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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S recent statement in the House of Commons in vindication of the work of the Peace Conference, betokens the public impatience in England at the slow pace with which that body has been proceeding towards the solution of the problems of the world's peace. Though the public feeling is only natural under the circumstances, one's sympathy goes out to the Premier and his co-workers at Paris in the arduous and delicate duties they have to perform. The whole world is out of joint and the situation which Allied statesmen deliberating in the Peace Conference have to face is unparalleled in history. As the Premier justly pointed out, the problems discussed and disposed of by the Congress of Vienna were insignificant compared with those which confront the present Conference in Paris; and he bitterly and justifiably complained against 'the attempts of certain newspaper-owners to sow dissensions between the Allies.' The eruption of Bolshevism in certain parts of Europe and the danger of its rapid spread far and wide in that continent and outside, have rendered the task of the Peace Conference enormously difficult. Russia is still plunging in the wildest kind of anarchy and the situation in Germany and Austria is no better. And Allied statesmen have to hammer out a solution by keeping their heads cool and their gaze steady at the goal of a just and lasting peace.

WHAT the world is anxiously waiting to know is the manner in which the Peace Conference proposes to satisfy the different and, in many cases, conflicting claims of various nations to territory, compensation and guarantees, and at the same time to reconcile its actions to the lofty principles which have been propounded by Allied statesmen.

A rough idea of the constitution and working of the proposed League of Nations and of the reparation which is going to be exacted from the enemy, has already been given, and Mr. Lloyd George declared in the House of Commons that every pledge which the British Government had given was incorporated in the demands of the Allies. The Premier went on to observe :—" We want a stern peace because the occasion demands it, but it must be designed not to gratify vengeance but to vindicate justice and every clause and term must be justified on that ground. Above all, we want to protect the future against a repetition of the horrors of this war." In itself, this statement is unexceptionable and even satisfactory, and no useful judgment can be passed upon the work of the Peace Conference till definite and detailed information about it is available to the public. It is the fashion to condemn the Congress of Vienna, and the criticism is perfectly just. But it must be borne in mind that the Peace Conference in Paris will be more severely criticised and its faults of commission and omission will be more roughly handled than the decisions of the European Congress of a hundred years ago.

THE only substantial alteration made in the draft covenant of the League of Nations is that it "provides for the inclusion of all belligerent States named in the document annexed to the covenant." The annexure not being published, we do not know which of the belligerent nations are to be admitted into the League. The mandatory system continues to be applied only to the former German colonies. The Labour party, however, is demanding its extension to all colonies indifferently. In the notice, for instance, summoning delegates of that party and the Trade Union Congress to a special conference, convened for April 3 to discuss the draft covenant, the following resolution was proposed: " It should impose upon the signatory nations the responsibility of holding colonies and dependencies in wardship for the purpose of training and educating them in political qualities which will enable them ultimately to practise self-determination; and in accordance with the proposals in the Labour war aims, this provision should apply to all such colonies and not merely to those lately under German control."

WE learn with immense relief of Mr. Gandhi's decision to suspend passive resistance for the time

being. Of course his view of the efficacy of Satyagraha and the objectionable character of the Rowlatt Act remains unchanged. But seeing that there was a great danger of the movement being used to feed violence, he had no alternative but to abandon it temporarily. In announcing his decision, Mr. Gandhi frankly acknowledges that he underrated the forces of evil when he initiated the movement and that the essential principles of it were not properly appreciated by the people. "Satyagraha," he says, "is like a banyan tree with innumerable branches. Civil disobedience is one such branch. Satya (truth) and Ahimsā (non-violence) together make the parent trunk from which innumerable branches shoot out. We have found by bitter experience, that in an atmosphere of lawlessness civil disobedience found ready acceptance satya (truth) and ahimsā (non-violence) from which alone civil disobedience can worthily spring have commanded little or no respect." For the present, according to Mr. Gandhi's decision, "satyagraha must consist in ceaselessly helping the authorities in all the ways available to us as satyagrahis to restore order and curb lawlessness." We hope the satyagrahis will now be as assiduous in helping in arresting disorder as they were in practising civil disobedience.

WHILE the passive resistance movement was in progress, it was the clear duty of those who disapproved of it as a potential danger to the peace and as removing the more important question of reforms out of sight to have given public expression to their disapprobation. Many, however, to whom it belonged by reason of their position in public life to lead opinion, forgot their duty to the country in their attachment and reverence for Mr. Gandhi, though Mr. Gandhi would have liked nothing better than a strict adherence to truth on their part. Mrs. Besant's complaint is, therefore, justified that those who should have joined with her in the odious task of opposing a popular cause avoided doing so. Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, for instance, though he never believed from the inception of the movement in the possibility of its being conducted on right lines as a mass movement, could give voice to his disbelief only when the movement had been all but suspended. Mrs. Besant, however, is not accurate in her statement that all who disapproved of the movement in Madras disapproved of *all* passive resistance. Here evidently she refers to her own limited pledge, confined to the disobedience of the Rowlatt law, which afterwards she withdrew. Other opponents of Mr. Gandhi's wider movement did not support her restricted movement, for they perceived sooner than Mrs. Besant that passive resistance, circumscribed within the narrow limits prescribed by her, was bound to prove infructuous from the nature of the legislation and that there was no alternative between Mr. Gandhi's plan and orthodox constitutional agitation. But no one to our knowledge was or is opposed in theory to pas-

sive resistance of the kind which was contemplated by Mrs. Besant.

IT would appear that just at the time when Mr. Gandhi was contemplating a suspension of passive resistance, the Government of India were arming themselves with additional powers under the Defence of India Act to suppress the movement. They have promulgated a new rule under the Act, forbidding persons in any area to print or publish any newspaper not in circulation at the date of the notification and empowering the local Government to confiscate the press at which such a newspaper may be printed in contravention of the rule. This new rule seems to be directed against the Satyagrahis who may publish unregistered newspaper and against the presses where such newspapers may be printed. Evidently, the counsel of leaving the movement alone and letting the Satyagrahis go unpunished for a technical offence did not commend itself to the Government, and they had determined to deal severely with those who would practise civil disobedience. But why apply to them what has always been regarded as a war measure, which is now morally dead? For the moment, the passive resistance movement being held up, the question ceases to be of any immediate practical significance, but it shows how readily on ordinary occasions Government makes use of drastic powers intended to be in reserve against emergencies. In the presence of such gross misuse of the Defence Act, the opposition to the enactment of the law which is to take its place can be easily understood.

CONSEQUENT upon the outbreak of disorder in Gujerat and the Punjab, the Government of India issued a press *communiqué* with a view to defining its attitude to the agitation against the Rowlatt Act. The heads of local Governments also made a similar explanation each in his province. We welcome these efforts on the part of Government to convince the people of the urgency or innocuousness of the legislation which it was persuaded to enact in face of the unanimous opposition of the people's representatives in the council. We are not sanguine enough to believe that the efforts will succeed in their immediate object, but we welcome them as showing a desire on the part of Government to reason with the people and to enlist, if possible, their intelligence on its side. It has since been decided to undertake propagandist work with the object of removing the misapprehensions of the people, and the first pamphlet has been published. On this subject the popular representatives have been so reasonable and considerate and the Government so obdurate and perverse that we cannot imagine that this propagandism will induce the conviction in the public mind that the Rowlatt Act was indispensably necessary to cope with the situation.

WE can cherish no such delusion, but if there are any wrong ideas prevalent about the Act, it is desirable in the interest of all that they should be speedily removed. The India Government's *communiqué* mentions that the idea is sedulously propagated that the new law gives unfettered authority to interfere with public meetings even of a religious and social nature and empowers the police to clap into gaol anyone who dares criticise any action of Government. Such gross perversions of facts we have never seen perpetrated either in the press or on the platform, and that being outside the range of our experience we do not know that the anti-Rowlatt Act agitators can be justly held responsible for the alleged existence of such rumours. The Government has taken an opportunity to reiterate its assurance that the Act will be severely restricted in its application to revolutionary and anarchical crime and that its tenour and intention will be scrupulously safeguarded should occasion arise to put it into operation. This is good so far as it goes, but as things are happening at present, it only serves to bring out the misuse of the Defence of India Act in full relief. The *communiqué* then goes on to remind people of the many and adequate powers it wields to meet any possible development of the situation and assures the public that it would use all those powers if occasion arose. Its appeal to all loyal citizens to help in quelling disorder will, we trust, be heartily responded to unless Government by its unnecessarily harsh measures should make it impossible for people to co-operate.

QUIET was immediately restored at Ahmedabad when Mr. Gandhi visited the place. The position in the Punjab is very obscure. The news that has been allowed to come in relates mostly to severe measures taken by Government to quell disorder, but has practically nothing to say of further outrages on the part of the mob. In Lahore, Amritsar and Delhi strike continued for some days and caused serious inconvenience to the European population in the civil station. Great difficulty was experienced in providing supplies from the mufasal, but beyond this hardly any excesses were committed by the people of these places, to judge from the reports that have arrived. At Kasur, however, serious disturbances occurred. According to the official version, a train from Ferozpur was held up on the 12th inst. at Kasur and looted by a mob 1000 strong. Two Europeans were killed. After wrecking the station, the crowd burnt the Post Office and attacked the police, driving them off, killing one and wounding six. Several stations on the Kasur-Amritsar line were attacked the same day. Khemkaran station was looted and the treasury at Taru station was attacked unsuccessfully.

THE All-India Congress Committee, at a meeting held on Sunday last in Bombay, decided to send a deputation to England forthwith and thus

by its action disclaimed the romantic-looking view which is cherished in certain quarters, namely, that so long as the Rowlatt Act remained on the Statute book the reforms were a matter of no concern. For, the deputation is going to England with the primary object of working for the reforms, and it will have no business to undertake the mission if it does not believe in the utility of reforms even while the Act is in force. This is not to say that the country may now reconcile itself to the existence of this pernicious legislation; we must agitate unceasingly for its repeal. But we shall certainly commit a grievous blunder if we allow our just resentment at the passing of the Act to impede our effort in liberalising the reform scheme which, for the moment, is in danger of being watered down. In its original shape, the bill made all political agitation virtually depend upon the sufferance of the bureaucracy. The modifications since introduced may not be full satisfactory, but the pledge repeated several times over that only revolutionary and anarchical crime will come within its scope, places the whole matter on a different footing. It will be highly unwise after these assurances to sweep reforms entirely out of sight, while working for the withdrawal of the Rowlatt Act. We are pleased to see the *Mahratta* emphatically declaring: Reforms first; the Rowlatt Act afterwards. But there need be no necessary contrariety between these two objects. The several deputations that will go to England will surely be able to do valuable work in connection with the latter while working for the former, but it is necessary to be clear in one's mind about the relative importance of the two.

THE Bengal Government has put the Press Act into operation against the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* by forfeiting its deposit of Rs. 5000 and demanding a fresh security of Rs. 10,000. Two offending articles are mentioned as having, in the Government's opinion, "a tendency, directly or indirectly, by inference or suggestion, implication or otherwise to bring into hatred and contempt the Government established by law in British India," etc. The formula is so wide-reaching that Government can never have any difficulty in setting the law in motion against any paper which at all undertakes the function of criticism. The question, therefore, that one asks in such cases is not whether the elastic phraseology of the law warranted action under it, nor whether the comments in the paper were fair and just, but only whether they were so extraordinarily perverse and malicious as to render resort to such a special law necessary. This law exalts executive discretion above judicial decision, and it therefore, becomes the obvious duty of Government to practise the greatest amount of forbearance. Lord Ronaldshay's Government has on the whole, exercised restraint in a difficult situation, and it were much to be wished that it had refrained from the drastic action it has taken.

THE SITUATION IN THE PUNJAB.

AT an urgent meeting held on April 18, the Madras Liberal League passed the following resolution:—

This meeting is of opinion that the firing on the mob in Delhi at the railway station and near the Clock Tower on the 30th March does not appear from the published official and non-official accounts to have been necessary or justifiable, and calls on the Government to appoint an independent Committee to inquire into and report on the circumstances that preceded and led up to the order to fire.

While the meeting recognises the gravity of the situation in certain parts of the Punjab and the duty of all citizens to support reasonable measures for putting down the disturbance and bringing offenders to justice, it feels constrained to deprecate the alarmist view that the Government of India seem to have taken in their Resolution, dated 14th instant, in using the expression "open rebellion" and sanctioning drastic steps like court-martialling, as such view tends to cause panic among Europeans in India and Great Britain and widespread terror and resentment among the people of this country and thus to inflame racial feeling.

Since then the Punjab Government has passed a series of orders which have filled the whole country with grave alarm. While, on the one hand, the news of fresh disturbances which is vouchsafed to the outside world is so meagre, that regarding the coercive measure taken by Government is so ample that the circumstance creates a most undesirable impression on the public mind. In Lahore and Amritsar no fresh outrages appear to have taken place; strike continued for a few days causing much acute hardship to the population in the civil lines, but it has now ended, business having again assumed its normal aspect. At Kasur and Gujranwala the mob violence took on an alarming form; several of the deplorable occurrences which happened at Ahmedabad and Amritsar were repeated at these places, but quiet was restored therewith no greater difficulty than at Ahmedabad. We have no wish to minimise the gravity of the excesses that were committed by the mob. The burning down of railway stations, cutting of telegraph wires, and the murder of European citizens are acts, the brutality of which has shocked the whole country. Mr. Gandhi could infer from what he found at Ahmedabad that there was organisation behind the outrages. To whatever source the inspiration of these may be traced, it is clear that this organised violence must be closely inquired into and severe measures taken to put it down. As to that there is complete unanimity. For any reasonable measures that they will think necessary for the restoration of order the Government will have warm and enthusiastic support from the public, for they detest the present outbreaks of disorder and desire nothing so much as to prevent their recrudescence. The popular leaders recognise that whatever be their feeling for the Rowlatt law which has been the occasion of the recent disorderly acts of the mob, their immediate concern must be and is how to quell disorder and restore to the country its even tenour. Whether Bolshevism be at work among the populace,

as is alleged by Anglo-Indian papers of weight and standing, or whether the inspiration be more indigenous, the just feeling of resentment at the passing of an unnecessary and evil law cannot by any means be allowed to help forward the sinister designs of some unknown malignant persons. The only question for consideration at such a time, overshadowing every other, must be how to subdue lawlessness without injury to the innocent.

But we must at the same time plead with the Government with all the earnestness at our command for a scrupulous avoidance of all unnecessarily harsh measures and for using all its efforts to convince popular leaders of the necessity and suitability of the measures on which Government may decide. In the case of the Ahmedabad riots, the public are fully satisfied that the Bombay Government took no measures that were not warranted by the circumstances of the case, and that no intimidation was used with the object of cowering down the people. The withdrawal of the martial law the moment it was thought it had done its work has inspired the people with a confidence that Sir George Lloyd's Government will not take action which will err on the side of cruelty. Does the Punjab Government's action induce a like confidence? Far from it. If that Government's *communiqués* fully relate all the outrages that have taken place—and there is no reason to suppose that it will keep back any—the public will feel convinced that however deplorable the occurrences may be, they are certainly not so serious as to justify a fraction of the severity to which the Punjab Government has evidently nerved itself. If the situation has had no more flagitious developments than those that have come to light, can the various orders issued under the martial law have any evident justification? For, be it remembered that the measures taken must not only be justifiable in themselves but must be generally believed to be so. What steps has the Government taken to remove the serious popular misgivings that are felt everywhere? The course of action adopted by Government indicates that in its view it has to deal with a foreign Power rather than with internal lawlessness. The gagging of the Indian press and the deportation and arrest of several leaders of public opinion, against whom there cannot be a scintilla of evidence of complicity in the crimes committed, are acts which will only inflame public opinion to an extraordinary degree. Who can ever believe that the editor of the *Tribune*, who is one of the most level-headed men in the country and who is conducting the paper on lines that others may well set themselves to emulate, has the remotest connexion with the disorders except it be that he used his efforts to prevent them? What again could be the possible offence of Messrs. Manohar Lal and Dunichand and others? If their temporary absence from the scene of trouble will lead to a restoration of order, these men will not grudge the Government the luxury of depriving them of their liberty for a season. But to suggest that their

freedom was prejudicial to the preservation of peace is to cast a stigma on the loyalty of the best affected among us. It is just because we are convinced that the removal at this critical time of men who could exercise very great influence on the side of peace and order and who would never use it any other way may put an intolerable strain on the patience of the people and lead to results contrary to what the Government expect that we are so much concerned at the turn things are taking in the Punjab. The Government of India and the Punjab Government have taken too alarmist a view of the present position, and if they do not wish to terrorise the people into submission, it is highly necessary that they should take steps to convince the public that the severity of the measures adopted by them was called for by the circumstances. The curfew gun, the order to the students of the D. A. V. college to answer the roll-call four times a day and other equally strong measures are things which seemed beyond the capacity of even a Sir Michael O'Dwyer. The dropping of bombs from aeroplanes, which is officially acknowledged—what is one to say of it? The brutality of these measures may lead to consequences which one dare not contemplate.

DISTANCE POLLUTION

OR

A SOUTH INDIAN SOCIAL MYSTERY.

RACE-HATRED is an interesting animal instinct inherited by humanity from the general animal world. Students of sociology find it practised by human groups against one another under various curious pretexts more or less sanctioned, and at times even rigorously maintained, either by a religious ceremony, social prestige or political expediency. Distance Pollution is one of such pretexts based on the bed-rock of this inveterate instinct. Both in theory and in practice, this pretext has often been systematically preached and practised in the west, maybe, under the name of Eugenics and in the East of the Yoga Philosophy. It requires men of the greatness of a Gandhi in a land like South Africa to expose this disease in its true colour. Ordinarily, however in its more chronic conditions, it is likely to escape practically unnoticed. Were not whole tribes of the human species decimated and even extirpated by the ravages of small-pox and plague, in an age when the idea of vaccination or inoculation would have been resented with a wrath which, in medieval times, was visited on witchcraft? Those simple and perhaps religiously minded tribes meekly or, in a sense, even heroically succumbed to such ravages without a murmur on their lips. Some tribes are even at this day being tortured into slow but steady extinction which they meet in the same meek and heroic way as of old. Take, for instance, some parts of our own country, especially South Malabar, where a similar process is being carried on by the ravages of a chronic social

malady known as Distance Pollution. Our vaunted civilization, ancient, modern or mixed, has apparently no time to take note of such a huge waste of manhood. And all this is allowed to go on only because the disease is not physical or material enough to disturb our research institutes or political workers. So long as the bacillus is supposed to be *merely* moral or social, it will very likely be left to its fate in the dark future just as much as it has been in the mysterious past.

I do not know how many of our "educated Indians" on whose mercy our salvation is now-a-days made to depend, find time to read those admirable records known as a "District Gazetteers" which may easily be unearthed from a dusty shelf of an old-fashioned library. I daresay, not many. With some apology, therefore, I quote the following:

"Bound up with Malabar caste-system are the strict theories with regard to pollution. Every man considers himself polluted by the touch of one of a lower caste; and there are castes low in the social scale which mutually convey pollution to each other. But in addition to this, at a certain point in the caste system, the taint is supposed to become so pronounced as actually to affect the atmosphere and carry pollution to persons, houses and so on, within a radius of several yards from the person who is the centre of infection. Based on this theory there is a recognized scale of distances at which members of each of the polluting castes must stand from a man of higher caste or his house, the distance increasing as we descend the social scale. In ordinary conversation such expressions as *Tiya-pād* or a *Cherumā-pād* (that is, a distance at which a *Tiyan* or a *Cherumān* has to keep) are commonly used. The distance is about 24 feet in the case of a *Kammālan* or member of one of the artisan classes, and, in the case of the aboriginal *Nāyadis*, as much as 74 feet. Under the Native Rajas, *Nāyars* thought nothing of cutting down on the spot a member of the lower castes, who should approach within polluting distance of his person. . . .

"It is noteworthy that neither Jews, Christians nor Muhammadans are considered to convey this 'atmospheric pollution,' and this is true even of converts to the two latter religions from the lowest castes. It is evident what an immense inducement is thus afforded to the latter to raise themselves in the social scale and rid themselves of so many vexatious and degrading restrictions and disabilities by embracing Islam or Christianity." (See the Gazetteer of Malabar, Vol. I, page 102.) Taking it that the reader has now a fair idea of what is designated as "Distance Pollution," I shall directly proceed to relate briefly a few cases which I personally witnessed in South Malabar during my tour there, in last December.

(1) One morning I alighted at the S. I. Railway Station Paighat, where there is a small cen-

tre of our Depressed Classes Mission. A number of friends and volunteers had assembled to receive me. Naturally my first question was whether among the crowd there was any person belonging to the Depressed Classes, for whom my visit was intended. Mr. Sheshayya, the enthusiastic secretary of the Mission, with an air of complacent triumph, replied that all that he could succeed in doing was to get a few Cherumas at the platform, and that, as to bringing other untouchables there, it was out of the question. As I requested further explanation of the local mystery about untouchability, to study which was the main purpose of my tour, he remarked that the local untouchables such as the Nayadis were unapproachables, and that no one among them would have the temerity even to think of entering a public high way, much less a railway station! Well, for the moment, I was so astounded at this that I even failed to realise the horror of it all. Though I had heard enough about the practice he was referring to, I had never before actually witnessed it. No wonder, therefore, that though I was in close quarters with it, I found it difficult to believe the evidence of my eyes. Mr. Sheshayya, however, took me about half a mile from the station where I saw 16 Nayadi souls, in bodies which hardly looked human. They were standing in the paddy fields nearly a furlong from the appointed place in the public road at which I alighted from my conveyance to meet them. I insisted on their coming at any risk to the road-side where we were standing. They did it, and probably that was the first time in their life that they had approached so near a public road! And remember all this was pre-arranged as a special case in honour of my visit! On inquiries I found that the number constituted nearly the whole of the Nayady population of the neighbourhood. The only safe means of livelihood allowed to them by our time-honoured civilization was begging; and, as our old civilization is now being modernized with righteous economic ideas of checking the habits of vagrancy among these people, they were, I was told, allowed to beg only on two days in the week, so that they might not beg indiscriminately on any other day in the week and be a nuisance to the gentry of the place! This information was vouchsafed to me with a deliberate air of responsibility by a local second class magistrate. Small wonder then that Nayadies of Malabar are getting extinct so fast! Before finishing this case, I may state that this same magistrate related to me in the same responsible and deliberate manner how Mr. Sheshayya had once led a party of Cherumas (a caste which is a little higher in the social scale than Nayadis,) to attend the public function of a local celebration of the victory day, that the pitiable sequel was that the poor people were beaten soundly by some overscrupulous orthodox men who could not bear the sight of Cherumas treading the public road and that, as a magistrate, he had to bring the offenders to book, &c., &c.

(2) Distance Pollution is not the privilege only of those who are considered untouchables, for I found before I left Palghat that the honour of polluting a higher caste man by mere proximity to him was shared by some communities who were not at all ordinarily considered as untouchables but were all the same, in certain circumstances, unapproachables. The mystery—for to me it is nothing less—stands thus. There are in Malabar streets or villages called *Agrahars* exclusively appropriated to the use of the Brahmans. Not to speak of Parayans, even Tiyyas and Ezhuvas, who are not depressed classes at all, are never allowed to enter these villages or streets. Among these Tiyyas, I could actually count several B.A.'s and M. A.'s, pleaders, doctors, and high Government officials; but all these notwithstanding, they may not enter an Agrahar. Just as I was departing from Palghat, I saw a very well dressed Tiyya gentleman, standing on the boundary line of an Agrahar and beating the ground with his stick. I could not understand what he was doing. My companion and guide enlightened me by saying that he was calling a Brahman friend out of the Agrahar to meet him. The explanation meant evidently that the Tiyyas in Malabar had thus to knock on the boundary lines of Brahman streets closed against them, just as strangers in the English world have to knock at doors, to announce their arrival and to signify a desire to go in, with this difference that while elsewhere the petitioner would be hospitably admitted into the house, in Malabar Brahmans would go out of their streets to meet their Tiyya friends and never receive them in.

3. While I was in the Tamil country, the Secretary of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of Madras who had been to Calicut wrote to me from there: "I am very glad to hear that you have come to the south, but, pray, why not extend your visit to the west coast? You will find Calicut in the height of agitation on account of this untouchable question. Perhaps you have heard of the trouble in connection with the closing of a public road to the low castes." Having seen something of this trouble at Palghat, I went to see more of it at Calicut. Distance Pollution is not an affair between Brahmans and the untouchables only. The whole of the caste system in the south, and especially on the west coast, I found, as stated in the District Gazetteer, imbued with such primeval ethnic notions, as the Evil Eye, Distance Pollution and the rest of it, the observance of which grows more rigid as the caste scale lowers. But the trouble of the agitation above referred to was an extraordinary revival of these dying notions, mysteriously managed by some designing agency hidden behind the veil. A Tiyya gentleman was introduced to me at a garden party as the leading banker of Calicut and a B. A., B. L. of the Madras University. I found him a perfect gentleman, of character, culture and great social position in the

city; and yet I was told that it was he who was prohibited from going on a certain public road, because he was a Tiyya by caste and because the particular road was connected with the tank of a Zamorin Rajah. And the report, which reached me but which passed my understanding, was that a European I. C. S. officer was the medium through whom the cost of purifying the tank was demanded!

(4) During my visit I purposely interviewed another Tiyya gentleman who was a leading medical practitioner at Calicut. On his professional visits he had, on several occasions before, been allowed to enter places both public and private without any hindrance, but recently on an occasion he was suddenly prohibited from passing by a particular tank, and as the case was too ludicrous to stand on any other ground, he was, as he told me himself, to undergo the vexation of a case filed against him in a local court of law, for ordinary trespass. I had some grounds to suspect that these particular cases of recrudescence of race-hatred might be traced to some local political manipulation rather than social superstition.

(5) I shall conclude by mentioning an instance in which I had to suffer a little personal inconvenience. In the company of a Nair friend, who was a B. A., B. L., I went one morning to see a historic Zamorin Rajaha's palace situate in an exclusively Nair quarter. We were proceeding in a carriage; while yet we were at some distance from the place, to my great surprise and puzzlement, the carriage suddenly came to a standstill. But my Nair friend soothed my wits by explaining that as the street we were just entering was in the exclusive occupation of Nairs and as the driver was a Tiyya by caste he could not go into it, though there was no objection to his horse and carriage being taken in. The result was that we had to walk round more than a mile to see whatever we wanted to, and then get at the carriage at the other convenient end of the street. I wished I had selected a cab-driver who was a convert to Christianity or Islam as, in that case, I could have saved the trouble of all this circumambulation. During my tours I found in many other respects that a timely conversion to an alien faith, more especially to Christianity, provided one a short cut to social or political convenience which the cumbersome and out-of-joint Hinduism could not do.

V. R. SHINDE.

THE REFORM SCHEME.—III.

MUCH has been made of the complicated character of the provincial executive. But all constitutions that have to deal with vast territories are complicated. The student of German history knows how intricate have been the constitutions of Germany from the time of Charlemagne onwards. The present constitution of the United States is intricate to an extreme degree. The real test of a constitution is not intricacy, but its suitability to the

conditions of the country and its efficiency to discharge the function which it is intended to perform. According to this test the dualism in the executive is a proper compromise between immediate responsibility and a purely autocratic government hitherto existing. If the transferred heads are numerous and the new councils pick up the manners and etiquette of Parliamentary government the diarchy would cease to be a stumbling block to the new constitution; on the contrary, it might prepare the way for complete responsible government by handing over the major part of the administration to the ministers. It is premature to pass a final judgment upon this part of the Report till the Southborough Committee's recommendations on the division between reserved and transferred heads are published.

Coming to the provincial councils, we are constrained to admire the candour with which the existence of the official *bloc* is declared to be out of joint with the new regime. Under the Morely-Minto councils the official *bloc* did infinite mischief. It irritated the non-officials and brought into existence the corresponding non-official *bloc*, whose existence the M.-C. report naturally bewails. It produced an impression which was not quite warranted by facts, that the phalanx of the officials was there only to carry out the orders of the executive with regard to voting on a particular bill, in a dummy-like fashion in order to drown the voice of non-officials. Thus an antagonism was created which is not yet over. The Report limits the number of officials to a number "not larger than is considered necessary for the transaction of business." Hence under the new scheme the unpopularity of the official will wear itself out.

In the Report large powers of intervention are reserved to the central Government and to the Governor in executive council in all cases in which the action of the non-official council or the ministers affects them to their serious prejudice. This has been severely criticised by the Radical politicians as only an agency in disguise of nullifying the little liberty given to the non-official executive or the council. Here, again, the success of the scheme would depend more upon 'the unwritten constitution' than upon written statutes and demarcations in black and white. Such powers of intervention ought to be exercised only in emergency and not habitually.

The Anglo-Indian press is never tired of lecturing to the Indian politicians about exaggerating the potency of the emergency powers which must be a part and parcel of every constitution as safeguards in times of stress and danger and which are like brakes attached to a fast-moving train. But it is pertinent to ask the question how it is that all shades of Indian opinion view these emergency powers with so much alarm. Perhaps the past behaviour of the several Governments has given some sort of justification to these apprehensions. Unless the memory of the Anglo-Indian press is short, many examples

will occur to it in which emergency powers have been utilized in normal circumstances. The only thing which will allay these suspicions is the vouchsafing of some sort of guarantee that in their 'letter of instructions' to the Governors and to the Government of India, His Majesty's Government in England will insist upon the latter treating the emergency powers only as such. Till such time as this is done, Indian politicians will probably continue to question the *bona fides* of the executive in India with regard to the brakes of the constitution.

The tone of the Report appears to be pessimistic with regard to the co-operation of the council in legislation necessary for discharging its proper functions. It is believed that the new councils will play a game of obstruction at every turn, making government impossible and accelerating an *impasse*. Hence the elaborate procedure of a Grand Committee is regarded as inevitable. Now it is clear that this apprehension is based upon the experience of the working of the Morley-Minto councils.

The reasons of this obstructive tendency, however, should be analysed carefully before the whole blame is fathered on the councils. The principal reason has been the powerlessness of the councils to affect the policy of the Government. With all his liberalism, Lord Morley regarded responsible government in India as beyond the horizon of political vision. Hence, under the scheme inaugurated by him, the only function of the councils was advisory and their only rôle was that of critics. This has been eloquently described by the signatories of the Report themselves. With no administrative work to do, all that the councils could achieve was to place before the Government the popular point of view as they conceived it and this is all that the framers of the councils had bargained for. What appears, therefore, as the obstructive character of these councils was really the performance of their legitimate rôle. But to argue from this that even the future council will be essentially obstructive is a *non sequitur*. Properly equipped with administrative machinery, with the major part of the administration in their hands, the councils will rise equal to the occasion.

But the second reason of the tendency of the past councils to act as an Opposition is the incapacity of the Government to respond to the popular will. Rightly or wrongly, the representatives of the people feel that Government has interests which are opposed to what they regard as the interests of the people: that Government thinks more of prestige and efficiency than of conciliating people's wishes; that Government thinks more of their income than of what Prof. Marshall has called the 'greater marginal utility of the money' fructifying in people's pockets if that income were less even by a little. Whether this opposition is real or illusory is not the important question; the very fact that leaders of the people who are more in touch with the people than the Govern-

ment as it is constituted in India could be, feel the opposition shows that "something is rotten in the state of Denmark." This is the sore point in Indian politics to-day. Much will depend upon the action of the Government itself in the future. It must give up the idol of administrative efficiency and bend its energies to the task of persuading the people that their own interests and the people's interests are identical. The future bureaucrat should not only dictate but also persuade. He should by no means humour the follies of the populace. If his conscience dictates that people are wrong and he is right, the path of duty is clear. But this difference of opinion need not be unnecessarily accentuated by supercilious impatience and unsympathetic behaviour. If the bureaucrat would descend from his empyrean heights to the plane of the sublunar world most of the causes of friction between Government and the councils would vanish as if by magic. It must be said to the credit of the framers of the scheme that they make a passionate appeal to the present as well as the future European services for realising their own responsibility in ensuring the smooth working of the new machinery under radically changed auspices.

With these reservations, however, one has to admit that the possibility of an acute difference between the councils and the executive Governments and their pulling different ways is real and has to be provided for. Under a constitution embodying the principle of complete responsibility the solution is clear; if a measure does not pass in the houses of legislature it is simply dropped. But the solution would not avail us in what is professedly a transitional arrangement. With an irremovable executive responsible to a Parliament in an other country, the power to pass legislation which the executive regard as essential is a *sine que non*, according to one of the most elementary axioms of politics that administrative responsibility and power must go together. Let us see whether the Grand Committee as proposed by the framers of the scheme is the proper agency to effect this.

One objectionable feature of the Grand Committee procedure is 'certified' legislation. This sort of legislation over the head of the council is out of joint with the principle of democratic government. Its existence cannot be tolerated in a country not accustomed to autocratic government. It is, in fact, nothing but legislation by autocratic fiat. But considering the purpose for which it is intended, one cannot help thinking that it is not after all so black as it is painted. The report clearly says that "such a certificate should not be given without strong reason." Here again the old monster raises its head. The Governor being the sole judge of the expediency of the bill, of the strong reason, of the emergency, he may certify legislation oftener than is contemplated by the framers of the Report

and the guarantees contained in the Report may be 'scraps of paper.'

The assumption of the Report throughout is that the Governor will never use his power of certifying; that he will resort to it only in extremely urgent cases; that normal legislation will be left by the Governor to the will of the majority in the council. Indian critics of the Report have rightly drawn attention to this dependence of the whole machinery on the will of one man and the absence of any method of correcting or checking the vagaries of a Governor inclined to ply the old trade of personal government. One redeeming feature however, of the Grand Committee procedure is that the council is not precluded from passing a resolution recording objections to certified legislation, such resolution accompanying the Act when it is submitted to the Governor-General and the Secretary of State. This gives the councillors an opportunity of giving weighty reasons for their opposition and also gives the council a sort of right of appeal so that certified legislation initiated by a reactionary Governor may be vetoed by a liberal Governor-General or, on a still higher plane of power, by the Secretary of State if either of them approves of the resolution of the council. As I have never seen any emphasis laid on this feature, I beg to draw the attention of the reader to it.

At this place one may note that in the whole Report no method is suggested by which the council may appeal from the decision of a Governor to some higher authority except in the case of a few stray points. His decision appears to be final in almost every case of dispute coming before him. Considering this unlimited discretionary power given to the Governor under the scheme, it will not be out of place to impress upon the British Cabinet the necessity of appointing Governors with a marked sympathy for popular government. In the past many a Governor has been appointed not because his political views were of a particular sort, but because his services as a diplomat or in some other capacity were recognised.

In future this will be a vicious method of procedure. The M.-C. Report apprehends too often a breakdown on the score of the want of experience of the councils or their obstructive tactics or their weak sense of responsibility. We should like to point out that a breakdown on the score of the defects of statemanship in the Governor is equally, if not, more probable. Of this latter contingency the Report seems to be blissfully oblivious.

V. N. GODBOLE.

SELECTION.

PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU. A COMPLIMENTARY DINNER.

SPEECHES BY DR. SAPRU AND MR. KUNZRU.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, senior member of the Upper India branch of the Servants of India Society and joint honorary secretary of the United Provinces Liberal Association, is one of the delegates to England of the All-India

Conference of the supporters of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme and of the United Provinces Liberal Association. He and the hon. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri are expected to sail for England on the 28th instant. Two other delegates—Messrs. N. M. Samarth and K. C. Roy, preceded them on the 8th instant, and others will follow, the hon. Mr. Surendranath Banerjee and Sir Benode Mitter being timed to sail on the 3rd May. Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru left Allahabad on Friday by the Bombay mail and a number of friends saw him off at the station. He will spend a few days at Poona and Bombay before sailing. On the 9th instant, he was entertained by the hon. Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru at a complimentary dinner at which a number of friends were present. At the end of the dinner Dr. Sapru proposed Mr. Kunzru's health and the latter made a suitable reply. The two speeches are printed below.

THE HON. DR. TEJ BHADUR SAPRU.

in proposing the health of the guest of the evening said :—

I rise to propose the health of our friend and guest of the evening Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru. (Cheers) As you know he is about to sail for England on a very high mission. I need scarcely say anything about Pandit Hirday Nath as he is such a dear friend of everyone of us. In an age of advertisement when everyone is claiming for himself the monopoly of wisdom and patriotism. I can honestly say that Pandit Hirday Nath has, with his characteristic modesty, kept himself in the back ground. At the same time everyone of us recognizes that no small amount of the public activity in these provinces has been due to his untiring zeal and selfless devotion to public cause. (Hear hear) The son of a very distinguished father, one of the founders of modern India, he has inherited his great talents, and I have not the smallest possible doubt that if he had decided to join the profession of his father he would have been a towering personality in it. But everyone of us will recognize that the supreme sacrifice which he has made for the cause of the country is one which we can never forget. A man of his talents, a man of his ability, might have made a great name for himself in any profession, but he has decided for himself to serve the country in the true spirit of a servant. We are all proud of him. We are all proud that he is such a distinguished member of the Servants of India Society and that he is such a distinguished disciple of Mr. Gokhale. He may belong for the time being to what has been described to be a non-descript multitude of politicians; but I have no doubt that the time is not distant—I should think it is very near—when even those who are deluded to-day by certain siren cries will find that true merit and worth will always assert themselves in the end. I have no doubt that Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru will represent our cause with all the ability and zeal of which he is possessed. (Hear, hear, hear) At the same time, I have not the slightest possible doubt in my mind that he will bring to bear upon his work that judgment which we have been accustomed to associate with him and with his name, and that when he comes back from England we shall be in a position to receive him enthusiastically and gratefully. I ask you to drink to his health. (Cheers.) The toast having been duly honoured,

PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU

in responding said :—

Dr. Sapru and gentlemen, I am extremely grateful to Dr. Sapru for the very kind way in which he has referred to me. It is usual on such occasions to disclaim the compliments given by generous friends, but I can honestly say that his remarks were extremely kind, kind even beyond the partiality of generous friends. I really can find no words to convey adequately my sense of gratefulness to him on this occasion.

I consider it a great honour that I should have been selected to assist those who have been chosen on behalf of the Moderate Party to represent the cause of India to the Imperial authorities and to press her demands on their attention for a substantial measure of constitutional freedom in the immediate present and for speedy progress towards the goal. It

has been said that when a man allows himself to be placed in a certain position he has no longer the right to plead either inability or ignorance or inexperience in extenuation of his failure to discharge the task entrusted to him. It is no longer open to me, therefore, to bespeak your indulgence by confessing my own deficiencies, however sincere that confession may be. I shall only content myself with saying that I accept the duty laid on me in a spirit of deep humility, and I regard my selection as an opportunity given to me for preparing myself further for the task which under the great influence of a lofty and inspiring example I vowed to fulfil on the threshold of my life. (Hear, hear.)

WORK IN ENGLAND.

You will not expect me to say anything in regard to the plan of our operations in England. In recent political discussions it has been sometimes assumed that we have pinned our faith to British statesmen and that we decry any form of activity which does not take the shape of interviewing the Imperial authorities. As I have said just now, it would be premature on my part to say what exactly is the line of action we shall follow in England, but this I may say, that we shall leave no method untried which would strengthen the cause of India and which would promise any chance of success. Everybody will acknowledge that the chances of reform are not as bright as was imagined. The Moderate deputation is not going there in quest of glory. It is not going there with any desire to make a name for itself in history. That, I believe, is implied in some of the criticisms cast upon it. All the members of the deputation are going to England with a full sense of responsibility, fully knowing the difficulties before them; and they will do all that lies in their power to serve their Mother country. What the issue will be, whether their counsels will be listened to or whether a deaf ear will be turned to them, they are unable to say. All that they can do is to present the case for their country as thoroughly as they can, to leave no stone unturned to press her demands on the responsible authorities in England, leaving the issue in the lap of the gods.

THE REFORMS—A WARNING.

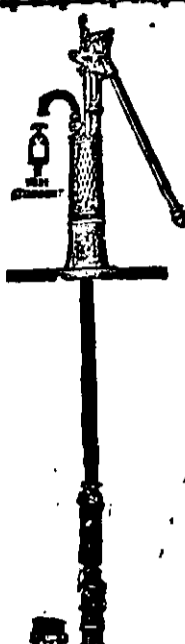
Whatever differences of view there might be in regard to the character of the reforms, I think about two things we are all agreed. Whether it be Mr. Surendranath Banerjee or Mrs. Beasant or Mr. Tilak—they are all agreed that we cannot go behind the pronouncement of August 1917; that we have to accept the broad principles of the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme; that all that we have to ask for is modifications in regard to details, and that we cannot throw the Scheme to the winds and put forward proposals which are tantamount to its rejection. Such a statement, coming as it does from one holding my convictions and occupying an insignificant position as I do, might be said to be a deliberate distortion of the attitude taken up by the other party. But I have on my side the high authority of Mr. Tilak for the statement I have made. A very recent issue of the *Mahratta* contains the information that in a recent speech, Mr. Tilak made it quite clear that there could be no question of giving the go-by to the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme and that no responsible person could afford to treat lightly the Declaration of August 1917. While we accept these statements so far as our countrymen are concerned, we have to make it plain to British statesmen that we shall stand no whittling down of the Scheme; we have to make it absolutely clear to them, not merely in our own interests but also in their own interests, that if the impression gains ground in India that the Scheme is going to be curtailed or that any attempt is going to be made after the war to go behind the promise made during its continuance, then, the present troubles are nothing compared to what the future will surely have in store for us. The other day the *Leader* writing on the subject, expressed anxiety on this score. It mentioned that it was being rumoured that the reports of local Governments and the Government of India were not

likely to give strong support to the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme, and that if this fear proved true the hands of the reactionaries would be strengthened and those whose task it was to gain rights for India, would find their position extremely difficult. It is no doubt true that those men will, in that case, find their position an extremely difficult one, but the British Government also had better realize that its position will not be any the easier in future. If the reforms are going to be whittled down, if the opposition of the bureaucracy is going to succeed, if on the pretence of maintaining peace, law and order, even the limited rights that are proposed to be given to us are reduced, no man with a degree of self-respect can make himself a party to the acceptance of the reforms. If this advice is not listened to, if reactionary counsels prevail, and if incidents like the Delhi outrage take place, then it is obvious that no amount of effort on the part of the authorities will be enough to cope with the serious situation that will arise in the near future.

THE DELHI OUTRAGE.

Speaking of the Delhi outrage I am sure I voice the opinion of every one of you when I say that the whole country is throbbing with deep resentment at the brutal treatment meted out to our countrymen there. Even if we read the official account, we find that the only charge made against our countrymen is that they were using some amount of force to induce people to close shops, and that a certain number of bricksbats were thrown at the authorities. If this is all that was done by the crowd, may I ask in all seriousness if it justifies to the least extent firing on the defenceless mob? These who are personally acquainted with the character of European mobs or those who have read of their doings in the newspapers know very well that a mob of this character in England would have done far worse things. And yet no one would dream of firing on them. I remember a few years ago when a strike took place in England—it was in one of the dockyards—and the military was called out, the minister responsible for the action was strongly attacked by the press and the public at large. In any self-governing country, such action would not have been possible; it would have been highly improbable. Although the country is seething with excitement and filled with indignation at the brutal treatment meted out to the men at Delhi, no official announcement has been made to show that the Government has any desire to institute a searching inquiry into this deplorable occurrence and bring to book those who are guilty of it.

As I said, we have to make it absolutely clear to the British authorities that if the Reforms are whittled down there would hardly be a moderate man left in India. Gentlemen, I need not detain you any longer. In conclusion, I should merely like to think Dr. Sapru for the honour he has done me to-night and you all for being present on this occasion. In these days of political controversy, when the air is full of suspicion, when motives are freely attributed, it is a great comfort to find that there are some men who still believe in your rectitude, in your honesty, and in your sincerity. It is a great encouragement to find that some of your own countrymen who have education and capacity to form opinions on public questions are still willing to believe that you will do all that lies in your power to fulfil the task entrusted to you. It is indeed a great encouragement that, no matter whether you fail or succeed, the spirit in which you do your work will have their approbation and that no matter what may be thought by unthinking or ignorant men, they will at any rate continue to cherish a belief in your honesty and in your rectitude. This at all times is a source of no small consolation, but at the present time it is indeed a source of great encouragement. I am sure so far as I am concerned, if I may say so without presumption, it will nerve me to do my best in England, and when I return, no matter whether I shall have been able to achieve anything or not, I shall still have a warm place in their hearts and I shall continue to enjoy their best regard. (Loud cheers.)—*The Leader*



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