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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

IT came out in answer to a question in the council that provision was included in the budget for the enhanced salaries which the Secretary of State had promised the police, medical and other services. It was a pity that these items were not attacked with vehemence in the course of the debate. For the increments that have been allowed are perfectly unjustifiable and have not been sanctioned with a proper regard to the finances of India.

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THE raising of the minimum taxable income evoked just praise from non-official members, but a caution must be entered here against denying in reality the concession granted on paper. For it is known that on an earlier occasion, when the minimum had been raised from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000, the overzealous income-tax officials in several provinces discovered that most of those whose incomes had been put down as below Rs. 1,000 were really in the enjoyment of incomes above that figure. We wish the Finance Member were specially warned that the present concession really reached those for whom it was intended.

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PUBLIC opinion is slow in expressing itself on Mr. Gandhi's passive resistance movement. Mrs. Besant has adopted a form of resistance which, though more justifiable on general principles, is bound to prove ineffective. There is another party, however, in Madras which is prepared to practise the wider form of resistance advocated by Mr. Gandhi. The Nationalist leader in the United Provinces, however, Mr. Motilal Nehru, declared at a public meeting in Allahabad that he would

not, and could not in conscience, undertake to break any other laws which the Committee may decide as an instrument of offering passive resistance. Munshi Ishwar Saran agreed. The Bengal leaders want joint deliberation before any action has been decided upon. The Poona extremists, as is their wont, are neither here nor there. They confine themselves to an academic expression of approval of passive resistance, which was never the question, and do not disclose the extent to which they are prepared to go in practical application of the doctrine, and the means they propose to take to give effect to it. Their support, therefore, is of no particular significance.

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THE difference between Mr. Gandhi's and Mrs. Besant's plans of passive resistance is not merely this, that one is more drastic and other less so, but Mrs. Besant's inability to break other laws in order to make the passive resistance campaign effectual is founded on principle. She apparently thinks, and in our humble opinion rightly, that the violation of any particular law is justifiable only under exceptional circumstances, and each particular infraction must be justified by the circumstances of the case. The justification which may attach to the disobedience of the Rowlatt Acts cannot be held to extend to disobedience of all laws. The reasoning which supports the larger movement is that a Government that could pass Rowlatt Acts in defiance of public opinion forfeits all claim even to obedience to the ordinary law. Which law we choose for disobedience is to be determined by considerations of our convenience, strength and stamina, not at all by what is due to Government, for nothing is due. Mrs. Besant perhaps also fears that a general passive resistance movement will tend to undermine the people's respect for law, which is not desirable. Her plan, however, though more defensible, is utterly infructuous; for it is impossible to exercise resistance except by breaking other laws. There is really no half-way house between Mr. Gandhi's comprehensive plan and the orthodox constitutional methods.

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IF, however, Mrs. Besant only means by her vow that she will go on with her political work as though the Rowlatt law did not exist, we should like to say that even those who do not take the vow are going to do the same. They too are determined to continue the agitation without thinking of the law, but they do not take Mrs. Besant's pledge

for it is no passive resistance, and it is wrong and misleading to apply that name to such an attitude. While we do not approve either of the limited pledge of Mrs. Besant or the wider pledge of Mr. Gandhi, we must say that it is necessary to organise an agitation against the Rowlatt legislation. The agitation may be in an intensified form, but must be carried on along the usual lines. A prayer should be cabled immediately after the passage of the bills that the Crown may disallow the Acts. The deputations sailing for England a month hence will be able to do a good deal. In this and other ways we must work for their abolition.

MR. GANDHI has stated in his letter to the Press that the passive resistance movement will serve to keep the youth of India from having recourse to anarchism and violence. This is very true; but we deny that only passive resistance will have that effect. A vigorous agitation against the bills by the usual methods will also tend in the same direction. The key to the success of Parnell in Ireland was that he managed to keep revolutionaries on the side of the constitutional movement by incessantly carrying on an agitation against the Government. Passive resistance was not necessary in Ireland to achieve the result, and the wild spirits in India do not require a more drastic remedy to keep them in check than what was found sufficient in Ireland.

AGAIN a division in the rank of national workers, owing to the organisation of the passive resistance movement. Of course, the Moderates have created the division, for how would it have arisen if they had laid what they consider the best interests of the country on one side and joined the movement or at least kept their counsel to themselves? So a writer argues in the *Hindu*. It is now fairly obvious that the unity desiderated by the *Hindu* is possible only if no opinions, not favoured by it, are at all held anywhere in the country. You start a movement on your own responsibility, and the step taken is, in the words of Mr. Gandhi, "probably the most momentous in the history of India;" and yet those who think the movement inexpedient and likely to be harmful in its reaction upon the constitutional reforms, the prospects of which are not overbright, must keep mum; else they sow dissensions in the country. One should have thought, as has been observed in effect by the *Tribune*, that those who spring such a movement upon the country will at any rate be held partly responsible for the resulting differences.

TWO great objectionable features of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill were penalizing the possession of a seditious document, and, in a way, the association of a man with another convicted of offence under s. 124 A or any other section of chapter VI. of the Indian penal code. It is a matter of congratulation that the bill has been

now purged of its former obnoxious feature by the deletion of clause 2 in the original bill by the select committee. The opposition of the non-official Indian members to the principles underlying the bill, however, still remains as solid and uncompromising as at the beginning. The remaining part of the bill cannot be said to be less objectionable than the deleted part, especially in view of the powers proposed to be conferred on the executive. As Government has accepted the non-official members' proposal for republication of the bill, further criticism on it may be postponed for some time.

THERE is no justification for the ruling of His Excellency the Viceroy in respect of the dissenting minutes of Messrs. Malaviya, Khaparde and Patel, particularly in view of the fact that the imperial council rules are silent on the point and the rules of the provincial councils are expressly adverse to the ruling. The public have therefore a just grievance in the matter, but it is amusing to find that those critics who thought that the honorable members should have nothing to do either with the select committee or its report should now complain that the minutes of the three members, which we think ought to have been admitted, have been excluded. This surprise is only enhanced by the fact that Mr. Malaviya's minute, which does not adopt the purely negative attitude of the minutes of the other two, makes constructive suggestions which, to quote the *Tribune*, are "absolutely identical" with the suggestions contained in the minutes of Messrs. Banerjea and Sastri.

FOR some time the 'nationalists' affected to believe that to suggest any detailed amendments in the bills was in itself a surrender of the right of opposition to their underlying principle. Now, however, they have abandoned this plea, finding that Pandit Malaviya has made "absolutely identical" suggestions, and the other two members who refrained from making any suggestions in their minutes have already tabled a number of amendments. The pretence therefore that the minute of the moderates has compromised the country's position has perforce to be shed. Lest any one should have yet a lingering doubt upon the subject, we give below an extract from a speech of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, the Irish Nationalist leader, in explanation of his participation in Select Committee on the Coercion Act of 1881, though he was opposed to the whole of the policy in that Act. Said T. P.,

He hoped the Committee would not misunderstand the position of himself and of the Irish members generally. While their hostility to the Bill still remained exactly what it was before, that did not prevent them from seeking so to amend the bill as to decrease what they considered to be its cruelty, and therefore he hoped that their general hostility to the measure would not be confounded with their desire to amend its provisions, but that any amendment they suggested would be considered on its merits.

Exactly what the Moderates did.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

IN spite of the encomiums showered on it by Sir Dinshaw Wacha and Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, the Financial Statement will be received generally with feelings of profound disappointment. Although peace has not been signed and heavy liabilities which India took upon herself last September have to be met, it was expected that the financial dispositions of next year would take into account objects of expenditure on which the material and moral welfare of the country depends. In other words, it was believed that, in the preparation of the budget, the problems of reconstruction would not be lost sight of and that some attempt would be made to grapple with problems which have an intimate bearing on the daily life of the people, and the solution of which is of vital moment to us. But this hope has proved false. The cessation of the war has brought about no welcome change in financial policy. Services with the development of which true progress is bound up have received no attention. "You may think," said Sir James Meston, "that economy is a threadbare motto in our financial statements; but I am convinced that, coupled with courageous outlay on the essentials of progress, a strict economy in all non-essentials will in the near future be more necessary than it has ever been." These are excellent principles, but they appear to have been completely ignored in framing the budget. Of economy there seems to be no sign, and of "courageous outlay on the essentials of progress" not a single item gives any indication. European countries have felt the shock of the war far more intensely than India. Their losses in men and money have been much greater than ours, but they are alive to the importance of making immediate provision for their educational and economic development. In India, however, the consideration of all those social problems, which are in the forefront of the programmes of other countries, has been relegated in practice to a distant future.

Before entering on a discussion of the budget, it seems desirable to call attention to the form of Sir James Meston's statement. It is to be feared that it compares unfavourably with that of Sir William Meyer's statements. Every one who has a case to present should do so in such a manner that an ordinary reader may be able to perceive its salient features at a glance. The omission of the customary tables from Sir James Meston's statement is an appreciable inconvenience from this point of view. For instance, the variations between the financial forecast of the current year and its revised estimates have not been exhibited in tabular form, and it requires an unnecessary expenditure of time to acquaint oneself with them, and to fix them well in one's mind. The same complaint can be made in regard to the estimates of revenue and expenditure for the coming year. One has to go through the whole of section F before coming to know what our revenue and expenditure are ex-

pected to be during next year. The section relating to the war loan suffers from the same defect. Matters relating to currency and exchange have been dealt with at pretty great length, but nothing has been said about the position of the Gold Standard Reserve or the active note circulation. We are told only incidentally, in the concluding section of the financial statement, that the effective circulation of notes is close on 150 crores. The table showing the expenditure from special grants for education, sanitation, medical relief, etc., which was a characteristic of Sir William Meyer's financial statements, has also been omitted. It is to be hoped that one will not be accused of censoriousness in pointing out these defects. They have to be mentioned as they detract from the lucidity of the financial statement. Detailed information on many points can be had, no doubt, from the financial Secretary's memorandum, but it is seldom read even by professed students of Indian finance, and it is no exaggeration to say that the public is scarcely aware of the existence of such a publication. Sir James Meston will do well, therefore, to follow the practice of his predecessor in respect of the matters referred to above.

The features of the budget that overshadow all others are the scale on which military and railway expenditure are to be incurred. The gross revenue, Imperial and Provincial, for 1919-20 is estimated to be about £ 123 million. But this is far from being the real revenue. As Mr. Gokhale used to point out year after year, it does not represent the sum available to the Government of India for being spent on the various objects of expenditure, which is much smaller. If his method be followed, *i. e.*, if Refunds and Drawbacks and Assignments and compensations are deducted from the revenue accruing under Principal Heads, and interest and the commercial services (Posts and Telegraphs, Mint, Railways and Irrigation) are taken net, the real revenue (Imperial and Provincial) will be found to be £ 94.15 million. Of this about £ 42.78 million or nearly 45.4 per cent. of the total revenue is proposed to be spent on the army. The figure which has been arrived at "with the most cordial and helpful co-operation of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief," is simply staggering. It is true that it has swelled considerably because of the additional liabilities undertaken in connection with the war last September, and Sir James Meston holds out the hope that it may be reduced considerably in the near future. But the hope leaves one cold. That military expenditure cannot be maintained at the present level is certain, but one may entertain legitimately the apprehension that its reduction may not be as substantial as it is expected to be. The Nicholson Committee recommended that £ 19.5 million should be spent annually on the army. But the actual expenditure in 1918-19 and 1919-20, after deducting the special payments to be made in pursuance of the resolution passed in the Legislative Council in Septem-

ber last, is estimated to be £31.23 million and 82.5 million respectively. It has increased by about 60 p. c. during the last five years. To what extent it will be reduced is uncertain, but if the Finance Member continues to receive "the most cordial and helpful co-operation of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief," one shudders to think what the results will be. In relation to the economic condition of the people, the burden of military expenditure was heavy enough before the war. It will be simply crushing hereafter. To ensure the safety of the country is one of the primary duties of Government, but surely the welfare of the human beings who constitute the country is no less important a duty than to guard its territorial boundaries.

The other item of expenditure which calls for criticism is the railway expenditure. The Mackay Committee recommended that the annual capital expenditure on railways should be £12.5 million. The Finance Member has budgeted for a programme of no less than £17.75 million during next year. This does not include the £6.5 million earmarked for renewals from current revenue. It is true that during the war much less was spent on railways than would have been done in normal times. But is the railway department the only one that has suffered on account of the war? In spite of the extremely insufficient attention given to education and sanitation, it may be presumed fairly that but for the war the expenditure on them would have gone on increasing. What steps has the Finance Member taken to make up the leeway in regard to these highly important services? Beyond uttering a platitude about the necessity of spending money on the essentials of progress, what action has he taken to push forward their development? If these services can wait till normal times return, so can the railways. A great deal was said during the budget about the importance of railways in relation to our industrial development and stress was laid on their productive character. Certainly the railways are highly remunerative, but if they yield a handsome return why should money be found for them from current revenue? As Mr. Gokhale used to point out, they should be financed by means of borrowings. There is no justification for taxing the people to promote their development. Nobody doubts the utility of railways, but some proportion has to be observed in regard to everything. Besides, roughly speaking, railways can help only in carrying things from one place to another. But, as has been repeatedly observed, the difficulty that one is faced with in India is not the insufficiency of food, but the inability of the people to purchase it. He will be a bold man who will say that the railways have cheapened the food of the people or increased its production, or, except as affording employment to clerks and labourers, added materially to the resources of the masses. The Rowlett Bill is to be passed to satisfy the I. C. S., and money is to be spent lavishly on railways in order to placate

European merchants, but no measures have been undertaken to ameliorate the condition of the voiceless millions.

Another striking feature of the budget is the complete absence of "courageous outlay on the essentials of progress." Education, sanitation, medical relief, agriculture and industries have received hardly any attention. In reply to criticisms in the Legislative Council, the Finance Member stated that it was utterly wrong to say that the expenditure on education had not been increased, and pointed out that the increase exceeded a crore. But this is due entirely to the action of the Local Governments. By far the larger part of it is accounted for by Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the United Provinces. The increase is largest in the U. P., being about 32 lakhs. About 46 lakhs of the additional expenditure will be defrayed from previous Imperial assignments, while no less than 58 lakhs will be spent by the Local Governments out of their own resources. If the education budget for next year exceeds that for the current, it is not due in any way to the generosity of the Government of India, which has made no special grant for education. To defend the absence of grants for education, agriculture, etc., on the ground that the system of doles has proved utterly demoralizing is to add insult to injury. Doles are, undoubtedly, a very poor substitute for a proper division of funds between the central and local Governments. The resources of the latter should be increased permanently in order that they may be able to discharge their obligations satisfactorily. But the Government of India, itself, has so far stood in the way of an equitable apportionment of the revenue between it and the Provincial Governments. Special grants are at present the only means by which the resources of the Provincial Governments can be made, and the Government has no right to discontinue them on principle before it reconstructs the existing financial system.

It has been pointed out above that about £6.5 million will be spent out of current revenue on railways. If the money to be given to railways had been confined to borrowings, because they are productive undertakings, this sum would have been available for being spent on objects, which are the foundation of all true progress. The excess profits duty is expected to yield about £6 million. If the course suggested above had been followed, it would have meant that the proceeds of the new tax would be devoted to the improvement of the moral and material condition of the people.

Perhaps Sir James Meston has made no special provision in this direction, because he believes that the people are, on the whole, prosperous. He believes that "the full prices paid for agricultural produce must have accumulated on several reserves of rural wealth," and that "there is much diffused prosperity in the country which even high prices and local scarcity cannot seriously impair." Is there any foundation for this behalf in fact? If there is "much diffused prosperity in the

country " signs of it ought to be visible in the daily life of the people. The plague, cholera and influenza epidemics do not show that the resisting capacity of the masses is greater than before. The influenza alone carried off five million people. Does not this suggest uncomfortable conclusions? Any one who visited even a single village during the outbreak of influenza could have seen how destitute the people were. On account of the high prices of cereals and cotton, they could have neither sufficient food nor sufficient clothing. One would have thought that this would be patent even to those who are fond of *a priori* arguments. Sir James Meston states that the total number of persons assessed to income-tax is only 381,000, and besides by raising the taxable minimum of income from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000 he will be relieving "no fewer than 237,000 assesseees?" Do these facts support his belief in the prosperity of the people?

The only feature of the budget on which Sir James Meston deserves to be warmly congratulated is the raising of the taxable limit of income to Rs. 2000. It will be greatly appreciated by a large number of people who have been hit hard by the abnormal rise in prices, but while we fully appreciate the value of the concession that the Finance Member has made, it is very far from being a people's budget, as some have called it. That title it could earn only if it included a substantial provision for expenditure on objects which lie at the root of all progress. Let us hope that the next budget will give effect to the principles that Sir James has enunciated, and that his regime as Finance Member will be an era of achievement and not merely of hopes and promises, as his Lieutenant-Governorship of the United Provinces was.

ROWLATT BILLS AND PASSIVE RESISTANCE.

THE report of the Select Committee on the first bill is now out and though it shows that some concessions have been made, specially in the way of making its operation temporary for three years after the close of the war and restricting it to anarchical and revolutionary crimes, the bill still remains fundamentally objectionable. With more or less modification, it is certain that the Rowlatt Bills are going to pass. What next? In spite of some carping critics who, as in the proverbial case of the husband and his slighted wife, can see no good in any 'moderate,' however vigorous the attitude he may take up, it is acknowledged in all reasonable quarters that both parties in Indian public life have worked shoulder to shoulder in opposition to these bills and that perhaps in assigning the share of credit for what little success has been achieved in a few skirmishes on the outskirts of the field of battle the share of the 'moderate' leaders must be adjudged to be far greater than that of their extremist friends. The alliance between the two wings of public workers on this

question is likely to be, however, very short-lived. For the line to be followed after the passing of the bills has disclosed a decided cleavage of opinion. The saint of Indian public life, Mr. Gandhi, has already come out with a manifesto advocating passive resistance as the weapon to fight these bills, and he appears to have been joined in the cause by others who can scarcely claim the same saintly character. We have the highest admiration for Mr. Gandhi and the liveliest realisation of the services he has rendered to our country by his campaigns in South Africa, Champaran and elsewhere and it is because we feel that such a potent force may become ineffectual by repeated use on occasions when its operation is not suitable that we put before our readers some considerations dictated by mere commonsense. Mr. Gandhi's inspired instinct may lead him to the right path; but if the powerful medicine is used by all and sundry, who have not the necessary vigour in them, it is likely to do incalculable harm.

In the first place, then, we ask, what are we going to resist passively? It certainly cannot be resisting anything contained in the bills themselves. When, for instance, the bill threatens pains and penalties against persons associating with anarchical and revolutionary people, is it seriously contended that we should openly associate with such such persons? That would only be declaring that some persons are to our knowledge anarchists, and Mr. Gandhi at any rate has the greatest horror for such persons. The possession and circulation of anarchical and revolutionary literature is another of the things banned under the bill. Should a passive resister possess and circulate such literature? The question needs to be merely put to show its absurdity. The defect of the bill is that under cover of the clauses of this bill a good deal of oppression and subordinate tyranny becomes possible when it is not really justified. If the people who have to take action under this bill were so many Gandhis, we for our part would not have much objection to it, for the existence of a small but appreciable anarchical party in India is a fact and its propaganda has to be combated. As regards any cases clearly falling under the provisions of the bill, there is no difference of opinion. Everybody agrees that society has to be protected against revolutionaries and anarchists, though at the same time measures must be taken to stop people from being turned into such. We do not see that much reasonable scope exists for passive resistance to any clause contained in the bills themselves. Then there remains the question of resistance to some other laws and enactments that are not themselves objectionable and have nothing to do with the Rowlatt bills or some other actions calculated to show the resentment of the people. Thus it may be proposed to refuse the payment of a particular tax or taxes in general imposed by the Govern

ment which is passing there bills; these may be a resuscitation of the Swadeshi or rather boycott movement; it may be the resignation of all positions on bodies which are organised or recognised by Government, *e. g.*, the legislative councils, the universities or the local bodies; it may be a cessation of all intercourse with every member of the Civil Service which in India is nearly synonymous with Government; it may be the boycotting of law courts and the setting up of our own arbitration tribunals, or, finally, it may be the old Indian way of the *Dharna* or, Mr. Gandhi's version of it, a universal vow of fasting. Similar other measures may be proposed, but will they be efficacious. In politics, above all, we have to be practical men. When a labourer is told to go on strike on account of dissatisfaction with the conditions of his work he acts passively in a way he can understand; when Mr. Gandhi advised all his South African fellow-sufferers to destroy their certificates and go about without them regardless of consequences they could see that they were directly resisting a cruel and unjust ordinance. But when a man is told to let a legitimate claim go by default for not taking it before the courts simply as a protest against the Rowlatt bill, he cannot understand it and if he does it at all he will not stand it very long. A homely Marathi proverb tells us that blowing into the ear will not remove a mote in the eye. Passion may be well enough, but it has to be guided; otherwise it is likely to do more harm than good. In adopting any strong remedies we must at least see that they are bound to effect their object.

Then again there is the question of the direction of the movement. The manifesto issued by Mr. Gandhi mentions a committee to be appointed to direct the plan of operations, to settle what law is to be passively resisted and so on. Now we in India have some knowledge of committee management. A campaign of passive resistance requires, if any movement does, a perfectly autocratic management and absolute rigid sense of discipline in the followers. Both these things are wanting in our country. Everybody tries to be a leader; appeal is made to the passions of the mob to drown all counsels of sanity and soberness; the most violent platform orator becomes the greatest patriot and the comparatively moderate leader is shed in a minute in favour of his more revolutionary follower. We recently read of Lenin arresting Trotsky for not being extreme enough. We are observing similar instances in India also at the present moment. Mrs. Besant who was the idol of yesterday is now the image of the fiend in some circles. There is always a Pal who can be obtained to shout with the mob, content to remain on the crest of the wave, trusting that nobody would care to examine his antecedents of a few years ago. Is it so sure that Mr. Gandhi will retain the conduct of the movement which he has started, and that no excess will be committed while carrying it on?

The path before all thinking men is clear.

They must, on the one hand, make it absolutely plain to Government that they have no part or lot in this legislation and that the responsibility for unexpected evil consequences from it is not theirs. On the other hand, they must make it clear to the passive resisters that they do not approve of their campaign, that they think it as mischievous in its consequences as it is ill-judged in its inception, that it is calculated to retard our political progress. We fully believe that the one efficacious remedy for political disorders of the revolutionary kind is the immediate grant of liberal reforms without being afraid of these sporadic outbursts. Make the people themselves responsible for the preservation of law and order and then let them if necessary pass these laws themselves. For our own part we ought to realise that a people habituated to set law and order at defiance for one great cause are not likely to be law-abiding when that cause has disappeared and may do so again for a frivolous or at least a small cause. A time may arise when even this risk may have to be taken. But we ask in all seriousness whether on the eve of political reforms we should take it for resisting the Rowlatt bills.

We have already said that it is very painful for us to oppose a course of action which Mr. Gandhi proposes. He has obviously been actuated by a compelling sense of public duty in thus coming forward after his recent very severe illness to lead his countrymen in this passive resistance campaign. We have the highest admiration for his public spirit; but he is after all a human being; he may be mistaken in the strength of the material that lies ready to hand, the forces at his disposal, the time, the place and the circumstance. We are deliberately of opinion that the course of action advocated by him is not in the best interests of the country and is calculated to retard its progress.

R. P. PARANJPYE.

"INDIA IN TRANSITION: A STUDY IN POLITICAL EVOLUTION."

I.

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN'S "India in transition: a study in political evolution" is a remarkable book that ought to be read with keen interest by every student of Indian politics as well as by those responsible statesmen who aspire to guide the destinies of Asia. It is a very suggestive contribution to the solution not only of the Indian problem but of the problem of the future of those Mahomedan Kingdoms that form the western half of the Orient. His Highness the Aga Khan's views on these problems are entitled to great weight, for he has a first-hand knowledge of the politics and peoples of the Muslim countries of Asia. And one notes with sincere pleasure that he has brought to bear upon the consideration of those problems a fresh and open mind free from party pre-possessions or shibboleths. In the preface, he claims that the

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book is an "original and strictly personal contribution to the Indian problem," and the claim must certainly be conceded. The book is marked by an independence of thought which gives it peculiar charm and especial importance. On certain points, as will be seen in the sequel, he soars to a height to which Indian politicians have seldom risen. His wide and frequent travels throughout the world, have enabled him to apply to the Indian problem that widened outlook that cannot but come from a close and frequent contact with political systems and affairs of various countries. There has grown up now quite a decent literature on the subject of the Indian problem; but there are few books in which that problem is treated with such breadth of conception and such originality as mark His Highness the Aga Khan's book.

The book covers a very wide ground. No important phase of the Indian problem is left untouched. The future constitution of India, local self-government, the judiciary, the police, the civil service, India's military and naval requirements, her industrial development, her agriculture, her education, the status of her women, the condition of her depressed classes, her relations with foreign countries, her future place in the British Commonwealth of Nations, her influence on Western Asia and on international policy—all these questions have received the author's consideration, and, for the most part, his views thereon will, we think, meet with general approval. The book was written after the Russian, but before the German, debacle, and the author has been rather impatient in expressing his views about the growth of German and Turkish influence in Western Asia. Those views are falsified by subsequent events, and His Highness the Aga Khan would have done well, had he waited till the result of the war, before committing himself to them. He could have seen that the advantages gained by Germany owing to the Brest-Litovsk treaty could not last a single day if Germany was ultimately defeated.

The central conception of the book is the ideal of the "South Asiatic Federation." His Highness the Aga Khan thinks that in course of time a federation which he calls "the South Asiatic Federation" will arise, comprising not only the different provincial and the so-called protected states of India, but also all the countries in Asia extending from Aden to Mesopotamia, from the two shores of the Gulf to India proper, from Ceylon to the states of Bokhara, and from Tibet to Singapore, besides Burma and the Malay Peninsula. That Federation will thus include diverse races, —Arabs and Burmans, Tibetans and Singalese, Afghans and Bengalees, Mahrattas and Malays. The Aga Khan has full faith in the rise of this Federation and has outlined with a bold touch the process that will bring about its ultimate establishment. The first step in the process will be taken when the internal constitution of India herself will be built on a federal basis. There the author is on sure ground. There can be no difference of

opinion on the point that the constitution of self-governing India can only be a federal one. His Highness is perfectly right in summarily rejecting the idea of a unilateral form of free government for India. That is obviously impossible and we do not think, the idea will even be seriously entertained by anybody. Along with this process of internal federation, the Aga Khan thinks, India will be exerting greater and greater intellectual, economic and cultural influence on the Mahomedan countries to her west. There was a Greater India in the past and there will again arise a Greater India in the future. "Can any one deny" says the author, "that if the Mogul Empire had not been dissolved, or if it had been succeeded by a powerful and united Hindu Empire over the whole of India, the lands of the Persian Gulf littoral would long ago have been brought under Indian dominance? Nor can the process of Indian expansion westwards be stopped by any series of treaties, or political conditions. Whatever else happens, and whatever the flag that may hereafter float over Basra and Baghdad, over Bushire and Muscat, Indian civilization must become an increasing power in Mesopotamia, Persia and Arabia."

After this cultural and economic influence has prepared the ground and the internal federation of India has become complete, the South Asiatic Federation will not, the Aga Khan thinks, take long to form itself. Afganistan would probably be the first to come within the orbit of this Federation. "The fact that Bengal and Bombay, Hyderabad and Kashmir were enjoying full autonomy, would be a guarantee to the Afgans of no risk of loss of independence in entering the Federation. Just as the indigenous rulers of Rajputana would have their place, there is no reason why a group of principalities from Arabia and the southern littoral of the Persian Gulf, should not ultimately become members of the union that will ensure peace and liberty, freedom and order to the south of Asia. Subsequently, Persia herself would be attracted, and just as the natural pride of Bavaria or Saxony has been diminished by inclusion within the German Union, so on a greater but more difficult but happily beneficent basis, the Empire of Persia and the Kingdom of Afganistan could honourably enter a federation of which Delhi would be the centre. Needless to say, no compulsion, direct or indirect, can be employed. The right course is to institute such a type of community of states as to draw the sympathy and practical interest of India's neighbours. The magnet would attract, as time went on, the isolated and remote lands of Nepal and Bhutan, and Tibet. The crown colony of Ceylon naturally and historically belongs to India. . . . The autonomous system would give the *coup de grace* to the pleas put forward from time to time for the separation of Burma from the Indian Empire, which spring from dissatisfaction with the present centralised control."

Such is the Aga Khan's ideal of the South Asiatic Federation. The magnificence of the ideal may at once be admitted, and there can be no doubt that if it could be realized, the influence of the Federation will all be exerted both directly and indirectly towards the maintenance of peace in the Orient. The Aga Khan is quite sanguine about the ultimate formation of the Federation. We, however, think that he has not taken sufficient account of the fact that independent nations like Afganistan and Persia can have no adequate motive for entering such a federation. Federation is very desirable, but it is feasible only among equal states whose interests do not conflict with one another. Both Persia and Afganistan are jealous of their independence, and it is doubtful whether they would prefer the to-them dubious advantages of a federation to the maintenance of their independent national life. They are not likely to be absorbed by Great Britain and the possibility of their falling a victim to the territorial ambitions of Turkey or Germany is now removed by the utter collapse of those countries and by the guarantees that will be afforded by the League of Nations, that is sure to come into existence as a result of the deliberations of the Peace Conference. We are, therefore, not so sanguine as the Aga Khan that the South Asiatic Federation will be an accomplished fact. It may also be doubted whether it will be an unmixed blessing, inasmuch as it will possibly lead to the formation of a counter-federation of Japan, Corea, Manchuria and China and thus to the division of Asia into two rival camps.

We do not, therefore, cherish the Aga Khan's faith in the South Asiatic Federation. We rather think that Persia and Afganistan, when once their national self-consciousness is fully developed, will seek to enter the League of Nations on equal terms with other Powers, and to work out their destiny as independent nations, though, let us hope, in friendly co-operation with Great Britain. But though the ideal of the South Asiatic Federation may, or may not, be realized, there can be no doubt that if the Federation comes into existence at all, it can do so only after India herself has become a federation of self-governing states. The Aga Khan is perfectly right in emphasizing this point. To him the ideal of a South Asiatic Federation affords an additional argument for a federal constitution for India herself. His scheme of such a constitution does not differ in principle from other current schemes; but it has certain features which would justify a detailed consideration of the scheme. But such a consideration must be reserved for the second part of the article.

R. G. PRADHAN.

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

LONDON, FEBRUARY 10.

THE WILLINGDON MEMORIAL.

FROM a perusal of recent issues of Indian newspapers, it is clear that a change has been wrought

in the superstructure of Indian political life, and in many respects, it does not seem to be a change for the better. The recent happenings in Bombay in connection with the Willingdon memorial leave a nasty taste in the mouth. There were obviously errors of judgment by both parties to the controversy; but good taste, common decency and a spirit of reasonableness should have avoided some of the worst excesses and the most extravagant abuse on the part of the opponents of the scheme. The episode does not amount to very much in itself; its importance, however, lies in its being a somewhat unsavoury symptom of an increasingly unpleasant attitude of mind on the part of the younger workers for India. One need not, of course, be too squeamish, and it is recognised that omelettes cannot be made without the breaking of eggs; but there were some among us who had hoped that, in India at least, the divorce between politics and ethics will not go so far as it has done hitherto in the West. Perhaps, however, even worse than this divorce, is the masquerade of questionable politics in the guise of ethics, and this seems to be the besetting sin of the younger generation of Indian politicians. It is no satisfaction for any lover of India to express openly such a belief as the foregoing, and I recognize that its expression lays me open to attack; but I think it ought to be frankly stated that methods such as those that have of late been adopted on your public platforms and in a certain section of your Press, are calculated, when all necessary allowances are made for what is said and done in the heat of the moment and under, perhaps, strong provocation, to withdraw a great deal of sympathy in this country amongst those whose only desire is to help India forward as rapidly as possible along the path of freedom that she has rightly chosen.

ALLIANCE WITH LABOUR.

There is, I understand, a school of thought in India, that rejects Western ideas and methods as being incompatible with the natural genius of the Indian people. Yet, strangely enough, it is among these very people that one observes the adoption of some of the worst features of political controversy in the West. At the same time, they are prepared to form some sort of a working alliance with dissentient and dissatisfied parties in other portions of the British Dominions, adversity bringing strange bed-fellows indeed. One of these is British Labour, and more especially its left wing. I have had favourable opportunities of studying the methods and machinery of Labour as a political and an industrial entity in more than one Continent, and one of its greatest weaknesses is the increase in recklessness with which the rank and file are prepared to reject the experience and advice of their well-known leaders, and, regardless of conventions, contracts, compromises, and compacts already made or arranged for, proceed to strike, without notice, without heed, and without discipline, in the hope of securing better conditions, but without having taken the trouble to perfect or-

organisation and preserve a comprehending and well-regulated unanimity. All kinds of allegations against Labour leaders become current among their disgruntled followers, who do not hesitate to impute the meanest motives to them, and practically charge them with having sold themselves to the bourgeoisie. Hardly is a leader set up, than attempts are at once made to pull him down; hardly has he on behalf of his men reached a settlement with the employer or Government, than it is set at naught and his authority defied.

THE DELHI CONGRESS.

It would seem that, in your political life of the last two years, you have been going through a very similar experience, and the climax appears to have been reached by the proceedings of the Delhi Congress, which have been read here with the greatest alarm and anxiety by those of us who are eager to press forward India's demand that her status should be raised to that of an equal Dominion of the Empire. It had been hoped here that means would have been found at Delhi to align the two parties to the controversy that raged round Bombay Congress and Conference upon a common platform, *viz.*, the points upon which a substantial agreement had apparently been reached with regard to necessary improvements in the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme. Instead of this, we find that there are not two, but three, parties, and that the extreme left wing has secured complete control over the Congress organisation in India. It is not, I am sure, revealing any secret to say that one of the principal reasons that have operated against the successful and effective reconstruction of the British Committee here was the evidently well-founded fear that some such *impasse* might be reached. It would have been nothing less than a disaster, had the Committee allowed itself to be manipulated so as to leave it open to capture by the Extremists. As it is, it has been found impossible to invite men of standing and influence to join the Committee, not knowing whether or when they might be called to heels by a party in whose political sagacity no-one here has any confidence. It is generally felt that the capture of the central Congress organisation by that party has been what may well prove to be a fatal blunder, so far as effective and constructive criticism of the Reform proposals is concerned. At the very moment when the utmost unity, moderation, and statesmanship were required, a shout of defiance has been set up, the standard of intransigence has been raised aloft, and insult has been offered to the British Crown. The constitution of the Congress itself has been torn up, an attempt has been made to strangle the British Committee and gag its organ, and upon a flimsy pretext, resolutions have been passed rejecting in substance the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme and endeavouring in effect to substitute a new scheme, which, however it may appeal to the younger and wilder spirits in the Congress, must necessarily be looked upon with the utmost misgivings by its more thoughtful members. Mr.

Tilak and his principal fugleman here, Mr. Baptista, are, quite naturally, doing their utmost to minimise the points of difference between the two sections into which the Delhi Congress was split. It is desirable in certain circumstances to minimise differences, when there is a hope of reconciling lines of action which do not differ in essentials, but only in methods of expression; but it is dishonest to continue to minimise those differences, when they are based upon fundamentals and not accidentals. It is perhaps well that the time has come for Indian politics to be placed upon a healthier basis than they have been for some time past, and it is one of the few satisfactory features of the present unfortunate situation that Mrs. Besant herself has recognised this fact.

DEPUTATIONS.

The net result of Delhi has been enormously to weaken the hands of friends of India here, and correspondingly to strengthen the opposition already overwhelmingly strong. There will presently be three deputations in this country, the first basing itself upon the resolution of the Moderate Conference; the second, or Home Rule, deputation, basing itself upon the more aggressive resolutions of the special Congress at Bombay, but with the power of negotiation reserved; and the third, or Tilakite, deputation, having a hard and fast mandate to demand according to the extravagant resolutions of the Delhi Congress, but deprived of the power of negotiation and forbidden to accept less. Where then does the voice of India lie? After the Bombay Special Congress, when the Moderates claimed to represent the better mind of India, they were met with the retort of their opponents that they were in an infinitesimal minority and that right lay with the majority. In other words, numbers triumphed. If the same argument holds good to-day, Mrs. Besant and her colleagues, who have refused to accept the Congress mandate and the Delhi resolutions on the Reforms, clearly do not represent the voice of India. I see a great likelihood of the first two deputations being compelled, by force of circumstances, to collaborate, more or less closely, whilst the impotence of the third will be dramatically striking.

MR. TILAK'S CASE.

Mr. Tilak's libel suit against Sir Valentine Chirol hangs fire, owing to the illness of the presiding judge; but the trial is to be resumed in all probability on Wednesday, and it is so far impossible to prophesy as to its result. It is amusing to learn that statements have been made in India that the great Albert Hall Labour demonstration, at which India's claims were mentioned, was organised to engineered by Mr. Tilak. I am in a position to state that if there had been no Mr. Tilak in England, demonstration would have been just as large and successful as it actually was, the only contribution that he appears to have made to the proceeding seems to have been the inspired statement by Mr. Lansbury that funds would be forthcoming from India in support of the projected

Daily Herald. For the reason that he has been specially requested to do so by his legal advisers here, Mr. Tilak has scrupulously refrained from addressing any public meetings since his arrival and he will continue to observe this self-denying ordinance until after the present trial.

MRS. BESANT'S SUCCESS.

Strangely enough, political India is represented simultaneously before the Privy Council. Mrs. Besant's consolidated appeal regarding the *New India* case is now being heard by the Judicial Committee; but here, too, the illness of one of the judges has required a postponement of the hearing until towards the end of this week. Mrs. Besant, however, has succeeded in rehabilitating herself in the matter of certain libels, published against her by Sir John Jardine, an ex-Judge of the Bombay High Court, in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *National News*, and also by the former proprietor of *Everyman*. These have all now publicly apologised, withdrawn all the imputations made by them against Mrs. Besant, and paid the bill. She has every reason to congratulate herself upon having made her opponents eat humble pie.

MR. DEVADHAR'S WORK.

Mr. Devadhar has been doing work of the very greatest value, since he has been here. Not being a politician in the narrower sense of the term, he has found much in this country to study and to appreciate, and he will return to India with his mind well-stored with a fund of valuable information to be used in the service of his country and his spirit strengthened to work courageously for the New India that is to be. His lecture to-day on the work of the Servants of India Society before the East India Association was very warmly received, and the greatest appreciation was expressed by Lord Willingdon and others, not only of the services of a multifarious character rendered by the Society itself, but of the many-sided activity, the organising power, and the constructive ability of Mr. Devadhar, who has made and continues to make innumerable friends here among all classes of society. He is quite unspoilt by the hearty reception that he has had in many influential quarters, and has worthily represented and maintained his Society's best traditions.

SELECTION.

THE MINUTES OF DISSENT.

IN view of "the attempt which is being made in certain quarters, apparently for merely party purposes, to make out that three hon. members (Messrs. Banerjea, Shafi and Sastri) have by the course they have followed, sacrificed the interests of the country or been a party to giving away, in however small a measure, the case against the (Rowlatt) bills," the following extracts from a convincing article in the *Tribune* in its issue of March 8, will be read with interest:—

As regards the subject matter of the Bill itself all six dissenting and abstaining members are absolutely agreed. It is true that two of them, Messrs. Patel and Khaparde, make no constructive suggestion, but confine themselves to asking with equal strength and emphasis that the Bill should be

abandoned, while the other four do make constructive suggestions with a view to improving the Bill. But only a little reflection shows that in relation to the essence and substance of the Bill, most of these constructive suggestions do not in any way differ in their effect from the purely negative attitude of the first two members. That this is true of Pandit Madan Mohan's minute is not likely to be disputed. It is equally true of the other minute. In it the three dissenting members do, indeed, recognise the two major and the several minor improvements made by the select committee, but this does not prevent them from stating with the utmost clearness that they still disapprove of the policy and principles of the Bill and reserve their right to oppose it altogether. They also reiterate what is, indeed, the fundamental objection to the major part of the Bill, that it seeks to impose "restrictions on the personal liberty of a citizen except as the result of a conviction in a court of law," an objection of which the select committee's recommendations have, in no way, mitigated the force. And even if this were not enough to indicate the strength of their opposition to the Bill, all three signatories to the minute have since made their position clear beyond dispute by putting their signatures to another document in which the amended Bills are strongly condemned as "drastic and unnecessary." After this no reasonable and fair-minded person will deny that if the three hon. members signed the main report it was merely as a matter of form and just to earn the right, according to the chairman's interpretation of it, to officially submit their minute of dissent. . . .

It is, indeed, perfectly clear that many of those who are passing a cheap and facile condemnation upon the three dissenting members have not even been at the pains to read their minute of dissent with ordinary care. It has been described variously as a short addendum to the main report, as a body of minor changes which conform to the official standard and so on. In reality it differs from the main report as white from black, and the proposals it makes are absolutely identical with those made by Pandit Malaviya in his admirable note of dissent, of which the critics themselves are loud in their praise. To say that the proposals conform to the standards laid down by the Chairman may be literally true, but is not true in its implication. It is certainly not true in the sense that the proposals are not sufficiently far-reaching, or that they leave the root principles of the Bill untouched. The truth, on the contrary, is that it is the root principles of the Bill that they attack both directly and unreservedly. We were reluctant to state this at the outset for obvious reasons, but when an unjust and ungenerous attack is made upon men one of whom has served the country with rare ability, distinction and devotion over forty years, and another though comparatively younger, has already a distinguished record of unselfish patriotic work to his credit of which any public man might be proud, it becomes necessary to throw aside ordinary considerations of prudence. . . . Is it possible to deny that these recommendations are inspired by the object and would have the effect, of considerably mitigating the special and extraordinary character of the proposed legislation, and that, if accepted, they would bring the new law more or less on a level with the ordinary law, as far as it is possible for any such law to be brought on such a level? Yet so strong is the spirit of party in some quarters that an attempt is actually being made to deny these changes as if they were on a level with the minor changes made by the select committee itself.

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