

# Servant of India

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## Topics of the Week.

### Sholapur Martial Law.

MAKING all allowances for the difficulties of the situation, it must yet be admitted that the Government *communiqué* on the course of events that led to the proclamation of martial law in Sholapur and the promulgation of a special Martial Law Ordinance by the Viceroy is most unconvincing. On the face of it it betrays its one-sided nature, and there are many lacunae which engender grave suspicions. From all that we can gather, it appears that while the authorities had enough provocation for the firing on the mob, the most bitter complaints refer to the alleged snipping by the police patrols when the disturbances had quieted down and before martial law was proclaimed. Allegations have been made and published in the vernacular papers that even little children had been wantonly aimed at and shot. The brutal punishments inflicted by the martial law tribunals have given a rude shock, and allegations have been freely made of police and military indiscretions, not grave in themselves but provocative of grave consequences, as, for instance, the snatching away of Gandhi caps. Messrs Lalji Naranji and Walchand Hirachand, after their return from Sholapur, have published statements which go to show that martial law was uncalled for. We strongly urge that the martial law regime should

immediately be withdrawn, and a searching enquiry by an independent judicial tribunal should at once be set up.

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### True Swadeshi.

AMONG the most sensible things that have so far been done to promote genuine swadeshi movement is the action taken by the Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on the 20th last. The Committee recommended the Indian public to patronise only Indian goods to the maximum extent possible and at the same time reduce as far possible the consumption of goods which are either not made or only partially made in India. With a view to stimulating the production of swadeshi cloth to replace the foreign cloth now imported, the Committee appointed a sub-committee consisting of some of the leading mill-owners and capitalists to devise ways and means for the purpose, which will at the same time prevent profiteering and will safeguard the interests of the consumers. We hope the sub-committee will set about its task in right earnest and make it possible for India to be self-contained in the matter of her requirements.

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### Dr. Tagore on the present situation.

WE are glad to find that Dr. Tagore has broken his self-imposed vow of refusing to discuss politics and in an interview given to the *Manchester Guardian*, has come out with a timely warning to both the combatants in the present struggle for freedom. He describes the present situation as characterized by "a vicious circle in which one act of violence leads to another". This is an accurate description of the last two months' events which include numerous acts of violence on the part of the upholders of law and order, which have been provoked by unpardonable acts of violence on the side of the people (ostensibly engaged in a non-violent fight for freedom. Dr. Tagore has expressed the hope that the best minds in England will be ashamed of the tyrannical acts of the Government as Indians are ashamed of the violence displayed by some of their overzealous and misguided compatriots. Dr. Tagore has very wisely said that the present complications cannot be put straight by repression and a violent display of physical force but only by real greatness of heart displayed on the side of Britain which will evoke a response from the Indian side. This is just what has been emphasized recently in the statement issued by the

Council of the National Liberal Federation. As for the disproportionate sentences passed for the most trivial offences Dr. Tagore says that they are the worst breaches of Law of Humanity which is greater than any other law of the land. There is no doubt that many of the punishments recently inflicted for breaches of the Salt Act are disproportionate to the offence committed and are much beyond the range of punishments contemplated by the Salt Act itself. There is, however, this consolation that very soon all these prisoners are bound to be released. As Dr. Tagore has well put it, Europe has completely lost its moral prestige in Asia and we think it can only be regained by the assertion not of physical force—which will make it go down still more—but of spiritual force and by the maintenance of moral superiority.

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#### The Bengal Merchants' view of the present situation.

ALTHOUGH we do not agree with his advocacy of civil disobedience, we must admit that Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar's presidential address at the general meeting of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce is very suggestive and contains many suggestions to the Government with regard to the solution of the present political riddle. Mr. Sarkar, referring to the retardation of Indian exports, complained of the contraction of currency in order to keep up the exchange rate. The only way to overcome the impediments to the achievement of the people's economic purpose was, in his opinion, economic freedom, which ultimately meant political autonomy. He cited many instances of the way in which Great Britain had explained away solemn promises and manifestoes; and on these grounds he justified the opposition of the Indian people to the Round Table Conference. We do not see however any good in raking up past mistakes and failures since our present duty is to concentrate on the realities of the hour. Mr. Sarkar regards the breaking of the Salt Act as giving the people an opportunity to express their disapproval of the present system of Government and the iniquities it has perpetrated; but if this opportunity degenerates into an occasion of anarchical violence, surely the inaugurators of civil disobedience cannot be wholly exempted from their share of responsibility. Mr. Sarkar cites the parallel of Ulster's resistance to its inclusion in the Irish Free State as a justification for the present day non-co-operation in India; but we are sure every one would regard it as a dangerous precedent. Although we have no love for the Press Ordinance, we think it is untrue to say, as Mr. Sarkar does, that open expression of legitimate grievances in the press is suppressed by the Ordinance. We would agree, however, with the warning given by him that repression does not pay in the long run and gives only a temporary set back to powerful boycotts and other expressions of national feeling. His suggestions for a final solution of the present deadlock are the granting of India's demand for full freedom, the retracing of all the steps taken on the perilous path of repression, and the giving of the assurances demanded by Indian leaders.

#### A Protest from Indian Merchants.

THE communication addressed by the Indian Merchants' Chamber Bombay to the Government of India with regard to the gravity of the present political situation is symptomatic of the general uneasiness felt by the Indian commercial community with regard to the future of trade, commerce and industry in India. The Chamber cites some criticisms of the old Press Act by the Chief Justices of Madras and Calcutta in order to make the Government realize the dangers inherent in the present Press

Ordinance which not only copies the Act but adds to its rigours and recommends the withdrawal of the Ordinance. Referring to the origin of the present agitation by the Press, the Committee of the Chamber expresses the opinion that without a declaration by the Government that Indians will be masters in their own country Indian opinion will not be conciliated. The Committee is convinced that the present movement is not confined to a fringe of the population but has permeated the masses and recommends the Government to adopt other methods than repression which, in its opinion, can only aggravate disaffection. While admitting the excesses committed by the misguided public, it declares the opinion that a difficult situation is being handled by the Government without adequate appreciation of the consequences. With regard to the appeal made by the Government in their reply to the Chamber's previous telegram for the support of the stable interests in society, the Committee recommends the summoning of a conference of these interests in order to learn from the representatives how the Indian commercial community visualises the present situation. We feel that the Government cannot do better than accept the suggestion since such a conference will at least remove a number of misunderstandings. The Committee apprehends serious consequences to commerce and industry if the Government fail to meet the present situation in a statesmanlike spirit and declare itself strongly opposed to a policy of repression dictated by panic. It would hardly be right policy to ignore the feelings of the bourgeois elements in this country which are certainly interested in the maintenance of law and order.

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#### Prof. Karve's World tour.

It is clear from the account of his tour submitted to the Senate of the Indian Women's University by Prof. D. K. Karve that the University has come to be known all over the world through his lectures and the articles in the press stimulated by them. Prof. Karve addressed several meetings of Indians with the object of rousing interest in them about the Indian Women's University and visited girls' high schools and Colleges with a view to observe their working so as to apply the knowledge gained to Indian educational institutions. At the World Federation of Educational Associations, the Indian delegation decided to hold an Asiatic Conference at Benares in December 1930 and Prof. Karve notes that international goodwill and cooperation were the main theme of discourses in the Federation. Prof. Karve feels that there is a great need of spreading correct information about India and thinks that if eminent Indians go out in large numbers it will largely help in registering the sympathies of foreign nations towards India in her struggle for progress. It is worth noting that even in ordinary schools in Europe and America education in house-keeping with full responsibility of managing a small model apartment is given to all girls. Prof. Karve recommends that more attention should be given in India to Home Economics, which has a special faculty in some American Universities. In many European countries two languages, besides the mother-tongue, are taught to girls and Prof. Karve suggests that one of these additional languages in India should be Hindi. We are glad to note that Prof. Karve helped in dispelling a good deal of misunderstanding about India created by some recent books, and it is pleasing to learn that in spite of being a septegenarian he has, as a result of the hopes created by the tour, decided to carry on his work as a reformer with greater zeal.

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## Articles.

### THE MAHATMA'S TERMS.

ACCORDING to an interview which the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Herald* had with Mahatma Gandhi in Yeravda Jail, Mr. Gandhi is willing to call off civil disobedience and to co-operate with the British Government on the following conditions:—

- (1) The terms of reference of the Round Table Conference to include the framing of a constitution giving India the "substance of independence".
- (2) Satisfaction to be granted to Mr. Gandhi's demands for the repeal of the salt tax, the prohibition of liquor, and a ban on foreign cloth.
- (3) An amnesty for prisoners convicted of political offences to coincide with the end of civil disobedience campaign.
- (4) The remaining seven points raised in Mr. Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy to be left for future discussion.

We have no desire to be unduly critical of the Mahatma or hamper in the least the prospects of negotiation that will bring peace to this sorely stricken land. We heartily welcome this fresh evidence that the Mahatma is willing to co-operate with the Government. We readily recognise that the Mahatma now incarnates the very soul of India, and that without his blessing the Round Table Conference has no chance. It is worthwhile, therefore, going a long way to conciliate the Mahatma.

Of the four conditions that he laid down, the first is undoubtedly the most important. Swaraj must give India the "substance of independence". This has been the common factor in the demands made by all progressive parties in the country, and even Mr. Gandhi will not deny that Dominion Status, as enjoyed by Canada and South Africa, gives that "substance of independence" which he lays stress on. If some Indian publicists preferred the word Dominion Status, it is because they realised full well that it would give India the "substance of independence", because it was a well-understood term in Britain and did not rouse unnecessary antagonism, and because India stood to gain by being a voluntary member of the British Commonwealth.

The third condition laid down by the Mahatma that political prisoners should be released simultaneously with the cessation of civil disobedience will be universally endorsed. We wish we could say the same of his second condition, the repeal of the salt tax, the prohibition of liquor and the ban on foreign cloth. If under the first condition she obtained the "substance of independence" India would be free to introduce these and other equally desirable and necessary reforms in the administration. We cannot help feeling that in this respect the Mahatma has fallen a prey to considerations of prestige.

Nevertheless, we are not without hope that negotiations, once started and handled by proper and competent people, will yet find a way out. It is something that the Mahatma has reduced his eleven points to three, and when he sees a change of heart in the Government, he may be persuaded to stick to the substance and not insist as a precedent condition to the Round Table Conference the subsidiary and minor administrative reforms.

### THE LIBERALS' PLEA.

IT was hoped and anticipated that the All-Parties' Conference under the presidency of Sir A. P. Patro would give precedence to the question of promoting a truce between the Civil resisters and the Government and of exploring a way out of the difficult political situation that now faces the country. That Committee, however, broke up without attempting the task. Nor was it able to achieve any progress in the special problem that it had taken on itself to solve, owing to the abstention of the leaders of the Hindu Maha Sabha. The Conference realised that its size was a handicap and constituted a smaller committee to explore the ways of communal settlement and to report to the Conference.

The intervention of the Patro Conference in respect of the political situation, was rendered superfluous by the statement that the Council of the Liberal Federation published last week. The Council unreservedly condemned the civil disobedience movement. It disapproved of the proposal of the Congress calling upon people not to pay the land tax in the ryotwari provinces and the choukidar tax in some other provinces. We have always condemned and must continue to condemn the exploiting of the ignorant masses for political ends. If Government revenue must be attacked, there is no reason why income tax should not be refused in the first instance. But as the Council pointed out, non-payment of taxes is likely to lead to great hardships without bringing the country nearer Dominion Status.

While thus disapproving of the civil disobedience campaign, the Council was equally strong in its condemnation of the excesses committed by the Government officials in combating the civil resistance movement, and in particular, the heavy and disproportionate sentences imposed on civil resisters on conviction and the declaration of martial law in Sholapur. Government have done well in appointing two High Court judges to investigate into the happening at Peshwar, and they will do well to withdraw martial law in Sholapur at once and institute an independent judicial enquiry. We cannot help regretting that the Madras Government have refused to make a public enquiry into the shooting that took place in Madras in April last, even after the leaders of the Liberal and Justice Parties and others equally responsible and influential, demanded it.

But the most important contribution of the Council was its constructive suggestion for permanent peace. It made it clear that the mere announcement of the date of the Round Table Conference was not enough if the Round Table Conference idea is

to materialise. An atmosphere favourable to it should be created, and for this purpose both belligerents should bend their energies. Civil disobedience should be called off and with it automatically repression. But something more is necessary on the part of the Government. Political prisoners, and in particular, Mahatma Gandhi, must be released and an unequivocal declaration made that the object of the Round Table Conference is the establishment of Dominion Status with necessary safeguards agreed upon for the period of transition.

This advice of the Liberals in India has been reinforced by the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, who, speaking to certain members of Parliament in London, is reported to have advised the release of Mahatma Gandhi and the political prisoners, and the announcement that the purpose of the Round Table Conference was the establishment of Dominion Status.

The Council is responsible for one other suggestion of great immediate importance. And that is that the Viceroy should immediately confer with leaders of Indian opinion with a view to removing the present tension and to arrest the deterioration in the situation. We own to the feeling that there is genuine feeling on the part both of the Government and the Congress to end the quarrel and come to a settlement. But as usual, prestige is barring the way to it. Government evidently feel precluded from making any advance pending the publication of the Simon Report, and the Civil resisters feel precluded from crying a halt to their activities lest they should be open to taunts of defeat. The real obstacle to immediate peace seems to be the Simon Report. Meanwhile, there is danger of the situation getting worse and reconciliation rendered more difficult. A conference between the Viceroy and the leaders of public opinion will very probably result in a truce at once. Now that the Simon Report is reported to have been unanimously signed, it should be possible for Government to publish at once a summary of the main conclusions, and thereby release themselves from their vow of silence. Government would then be free to go forward with their declaration of policy of conciliation and negotiation.

### THE PRESS CONFERENCE.

LAST week there met in Bombay a conference of journalists and owners of printing presses in India to consider the situation created by the promulgation by the Viceroy of the Press Ordinance. Mr. K. Natarajan, the veteran journalist of forty years standing, welcomed the delegates in an interesting speech marked by his usual originality and breadth of view. Transcending the immediate purpose of the Conference, he suggested that the only permanent remedy was conciliation and not repression. Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, the intrepid editor of the *Hindu* of Madras, who, besides being a journalist of the very first rank in the country, is also a close student of the constitution and a legislator of experience and standing, occupied the Presidential Chair and delivered a most stimulating,

sober, yet strong speech. He exposed the weakness in the Viceregal apology for the Press Ordinance. It was not an emergency measure meant to meet an emergency just arisen, for the Viceroy adumbrated reasons which, on his own showing, have been in operation for several years since the repeal of the Press Act in 1922.

Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar deprecated both the policies approved by Mahatma Gandhi, namely, the refusal to pay security when demanded and the continuance of the paper until the press was confiscated or the suspension of the paper on the first demand for security. Combining business acumen with patriotism in nice proportions, he suggested that security, when first demanded, should be paid, provided, of course, the paper could afford to do so, and that the newspaper should continue to maintain its policy undeterred and undeflected by the security. If the security was forfeited, the matter should be taken to the courts and the action of the Government challenged. He was under no illusions that the courts would be able to give relief, but the advantage was that Government would be compelled to specify the passages which offended them and that would enable the public to judge the *bonafides* of the Government. He was, however, opposed to the paying of a second security: he preferred the closing down of the periodical under that circumstance.

He assigned no adequate reason why the second demand for security should be refused and the paper closed down. Consistent with his policy of civil disobedience, Mahatma Gandhi advised the *Nava Jivan* press to defy the Ordinance straight away, refuse to pay security, if demanded, and continue the paper with just the same standard of right and wrong that it had all along adopted. Mrs. Besant followed the constitutional method of paying for the second time the security demanded of her and fighting her case in the Courts, and ultimately she was interned. It is certainly more patriotic and high-spirited for a paper, particularly a popular paper, to keep up the fight to the last ditch, paying security as often as it is demanded, finances permitting, until it is physically gagged. But the proposal that the second demand for security should not be met is somewhat difficult to defend, except purely on economic grounds.

But the most surprising proposal was the one that all nationalist papers should close down until the Press Ordinance was repealed. Of this proposal Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar said in his Presidential Address; "I do not think we should play into the hands of the Government by ceasing publications the moment the Government start to attack us. If newspapers should cease publication immediately on demand for security and if other Nationalist newspapers who are in sympathy with it should also cease publication at the first touch, it would be an act of surrender which would enable the Government to claim not only that the charges of objectionable writing of the newspapers concerned have been justified but also that the steps taken by them to prevent them have proved effective." Thanks to the good sense of the majority of the Conference, this disastrous and suicidal proposal was heavily defeat-

There would have, therefore, been no occasion to refer to it here but for two circumstances. At the Conference itself this amazing proposal was supported by some of the most "advanced" extreme left-wing journalists. It is a melancholy feature of Indian politics that some of the very journalists who, day in and day out, inspired and instigated other people to acts of civil disobedience, who preached the boycott of foreign cloth without a thought for the compensation legitimately due to those Indian tradesmen, who will be financially ruined by the success of the boycott, and who have urged other people to refuse to pay taxes, and to go to jail, nay, to give up all, even life itself, for the liberation of the Motherland, found excellent and equally patriotic reasons why they should save their own money and printing presses!

The other reason for referring to this subject here is the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress at its last meeting at Allahabad. The resolution solemnly asked all nationalist papers to close down. Journals who wish to be loyal both to the Congress and the Press Conference are in a difficult position. Just a few seem to have followed the lead of the Congress but the large majority of nationalist papers, even those who at first suspended publication, have ignored the Congress resolution.

It is an admitted fact that since the passing of the Press Ordinance several papers have considerably toned down their writings. It is even sought to justify this retreat on the plea that honest and independent journalism is impossible under the Ordinance. In as much as this confession is a humiliation to the Indian Press and a vindication of the Government's Press Ordinance, we regret it intensely. The Press Ordinance can, but, break but it cannot, ought not, to bend independent journalism. No journal worth its salt will allow itself to be cowed down or deflected from its policy by bureaucratic wrath or for purely material considerations. We recollect that Mrs. Besant wrote more vigorously and uncompromisingly after the demand for security, perhaps because she had an additional grievance against the Government. Notwithstanding the chastening effect of the Press Ordinance on the circulation of a section of the Press, it is impossible to reconcile ourselves to the Ordinance. As the Council of the Liberal Federation stated, Government would have done better if they had issued a warning to the editors, and if the warning went unheeded, proceeded against them under the ordinary law of the land. The ample resources of the ordinary law have not been exhausted and it is criminal folly on the part of the Government to invent the Press Ordinance. The circumstances in which the Ordinance was passed, the use rather the misuse, already made of it by certain provincial governments, and the almost unlimited potentialities for oppression in the hands of district authorities, all these considerations render the continuance of the Ordinance a greater danger than its repeal. More than all, the psychological aspect of the matter should not be overlooked. As Rabindranath

Tagore is reported to have said in England, the snatching away of the Gandhi cap may be attended with little or no physical injury, but the mental injury caused thereby, the humiliation that will rankle long in the breast of the victim and the resentment engendered in a wider circle, is immeasurably greater and more dangerous. When the offending section of the Indian Press could be effectively controlled by the processes of the ordinary law, the promulgation of the Ordinance is an act of supreme unwisdom.

CAN THE SITUATION BE EASED ? I

THE political situation in India is now so critical that we might say it has few precedents in the annals of British Indian History. It has attracted an amount of attention in England, on the continent of Europe, in America and in the British self-governing dominions.

The Indian public are anxious for an early settlement, honourable to the country. The only obstacle is the fear that no honourable terms will be offered by Government, and the belief is wide-spread that John Bull will not give in an inch until he is compelled to do so. The conduct of the British in the past towards subject races—in Ireland and elsewhere where the people were their kith and kin—fully justifies this belief. If the British could be so hard towards their own flesh and blood, how much harder will they be towards a dark Indian race, emasculated by generations of subjection, and when the prize in their hands is so rich. Such are the arguments of the vast majority. And can anyone give an adequate answer to such arguments?

Lord Irwin has shown on many occasions that he is actuated by a sincere desire for a peaceful solution. He has recently said several times that he will use all his powers to maintain Law and Order; and he has said in the same breath that he will not be diverted from his policy of advancing India's political aspirations on constitutional lines. Of the former, he has given ample proofs by arrests and ordinances, but of the latter there has been no proof beyond mere repetition of words. Words have now lost their value, even with the softest section of Indian politicians.

The masses are hungry, ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-employed. The agriculturist has lost heavily in the price of his products. The paddy cultivator who used to get Rs. 8 or Rs. 10 for years together finds that his produce does not fetch him more than Rs. 6 now. Likewise the value of every other agricultural commodity. His margin, already low, is dwindled down to a dangerous level. He sends his sons to the metropolis for service, but they return finding that the metropolis is full of unemployed. He is told that his troubles are due to the British Raj. And who can blame him if he enthusiastically agrees to break the Law? And verily, who is responsible for the distress of the agriculturist? Is it not chiefly the Rette Bill passed through the Assembly in the teeth of the opposition from the whole of the country? Or can we blame the agriculturist of

1/8th of the value of his produce. It is the marginal amounts that really matter, and by reducing the value of his produce by 1/8th you have really killed him.

And what about the manufacturer? He has lost doubly; first, from the reduced purchasing power of the agriculturist, and secondly, from the bounty which the appreciated rupee gave to imported goods, with which he is unable to compete. Can the Government point out anyone who has not been a sufferer from the consequences of the appreciation of the rupee?

In these circumstances, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the currency policy of Government has more than any other cause been responsible for the wide-spread unrest in the country. In spite of the most heroic manipulations, Government have been unable to keep up the exchange even a point or two above the lower gold point. Should the coming monsoon be a failure to any extent, Government will have to decide to drop the exchange to 16d. There is no doubt that Government is convinced of the folly of 18d. rupee. The only thing that stands in their way is prestige. How long is the country going to suffer to keep up "prestige" based on such hollow reasoning?

If the Government resolve to drop the exchange to 16d. they will have removed the biggest cause of the present unrest. It will at once improve the lot of the agriculturist and the manufacturer and all the others and create a wider circle of vested interests. *Vested interests are always the best supporters of stable Government.* The larger the number of people who have a stake, the larger is the support to the Government. We do not see how Government could rally any supporters to their side in any other way. The distribution of honours and jobs has its limits. The number of sycophants who always wish to bask in the smiles of Government, are perhaps still more limited in number. Who else can Government have on their side? None but the vested interests. Unless their numbers are increased, the tide of unrest is bound to go ahead and Government will soon find they can only rule with the bayonet and the machine gun.

"VERITY"

#### INDIA IN 1928-29.

SO far as the presentation of facts is concerned the annual statement by the Director of Information for the year 1928-29 is up to the standard set by previous ones; but we fail to detect any improvement towards a sympathetic understanding of the aspirations of the people and an appreciation of the point of view of parties in opposition to the Government. Mr. Coatman begins as usual with Hindu-Muslim relations, a theme which seems to fascinate him and he thinks that these have been more friendly during the year owing to the perception by the better elements on both sides of the injury inflicted upon public life by savage outbreaks of communal hatred and also owing to the legislation passed during the year 1927

penalising the instigation of inter-communal hostility by the press. The year had a sad record so far as industrial disturbances were concerned; the total number of strikes was 203 and of working days lost was 316 lakhs, a number greater than the number of days lost in the five preceding years taken together. The chapter 'Politics during the year' affords a fairly impartial narrative of political events in India but is colourless so far as judgment on the motives and actions is concerned. The Nehru Report is admitted to represent a constructive effort to build a political platform broad enough to accommodate varied interests in India, and it is noticed that the National Liberal Federation has accorded general support to it and to the resolutions of the All-Parties Conference. In spite of this volumes are said about the opposition to the Nehru Report and there is no attempt made to give a final judgment. Perhaps the office of the Director of Information is supposed simply to provide information! One of the most notable events of the year was the attempted unification of the two rival sections of Muslims by their holding a joint All-India Muslim League; and although this failed owing to the refusal of the Shafi wing to join the open meeting, the breach was becoming narrower. From the proceedings of the Liberal Federation Mr. Coatman has drawn the conclusion that Indian Liberals were going to refuse in 1930, as they refused in 1920, to be drawn into the dangerous ways of non-cooperation and has emphasized that their views are shared by other eminent Indian politicians who do not belong to the left wing of Indian politics. Owing to the unceremonious rejection of the Nehru Report by the Muslims the Hindu Mahasabha also refused to consider it and almost went back to its original position of opposition to the preferential treatment of any community.

Mr. Coatman thinks that India is prospering because year by year her exports and imports have steadily climbed without a pause so that after the War she attained the fifth place among the trading countries of the world. In the same breath he admits that India exports raw materials and food-stuffs and imports manufactured goods, and one can only marvel at the curious criterion he applies for determining prosperity. Mr. Coatman's views on the drink problem are strictly of the orthodox Government type and he thinks that except in big cities the consumption of liquors does not provide a serious problem in India. After a good deal of cynical philosophising about total prohibition he admits that the movement towards total prohibition is very largely inspired by genuine reforming zeal. His statement however that the general trend of every governing authority in India is to reduce to a minimum the consumption of alcoholic liquors can only be accepted with large reservations. Finally he clinches by saying that there is reason to believe that there are limits to the policy of checking consumption by raising the price on account of the encouragement afforded to illicit liquor. With such an apology for the excise policy presented to Parliament the outlook for prohibition can only be regarded as dismal.

We think it is quite unnecessary to include in the statement a verbatim reproduction of the Finance Member's Budget speech; members of Parliament can certainly get access to this speech and it would be more appropriate to comment on the views on the Budget expressed by non-official members of the Central legislature. Mr. Coatman believes that in spite of financial stringency, serious economic dislocation and heavy expenditure, the country as a whole has been gradually steered into an enviable state of prosperity and practically all the provinces have passed through their worst financial crises. We do not think we can share this optimistic view. It is gratifying to note that Mr. Coatman gives a sympathetic account of the grievances of Indians overseas; he frankly says that it would be idle to deny that there are some parts of the Empire where the treatment of Indians is not consistent with the position of India in the Empire or with their own status as British subjects. Among the grievances of Indian settlers in other parts of the Empire are included the denial of their right to hold land and to enjoy trading facilities and the imposition of compulsory segregation; so far as these are concerned there has been no substantial relief to Indians in Kenya and South Africa in spite of the partial success of the Cape Town Agreement.

It is encouraging to see that municipalities and other local bodies are taking an increasing share in improving public health by providing medical relief and undertaking schemes of water supply; the gap between demand and supply of medical facilities, though still large, is continually narrowing. Progress in education is still hampered by the chronic poverty of the masses and their hereditary prejudice to educational innovations but the statement admits that Ministers are displaying more and more courage, enthusiasm and initiative in advancing primary and compulsory education. One satisfactory feature of educational reports is the satisfactory increase in the number of depressed class pupils and the gradual breaking down of caste prejudice all over India. It is clear from the account of the cooperative movement in the various provinces that it is expanding everywhere and its growth has been a sound and healthy one, a good deal of constructive work having been carried out by the societies. The statement recognizes the importance of the part played by cottage industries in rural economy; Bihar has shown the greatest progress in hand-weaving, producing nearly 5 crores of rupees worth of cloth. In Madras the State Aid to Industries Act has been amended to extend its benefits to small scale industries and cottage industries and the U. P. Government gives demonstrations in weaving, leather working, dyeing and printing in addition to maintaining 112 institutions imparting technical training. Bengal tops the list maintaining 127 technical and industrial schools, besides managing an Industrial Research Laboratory. All this is good augury for the industrial future of the country. The general account given of transferred departments amply justifies the transfer of important subjects to ministers responsible to the legislature.

V. N. G.

## Reviews.

### DOMINION STATUS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW.

THE PRESENT JURIDICAL STATUS OF THE BRITISH DOMINIONS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW. By P. J. NOEL BAKER. (Longmans.) 1929. 23 cm. 421p. 21/-

THIS is a book of topical interest especially for India where the question of Dominion Status *versus* Independence is a live question and is being fought out even now on a field of battle. To the out and out Independence theorists this book may not make any appeal, for to them not books but action would seem to be the instrument of discussion. But even to them it may have an academic appeal, if only because it shows how both in the field of constitutional and of international law the British Dominions by means of gradual and sure-footed movements have acquired a status not much inferior to that of independence. But to the constitutionalist, whether in the study or in action, the book will furnish the knowledge that helps and inspires with hope and confidence. In the historical chapter (ch. III) Noel Baker traces the steps by which Canada and the other Dominions, standing at the point at which India would be if provincial autonomy and responsible government at the centre outside national defence and foreign affairs were granted, have been able to obtain the position they occupy at present of equal partners with Great Britain of the British Commonwealth. In the subsequent chapters he describes the position of the Dominions in the League of Nations and in International Law and shows the large powers they have acquired of deciding on their foreign policy, of organising their foreign relations even to the extent of making their own treaties and having their own diplomatic representatives and of refusing to be bound by any treaties of Great Britain to which they had not assented. But that, although the Dominions have a "distinct international personality", they are not separate international persons is shown in a chapter called "The Constitutional Unity of the British Commonwealth", in which the legal and conventional ties that bind the several governments of the Dominions to the government of Great Britain are explained. A common crown, a common allegiance, the universal validity of the royal prerogative, exercised through a Governor General who more and more in the exercise of his executive functions behaves like the King in England, the jurisdiction of the Privy Council, the unity in war of all the parts of the Commonwealth—these go to show that the constitutional unity and personality of the Commonwealth is still a juridical fact. In a final chapter on "Some Unsolved Problems", Mr. Baker deals with a number of interesting and rather at present academic questions. But the most academic question of all, approaching the vanishing point of unreality, is whether the Dominions have a right to secede from the British Commonwealth. Surely the "right to secede" cannot be a question of constitutional law. It belongs more to the sphere of Natural Law, if such a Law there be. When a member of a State has come to the point of thinking of secession, it has ceased to have a right to belong to that State. That "the right to secede" is not a question of constitutional law was proved once for all and for ever when the right to secede of the Southern States of the U. S. A. was submitted to the decision of war and not to the Supreme Court.

M. RUTHNASWAMY.

## AUROBINDO.

## LIFE WORK OF SRI AUROBINDO. By JOTISH

CHANDRA CHOSE. (Atmashakti Library, Calcutta) 1929. 20 cm. Rs. 2/11.

THIS attractively got-up book is written by an ardent devotee of Sri Aurobindo as an offering at the feet of the Master on his fifty-fifth birth-day. It is, therefore, marked by the merits as well as the defects of such purely subjective works. The author's estimate of Sri Aurobindo's life-work is indicated at the outset. In the Introduction we are told that the man—here reference being evidently to Aurobindo—that will come out of his seclusion some-day will not be our man in the narrow sense of the term devoting his life to the fulfilment of our immediate needs of life; the petty gains of a circumscribed outlook, but a man whose only claim to life would be the fulfilment of his God-ordained mission on earth—to bring down a purer atmosphere of truth on earth, from which all, irrespective of caste, colour and creed, who may be spiritually fit to receive the new light will derive the supreme benefit. The old Aurobindo in the new namesake of him is dead, and today we sing not a song of brotherly congratulation, an epiphany glorifying the life-passage of the Divine *Purusha* in his body, whom we see passing through a new cycle of existence to fulfil his Divine *Ila* on Earth. This extract will suffice to show to the reader the sort of hero-worship to be found in the volume.

The book consists of eight chapters and an appendix giving Desabandhu Das's address in defence of Aurobindo in the Alipore conspiracy case. The first five chapters deal with Aurobindo's early training, the forces that helped to mould his uniquely rich and versatile mind, his life in Baroda as vice-principal of the Gaekwar's College, his initiation into yoga by Lila, a Mahratta Brahmin, his advent to Bengal and assumption of the reins of leadership there and the events that led up to his trial and subsequent retirement to South India. Towards the end of the fifth chapter the author tries to clear up the mystery surrounding Sri Aurobindo's sudden retirement. He says that Aurobindo did not approve the dangerous activities of the violent revolutionaries of Bengal and desired that the Nationalist Party, of which he was the leader, should keep aloof from such violence, leaving the fight to be conducted between the Government on the one hand and the revolutionaries on the other. At the same time, Aurobindo did not want his party to sit idle. So he advised his men to prepare themselves for future work by taking to Yogic Sadhana as a sort of individual and national self-discipline. Indian philosophy and literature were also to be studied to explore the foundations of the spiritual and cultural synthesis on which Indian Society and humanity as a whole were to be rebuilt for future progress and evolution.

After the above explanation, the object of Sri Aurobindo's life South India, his pursuit of Yogic Sadhana at Pondicherry, the publication for some-time of the purely philosophical and cultural organ, *Arya*, becomes quite clear. The author expounds the message of the *Arya* and some aspects of Aurobindo's synthetic philosophy and *Sadhana* in the seventh chapter. It will be going beyond the bounds of a brief review to attempt to analyse here the teachings of Aurobindo and their bearings on Indian cultural renaissance and human evolution. The curious should go in for a copy of the book, which, in spite of its many defects of hero-worship, intrusive subjectivism and a cumbrous style, and unpardonable neglect of proof correction, amply repays perusal. But in our humble view, a more clarified, less effusive and scientifically well-arranged pre-

sentation of Aurobindo's teachings and life-work is required to acquaint the world with the deep mysteries and profound principles of a great synthetic gospel, which is still in the embryo, of a Master-mind not yet completely emerged out of the self-imposed ordeal of *Tapasya* and silence.

M. R. RAMASWAMY.

## DEMOCRACY.

## THE ESSENTIALS OF DEMOCRACY. (William J. Cooper Foundation Lectures). By A. D.

LINDSAY. (Oxford University Press). 1929. 20cm, 82p. 3/6.

THE Master of Balliol College, Oxford, has rendered a great service to publicists and students in the five lectures given under the William J. Cooper Foundation at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. The lectures are devoted to the examination of the essentials of democracy and in the compass of a very small volume abundant material is provided for extended discussions. The lecturer brings to bear upon the exposition extreme candour, profound thought and deep erudition. The attempt is a very successful endeavour to lift politics out of the region of sordid considerations to the high level of a philosophical approach to the imminent demands of an age which seeks to rescue democracy from temporary disrepute.

The present disillusionment about democracy is widespread and in certain quarters deep. Prof. Hearnshaw of Kings College London, not long ago, threw out a challenge in a book called *Democracy at the Cross Roads*. This dissatisfaction arises from two facts. All the world over people expected the millenium to arrive when the mass had its say. The Great War added to the conflict and the confusion. Dr. Lindsay truly suggests that the attitude towards democracy is due to the fact that "our democratic governments are not democratic enough." The non-democratic governments proved unequal to the new situations created by the war. And the new democracy in Germany, the hopeful, alert democracies in the smaller states like Czechoslovakia and Estonia, have proved the truth of the successful operation of democratic principles. There is something in real democracy which, when experienced, is such a thoroughly satisfactory form of government that men are always trying to extend it and to give it more to do.

As a fairly satisfactory form of government democracy suffers in larger groups. In the Christian local congregations where a small group of people can meet face to face it is found useful to adopt that form of government. The author has a very illuminating illustration drawn from what is known as the Clarke papers. It is the record of a famous debate held in 1647 on the subject of manhood suffrage, the disputants being the representatives of the army known as the Levellers and Ireton, Cromwell, on the opposite side who argued for voting to be based on property. Colonel Rainboro for the army said, "Really, I think the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the richest he." Commenting on this authentic note of democracy, the Master of Balliol says, "the poorest has his own life to live, not to be managed or drilled or used by other people. His life is his and he has to live it. None can divest him of that responsibility. However different men may be in wealth or ability or learning, whether clever or stupid, good or bad, living their life is their concern and their responsibility."

Arising out of this very elementary, nevertheless, principle are certain difficulties. If every man is to assert his rights then full consent and govern-



ment becomes impossible.' In the discussion, Ireton, the exponent of the civil government, while demolishing the arguments of Col. Rainboro, shows a miserable lack of understanding of the spirit behind the demand for equality. Two elements emerge out of the discussion between the Levellers and Ireton—a mystical conviction of the equality of man which has behind it a living power and fervour, but, if translated literally into practical machinery, is impossibilist and anarchic and the compromising spirit of the practical man who knows the necessities of government and tries by appeal to common sense and efficiency to get some sense into the idealist."

Unlike Ireton, Cromwell, who acknowledges the need for consulting the individual conscience, shows remarkable understanding and sympathy when he maintains that it is not the supremacy of the individual will but the readiness to discuss everyman's point of view which makes true democracy both desirable and effective. Then it is that we see the emergence of the group mind. And the machinery for the evolution of a common mind and a common life is thus made available.

Cromwell, who had the model of the Christian congregation before him, urges the two methods of democratic government—by consent and by discussion. In the end he points out the possibility of government by discussion, now made famous by the formula of the Round Table Conference.

We notice the decline of the effectiveness of representative assemblies, for in no sense is it possible to ascertain the opinion of all the governed. Means of communication have improved and the effects of broadcasting are observable everywhere. But the reality of the individual vote is known to those who care to see and understand. Further, if we aim at unanimity tyranny is sure to follow. Under Fascism and Bolshevism means are employed to secure mass consent and suppress ruthlessly those who dare to dissent. Dr. Lindsay admits that 'in a democratic government we need compulsion in order to carry out the purpose of the state.' He also makes plain that 'it introduces new dangers against which precautions have to be taken; but those precautions are all to ensure that force is the servant and not the master of politics.'

While admitting that the purpose of the state needs force behind it, we should remember the extent to which such force is likely to be used indiscriminately. To correct the possible misunderstanding of the place of force, the author reminds his readers that 'democracy implies faith, but a reasoned faith'. That sentiment, nay conviction, if explored, reveals two distinct elements germane to the discussion of the subject of democracy. When a nation with a different cultural background seeks to govern another people the problem becomes complicated. Again and again in the Indian situation the best of foreign administrators have manifested benevolence without attempting to get under the skin of the nationals of the country. How can the 'give and take of discussion' be possible in an atmosphere of mutual distrust having its roots in racial antipathy and cultural differences? 'The real process of collective thinking' described by Dr. Lindsay will have neither the quality of reality or the continuity of process. As for 'collective thinking,' we know from experience that there are serious limitations making the much talked of Round Table Conference a very doubtful method of solving problems which have their roots deep down in human nature.

Discussion is good and necessary. But 'the consent of the governed,' as General Smuts says in his lecture at Cambridge 'is the only secure and lasting

basis of government and liberty is the condition of consent.'

H. C. BALASUNDARUM.

## HOUSING IN AMERICA

**HOUSING PROBLEMS IN AMERICA. PROCEEDINGS OF THE 10TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HOUSING, PHILADELPHIA, 28TH TO 30TH, JAN. 1929. (National Housing Association, New York) 1929. 25 cm. 355p. \$ 3.00.**

THIS book contains an account of the various technical papers read before the 10th National Conference on Housing, held in Philadelphia in January 1929. The subjects chosen are very interesting and cover—

(a) Housing problems, such as steel frame houses, the scientific kitchen, home equipped for children, building and loan associations, slum clearance; etc.

(b) Town and City planning, such as Hexagonal planning, the Need of a Master plan, Replanning great cities, Regional planning etc. When discussing the subject of Housing the first paper deals with mass production and suggests that by standardising 75% of the essential parts of a small house and varying the remaining 25%, the architect can have variety combined with cheapness.

In India we have not reached the stage of mass production so far.

In the paper on scientific kitchen the author remarks that, instead of trying to educate the housewife, we should devote our first efforts to educate the architect and the builder; for the first essential of efficient production is not efficient management but an efficient physical plant.

In the paper on Homes equipped for children the author says the home is the training centre during the most impressionable years of the children's life. A healthy home contributes to cheerfulness and to efficient metabolism and glowing health.

Government aid in the shape of loans to limited-dividend Housing companies, say at 5% or a negative subsidy in the shape of exemption from taxes for a number of years, would greatly assist better housing of the middle classes.

The essentials are—

- (1) A low interest rate,
- (2) A long period for repayment,
- (3) A minimum requirement for cash down,
- (4) Safety from exploitation.

In the case of slum clearance, people's standards and knowledge of what is insanitary vary greatly. But when a majority of houses are overcrowded and in a far advance stage of disrepair the area has to be improved as a whole. Speaking in medical terms, slum is like a civic cancer which must be cut out by the surgeon's knife. Before the slums are cleared proper arrangements must be made for rehousing the people. A slum clearance programme involves, a definite policy, express legal power to proceed, a special "Authority" to do the job, fair basis of compensation, a proper use for the cleared area fitting with the master plan, and a sharing of the cost that will not make such schemes prohibitive.

When dealing with Town and City planning one of the papers lays great emphasis on what is known as the Hexagonal planning and housing which provides swifter and safer traffic, wider accessibility to house, etc. Another paper deals with need of a master plan to guide city growth. Such a plan is quite essential for the proper development of a town. In the paper entitled "Replanning

great cities" the author states "If city planning can be called the exercise of foresight, it seems to me that replanning should be called the exercise of "Hind-sight". The difference between foresight and hind-sight is the difference between prevention and cure. High buildings increase traffic and the number of people to be transported into that vicinity. There is also direct relationship between recreation facilities of a city and the amount of crime in the city.

In conclusion the book shows how thoroughly the American people deal with problems, affecting their life, health and prosperity.

"BY ONE INTERESTED."

### SHORT NOTICES.

**THE PANDYAN KINGDOM.** By K. A. NILAKANTA SASTRI. (Luzac, London.) 1929. 22cm. 277p. 6/-

THIS monograph is certainly one of the best publications in earlier Indian History in recent years. It is characterised by the balance, reserve and critical judgment of a true historian, and one feels hopeful about the future of Indian scholarship after going through the book, notwithstanding the flooding of the market with productions of the "patriotic school" of Indologists and the popular craze for the consumption of 'ancient glory' stuff. The author's treatment of the problem of the Sangam age is very lucid; and the chapters on social life and administration of the Pandya Kingdom interesting and instructive; fuller details on this subject would have interested many readers. The critical study of epigraphic materials for Social History (including Economic and Administrative) of different periods and regions is, indeed, a task that has as yet been very meagrely attempted by scholars. The notes and Index are quite helpful. We wish that the author will in the near future bring out similar balanced and critical monographs on the Chera, Chola and Ceylonese kingdoms (a fairly good account of the Pallavas having already been published by the Madras University last year).

S. C. SARKAR.

**PAPER BOATS.** By K. S. VENKATARAMANI. 3rd Edn. (The Author, Svetaranya Ashrama, Madras) 1930. 19cm. 101p. Re. 1.

MR. VENKATARAMANI has once again set his flimsy and delicate "paper boats" floating into the milky way of literature with dream stuff to serve for their cargo. For all their attraction, his human wares fall short of humanity and are just glorified mummies as out of place in the world as ever. Intermixed in their make-up, there is a sardonic humour which cuts both ways. The Indian beggar of Mr. Venkataramani's imagination, whether religious or otherwise, is less loathsome and more idealised. The Pariah Arunchalam for all his untouchability which Mr. Venkataramani places lightly on him, is as happy as a brahmin. "Saraswati is now a maiden of twelve tropic summers ... Within, her nature feels the rush and swell of change—and leaps into tongues of flame over the ripening features". It is a matter for regret that for the sake of shallow literary effect, Mr. Venkataramani raises fanciful visions and in this case endows a child just out of its cradle with mature charms. Her victimisation on the block of early marriage has for him all the grandeur of an "Idyll". Mr. Venkataramani will do well to put new life and the anguish of painful incongruities of Indian existence into his artistic pen. The less he glorifies fossils and fungi, the better for his pictures.

K. VENUGOPAL RAO.

## Miscellaneous.

### INTERVIEW WITH MAHATMA GANDHI.

MR. GEORGE SLOCOMBE, Special Correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, London, the official organ of the Labour Party, has published the following statement after two interviews with Mr. Gandhi at the Yeravda Central Jail on the 15th and the 20th of May 1930:—

Mr. Gandhi's message to British Government and the world is that he is willing to negotiate and prepared to reduce his eleven points to four, leaving others for future discussions. He is nearly prepared to negotiate on a basis of Dominion Status that shall contain the substance of independence.

The following are the four principal demands of Mr. Gandhi:

(1) The terms of reference to the Round Table Conference shall include the framing of a constitution for India giving India the "substance of independence." (2) Satisfaction to be granted to Mr. Gandhi's demands for repeal of the Salt Tax, Prohibition of liquor and a ban on foreign cloth. (3) Amnesty to prisoners convicted of political offences to coincide with the end of the civil disobedience campaign. (4) The remaining seven points raised in Mr. Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy to be reserved for future discussion.

Mr. Slocombe believes that Mr. Gandhi only needs to be convinced of the sincerity of the intentions of the British Government to offer his co-operation. The Indian Government will court disaster if it persists in its tragic error of regarding Mr. Gandhi and the Congress as a negligible political force in India. Many celebrated Indians, including the Moderates, have confessed to Mr. Slocombe during the past week that Mr. Gandhi alone possesses the confidence of the masses, and that the communal differences on which Government places so much mistaken emphasis are capable of solution if Government can reach an agreement with Mr. Gandhi. His co-operation alone can make the Round Table Conference a reality and if Government is prepared to make an honourable peace with Mr. Gandhi, negotiations are still possible. After his two sittings with Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Slocombe is convinced that conciliation will be met with conciliation, and that violence on either side will never compel the surrender of the other, and incalculable disaster may yet be avoided by a frank recognition that the imprisoned Mahatma incarnates the very soul of India.

### LIBERALS' STATEMENT

THE Council of the National Liberal Federation of India considers it its duty to place on record its view of the situation in India as it has developed during the last two months. It deprecates and deplores that the movement of mass Civil Disobedience should have been started at this juncture and, while it recognises that the leaders of the movement have pledged themselves to non-violence it regrets to note that in fact it has created an atmosphere

in which the unruly elements of the population in some places have taken advantage of the situation and committed serious acts of violence. The movement has further accentuated the cleavage between different sections of the community and has evoked in a marked degree feelings hostile to a friendly settlement of the outstanding political issues. All this had led to strong action on the part of the authorities in certain places which has further inflamed public feeling.

The Council has further heard with grave apprehension of the proposal to ask people not to pay taxes as it likely to lead to serious hardships to persons concerned and to disorders, without in any way bringing the country nearer to the attainment of Dominion Status.

While the Council recognises the deplorable effects of civil disobedience, it equally feels it its duty to point out that the response which the civil disobedience movement has evoked is mainly due to economic and political discontent prevailing in the country due to the present irresponsible system of administration.

This Council also considers it necessary to point out that in the Government's anxiety to maintain law and order excessive force appears to have been used at certain places resulting in very serious loss of life or physical injury, that some public men have been subjected to humiliating treatment, and that the sentences of imprisonment passed in many instances have been unduly harsh, severe and unequal. The Council deplores and condemns the outrages committed at Sholapur but it is not satisfied that the civil authority had so completely broken down there that the situation could not be handled excepted by the introduction of martial law. The Council is of the opinion that continued supersession of civil authority is not calculated to ease the situation and it, therefore, urges that martial law administration should put an end to.

The Council trusts that there will be a thorough and independent enquiry into the events which have happened at Sholapur, Peshawar and other places.

The Council welcomes and strongly supports all measures for stimulating greater production and use of Swadeshi goods. It cannot, however, support any retaliatory measures carried into effect by picketing shops. Experience has shown that in spite of all good intentions, picketing in an atmosphere of tense excitement, either of liquor shops or cloth shops has generally led to regrettable conflicts.

The Council recognises that a certain section of the press has recently indulged in inflammatory language but feels that, instead of passing a drastic Ordinance, Government should have warned the Press against such writings as seemed to it to be beyond the legitimate functions of the Press, and that if such warning went unheeded, Government should have effectively set in motion the ordinary law of the land against offending newspapers. In the circumstances, and having regard to the manner in which the Ordinance has been worked in certain places and, in particular, in view of the use which has been made of it in dealing with matter which was published before the promulgation of the Ordinance, the Council urges that the Ordinance should be recalled.

In the interests of preventing the mischief which results from ill-founded rumours, the Council feels that correct news should be supplied without unnecessary delay and it calls attention to and deprecates the extent to which censorship is being exercised on the dissemination of correct news and on private telegrams.

While the Council continues to be of opinion that the Round Table plan suggested by His Majes-

ty's Government and His Excellency the Viceroy should be adhered to, it feels that in order to ensure its success it is not enough to announce the date of the meeting of the Conference but that Government should lose no time in publishing the terms of reference, making it plain that the object with which the Conference is being summoned is the establishment of a Dominion Status Constitution, subject to such necessary safeguards for the period of transition as may be agreed upon.

To supplement this policy and in the interests of the country as a whole the Council would strongly urge upon the leaders of the civil disobedience movement to restore normal conditions by the cessation of those activities which are a challenge to law and Government. And similarly, it would urge on the Government that they shall simultaneously take every step to create confidence among the people and an atmosphere favourable to the success of the Round Table Conference by releasing those persons who are undergoing imprisonment or internment for political offences and who were not otherwise found guilty of any acts of violence.

In furtherance of this proposal, the Council urges the expediency of His Excellency the Viceroy conferring with the leaders of Indian opinion for the purpose of removing the present tension and facilitating the success of the Round Table Conference.

#### H. N. KUNZRU'S RESIGNATION.

THE following letter of resignation has been sent by Pandit Hirdaynath Kunzru, M.L.A., to His Excellency Lord Irwir, Governor-General of India, Simla:—

May it please your Excellency.

The events of the last few weeks have made me consider carefully my position as a member of the Legislative Assembly.

It must be admitted that the situation in the country is far from being ordinary. Nevertheless I find myself compelled to differ strongly from the policy adopted by Government in dealing with it. A body like the Council of the Western India National Liberal Association cannot be accused of being hostile or indifferent to the maintenance of law and order, but they have thought it their duty to raise their voice against the methods by which Government have tried to assert their authority. They have strongly disapproved of the severe sentences passed on some civil resisters at various places and urged a searching enquiry by an independent tribunal into allegations of violence by the police. The conduct of the police in several places, for instance in Patna and Madras, has roused deep resentment throughout the country. The brutalities of which the police was guilty at Patna have been condemned by well-known public men of that city who do not belong to the Congress camp. Nearer home, Muttra, which is a part of my constituency, recently witnessed unoffending young boys being mercilessly beaten by the police for asking for the return of their flag which was snatched away from them by one of the district officials. Benares, too, felt the full weight of police high-handedness a few days ago.

The promulgation of the Press Ordinance is another official act to which strong exception must

be taken. In view of the history of the Press Act of 1910 it is not too much to say that the Ordinance which confers wider powers on the executive than the Press Act which was repealed in 1922 places the entire press at the mercy of the executive. It has justifiably excited the gravest apprehensions and I am unable to reconcile myself to the terms of the measure or to acquiesce in the policy that underlies it. During the few days that it has been in operation it has further alienated the public from Government without making the position of Government in any way easier.

Other examples can be given to show how Government are acting in utter disregard of public opinion, but it is unnecessary to multiply instances. The facts that are mentioned above are a sufficient indication of the attitude of Government. On the other hand, the Assembly, in the condition to which it has been reduced, is powerless to resist encroachments on popular liberties or to exert strong pressure on Government. Nationalist opinion can neither assert nor make its influence felt. Accordingly, I beg to tender herewith my resignation of the membership of the Legislative Assembly.

## Correspondence.

### ETHICS OF LAW-BREAKING.

TO THE EDITOR, THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

-Sir, It seems necessary to differ from the political philosophy of Dr. Naresh C. Sen-Gupta as propounded in his article entitled "The Ethics of Law-Breaking" appearing in your esteemed journal on the 8th May last. Drawing inspiration from Green, as he has done, he has gone the length of asserting that a law which is considered to be against the good of society renders the people not only ethically free to disobey it but imposes on them a moral obligation to break it. Incidentally Dr. Sen-Gupta almost allowed the contention that authority can be resisted for promulgating laws which do not represent the organised will of the community. Still he maintains that "with regard to a particular law no other consideration exists except whether the law is a good law or a bad law." Surely, Dr. Sen Gupta knows that, philosophically speaking, people obey the State by conforming to its laws only because they realise that by thus obeying, the common good of the society can be best promoted. A particular law is obeyed not because it is a good law but because its obedience will bring greater good to the community than its disobedience. No philosopher will justify your breaking a law simply because it is bad, if by so breaking, you bring greater ills to the society (by disruption) than good. That is the test so long laid down by the philosophers in regard to the limits of obedience. Judged from that standpoint, if the breaking of a particular law is not only ethically justified but is made incumbent on the people as their duty when the provisions of the law are considered to be inimical to the best interests of the society, why, it can be pertinently asked, cannot Dr. Sen-Gupta find a philosophical justification for those who are out to paralyse the government, whose very

existence is supposed to be injurious to the best interests of the community, by disobeying any or all of its laws—laws which, it can hardly be denied, are the pillars on which the modern States take their stand? Looked at from this point of view, it is clear that the difference between the principle underlying the breaking of any law—good, bad or indifferent—of an intolerable government and the principle of disobeying a particular law (unpopular and bad) is that between tweedledum and tweedledee.

- The lurid picture of the future however which, according to Dr. Sen Gupta, is the logical outcome of a paralysis of the government when there is no other authority to take over the administration is unfortunately too true and should serve as a warning to those who are handling the movement without responsibilities in proportion to their exuberances.

Yours etc.

B. P. S-G.

### BOOKS RECEIVED.

- UNSOLVED PROBLEMS: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL. By JOHAN S. HECHT. (Jarrolds.) 1930. 24cm. 288p. 16/-
- THE WORLD CRISIS OF 1914-1918. By FLIE HALEVY. (Oxford University Press.) 1930. 23cm. 57p. 5/-
- SO THIS WAS WAR; THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WESTERN AND EASTERN FRONTS REVEALED. By BOMBARDIER "X". (Hutchinson.) 1930. 23cm. 224p.
- FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF MARXISM. Marxist Library Series No. 1.) By G. PLEKHANOV. (Martin Lawrence.) 1929. 22cm. 145p. 5/-
- FROM CHARTISM TO LABOURISM. HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF THE ENGLISH WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT. (Marxist Library Series No. 2.) By TH. A. ROTHSTEIN. (Martin Lawrence.) 1929. 22cm. 365p. 7/6.
- ITALY, (The Modern World Series.) By LUIGI. (Benn.) 1929. 22cm. 391p. 18/--
- THE ECONOMICS OF INHERITANCE. By JOSIAH WEDGWOOD. (Routledge.) 1929. 22cm. 276p. 12/6-
- FACTORY LABOUR IN THE PUNJAB. By AHMAD MUKHTAR. (The Huxley Press, Madras.) 1929. 22cm. 207p. Rs. 5.
- MARKETS OF THE EMPIRE. By W. H. WILLSON. (E. Wilson.) 1930. 21cm. 280p. 7/6.
- ESCAPE, THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A POLITICAL PRISONER WHO WAS RESCUED FROM LIPARI, THE FASCIST "DEVIL'S ISLAND." By FRANCESCO FAUSTO NITTI. (Putnam, New York.) 1930. 21cm. 267p. \$2.50.
- THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE. By PAUL HUTCHINSON. (Willett, Clark and Colby, Chicago.) 1929. 20cm. 225p. \$2.00.
- A GIRL IN SOVIET RUSSIA. By ANDRE VIOLLIE. Translated from the French. By HOMER WHITE. (Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York.) 1929. 20cm. 347p. \$2.50.
- INDIEN IM SCHMELZTIEGEL. By O. Z. KLOTZEL. (Brockhaus, Leipzig.) 1930. 20cm. 285p.
- A FEW WORDS ON THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SETTLEMENT. By ABBAS HILMI II. (Allen and Unwin.) 1930. 20cm. 105p. 4/6.
- FELLOWSHIP, PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE. By A FELLOW GROUP. ED. By MALCOLM SPENCER AND H. S. HEWISH. (Allen and Unwin.) 1930. 20cm. 288p. 7/6.
- THE HEALTH OF THE NATION. (2nd Edn.) By F. E. FREMANTLE. (Philip Allen) 1929. 20cm. 209p. 3/6.