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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Deccan Sabha in the name of its President, Sir Hormusji A. Wadya, has sent the following cablegram to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for India and Lord Sinha:—"President and Members, Council Deccan Sabha, respectfully approach His Majesty's Government and State Secretary for India and entreat patient dispassionate consideration of situation in India. We deplore and detest every act of lawlessness and seditious violence. We admit absolute necessity for vindicating Government's authority and exorcising machinations of enemies of British rule. We entreat equally avoidance of vindictiveness or excessive use of force. True causes of disturbances need unequivocal ascertaining through patient exhaustive impartial enquiry by independent commission enjoying confidence alike of Government and public. Meanwhile we implore there should be no departure from Government's and Parliament's declared policy of progressive reform. Let not the loyalty of all during four and half years' prolonged war be forgotten through some days' acts of disloyalty by few. We hold and submit as ever before what India want most is strong sympathetic statesmanship, conceding measures of justice and freedom for necessary fulfilment of legitimate aspirations. Delay now mischievous, perhaps dangerous. Government's and Parliament's wisdom and trust will restore firm faith in India's higher destiny under British Empire."

THE *Times* readily accepts the official version that a rebellion is afoot in India and that firm measures are needed to put it down. If nothing more serious than the news available in India is cabled to England, discerning persons there will certainly discriminate between a mob violence and an armed rising. They will certainly require more proof than is afforded by disorderly demonstrations,

stoppage of business and even a few acts of murder and incendiarism and the cutting off of communications to demonstrate the existence of revolt. We are glad that the India Office is supplying copious information to the British public about the disorders. They will soon begin to ask the question which is on everybody's lips in this country, *viz.*, Where is here in all this anything approaching an insurrection? And when they will see that even the *Times* is satisfied with the strong measures taken by the executive in India to put down the rioting that has occurred as if the rioting had assumed the proportions of a great uprising, the British public will certainly feel that the measures far exceed the exigencies of the situation and will call for evidence to justify the unusual severity of the Government's action.

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EVEN the *Times* recognises that, amidst the revolution that is apparently unfolding itself in India at the present time, "a substantial proportion of the Indian intellectuals are sincere supporters of the British rule and our friends will enormously outnumber our foes;" but if Dr. Nair's definition of the "friends of British rule" is to be adopted, this number must be very seriously reduced. For, according to him, no one has a claim to that title who objects to the Rowlatt Act. Such friends of Government in the sense that they support this pernicious legislation are few outside the ranks of Dr. Nair's party, and the opponents of the Rowlatt law are not prepared to drop their opposition even for the fear of being dubbed enemies of Government. They are what they are, but it is interesting to note that the *Times* has a more correct perception of the situation than the leader of the non-Brahman movement. On another point, again, will this great ally of the Indo-British Association be sorely disappointed with the *Times*. Whereas Dr. Nair was harbouring the hope that the present disorders would finish reforms, the *Times* even when commenting on the "rebellion" speaks approvingly of reforms! "Since there were disturbances here," the doctor solemnly warned, "and since the party which represented the majority of the intelligentsia were with the disturbances (*sic*), this would be dangerous time to transfer any of the powers which Government now enjoyed to popular control. The *Times* too counsels delay in the introduction of the Reforms Bill, but insists upon the "imperative necessity for spacious reforms." It remains to be seen if Dr. Nair, who

is shortly proceeding to England, will be able to stay the initiation of the measure for good.

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WHATEVER divergences of view may have arisen in India on the question of reforms, democratic opinion in England seems to be united in giving general support to the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals. Whether it be Col. Wedgwood, or Mr. Philip Snowden, or Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, or Dr. Clarke or Mr. Charles Roberts, all are at one in endorsing the scheme and trying to widen it. Mr. John Scurr, who has come here to observe things for himself, also sees the need for supporting the scheme and will work in England in collaboration with Mrs. Besant on the lines approved by her. There being thus a practical unanimity among English friends of India, it ought to be possible for the Indian deputations to sink their differences and work unitedly.

* * *

ELSEWHERE we publish the report of a speech made by Mr. Sastri at Poona; it fairly represents the views uttered by him on the occasion. The report of his speech in Bombay, however, published in the *Times of India*, is an unfortunate version and may create a misleading impression of the sentiments expressed by him. Mr. Sastri did not hold the Satyagraha movement responsible for the violence that has occurred, but he strongly condemned the action taken by the Local Governments as much too harsh.

* * *

THE Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, who sailed for England on Tuesday last, were entertained by their friends in Poona and Bombay last week. They were also the recipients of a large number of messages of confidence and good will from their many friends, to whom they regret it is not possible for them to write individually in acknowledgment. They, therefore, make this paper the means of according their cordial thanks to all those who sent them words of encouragement.

* * *

IN view of the departure of Messrs. Sastri and Kunzru, a meeting of the general body of members of the Servants of India Society was held last week. Mr. Devadhar was appointed vice-President to act for the President during Mr. Sastri's absence in England, and, pending Mr. Devadhar's return to India, Mr. Dravid was appointed to perform the duties of President. In the place of Mr. Kunzru, Mr. Kaul was elected Member of Council.

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THE most important subject discussed at the meeting was the application of Mr. D. Hanumanta Rao to let him take the satyagraha pledge. This opened up the subject of the Society's attitude to the present movement of satyagraha, for though informal consultations had taken place, no regular decision had been arrived at. Accordingly, the subject was discussed at length and from all points of view. Mr. Hanumanta Rao read a paper pleading eloquently for the adoption of passive resistance.

but, with the single exception of Mr. Hanumanta Rao, the members present at the meeting unanimously came to an adverse decision. This led up to the question whether an individual member could be granted freedom of action on such a vital matter and allowed to participate in a movement disapproved by the Society. This, again, was carefully considered and the members unanimously resolved that an organised body like the Society cannot on such an important matter allow a deviation from the policy settled by the Society as a whole. Mr. Hanumanta Rao was, therefore, requested to defer to the judgment of the majority, but he feeling a call of conscience to join the movement, the meeting had no alternative but to release him from his obligations to the Society. Every member, while discussing the question, gladly acknowledged the purity of motive from which Mr. Hanumanta Rao felt constrained to take this step, which was deeply regretted by all.

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TWO new members were admitted into the Society during this session: Mr. Krishnaji Ganesh Limaye, M. A., LL. B. (Bombay) and Mr. R. Suryanarayana Rao, B. A. (Madras). Mr. S. M. Michael, who did meritorious work as Permanent Assistant for the last four years, was also raised to membership. Another addition to the probationers was also made in Mr. R. Vaidyanatha Sastri, M. A., B. L. (Madras), who has had a very distinguished University career, having taken first class in all examinations except in B. L., in which too his place was very high in the Presidency.

TO READERS.

BEFORE this issue is published, I shall have sailed for England as a member of the Moderates' deputation. My name will not appear henceforth on the front page of THE SERVANT OF INDIA. In its place will appear that of Mr. S. G. Vaze. Of ten years' standing as member of our Society, Mr. Vaze is a fit custodian of its policy and principles. He has been associated with me in the conduct of the paper from the start, and to speak the truth, the brunt of the burden has hitherto been borne by him. I am glad to admit that the best part of whatever merit the paper has, is of his contribution.

Friends, I feel confident, will continue the indulgence and sympathy that I have been fortunate enough to get from them. Our object in starting the paper was propaganda, and we were prepared for its not being a financial success. But what with the smallness of the subscription we charge, what with the heavy cost of production, it casts too heavy a burden on our slender resources. It is our desire, nay our ambition, to live on and do service according to our lights at least till the new regime is well under way. Friends must enable us to realise this ambition by counsel and contribution, by subscription and advertisement, and by procuring of these.

V. S. SRINIVASAN.

THE MILITARIST REGIME

IN Gujerat perfect quiet seems to have been restored, and even from the Punjab no news of further disturbances has come. Now almost all the news is of arrests and deportations and other stern measures taken by Government to put down the disorders that broke out some time ago. One has only to try to equate the mob violence and rioting for the past few weeks and the coercive action of Government during the time, of which the end is not yet in sight, to realise the excesses in the use of force on the part of the Government. The authorities are of course acting in the belief that there is a revolutionary movement in India designed to overturn the Government by armed rising, and if this belief were well-founded, the measures actually taken would be considered none too strong, though even then one cannot help feeling that no Government with any pretensions to civilisation and humanity will stain its character by some of the barbarities for which the Punjab Government is reported to have been responsible. But is there any evidence to prove that a rebellion is on foot, or anything nearly approaching it? We do not pretend to any information outside what has been vouchsafed to the public by the Government, and we are loth to believe that, if there was any serious danger to the State by way of armed resistance, the Government would refrain from taking the people's leaders into confidence and enlisting their co-operation. In the absence of any such attempt, the public have a right to conclude that there is nothing further for the Government to communicate than it has done, and that on the side of the people there have been no more serious excesses than those of which mention has been made in newspapers or Government *communiqués*. We do not wish to make light of the enormity of the mob violence that has been indisputably committed; the general public entertains a feeling of nothing but deep abhorrence for all that has occurred. The cold-blooded murder of innocent Europeans has sent a thrill of horror throughout the country. But we must preserve a sense of proportion in all this. A casual disturbance or a spasmodic riot, however serious a form it may take for the time being, is by a long way removed from rebellion, and measures taken to quell such an outbreak of disorder as if it was a rising cannot but exceed by far the necessities of the case. It has been urged that these disorders cannot be casual, from the way in which the rioters cut off communications, derailed a troops train, and so forth. We at once concede the force of this contention, and the fact that Mr. Gandhi concludes from what came under his observation that there has been organisation behind the disturbances will be sufficient to convince all reasonable persons that the situation is more grave than one is likely to imagine at first sight. But even then an occasional upheaval, which some evil-minded persons are determined to use towards accomplishing their nefarious ends, must be discriminated from

a general rising, and the proceedings in either case must be such as to suit its individual character. Our quarrel with the Government is not that its action is too violent in putting down a revolt; but that in an alarmist fashion it is calling up visions of rebellion and setting itself to subdue it when in fact it has to cope with a situation of a different order and much less alarming tenor.

If the Government had really to encounter rebellion there would be no question that the whole body of intellectuals in India would support all measures, however severe, which the Government might think it necessary to adopt. For they are genuinely attached to British rule; and their very self-interest suggests to them that the future of the country is inextricably bound up with the security of that rule. This is no idle phrase; such a determined opponent of British rule as Mr. Har Dayal has seen the error of his ways, and his recantation has a ring of sincerity about it. But with present-day Indians his changed attitude to British rule is a matter of age-long tradition. It is not by reasoning alone but by deep sentiment that they feel bound to the British Government, and there is nothing which they will not risk when that Government is in peril. Latterly there have been strong agitations for reforms; on occasion they may have exceeded proper bounds; but with all such temporary aberrations, the loyalty of Indians, the politically-minded Indians and agitators, has remained unshaken. After the experience during war time one would think it would be a work of supererogation to dwell upon it. And even if there should be Bolsheviki agents about we doubt not that their machinations would fail utterly in seducing the allegiance of Indians. When the heart of India is so sound, it behoves the Government to tell the public why and how all of a sudden a bid is made here for independence before it commences to take what they can only regard as indiscriminate punitive action against leaders of public opinion, as if they were engaged in engineering rebellion or some such terrible thing. To the list of arrested persons additions are fast being made in the Punjab; and Lala Dharamdas Suri and Mr. Rattan Chand have suffered the same fate. It is impossible to believe, unless human nature has completely changed in the Punjab latterly, that Mr. Suri's freedom could at all be a peril to the State. There is an element of irony in the arrest of Mr. Rattan Chand. Only last week he wrote asking how public life in his province could be purged of some of the undesirable elements which seemed unfortunately to be associated with it. Again, we just hear of the arrest of Mr. Durgadas Advani. If the Government has any regard for public opinion, it must adduce clear proof of any offences of which such distinguished leaders could possibly be guilty. No one will presume any guilt against them merely because the Government has chosen to strike them down. The deportation of Mr. Horniman also stands on the same footing. It would be sheer affectation for us to say that

we were always at one with him in his politics; our differences with him were often very sharp; but, that is irrelevant to the present issue. There can be no justification for the deportation of any one without trial, except when it is absolutely inevitable for the safety of the State. The Bombay Government which showed a commendable restraint and moderation on the outbreak of disorder, would preserve, it was hoped, its balance of mind and would refrain from such an unwarrantable invasion of popular liberties. Bombay has been quiet, and Mr. Horniman was unable from illness to attend to his usual duties during these troublous times. The action taken against him in these circumstances will thus give rise to an impression in the public mind that the Government has now embarked upon a campaign of naked repression.

If the Government desires to remove this impression, it is absolutely essential that popular leaders should be taken into confidence and facts placed before them which would convince them that no excessive force was being used. Nothing would conduce to this result so much as to terminate Sir Michael O'Dwyer's headship of the Punjab. His regime has happily run out its period, and the Government should embrace this opportunity to bring a fresh mind to bear on the situation. Again, a long-sighted view must be taken of the present unrest. Whatever the proximate causes of the disturbances—and they must be closely inquired into—it is clear that the public mind is exceedingly uneasy, and a substantial factor of the uneasiness consists in the unsatisfied political aspirations of Indians. The remarkable utterance of Mr. Natarajan the other day in Bombay should be a warning to those officials who wish to see a contented India. Even if the reforms came in their integrity, he said, they would hereafter cease to inspire people. We know for a fact that in many thoughtful minds the reforms have considerably receded since the recent happenings, and without a doubt there is a risk of their falling quite flat and lifeless with the general public. At such a time statesmanship consists not in whittling down but in extending the reforms, and thus restoring public confidence. Should, however, our hard-shell Sydenhamites prevail and reforms be indefinitely hung up or an unsubstantial measure passed, discontent would follow on the results of which the mind shudders to reflect.

THE PRESENT SITUATION.

THE situation just now is as grave as it is complex. An Act, which, as its pre-amble states, is intended to deal with anarchical and revolutionary movements, was passed at the last session of the Viceroy's Legislative Council. The Bill, which culminated in this Act, embodied in its original form several provisions vesting the executive with drastic discretionary powers on individual liberty of action without any judicial proceedings and not safe-guarded by any legal remedies. This was met

with strong opposition in Council from the non-official Indian members. As a result, the Bill was modified in certain respects so as to mitigate its severity. While acknowledging the improvements thus effected, the non-official Indian members still could not see their way to support the measure as altered in the Select Committee and it had to be carried in Council with the help of official and non-official European votes. This has created a feeling of unrest and excitement in the country, a feeling which has been accentuated by mis-statements regarding the character of the Act and its effect on the rights and liberties of the people. Besides the usual constitutional method of subjecting the Act to public criticism and appealing to the constituted authorities to withhold consent to it, a new kind of agitation was inaugurated as a protest against its being passed into law in disregard of the united opposition of the Indian members of Council. Now when all constitutional methods against what is considered an unsound and unjustifiable measure of Government fail to bring about its withdrawal, or amendment from the popular point of view, what is called "passive resistance" within certain prescribed and defined limits is in certain cases considered a legitimate means to attain the object in view. Its employment by Mr. Gandhi in his historic fight for the rights of the British Indian subjects in South Africa had the approval of such a high authority as the late Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. This was the weapon which Mr. Gandhi called upon his countrymen to take up and utilise in order to make the Government cancel the above Act. His ideal was to fight against what he believed to be evil by the power of moral force only through self-mortification and self-sacrifice and he emphasized this position in all his public declarations on the subject. But he miscalculated ordinary human nature. The agitation he called upon his countrymen to enter upon was an agitation which could be conducted in the spirit in which it was conceived only by a compact rigidly defined body of highly disciplined persons all animated by one common ideal and governed by one common method of action. But when it is not so circumscribed and when, on the contrary, all and sundry are allowed indiscriminately to join in the struggle with a view to give it the glamour of universality, the original ideal is soon lost sight of and its place is taken by all the baser feelings of the human mind. This is exactly what has taken place and with disastrous consequences. That this would be the inevitable outcome of the movement as carried on was foreseen by all thoughtful men, but it is difficult for reason and good sense to prevail when men's minds are inflamed and raised to the highest pitch of excitement by appeals to their worst passions conducted without any regard for truth or a careful calculation of ulterior consequences. An atmosphere surcharged with a spirit of disorder and disregard for law and the constituted authority has been brought into existence which, unless promptly laid,

spells ruin to all our hopes of future progress. Chaotic Russia is an object lesson for all to profit by. As befits him, Mr. Gandhi has lost no time to confess his mistake. And not only so, he has in language of glowing fervour denounced the atrocities that have been committed under the aegis of his name and the glamour of his apostolic character. It is to be hoped, however, that the "temporary suspension" enjoined does not import a revival of the agitation at some future date. For, it cannot be too often and too emphatically pointed out that whatever view one may take of any particular measure of Government, an agitation which is bound to evoke a spirit of defiance of law and constituted authority and which leads to disorder and violence can never be right and is especially destructive of our best interests at this particular juncture, when we are on the threshold of events which transcend in their far-reaching effect on our future anything which has taken place since India came under the sway of England.

While it is the clear duty of every one who is in a position to guide public opinion to do all that lies in him to ease the present situation and instil into the minds of the people that the country's interest can never be advanced by breaches of the law, the Government has also its own responsibilities. Its first and foremost duty at this moment is, no doubt, to suppress disorder and restore the normal state of affairs. Anything reasonably necessary to attain this end must receive the support of every right-thinking person. But it should not be forgotten that all coercive measures have a tendency to leave unpleasant memories behind. Let nothing be done which will create an abiding sense of wrong in reasonable minds. A strong Government like ours can afford to be generous once the crisis is at an end and peace is restored. "Clemency Canning" did more to restore confidence in the Government and in its sense of justice than the stern measures taken to suppress the mutiny. The Proclamation of Victoria the Good telling her Indian subjects that she held herself bound to them by the same obligation of duty which bound her to all her other subjects has, in the long run, done more to advance the cause of good government than any number of repressive measures. The following from Lord Morley's *Recollections* records a truth which all history teaches, "The question is the future. It is like the Czar and the Duma. Are we to say 'you will have reforms when you are quiet. Meanwhile we won't listen to a word you say.' Our reform projects are hung up. Meanwhile plenty of courts-martial, *letters de cachet*, and the other paraphernalia of law and order?" (Vol. II p. 215). One more passage, "It is an old painful story. Shortcomings in Government lead to outbreaks; outbreaks have to be put down; reformers have to bear the blame, and their reforms are scotched; reaction triumphs; and mischief goes on as before, only worse." (p. 212). Let us hope that the mournful history of Ireland will not repeat itself in India.

B. K. BOSE.

MR. BAPTISTA'S SPEECH.

MR. BAPTISTA'S speech as President of the Bombay Provincial Conference is noticeable chiefly for its optimism. As men who have been in England for some time and observed things, the words of Messrs. Baptista and Tilak should carry weight. But when Mr. Baptista says that, as soon as Mr. Tilak appeared in England in the role "of a fragile philosopher appealing to Reason and History, the walls of prejudice created by Anglo-Indian masons crumbled to pieces," we are unable to follow him. Does he mean that the British public became all at once so enlightened as to the real state of things in India that the Anglo-Indian cherubs of reaction found that their campaign of misrepresentation had been futile? We wish we could believe it; it is so romantic that it is a pity to abandon it as too hopeful an estimate of the situation. Self-delusion is never a paying game.

This cheery optimism does not stop here. Mr. Baptista proceeds: After mature reflection Mr. Tilak bids me convey this message to you, "Home Rule is within reach. Ask and it shall be given. Only ask with a united and resolute voice." We rub our eyes and ask, Can this be a correct reading of the situation? Is it not too hopeful to be true? Are the many English friends sincerely interested in India unnecessarily tormenting themselves by morbid and gloomy forebodings? Do the forces of reaction and vested interests count for so little or is the British nation so wide awake to the new spirit in India that a responsible man can say confidently, "Ask and it shall be given." The trend of things has led us to the opposite conclusion. The warning of our English friends, "the promises which Lord Chelmsford felt himself compelled to make to the services, taken along with the concessions which the Secretary of State has been giving to the various departments, and the necessity for strong speeches from him and the Maharajah of Bikanir against the mendacity and unscrupulousness of the Sydenhamites—all these would seem to indicate a very real danger to the integrity of the original (reform) scheme." We cannot help thinking that, with these patriots, it has been a case of "to wish was to hope, and to hope was to expect." Anyway, if Home Rule is not granted at once, it would not be for want of asking. But it is as well not to be in a fool's paradise longer than one can help.

Mr. Baptista then goes on to argue that, as "England herself is on her trial at the Peace Conference and as the wicked war would have been waged in vain if it did not end in detestation of domination," England will have to grant Home Rule to India. Brave words these, but not based on solid facts. "In due time," he says, "the Parliament of England will apply the principle of self-determination to India. Perhaps, but that India will, therefore, 'obtain what she desires, decides and demands' is a non-sequitur to the 'faithful' no less than to the 'seceders.' The whole error is due to a confusion caused by the twofold interpreta-

tion of the word of the hour, "self-determination." While one class of people take it to be synonymous with 'self-rule,' the draft covenant of the League of Nations takes it in a much narrower sense. For purposes of article 19 of the covenant, countries like India are to be taken to have had the principle already applied to them. This is no pessimistic wail. The pugnacious attitude of the different powers and their various claims to land and money so barefacedly urged at the conference should have been an eye-opener to all. Even President Wilson, the accredited apostle of self-determination holds to the narrower signification of the term. The only countries, which stand in need of the application of the principle are the territories of the vanquished Central Powers; and it is to be done through the now famous system of 'mandates.' By way of circumstantial evidence in favour of this view, we would invite the attention of our readers to a significant telegram published on Monday to the effect that President Wilson has declined to concern himself in any way with the fate of Egypt. Evidently, he is not anxious that self-determination, as it is understood by most of us here, should be applied to Egypt; and we cannot conceive of any consideration which should induce him to treat India differently. With all respect therefore, to Mr. Tilak and to the "one of the most powerful personalities at the Peace Conference," we are unable to take that extremely hopeful view of the former conveyed in his message, "Ask and it shall be given."

With Mr. Baptista's condemnation of the Rowlatt Act and "the Government's nauseating solicitude for prestige," we are in general agreement. Prestige, as he says, is never tarnished by the splendour of a just and courageous act of statesmanship. But we confess that we are unable to appreciate his view-point in regard to passive resistance. He holds that, since doing an act which the law forbids is *active* resistance, the activities of a satyagrahi should be confined to abstaining from doing what the law enjoins and that, as a corollary, non-payment of taxes is the most efficient form of passive resistance, if well-organised. But since Mr. Baptista only expresses an academic opinion without particular reference to the existing conditions, it is hardly necessary to consider his views. Equally bereft of practical application is his advocacy of boycott as a weapon of constitutional fight. No one has ever questioned the constitutional character of passive resistance or boycott; it certainly does not require Mr. Baptista to tell us that either of them is perfectly within the limits of the constitution. The whole question is one of feasibility and expediency and on that Mr. Baptista maintains a discreet silence. It is well that he clears up a widely prevalent misconception that swadeshi is boycott. In their conception the two movements are widely different, and the confusion was sedulously maintained in the Deccan only because the advocates of boycott did not like

to appear in their true colours. It is difficult to understand, however, the logic of Mr. Baptista's reasoning by which he would make out that if limited to a few selected articles, the idea of racial antipathy would be excluded from the movement. Whatever it is that it will remain, whether it is limited or extended. Evidently, Mr. Baptista does not hold Mr. Gandhi's view that if foreign goods have at all to be used he would prefer British goods to those of the other countries. This shows also how the underlying idea of Mr. Gandhi's satyagraha is foreign to Mr. Baptista and to most other politicians, *viz.*, that their efforts should all be towards setting free as much soul-force as possible by inviting and undergoing suffering, but never by inflicting suffering on any body else, least of all by making the work of governing impossible. While we are on this subject we may as well draw attention to a mistake under which Mr. Baptista and the majority of people seem to be labouring. He says, for instance, that the laws to be disobeyed by satyagrahis "should be enumerated and not left to the conscience of any committee." Here, the obvious implication seems to be that, if the satyagrahi agrees to disobey only such laws as are recommended for the purpose by a committee, which Mr. Baptista assumes he does, it would be a surrender of conscience. But the assumption is without warrant. In theory, at least, the satyagrahi is at liberty to disobey any or all laws, but as a matter of discipline as well as for ensuring concerted action and uniformity of procedure, the committee puts forward certain laws as convenient for disobedience. This, in passing, we take it, is the explanation of the otherwise puzzling fact of Mr. Gandhi's breaking the Defence of India Act which is *not* among those recommended by the committee for civil disobedience.

Mr. Baptista's opposition to diarchy is well-known; no one is or can be in love with that system; it can at best be tolerated as the least objectionable alternative in the transitional stage. The only practical question is what feasible alternative is possible to it and whether it puts us in a better position to attain full measure of self-government. Mr. Baptista realises that diarchy can be replaced by a uniarchy which grants us much less power than the system adumbrated in the report. He therefore outlines a transitional scheme of his own. It is not necessary to pause here to consider its details; it is enough to mention that even those who in blissful ignorance declare that the principle of self-determination will be applied to India in its fulness are doubtful of the truth of their asseverations, since they themselves propound transitional schemes. As the *Mahratta* has observed in commenting on Mr. Baptista's scheme, no such scheme can be free from flaws from the nature of the case. Against diarchy too any number of objections can be urged, and those who support it do so merely because, on the principles laid down as axiomatic in the report, it seems more promising than any of its practicable substitutes. A CRITIC.

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, APRIL 2.

COMMITTEES TO FURTHER REFORMS.

STRANGE as it may seem, there are actually in existence two committees of House of Commons members earnestly concerned in advancing the cause of Constitutional Reform in India. Unfortunately, they are competing bodies and have not so far done what everybody to-day is doing—formed a federation of interests. The first committee was almost entirely composed of Labour members, with a few Radicals thrown in. Its chairman was Col. Wedgwood, who is almost the only member to machine-gun the “enemy”, namely, the Government, with a constant fire of questions on Indian matters from the point of view of the Indian reformers. But the Labour representatives, I am told, with a somewhat unaccountable fanaticism, which, however, is at present somewhat characteristic of Labour, did not feel disposed to work in association with non-Labour members, and the committee’s later meetings, if they were held at all, were certainly not presided over by Col. Wedgwood. The more recent committee, whilst it is likely to carry greater weight, even though it may not be prepared to go so far in the direction of pressing amendments to the Reforms Bill when introduced, came into being last night and is presided over by Sir John Rees, who, together with Mr. T. J. Bennett, is its leading spirit. It is likely that it will work in collaboration with the outside committee which Lord Carmichael, Mr. Charles Roberts, Mr. H. E. A. Cotton and Sir Walter Raleigh have either formed or are about to form, and of which they are the most prominent members, and it will doubtless be through some such agency as this; that the Moderates will work on their arrival here.

INDIAN LABOUR IN RELATION TO THE WORLD LABOUR MOVEMENT.

There are two aspects of Indian Labour questions to which I should like to allude this week. The first is the relations of Indian Labour to the World Labour movement in the light of the proceedings now taking place in Paris where the draft terms of the World Labour Charter have now been settled. They are embodied in a Convention consisting of 41 articles and a protocol, and provide for a General Conference of representative of the signatory Powers and an International Labour Office controlled by a governing body, which is to be entrusted with the duty of collecting and distributing information on all subjects relating to the International aspects of Labour, and will act as a general clearing house for all Labour information. This Labour Office will be established as part of the organisation of the League of Nations, admission to membership of which will amount to an acceptance of the Labour Convention. The Convention was considered on March 29, by the British Empire Delegation. The third chapter is of special interest and importance to India, for it contains clauses which

deal with the status of Colonies and Dominions and the application of the Convention to them. The British Dominions and India will have the same rights and obligations as if they were separate high contracting parties, and this will apply to any Colony of any signatory, which is admitted to be fully self-governing by the Executive Council of the League of Nations. Conventions dealing with Labour matters, which may be signed as the results of the International Labour Conferences, will be applied by the high contracting parties to their Colonies except where local conditions make it impossible. Conventions may be modified to adapt them to local Colonial requirements. The International Labour Office is to be informed as to the action taken as regards all not fully self-governing Colonies. The first thing that strikes one about this Convention is that it impliedly regards India as having the status of a self-governing Dominion, and as having the rights and obligations of one of the high contracting parties entitled to membership, upon its foundation, of the League of Nations. In the preamble there is a special reference to the fact that “the failure of any Nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other Nations which desire to improve conditions in their own countries,” and it is for these reasons that, “moved by sentiments of justice and humanity, as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world,” this convention has been agreed to.

Some time ago a London weekly, the “Near East,” drew attention to the fact that Mr. George N. Barnes, one of the British Delegates to the Peace Congress, and who especially is in charge of the British case in regard to Labour problems, aspired to promote the current ideals of Western Labour by eliminating “the international competition of low-wage countries,” and it asked whether that aspiration was shared by the Cabinet as a whole, whether Mr. Montagu accepted the policy as applied to India, and if so how he was going to put it into practice. It put the concrete case of the Tata Iron and Steel Works, and asked whether, representing as it did, the high-water mark of Industrial India, fostered as to its inception and growth by the Indian Government, and employing many thousands of labourers, who were paid low wages when judged by European, though not by Indian, standards, this low-wage competition was to be “eliminated”. It characterised the idea as grotesque to any one who cared for the future of India, but the formula enunciated by Mr. Barnes fitted it precisely, and India was entitled to know whether that formula was going to be applied. If it were, it was suggested that it was much more likely, not that she would or could work harder, in order to pay higher prices for what she wanted, but that she would remember how many things she used to do without, that the small rise in the standard of living already achieved would presently be lost, and that along with

it would go the hope of increased efficiency of labour upon which the whole economic future of the country depended. Point is added to this emphatic warning by a statement made by Viscount Ushida, the Foreign Minister of Japan, in the Japanese Diet, a few days ago, who said that International Labour legislation had not up to then been brought up for consideration before the Peace Conference, but that the Japanese Government would never lose sight of the importance of legitimate protection for the Labour interest. Labour conditions in Japan, however, he added, were widely different from those of Europe and America, and consequently it was impossible to introduce uniform legislation on this subject. The Japanese Government, he assured his hearers would exercise the utmost caution on this question.

INDIAN LABOUR EMIGRATION.

The other aspect of the Labour problem to which I wished to allude ought to come under the searching inquiry of the International Labour Office if it would be true to the spirit of the preamble that I have quoted above. I refer especially to the question of Indian Labour emigration, and the conditions prevailing in Fiji and the West Indian Tropical British Colonies. It is a sad reflection that, in spite of Mr. C. F. Andrews's representations, and the urgent needs of the situation in Fiji, the Indian Government have not yet been able to do more for the welfare of the local Indian population by bringing pressure to bear upon the Fijian administration. In all probability, it is the Colonial Office here that is the stumbling block, and until the bright light of day is directed to the transactions of the Crown Colonies Department in Downing Street, very little satisfaction will be obtained there, though it is believed that Lord Milner is favourably disposed to the abolition of the system of labour importation from India under conditions savouring of the servile, under whatever mask they may be concealed. I am the more anxious, as I know that the West India Committee is using its utmost endeavours to get supplies of cheap labour from India. A correspondent writes me that, in British Guiana, especially, these efforts are being pressed, and this in spite of the fact that on the showing of the Colonial Secretary himself, the population of the Colony in 1911, 70 years after the census of 1841, was actually less in number than the labour immigrants introduced. These figures he regarded as a grave indictment of the Colony's immigration methods in the past as well as of the measures taken in bygone years to preserve public health. The inference was, in his opinion, that the most pressing duty of the Government was to protect the health and the lives of the *existing* population and to secure that instead of the death-rate exceeding the birth-rate, as had been too often recorded in the vital statistics of British Guiana, there should be a steady natural increment. It is plain that, until the sanitary conditions of this Crown Colony are radically improv-

ed, in no circumstances, whatever may be the pecuniary inducement, should Indian labour be permitted to proceed to British Guiana, even though "free," for the risks to life and health, apart from other objections, are far too great. Whilst I am on this topic, I might be permitted to refer to an incident that has recently occurred in the British West Indies, which throws a rather lurid light upon the efforts of these Colonies to draw cheap labour supplies from India. Jamaica is another of the Colonies accustomed to look to Indian labour to enrich its planters and absentee estate owners. Recently, however, complaints have been arriving that a number of the native Jamaicans, who had gone to adjoining Central American territory to earn their livelihood, because they could not do so at home, were being abominably used. What other conclusion can be drawn than that these Jamaicans have been ousted because the planters found that they could get Indian labourers at a cheaper rate than they were prepared to give to the inhabitants of the island, who, after all, had the first claim to employment in the country of their origin?

I have dealt at length this week with labour problems, first because Labour dominates the whole world-situation to-day, and it is necessary to understand the attitude of the great Labour organizations on problems that so largely affect labour interests, which, as Mr. Clynes put it a few days ago, should not be allowed to outweigh national interests; secondly, because you have, in Bombay, recently had troubles of your own on a very extensive scale and finally, because it is but right that India should be interested in the vital issues affecting the peace of the world, in which her own most intimate industrial interests are involved, as well as her status in the Empire and among the nations of the world. It should hardly be necessary to urge, at this stage of the country's political progress, that there are no longer 'class' interests; they are nation-wide, and no one can afford not to be deeply concerned in the proper solution of such problems as these affecting the lives of the myriads who form the vast majority of mankind. It is by her recognition of the claims of her labouring population that India will be weighed and tested by Labour elsewhere, which, in the not very distant future, will be in the saddle in this country, and in most of the progressive countries of the world. The appearance, this week, of the *Daily Herald*, Mr. George Lansbury's paper, is a portent. The millenium is unlikely to come quite so soon as his band of enthusiastic young men and women appear to imagine. It never does quite come in our lifetime. But a bigger step than ever in that direction is intended by British labour, and it is as well that India should recognise something of the forces that are being generated here, so that, by putting her own house in order, she may adapt herself to the needs of the new times not so very far ahead.

MR. SASTRI ON THE PRESENT SITUATION.

At a farewell party given in honour of Messrs. Srinivasa Sastri and Hirday Nath Kunzru at Poona on Friday last, Mr. Sastri made an important speech on "the Present Situation." The Hon'ble Mr. Kamat, who presided, referred to the many qualities of Mr. Sastri which made him an outstanding figure in the several deputations going to England and expressed the hope that, even as is reported of the Australian patriots who brought back to their native country the very pen and inkpot with which the king signed the Constitution Act, Mr. Sastri would bring them an equally proud memento. Mr. Sastri in reply said:—

Mr. President and gentlemen,—In the difficult task which I have undertaken, the words of encouragement and good will spoken by the chairman will stand me in good stead. In England when pursuing the task before us, it will be so difficult to do the right thing and so easy to say and do the wrong things. But I trust that, even if I am not able to bring the pen and ink used in by His Majesty the King-Emperor in signing the Reform Act, I shall be able to come back and tell you that the mischief done through my ignorance and incapacity has not been great.

I am proceeding, as you all know, as a delegate of the moderate party—that is to say, I represent a particular political school of thought. But I hope that I shall be able to serve not only my own party but to advance common national aspirations as well. If I thought that I would be serving only a party and not the whole country, I would not feel so strong as I do. Some, indeed, say that a true patriot should serve the country as a whole and not any party. You will allow me to say that it is only partially true. No man can serve the country except through a party, unless he is super-eminent, in which case again, he would not stand alone for long, for a party would gather round him, whether he will or no.

Touching the political situation, I wish I could speak with confidence. If it were a fortnight or twenty days ago, I could speak with some assurance, but the events of the last few days have thrown doubts on the prospects of improving the situation. Before trying to ascribe praise or blame, it is quite necessary to clear up one matter, and that is as to the duty of the people to support the Government to restore order and to bring back the political equilibrium which has been disturbed. There are parts of India in a highly disturbed condition. These should all be brought to peace and contentment first. As to the reasons which have brought about the present state of things, there may be doubts; but as to the immediate duty of every one in India, there can be no possibility of doubt. We must render to the Government every assistance in our power to bring the rioters to justice. Of that duty we are all fully conscious and it is necessary to assure the Government that, both from our party and from other parties, they are justified in expecting cordial help.

Having said so much, I have to say that the blame for these happenings does not lie altogether on one side. Whenever there is a burst-up like the present, it is not easy to put a finger on one spot and say, "Here is the source of the trouble." Such troubles have many phases and proceed from more than one circumstance. There can be no doubt, however, that the Rowlatt Act did come as a great unsettling factor on the mind of the people. Now-a-days there is any amount of writing in the Anglo-Indian papers and any amount of sermonising in high quarters. Somehow the Moderates seem to be favoured with advice and criticism. They seem to say in effect, "You must suspend all opposition to the Rowlatt Act. Apart from your duty, the events in the Punjab and elsewhere have supplied the necessary proof that the Act was necessary. You were all wrong in forming yourself into a solid band of opposition. Now at last you perceive that, whatever people might say, you are not justified in opposing the Act." I will for one moment read to you the words of the Lt. Governor

of Burma, Sir Reginald Craddock, whose strength as the head of a province has often been demonstrated. "The action of Indian political leaders in opposing the Rowlatt Bill and in encouraging the storm of opposition has been the most grievous blunder in the history of Indian political life... The action of these leaders constitutes the greatest encouragement to the anarchical movement that it has ever received."

Now, that is a statement which, for the head of a local Government to make, is a gross distortion and an unpardonable exaggeration. He is, it seems to me, greatly exceeding the limits of fair criticism in saying that we are instrumental in stirring up anarchy. I do not share his view. If it were necessary to single out any one event as the root cause of the trouble, it is the obstinacy of the Government in persisting in passing the Rowlatt Act in opposition to popular opinion. We did our best to minimise the evil. We warned them at the time that the agitation which would follow would be unparalleled. They said it was an idle threat. An influential member of the Government turned to me laughingly and said, "I have seen India ablaze twenty times and I am sure that this will blow over." I hope it will blow over but, I am afraid, not before it had worked some amount of harm. They would not be warned. They would not listen to our representations made in good faith. Long before these happenings, we gave them clearly to understand that the course of our opposition would be unbroken. It is unreasonable to expect us to change our attitude to the Act, simply because of the unhappy events of the last few days. We cannot love the Act, and cannot pardon or excuse its authors for reaping the harvest of their own obstinacy. If it lies in our power when we are in England to press this question, we shall not fail to do so. But whether we succeed or not in securing its repeal, we can never relax our opposition to it.

I must say, in the next place, that the Satyagraha movement, though Mr. Gandhi has now suspended the civil disobedience part thereof, has, in its turn, contributed to the difficulties of the situation. I am one of those who hold that it was not the intrinsic nature of Satyagraha that led to the outbursts of disorder; nor were these intended. Nevertheless it is difficult to dissociate them entirely from a movement which brought together an unprecedentedly large mob in a highly excited frame of mind and from the undesirable forms it subsequently assumed. You will see that with his extraordinary readiness to take the responsibility even when it does not directly rest upon him, Mr. Gandhi himself admits that he failed to appreciate in its fulness the absolute inability of the mob to rise to the height of the Satyagraha plan and that he failed to take full note of the extent of the excesses which might be committed under its cover. When Mr. Gandhi is so ready to take upon himself the blame of it all, it is ungracious—highly ungracious—to dwell long on it. We recognize the unfortunate though indirect connection between the Satyagraha movement and the disturbances; but no one thinks that Mr. Gandhi had anything to do with them. That is why some of us, in speaking of these happenings, are unable to say anything of an incriminatory or severe nature. We know that nobody is so unhappy over these events as Mr. Gandhi himself.

While, on the one hand, we recognise the duty of the Government in putting down these disorders and the duty of the people to co-operate in the task, we must at the same time make it perfectly clear how we look upon the steps taken by the Government to bring offenders to justice. I do not wish to say anything out of a mere desire to speak against the Government, nor out of a desire to represent myself as a strong exponent of popular discontent. But I cannot withhold my very strong disapprobation of the lines which the Government has taken. When a mob goes wrong and becomes unruly it is necessary, no doubt, for the Government to take strong measures to restore order. But powerfully and fully equipped as the Government was, it was its

duty to see that no more was done in the repressive direction than was absolutely necessary—to see that it leaves no rankling in the breasts of people. What, on the contrary, is it doing? It is taking a series of measures which seem to exceed the necessities of the case. A state of open rebellion has been declared, martial law proclaimed and other things done in ways which must be pronounced barbarous. Bombs are dropped from aeroplanes, and people alleged to have disobeyed laws whipped in public streets—a barbarity which, we all thought, had passed away with the autocracy of Russia.

As if this were not enough, the Government has gone further and, in order to strike terror into the hearts of the people, put under arrest some of its most respected leaders. With the inadequate knowledge we have, it is difficult to pronounce a verdict on the merits of the case. But when we find such persons as the editor of the *Tribune*, Dr. Manohar Lal and others taken in custody it is impossible to feel that the Government is not overdoing this part of the business. I know many of them personally; and it strikes me that they are extremely good men and law-abiding citizens whom, it is impossible, in the absence of very strong evidence, to believe to be in any way connected with the disturbance and deserving of arrest or deportation. Measures of this sort are not likely to soothe the excited minds of people, but would, on the contrary, serve only to exasperate them and leave a sense of injury which will disfigure their memory. The feeling will be that the Government had taken advantage of trouble to show their strong hand. I am quite surprised that the province, the Lt.-Governor of which was never tired of trotting out, in season and out of season, the loyalty of his people, happens to be the province where troubles first arose. I do not know how Sir M. O'Dwyer can reconcile the rosy pictures of loyalty which he drew and the extraordinary powers which he thought necessary to use and which a too compliant Government of India allowed him to use without any restraint. I have spoken in public of the shooting at Chandni chowk and said that in India the police and the magistracy are only too ready to give orders to fire on a mob far too soon. In better governed countries, in England, for instance, I doubt very much whether the authorities would be driven so soon to the last degree of patience. I think not. They would have borne much longer. While we were waiting in doubt as to the true version of the happenings at Delhi, tidings from Amritsar came with such quickness that they took our breath away. The saddest feature of the situation in the Punjab is that the measures taken are on such a scale of violence and barbarity that it will be long, long before men's minds are brought back to equilibrium.

What effect will this have on reforms? On a certain class of people, the effect would be to delay the granting of any reforms and put it off till more favourable conditions prevail. On another section, the effect would be to quicken their desire to inaugurate the scheme, to give its share in allaying the discontent prevailing throughout the land. If the Punjab Government wanted to defeat the Reforms, it is difficult to see how they could have done better. It is extremely difficult to judge of acts and very perilous to analyse the motives underlying them. But whatever their real intention might have been, they have done all in their power to make the task of the reformer extremely hard indeed. The *Times*, the source of political opinion in many circles, has already begun to say that the effect of the recent disturbances would be to induce a desire to delay reforms and, when they do take shape, to transfer as little political power as possible. There are however, other political schools of thought—men who take wider view of things, in whom the nobler aspects of imperialism have not been quite blurred by petty considerations of party and vested interests—men who take their eye from History.

I well remember that, sometime ago, when I was writing a pamphlet on the Congress-League scheme, I said in a pro-


phetic sort of spirit that, whenever any scheme for the liberalization of the administration is mooted, the forces of reaction gather such a head that they would even create trouble, to show that they were right in saying that the country was still unfit for any reform. Here, people ill-disposed towards the political progress of India had no necessity to create any disturbances. They had already arisen: it was necessary only to use them for their own purposes.

In England, it would be impossible for us to say a good word of the Rowlatt Act, only because it was accompanied by unfortunate events which, we all said, were sure to follow the passing of the Act. But I do hope that it is possible for us to get our English friends not to lose heart. Whatever our enemies might say, it would, I hope, be possible to persuade our friends that the difficulties of administration need not disturb their confidence in the general loyalty of India:

The troubles which have arisen in the Punjab seem to have been brewing. If we dispassionately review the history of the Punjab for the last 5 or 6 years, we will see that the province was ripe, with discontent, for some such things. The political troubles, the high-handedness of the Lt.-Governor, the alleged harsh methods of recruitment for the army and other undesirable elements of general administration made the province ready to get aflame. The Rowlatt Act only supplied the spark. But it is sad to see things getting from bad to worse. Where the word of clemency had to be spoken and the hand of gentleness to be applied, we hear of a martial law of extraordinary severity, placing us face to face with a situation in which it is difficult to inaugurate the Reform Scheme.

But for every difficulty there is an end. I will not say that a single man can in all cases and in all circumstances, alter the face of things. But, surely, much depends on the nature of the man. As students of political history, you all know that it does make a difference who is at the head of a Government. A man for instance, who is trusted and loved and looked up to by the people, who always takes care to treat them with consideration and who is firm and merciful at the same time,—such a man is a great element in restoring peace. I hope that the troubled province of the Punjab would soon pass under a governor who possesses these personal qualities.

As to the prospects of the Reform Scheme, the situation is not so hopeful as it was some time ago. As I have said repeatedly, every day that passes adds to the strength of the opposition. I am not able to appreciate the point of view of Mr. Baptista when he says that the way of the reform scheme is smooth. I do not read the situation in that extremely hopeful light. The promises which Lord Chelmsford felt himself compelled to make, taken along with the concessions which the Secretary of State has been making by way of increased salaries to the services, and the strong speeches which he and the Maharajah of Bikanir have been obliged to make against the mendacity and unscrupulousness of the Sydenhamites,—all these indicate a danger to the integrity of the original scheme. In view of this fact, all the deputations now going to England will be well advised in trying to save the scheme and concentrate their efforts upon it. We shall all undoubtedly endeavour to the best of our power to improve the scheme; but the chief part of our energy will have to be directed towards the saving of the scheme. We need all the strength which political parties and associations can give us to convince the British public that India will not stand any whitling down of reforms, that any lowering of what I may call the level of reforms adumbrated in the M.-C. Report will be looked upon in India with alarm and would be absolutely incapable of restoring contentment, peace and confidence, and that India's faith in her future under the British flag cannot be settled on a firm basis, if the reforms fail to satisfy the newly kindled aspirations of our people.



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