate sphere.

## SERFDOM IN THE KONKAN.

### IV—KHOTI UNDER BRITISH GOVERNMENT

The truth is that scientific lawyers have seldom been very favourable to popular government, and when the scientific lawyer is doubled with the Indian bureaucrat, we are pretty sure beforehand that in such a tribunal it will go hard with democracy.—JOHN MORLEY.

WHAT Morley said of Sir Henry Maine can be said with equal truth of the lawyers who have passed judgments in disputes between Khots and ryots, if we replace the words "popular government" and "democracy" by "the cultivators' rights" and "peasant proprietorship." The ryots have grievously suffered at the hands of the administrators of the district and the judicial authorities who have given decisions relying only on prescriptive rights. Of course there have been exceptions of officers who had eyes to discern and the heart to combat inequity and injustice suffered by the ryots. The history of the Khoti question dates back to the early days of the British rule in the Konkan, if not earlier. "The plaguy question of the Collectorate has been to define the term Khot" wrote Mr. Coles, in the early fifties, in a memorandum which he left on record on his leaving the Collectorate, and the plaguy question has not yet been satisfactorily solved. Mr. E. T. Candy, of the Bombay Civil Service, wrote a book on the Khoti Tenure (published by Government as No. CXXXIV—New series, 1815) making use of the records of the Collector's Office at Ratnagiri. It is not a complete history of the Khoti tenure in all its details, but a compilation professing to discuss the relations between the watandar Khots and their

tenants, tracing the history of the subject and showing the succession of facts and opinions. In this discussion also the point, how far Government can interfere between the Khots and their ryots, has been kept in view. The selections given by Mr. Candy from the Government records in this book are important to the student of this question, though they shed little light on the original rights of the Khots. Mr. Candy begins his introductory chapter as follows:—

"The definition of the word "Khot" in Molesworth's Dictionary is "A renter of a village; a farmer of land or revenue; a farmer of the customs, also a contractor or monopolist *gen.* 2.—In some provinces an hereditary officer whose duty it is to collect for Government the revenue of the village, also an officer appointed for this office. 3.—A tribe, or an individual of it, of Brāhmans in the Southern Konkan, otherwise called खव्क." The last meaning is apparently a metonymical trope. As most of the Khots in the Southern Konkan are Brāhmans, the word has come to mean a particular tribe of Brāhmans. Mr. Chaplin wrote in 1821—"the Khots are usually Brāhmans;" and Lieutenant Dowell wrote in 1829 "Most of the Khots are Brāhmans." But there are Mussalmān Khots and the most ancient Khoti families are said to be Marāthas. The Brāhmans have come in by sale and mortgage, and by grant in later times, especially under the Peshwas. The other meanings given by Molesworth may be thus summarised: A farmer of land or revenue, sometimes hereditary and sometimes not." This is the view borne out by the authorities.'

According to Mr. Pelly's Revenue Report for 1819-20, there were two classes of Khots, *watandārs* and *Sarkāri*, the latter being liable at any time to be dispossessed by Government. The *watandār* Khots maintained that they possessed an hereditary indefeasible right and that they could not be dispossessed. The older inhabitants, however, of the Northern Konkan ridiculed the combination of *watandārs* and Khots as terms irreconcilable, maintaining that as Khoti meant only 'maktā,' farm or contract, to designate a man as hereditary contractor was an absurdity. In the Northern Konkan the Khots were *temporary* farmers. In Regulation I of 1808 the Khots in Sālsette are described as temporary farmers. Mr. Dunlop in his Report No. 70 of 1822 wrote: "There are no *watandār* Khots north of the Bānkot river." Also Mr. Chaplin wrote in 1820: "In the Northern Konkan the right of a Khot to hereditary succession either never existed, as in the Southern Konkan or else it has been totally disregarded, for at the present day they do not even claim it as a *watan*, and in the time of the late Government, whoever the Government chose was employed as Khot." In the Southern Konkan also, it appears, all the Khots did not possess hereditary rights. There was a very material difference between *sanadi* and non-*sanadi* Khots. A Khot naturally had no hereditary right to his Khotship, and unless protected by a specific grant or *sanad* he was not secure in the possession of his village. However, this difference between *sanadi* and non-*sanadi* Khots disappeared under the administration of the British Government, both Khotships having been treated alike as hereditary and both having enjoyed the same rights.

Mr. Candy's enquiry begins from the period when the territory forming the Southern Konkan came under the British Government. The oldest records that are available are four revenue reports (1813, 1814, 1817 and 1818) from "the Residency Malvan." In the 60th paragraph of the revenue report for 1817-18, mention is made of Khots, when the Resident, Mr. Hale, describes the land tenure in Sālshi Mahāl. He characterises the Khoti system as 'pernicious' and points out the necessity of protecting the cultivators under Khoti tenure from 'undue exactions.' However, how this protection was to be afforded he did not state. Mr. Dunlop in his report for 1821-22, while describing the land tenure in the said Mahāl, thinks that the nature of the soil in villages near the *ghruts*—being chiefly *warkas*—seems to have favoured the *usurpations of the Khots*, the alternate cultivation and abandonment naturally leading to cultivators being less attached to their ground. Mr. J. H. Pelly in his revenue report for 1819-20, said that there were two kinds of holders of land: (1) *Dhārekaris*—cultivating their own land like *mirādars*, and (2) *Ardhelis*—occupying new lands or renting the Khots' own like *uvaris*, mere tenants at will. He also opined that "a correction of the assessment and a restoration to Government of their undisputed rights, now *fraudulently withheld by the Khots*, would no doubt be unacceptable to the latter, though the ryot would undoubtedly benefit by the arrangement." Mr. Pelly's following remark is significant: "At present the villagers are generally much indebted to the Khots, and as the ryots can neither read nor write, they are, of course, wholly at the mercy of the former."

It appears that the British officials found it difficult to obtain correct information regarding the relations between Khots and ryots. As early as 1822, Mr. Dunlop says in his report: "These points (the rates paid by the ryots) are also pretty well determined by prescription, but it unfortunately happens that most of the hereditary district officers, *deshmukhs* and *deshpandays*, are also Khots, so that it is difficult to obtain information, but the practice of the former Government seems sufficient to authorise ours in establishing rules to restrain the exactions of the Khots." Mr. Dunlop submitted another report in 1824, in which he mentions certain old papers and that is the only mention of such old papers in Mr. Candy's compilation. One of these papers was found in the possession of one of the claimants of the office of *deshpanday* of Anjanvel, dated Sursan 997 (A. D. 1595) and it was a *Kaulnama* addressed to the *desais*, *mukadams* and *khots* by the manager of Mustafabad (Dabhol). In this paper a sale of coconut trees by a Mahar which had been objected to by the Khot was confirmed. Mr. Dunlop comments on this as follows:—"This seems to afford a presumption that the Khots even then claimed the sort of proprietary right in everything in the village, and objected to its being transferred or disposed of without their consent, as they do at present, but the confirmation of the sale by the

manager of the district shows that the claim was disallowed, and many subsequent decisions by succeeding Governments show that the same claims continued to be persevered in, but were set aside when appeals were made to the Government." The Government reply to this report was, however, disappointing. "Whatever may have been," the Government said, "the origin of their title, they appear now to have acquired a right with which it would be neither just nor *politic* to interfere."

Mr. Reid in his revenue report for 1827-28 says: "With regard to this class (the ryots who have for a series of years tilled the same fields on payment to the Khot of a fixed portion of the produce—generally one-half) *the right of the khot has perhaps been too far recognised since the introduction of our Government.* The vagueness and uncertainty of their tenure, the difficulty of defining with precision what individuals should be comprised in this class, and the absence in the village records of survey, &c. of any mark by which they can be distinguished, have reduced them nearly to the conditions of tenants-at-will; and I apprehend that the practice of our courts has much facilitated this result by the recognition of the full proprietorship of the Khot." Mr. Reid also mentions the difficulty (felt also by Mr. Dunlop) of obtaining information on these points, as nearly all the hereditary district officers have an interest in Khoti estates, and strongly recommends a new survey.

Lieutenant Dowell's report (Nov. 1829) contains the survey of one taluka, Ratnagiri, which then comprised Sangameshwar and Lanje Mahals. Lt. Dowell divided the land in a Khoti village into two parts—that which is permanently divided among the inhabitants and usually consists of about three-fourths of the village and the remaining one-fourth which is not permanently divided. The first division was sub-divided into (a) land divided among the Khot's family, and (b) lands held by the kardes (watandars). These kardes, says Lt. Dowell, are supposed to be the families of former dharekaris and of older standing in the villages than the Khots, they being generally of the Kunbi caste. Some of Dowell's notes are important: "Some of the best land in these villages is not under the Khot, but the property of kardes, which shows that the Khots have no real power of directing the kardes in what part of the village to cultivate, since the Khot would of course get the rice land for himself if he could." "The Khots of the Lanje Mahāl are probably all new within these 80 years, and the real Khots parāgandā and jayālli (i. e. have deserted their villages)." "In this village (Dhāmāpur) the watandar kardes have the right of mortgaging and in effect of selling their lands without reference to the Khot."

After Lt. Dowell's survey establishment was reduced in 1833, the correspondence regarding Khoti tenure seems to have ceased for some years. In 1836 the ryots of the Wehvi Mahāl petitioned Government against the levy of certain taxes, and

eventually the Collector, Mr. Glass, wrote a report in May 1837. He did not agree with Dowell and held that in purely Khoti villages the proprietary right was vested in the Khot. However, he admitted that the direct tendency of the Khoti system was to keep the ryots termed 'ardcelis' in the lowest stage of poverty. He was of opinion that it would not be *politic* or just to disturb the system. Really speaking, justice was subordinated to expediency. Now and again we come across the word 'politic' in the British officers' report in connection with the Khoti system. There were considerations of revenue and also political considerations natural in the early days of British rule. It was due to the former that Mr. Glass gave his opinion against restraint of the unjust levies, for he said that if *athveth* and such exactions were abolished, a corresponding abatement must be made in the revenue taken from the Khot. In 1843 and 1844 some ryots of Sirgaum (Anjanvel Taluka) petitioned Government complaining of oppression on the part of their Khot. This produced a long report by the third Assistant Collector, Mr. Ellis, dated 20th February 1845. The matters complained of were numerous, such as the levy of veth, house-tax, karsai (an import of grass, palm leaves, &c.) Mr. Ellis followed in the footsteps of Mr. Glass and upheld the unjust levies on the score of custom. "Of the evil tendency of the present system," he added, "there can be no doubt. . . . But then if the Khot were forced to abandon these levies, might he not exact their value from the ryot in some other shape?" Though theoretically the Khot could not exact more from the cultivator than the proportion of the produce authorised by ancient custom, Mr. Ellis remarked, practically by the imposition of extra cesses this was frequently disregarded, *the only limit to the khots' exactions being the power of the ryot to pay.* Mr. Liddell, the Collector, in forwarding this report, concurred severally with the opinions expressed by his Assistant. This report was answered by Government letter to the Revenue Commissioner, in May 1848. His Lordship in Council considered it "*monstrous doctrine*" that the only limit to the Khot's exactions should be the power of the ryot to pay. The Revenue Commissioner had recommended that the Collector should be directed to make a full and searching enquiry into the Khoti system, but the Governor in Council, though recognising the condition of the ryot as 'servitude of a description the most annoying and vexatious', thought that such enquiries would not enable Government to determine how it could protect its subjects from extortion. Nor was the Government prepared to use the power it had by law of prohibiting the unjust levies. It suppressed 'its desire to relieve the ryots from oppressive or vexatious taxation' in its anxiety not to 'deal unfairly with the Khots'. Consequently Mr. Coles was transferred to the Ratnagiri collectorate for paving the way and assisting in the introduction of a revenue survey.

P. G. KANEKAR.

## IN THE LAND OF THE ABORIGINES. AMONG THE GONDS OF THE C. P.

Raipur, February 13.

HAVING worked for three years among the Bhils of Panch Mahals district and the Kaliparaj of Navsari district (Baroda State), I cherished the desire of making some acquaintance, however superficial, with the Gonds and Santals, two of the other more numerous aboriginal tribes in the country. With this end in view and with the object of seeing the philanthropic work done by Christian missionaries—the only work of its kind—among them, I projected a three months' tour (1) of the Central Provinces highlands, which is the home of the Gonds, (2) of Assam or the Brahmaputra valley, in which reside on different plateaus several small tribes unconnected with each other, either ethnically or linguistically, and (3) of "Santalia," as the land of the Santals is named by a medical missionary who lived among them for over thirty years. Before actually setting out on the journey I equipped myself with some information regarding these tribes by a three weeks' study, at the Servants of India Society's Library in Poona, of books on ethnology and census reports and such other materials and then I commenced the tour by visiting Balaghat and Mandla districts of the Central Provinces.

The Gonds of Chedi country of old or of Gondwana of the Moghul times ruled for three centuries from 1440 to 1740 over the Satpura range and the plain to the south of it. The capital of the Gond rulers was at first Garhā, a few miles from Jubbulpore, but when pressed hard and harassed by the Moghul generals, they went south and founded a capital in the heart of this forest area at Mandla on the bank of the Nerbuda. The descendants of these rulers of yore are extant even to this day: they are styled Raj-Gonds. These have adopted Rajput manners and rank very much higher than the common Gonds in public estimation. Their numbers are few.

The Gonds themselves number as many as 20.0 lakhs and thus form more than one-eighth of the population of the Central Provinces and Berar. There are other hill tribes as well, who number 11.52 lakhs. Thus all the aborigines of that province number no fewer than 32.62 lakhs or 20.4 per cent. of the total population. That is to say, one in every five persons of the province is an aboriginal. These forest tribes are most numerous in Mandla, Chanda, Jubbulpore, Bhandara, Balaghat, Raipur, Bilaspur, Durg and most of the 14 Feudatory States.

These aborigines are of course to be distinguished from untouchables, but in one respect they share the disability of the untouchables: water touched by them is regarded as defiled. It is not so in the case of Bhils in Gujerat and Khandesh, where water is accepted at the hands of Bhils. Their low

social position is the cumulative result of the conditions in which they live, but is specially referred to the custom of doing their ploughing work with cows (and she-buffaloes) and to the practice of heavy drinking. The custom of yoking cows to the plough is widespread, though in villages adjoining large towns it is being abandoned. On asking a well-to-do Gond why this harsh custom, particularly offensive to Hindu feeling, is being followed, I was told that the Gonds were too poor to spare their cows this kind of work. Excessive drinking is a common vice of the Gonds and the principal reason which disables them from competing successfully with Hindu agriculturists. The wave of temperance which swept over this country in 1921-22, under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, was not altogether without its effect on the Gonds: consumption of liquor decreased among such Gonds as had intercourse with Hindus, though those living in far-away forests and hills retained their habits. The enhancement of the price of liquor and increased vigilance on the part of excise officials in detecting illicit liquor have also contributed to decrease in drunkenness. The educated Pardhans, priests and minstrels of the Gonds, are bent on eradicating these two customs from the Gonds, viz. the use of liquor and the yoking of cows to the plough. That will, according to them, raise them socially sooner than anything else. The Balaghat Gazetteer states:—"A remarkable movement is at the present time (in 1906) taking place among the Gond caste. At the instigation of a few of their leading men who were desirous of raising their caste in the social scale, they bound themselves to abstain from impure food, from ploughing with cows and from liquor drinking. The movement has lasted for a few months only, but it has spread over the whole of Baihar (the high land Tehsil of Balaghat) and its adherents have at any rate withstood the temptations of one marriage season."

As said above, several Gond Rajas had Malguzar villages, out of which they were slowly but surely swindled by wily money-lenders, who, making common cause with low-paid court subordinates, brought all these lands into the market without even letting the Gonds know that their lands were being sold! It was only in 1916 that a Land Alienation Act afforded the Gonds some protection. Their creditor or mortgagee cannot realise his dues now by the sale of the land, but very often he gets round the Act by compelling the Gond Malguzars to transfer their villages to him on a long lease of, say, 20 years. The Gonds, like all other primitive tribes, are notoriously unthrifty and over-trustful. They always get into debt and as a consequence lose their lands. Partial as is the protection given by the Land Alienation Act, it was applied only this month to Seoni, a district on the Satpura plateau and con-



Whinnish with Mandla. Thus the Gonds and Raj-Gonds in this district had till now absolutely no protection against the rapacity of the money-lending classes. The average Gond cannot compete successfully with Lodhi, Teli, Kurmi, Rathor and such other agricultural classes. Unfortunately the Rayatwari system of land tenure, which obtains in the Bombay Presidency and which at least partially protects weaker races from succumbing to more intelligent and advanced castes, does not obtain here. Under the Malguzari system which is in force here, the Gond is the tenant—fortunately an occupying tenant—of his overlord the Malguzar, who in his turn is as it were a tenant in regard to the whole village under him to Government.

Talking of money-lenders, I am reminded of the large number of Afghan or Pathan money-lenders I met on the railway line in Balaghat, Mandla and other Gond districts. Their logic of the stick is well-known all over the country, when they have to deal with docile classes of people. Their rate of interest is only from one to two annas per rupee per month, or 75 to 150 per cent. per annum! It is said that Pathans have a strict rule in their fraternity, which permits one to remit money from wherever he has his place of business to Peshawar and transborder tracts, but does not permit even a rupee to be re-imported into India under any circumstances. I learnt on good authority that a Pathan money-lender settled in a market town in Mandla district about six years ago with a capital of Rs. 1000; during the period of his residence of six short years, he remitted Rs. 18,000 to Peshawar and has now a floating capital of a further sum of Rs. 40,000 in his business distributed in half a dozen banks that he has since opened. The poor Gond is thus made poorer and his economic condition gets worse day by day. The 100 and odd co-operative societies of Mandla district exist only in villages of the headquarter Tehsil and not in the outlying Tehsils, where the Pathan has absolute control over the needy Gond. If means can be devised to stop this evil, it will save thousands and tens of thousands of rupees of poor wretched cultivators of the soil and will stop their moral degradation too to a great extent.

AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR.

## REVIEWS.

### S. AFRICA'S NATIVE POLICY.

THE HISTORY OF NATIVE POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA. By EDGAR H. BROOKES. (The Nasionale Pers, Cape Town.) 1924. 8½ x 5½. pp. 531.

THIS volume has very little appeal to the average layman. It is a compendium of native laws and a technical discussion of the manner in which native laws have been superseded by European codes. It has been prepared with meticulous care, and anyone seeking accurate information as to the manner in which the present policies of the various South African provinces have developed through all these years will find the volume illuminating and helpful.

The book has very little to challenge or inspire the humanitarian. Foreign administrators of native populations in various mandated countries may find a deal of inspiration in its pages, but the philanthropist, the sociologist, the missionary, the servant of Humanity may find that discussion leaves him cold and disappointed.

The theme of the book may be stated, in the words of the author, as an attempt to portray "the manner in which Europeans have striven to rule the Bantu." Here we have the *motif* of South African political and economic science. The white European conqueror, in the most naive fashion, has taken it for granted that his race and civilization are superior, and that he is morally obligated to take control of the economic resources of the country and to rule the backward races. The only idealism which moves him is that he is a sort of steward who, from a higher knowledge and experience, must guide the development of weaker and less advanced people. This attitude permeates the life of South Africa. No matter what may be the racial background of the white man, it is always the same story. He is the superior and the dark man is the inferior.

The author, in the several chapters, takes up native development first in one province, then in another. But as a matter of fact there is very little variety except in the mere details of administration. The policy of Native control has been one of segregation and servitude. One province only, namely the Cape, has developed anything in the nature of franchise for coloured people, and when the Union became a political entity the Articles of Union made it impossible to apply the Cape policy to other provinces. The black man has one great function to perform, namely to furnish labour for the white man. He is not in any sense regarded as a citizen of the country, and very few statesmen have the slightest dream that he will ever come to the place where he will be a voter or a holder of political office. As a matter of fact, the Charter of Organization lays it down as a principle that the black man can never become a candidate for membership in Parliament.

The author makes it clear that the gradual disappearance of the red man in America, the black man of Australia, or the Maori of New Zealand will never be the fate of the Bantu people of South Africa because the various races of the Bantus are increasing at a more rapid rate than are the whites. It would seem that a knowledge of this fact would lead South African statesmen to change their policy. In America the native red man was rapidly outnumbered by a growing white population, but privileges of citizenship were never denied him on the basis of colour. Likewise, in Australia and New Zealand, there are only 300,000 blacks in contrast with 8,000,000 whites. These continents were never thickly occupied by coloured tribes and therefore the white conquerors found very little resistance.

In South Africa, however, we find one and a half million whites, of various grades, set down in the midst of several million blacks and browns, but determined to maintain absolute white supremacy, reserving all rights of industrial development, ownership of economic resources, and political freedom for the few whites. It is a reversal of normal development, and contrary to natural laws. The very foundation principles of democracy will ultimately demand, as the dark races progress toward civilization, freedom of control by the majority. For one or two generations the present policy may persist; but after that a complete change will have to come. Nothing but war and bloodshed will make it possible permanently to continue a system where a

few representatives of one foreign race have absolute control over many representatives of another.

The book has little to say about the Indians and other brown races in South Africa. But the same inhibitions and restrictions which surround the natives likewise surround the Indians. There are already evidences of the fact that the Indians, the Malays, coloured and native races will find it profitable and necessary to combine against the whites. To avoid this and to make sure that the development of South Africa shall be peaceful and righteous, a totally new Native Policy will have to be developed by African statesmen.

FREDERICK FISHER.

## ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETATION OF SOCIETY.

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL BASIS OF SOCIETY.

By FRANKLIN THOMAS. (The Century Company, New York.) 1925. 9 × 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ . pp. 336. \$3.

STUDENTS of every branch of study take stock of their knowledge from time to time. Sociology is no exception to this rule. Writers on Sociology have often summarized the doctrines of individual sociologists and interpreted different schools of sociological thought. Giddings and the other older authors have always given us a short account of the history of sociology. Recently Lichtenberger has offered us a whole treatise dealing with the sociological doctrines of most of the pioneers of sociology that helped the advance of this branch of study. As regards histories of particular schools of sociological thought, perhaps M. M. Davis was the first in the field with his work on the psychological interpretation of society. The writer of the book under review, who is a University Extension Lecturer in Sociology at Columbia University, deserves the thanks of students of sociology for giving them a lucid exposition of the geographical interpretations of society. But the title of the work is misleading. It would have been better if the work were called the "Environmental Interpretations of Society," for, as the author himself remarks, "it is not a study of environmental influences but of theories." It is highly to be desired that one of the more leisured scholars offers us a study of the purely organismic theories of social life.

Man's civilization consists of the sum-total of his material culture, his beliefs, his customs and his social institutions and groupings. His environment includes the physical features of his country, the climate under which he lives and works, the economic resources of the place, the accessibility or otherwise of his locality, the skill that he develops and the traditions that he accumulates. In the numerous facile statements about the direct influence of climate on the temperament and energy of man, one can detect a core of truth which is being more and more proved by experimental research on the conditions of fatigue. The direct influence of geographic environment on the nature of beliefs has been more asserted than substantiated. Le Play and his followers were the first to make a systematic attempt to prove the connection between social organisation and environment through the kind of economic activity imposed upon man by his surroundings which again were being continually changed by man. Thus the place inhabited by man largely determined his work which again mainly dictated the type of social organization. While this process is going on, environment becomes more and more complex and man himself partly constitutes his own environment. This theory thus can accommodate the lesson taught by the history of

modern man, viz. that the influence of purely natural environment diminishes with the march of civilization.

It is evident that the primitive peoples afford us the best opportunity of studying how far there is a relation between economic activity and the social institutions of a people. This study on the basis of the statistical method has been ably done by Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg in their book "The Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples." Their conclusions do not wholly support the claims of the Le Play school of thought. They observe; "In several cases we shall in fact see that . . . the broad fact of correlation may be fairly taken as established. On the other hand, there are cases in which the proportions remain remarkably constant at all grades, and we may as fairly maintain that the frequency of a given institution is constant at all levels of industrial culture within our limits. Lastly, there are cases in which the variations are irregular, and no inference can be drawn." It is strange that such an important work should have escaped the notice of our author.

The fascinating and very promising study of the influence of social environment on the newer social forms in the modern period has been sadly neglected by environmentalists.

G. S. GHURYE.

## BIRTH CONTROL.

BIRTH CONTROL. Compiled by JULIA E. JOHNSON. (The H. W. Wilson Company, New York.) 1925. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  × 5. pp. 149. \$2.40.

THERE is this unique feature about this book, that it will please both parties, the most ardent advocates of artificial birth control as well as its most bigoted opponents. It is a collection of selected articles bearing on every important aspect of the subject, and including an admirable summary or 'Brief' of the arguments on both sides, and a fairly exhaustive bibliography of books, articles and papers. Every shade of opinion is represented.

Those who intentionally confound Birth Control with abortion, to cast a slur on it; those who confound modern scientific means with crude methods of antiquity and pretend that they are harmful, in spite of the fact that Dr. Robinson has challenged medical men to cite even a single authenticated case of harm done by contraceptives and proves that they sometimes incidentally cure diseases like leucorrhœa; those who pretend that they produce sterility in spite of any number of examples to the contrary, or that they are likely to lead to excesses, while as a matter of fact excesses are much more common during pregnancies, as these are safer than any contraceptives; those who, trying to be modern, write Nature instead of God, but do not understand that Nature does not issue orders, and is not vindictive, and that laws of Nature need not, therefore, be feared in the same way as the supposed laws of God, in fact that we cannot really go against laws of Nature, which are inviolable, but can sometimes turn them to our advantage; those who think that 'indulgence' without procreation is unnatural (nature itself must seem unnatural to them, since even without contraceptives conception does not always follow 'indulgence' as they call it); those who, quoting the instance of a seventeenth child who was a genius, fear that birth control may deprive us of geniuses—implying that a woman must lose no opportunity of procreation, since, if she has already twenty children born in as many years, she must still go on with the process, for the twenty-first may turn out a

genius; those who go to the other extreme and think that the interval between successive children should be five years, and expect people to control themselves for five years at a stretch; those who, like Tolstoy, become saints in their old age and consider all thought of sex sinful; those who assume that women have no carnal desire and that birth control would be entirely unnecessary if men peacefully submitted to women's will in the matter; those who betray their want of logic by arguing that since some means have been found to fail in 100% cases, all means are ineffective; those who pretend that abstinence can be practised for any length of time and cite the example of Catholic priests, nuns, and travellers—others can only listen with a smile, since the great abuses which resulted from the supposed celibacy of priests are historical facts; those who talk as if they had God hidden in their pockets, and were the sole arbiters as to what is moral; those who compare men to birds and find that the latter are superior, not knowing biology well enough to know that different species of animals have different habits, not necessarily better or worse; medical opponents who are highly incensed at laymen meddling with what they consider their special preserve, saying in effect: 'I shall not do it, and you must not'; even some who urge the necessity of a lower class to do menial work, and are afraid there will be no lower class if people do not breed without limit and make labour cheap; in fact, every variety of controversialist and every species of argument, frivolous or sincere, reasonable or unreasonable, honest or dishonest, has found expression in this book. The reprints are presented under three headings, general, affirmative and negative. The handbook admirably succeeds in what it sets out to do—to provide a reference book for debaters.

R. D. KARVE.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE PUNJAB MONEY-LENDERS' BILL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR.—Since I read the article on the Punjab Money-Lenders' Bill published in the SERVANT OF INDIA of the 24th of December, I have been thinking of writing a full note which will explain the attitude of the Hindu and Sikh members towards the Bill. But I have been away from the station and have been otherwise occupied. It appears that the writer of the article has not carefully studied the Bill and is not fully acquainted with the economic conditions prevailing in the Punjab. My short speech in the Council was prefaced with the remark that I did not look at the Bill from the point of a view of a class or a community. I consider the Bill to have many objectionable features, which makes it unworkable. The Bill, if passed in its present form, will hamper trade and will impose unnecessary restrictions on petty shop-keepers. If shorn of its objectionable features, it will serve no useful purpose. The Select Committee on the Bill is sitting and it is difficult to say in what form the Bill will emerge from it. No Hindu or Sikh member objects (1) to Government prescribing a simple form of account, (2) the borrower being furnished with a six monthly statement of accounts, or (3) to the creditor furnishing the borrower with a copy of any item or its details, whenever the latter wants it.

That there is no communal sting in the criticism of Hindu and Sikh members is evident from the fact that the non-official European members are also opposed to the Bill. I need not write more at the present stage. If further proof were needed of our freedom from bias, I would refer your readers to the following letter of the Judges of the High Court to the Secretary, Legislative Council, embodying the opinion of the Hon'ble Judges on the Bill:—

With reference to your letter No. 1767, dated 13th December 1924, asking for the opinion of the Judges on the Punjab Money-Lenders' Registration Bill, I am directed to say that the matter was considered by the Judges at their meeting held on the 3rd April 1925, and they were of the opinion that the Bill would prove unworkable. In view of the above, who do you think shows class or communal bias in the controversy which is going on on the Bill, those who support it or those who oppose it?

NARENDRANATH.

Lahore, February 11.

[Raja Narendranath, we are afraid, has missed the point of our criticism. The Bill may have defects; we are sure it has. The mover himself declared that he was groping his way to light. The right attitude of all friends of the poor to such a measure, which seeks redress of an admitted evil, should be not one of blank opposition, but of helpful criticism. The critics however persistently refused to take the Bill into their consideration, merely raising the communal cry. Is the registration of money-lenders such an obviously wicked or unworkable measure that no one should be allowed even to put it forward? Nothing could justify such a position. We are glad however that Hindu and Sikh members are in favour of certain safeguards against the malpractices of dishonest money-lenders.—Ed., S. o. I.]

## BOOKS RECEIVED.

- HISTORY OF BURMA. By G. E. HARVEY. With a Preface by SIR RICHARD CARNAU TEMPLE, Bt. (Longmans, Green & Co., London.) 1925. 9 x 5½. pp. 415. 21s.
- POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, 1819-1925. By ARTHUR MEIER SCHLESINGER. (The Macmillan Co., New York.) 1925. 9 x 5½. 576. 12s. 6d.
- SOCIALISM FOR TODAY. By H. N. BRAILSFORD. (The New Leader, London.) 1925. 7½ x 4½. pp. 143. 1s.
- A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH. Vol. II, 3rd Edition. By RAVSAY MUIR. (George Philip & Sons, Ltd., London.) 1924. 9 x 5½. pp. 814. 15s.
- IDEALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY: A STUDY OF THE RELATIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN WITH GERMANY AND FRANCE, 1860-1878. By A. A. W. RAMSAY. (John Murray, London.) 1925. 9 x 7½. pp. 450. 21s.
- VILLAGE SCHOOLS IN INDIA. By MASON OLCOTT. Foreword by D. J. FLEMING. (Association Press, Calcutta.) 1926. 7 x 5. pp. 235. Cloth Rs. 2; Paper Rs. 1-8.
- SOCIAL PROGRESS: A HANDBOOK OF THE LIBERAL MOVEMENT. Edited by WILLIAM FLOYD. (The Arbitrator, New York.) 1925. 9 x 6. pp. 342. \$ 2. 50.
- THE HISTORY OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY. By EDWARD R. PEASE. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London.) 1925. 7½ x 5. pp. 305. 6s.
- PYGMALION OR THE DOCTOR OF THE FUTURE. By R. M. WILSON. (Kegan Paul Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., London.) 1925. 6½ x 4½. pp. 71. 2s. 6d.
- LYCOURGUS OR THE FUTURE OF LAW. By E. S. HAYNES. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., London.) 1925. 6½ x 4½. pp. 94. 2s. 6d.
- THE NATION AND THE CHURCH. By BERTRAM POLLOCK. (John Murray, London.) 1925. 7½ x 5. pp. 158. 5s.
- CHRISTIANITY IN POLITICS. By the Rev. H. W. FOX. With a Preface by The Rev. H. R. L. SHEPPARD. (John Murray, London.) 1925. 7½ x 5. pp. 153. 5s.
- AN INTRODUCTION TO INDUSTRIAL ADMINISTRATION. By JOHN LEE. (Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., London.) 1925. 8½ x 5½. pp. 194. 5s.
- FULFILMENT: BEING THE ADULT SCHOOL LESSON HANDBOOK FOR 1926. (National Adult School Union, London.) 1926. 7 x 4½. pp. 280. Limp Covers 1s. 3d. Cloth-Borders 2s. 6d.
- THE COST OF A NEW WORLD. By KENNETH MACLENNAN. (Edinburgh House Press, London.) 1925. 7½ x 5. pp. 192. 2s. 6d.

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