

The Servant of India

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VOL. XIII No. 40. }

POONA—THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1930.

{ INDIAN SUBSN. Rs. 6.
FOREIGN 15s

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Topics of the Week.

Empire Marketing in Britain.

THE Report of the Empire Marketing Board for the year ending last May, just to hand, is an interesting document showing the efforts that were being made to encourage the consumption in Britain of products grown or produced in the other parts of the Empire as well as of agricultural products grown in Britain itself. The most striking feature, in the rapid increase of Empire imports was fruit, which attained record figures. South Africa did the lion's share of business in this line. Besides fruit she exported to Britain large quantities of eggs, raw sugar and wines. India's contribution was tea which attained the record figure of 307, 600, 000 lbs. There is no reason why India should not export large quantities of tropical fruit, like bananas, for instance, of which British West Indies seem to have a monopoly. Another peculiarly Indian fruit which should have a ready welcome in the British market is the mango. Prof. G. S. Cheema, of the Department of Agriculture in Bombay, has initiated experiments for the export of the Alphonso mango to Britain, and it is gratifying to learn that they hold out much promise. It is a pity that the Department of Agriculture is the first to feel the pinch of the financial depression of the Bombay Government. We hope that the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research in India will come to the rescue. The

Empire Marketing Board spent large amounts of money in giving grants to various organisations and Governments in the Empire to promote research. India came in only for two grants. The Government of Bihar and Orissa was put down for a grant of £. 500 per annum for five years to market Bihar lac in England. The Indian Tea Association was put down for a capital grant of £. 3,125 and an annual grant of £. 687 for five years for research. We hope India will receive greater assistance from the Empire Marketing Board.

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Autocracy in Miraj.

HOW extremely restricted is the elementary civic right of public meeting in most Indian States cannot be easily realised by people having little to do with them. Let us take Miraj, a small state in Southern Mahratta country. No public meeting can take place there which is not permitted by the District Magistrate. And District Magistrates in Indian States are, as is well known, proverbially niggardly in granting such permissions and not particularly discriminating either, so that a meeting at which the most objectionable speeches are to be made and a perfectly innocuous one intended to promote swadeshi equally come under their ban. This might seem strange and even inconceivable to some; but has actually happened in Miraj. Mr. B. V. Shikhare, a public-spirited citizen of the place, wanted to organise a series of lectures on swadeshi, the first lecture of which was to be by Mr. D. V. Divekar, editor of the *Mahratta*. The usual application for permission was made in good time to the District Magistrate, who could not come to a decision until about 15 minutes before the meeting was advertised to begin and his decision was to prohibit the meeting. Mr. Divekar having gone all the way from Poona, the organisers thought it best to defy the prohibition and hold the meeting at which Mr. Shikhare himself presided. Though the principal speaker, Mr. Divekar, was left alone, Mr. Shikhare was prosecuted and sentenced to a fine of Rs. 200 or in default twenty days' simple imprisonment. During his incarceration other people came forward to disobey the magisterial prohibition and as many as 18 meetings were held. But, curiously enough, no action was taken against either the organisers or the speakers. After this there was ground to hope that as a result of certain negotiations going on, better counsels would prevail; but thanks to the obduracy of the Chief and his advisers it was dashed to the ground. Mr. Shikhare then arranged a programme of two lectures every day, one in the capital of the State and the other at some mofussil centre; but the authorities would have none of it. They wanted him to cancel the same; else they would take all possible steps to upset it. As Mr. Shikhare only wanted to assert

the right of free public meeting, he showed his readiness to cancel his programme provided the state authorities promised to lift their ban on public meetings within a definite period. If this happened, he is reported to have gone so far as to promise to refrain from public speaking for six months so as to save the face of the authorities and to protect their prestige. Even this eminently reasonable compromise was turned down, with the result that there was no alternative but to go on with the programme of public meetings. To make these impossible the authorities now resorted to all sorts of devices. Hirelings were sent to Mr. Shikhare's meetings with drums and tom-toms and with instructions to make it impossible for the proceedings to go on. These apparently overdid their part by pouring abuse on respected public leaders like Gandhi, Malaviya, etc., to the great detriment of the public peace. Then, we are told, followed attempts under official auspices to discredit Mr. Shikhare by getting people to sign a statement purporting to say that the movement for which he had made himself responsible was creating disaffection towards the state. But the attempts did not deservedly achieve much success. For our part we fail to understand why the Chief and his advisers should be so touchy on the question of public meeting. One can understand their unwillingness to ban objectionable ones; but why even the unobjectionable ones should be prohibited is a point on which no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming. If they still look upon the public meeting as a great nuisance which must be put down at all costs, they are living in a world which perhaps once existed, but exists no longer. It is high time they revised their notions on the subject, and the sooner they do so, the better for all concerned.

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Punjab Municipalities.

THE Punjab Municipal Administration Report for 1928-29 reveals the lamentable and grave condition of local self-government in that province. "Even in Lahore, the premier municipality in the province, personal and party motives are said to predominate, and rules and regulations to be constantly infringed with much resultant waste of public funds." "The Commissioner of Lahore finds that the control of establishment in Lahore is as bad as it could be; that there is corruption in every department and that systematic frauds have been brought to light; that new posts are created and premature increments given without gauging the effect of the increased expenditure until at present nearly 50 per cent. of the Committee's income is spent on establishment to the detriment of other needs, such as sanitation and lighting." The picture of the general attitude of members of the municipalities towards their responsibilities drawn by the divisional Commissioners in almost all the divisions in the Punjab is more or less similar and very disappointing. Local self-government has been for nearly ten years a transferred subject under the control of a Minister directly responsible to the Legislative Council. But it is a significant fact that the Punjab Government itself now admits that the control exercised by the Ministry of Local Self-Government over the administration of this department is not what it should be. There is no doubt that the Ministers in charge of local self-government in the various provinces have really so far been left without the necessary powers of control. But this is not the only cause of mal-administration of local bodies in the Punjab. The extension of the vicious system of communal electorates and communal representation to municipal bodies appears to be more responsible for the corruption and abuse of power than anything else.

G. I. P. Railway Strikers' Grievances.

IT will be remembered that in connection with the G. I. P. Railwaymen's strike of February last the Government of India promised to reengage all strikers that would resume work before the 15th March. It was also made clear that this would mean no break of service or reduction of pay or grade. The only qualification was "if their vacancies were not permanently filled up." In the case of those whose posts were permanently filled up, a time-limit of six months was fixed. The period has elapsed; but the men find to their great regret and inconvenience that on some pretext or the other the G. I. P. Railway administration is not too anxious to carry the undertaking into effect. Most of the strikers presented themselves for work on the suspension of the strike, but, we are told, were refused reinstatement and registration, though their vacancies had not been permanently filled up and were asked to agree to certain conditions which did not form part of the settlement. These irregularities, when brought to the notice of the proper quarters, did not bring any relief. But it appears the G. I. P. Railway itself ordered an inquiry into them by means of one of its officers who is said to have made no effort to understand the strikers' point of view. And, what is more, though two months have gone by since his inquiry started, his report is still in the making, the strikers suffering great hardships in the meantime. We further understand that the opportunity is taken by the administration to effect retrenchment in their workshops staff. Now retrenchment is of course always welcome and desirable; but it should not be availed of for the purpose of victimisation, as seems to be happening in this case. This is unfair and should be avoided. And, what is more, an honest attempt should be made to carry out the terms of the settlement of last March. As it is, the situation in the country is full of dissatisfaction and grave possibilities. Why, we wonder, should the G. I. P. Railway administration not refrain, if it can, from aggravating it still further by any action on its part?

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Sukkur Firing.

THE report of the committee appointed to inquire into the happenings at Sukkur on the night of the 7th August last has been published. The full report is not before us, but the press note issued by the Commissioner in Sind is. It seems that on the night of the 3rd August there was serious communal rioting in Sukkur followed by "three days of violence, rapine and murder." This aggravated the mutual suspicion between the two great communities, Hindu and Mahomedan. On the night of the 7th of that month while some Hindus were sleeping; on the roof of a building, they saw some men approaching them from the adjoining roof. These they took to be robbers. An alarm was raised which brought to the scene a number of armed policemen. This frightened the Hindus who began to run in all directions. The Police looked upon them as escaping robbers, whom they called upon to stop or they would fire. As the Hindus did not stop, the Police resorted to firing which, as the Press Note says, completed the panic. The Hindus rushed into their rooms and bolted the doors. The police were still under the impression that they were dealing with robbers and forced open the doors of the rooms and arrested the occupants. The Press Note tells us that "the Committee has held that it was at this point that the injuries were inflicted on the Hindus, and that it was the Police who inflicted them with lathis and the butt-ends of their guns." While the Committee thinks that the Police acted in good faith in imagining the Hindus to be robbers, the

force used by them in effecting the arrests was, in its opinion, "altogether excessive and unjustifiable." Be it noted that it is the verdict of a committee consisting not of Congressmen, the sworn enemies of the Government or irresponsible non-officials but exclusively of officials like the City Magistrate, the Special First Class Magistrate and the Deputy Superintendent of Police. It is a pity the Committee has not been able to spot out the culprits or to fix individual responsibility. But we think the Government with unofficial help ought to track down the offenders so that they might be taught a lesson. In its absence it is poor comfort to the aggrieved Hindus to know that excessive force was used by the Police.

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Panvel Tragedy.

Not less tragic were the happenings last week at Chirnar, near Panvel in Kolaba District, the scene of forest satyagraha. It would appear that after the cutting down of trees by satyagrahis was over, some arrests were effected by the police party present on the spot. It is stated that when the arrested leaders were handcuffed, it enraged the mob which numbered about 5,000. The Magistrate Mr. Joshi, on seeing the temper of the crowd and fearing a disturbance of the public peace, ordered the handcuffs to be removed. What effect this had on the mob is not clear from newspaper reports, but there is no doubt it must have had a pacifying effect. While the magistrate was returning to join the police force, which was only 25 strong, the police are reported to have opened fire, under whose orders remains a mystery for the time, the first volley hitting the magistrate fatally. A forest official was also killed. But it is not clear whether he fell a victim to police bullets or to mob fury. The bodies of two constables were later discovered with their heads battered. The presumption is that it was a repetition of Sholapur. The circumstances surrounding this sad incident are still shrouded in mystery and what is needed is a public inquiry into them by means of an independent committee of officials and non-officials. There is reason to believe that as in the case of Sukkur one will be ordered on this occasion too. We cannot too strongly emphasise the fact that the committee to inspire public confidence must consist of really impartial and independent persons.

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Magisterial Excesses.

ON the top of Police excesses come the excesses committed by Magistrates.

It will be remembered that some weeks ago the Madras High Court set aside as illegal an order of the District Magistrate of Guntur prohibiting the wearing of Gandhi caps in Guntur town, and also the order of the Stationary Sub-Magistrate of Rajahmundry requiring the people of that town to remove National flags from their house-tops. This week the same High Court has set aside, on revision petition, the conviction of Mr. N. Satyanarayana of Alamuru in East Godavari Dt. who had been sentenced by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Cocanada to two years' rigorous imprisonment, and committed to C. Class and fined of Rs. 1000 for the alleged offence of inciting people to break the salt laws. Mr. Satyanarayana is a very well known worker in the field of Co-operation and rural uplift, and is a director of the Provincial Co-operative Bank and a Secretary of the Provincial Co-operative Union. The benefits that he and his friends have been able to confer on the villagers of the Alamuru area through co-operative societies, village panchayats, village libraries, etc., are almost unequalled in the

Madras Presidency. He had not joined the Civil Disobedience movement lest his co-operative work should suffer. He denied the charge as absolutely false and wished to be represented by a barrister and asked for a short adjournment for instructing him. This right he was denied, and on the evidence of the Police Sub-Inspector and the Revenue Inspector he was convicted and awarded the most severe sentence that the Magistrate was empowered to give. Justice Bardswell characterised the trial in the lower Court as "horribly summary", held that it was vitiated on account of the barrister's services being denied and set aside the conviction rather than order a re-trial, as Mr. Satyanarayana had already undergone three months' imprisonment.

Of like nature are the strictures of the Bombay High Court on the conduct of the magistrate in Mrs. Lakhmani's case. Mrs. Lakhmani is the daughter of the late Mr. Badruddin Tyabji, an ex-President of the National Congress and for some time judge of the Bombay High Court. As a temperance worker she 'loitered' near a liquor shop and tried to wean away people from drink and was charged under the picketing ordinance. The magistrate of Kurla found her guilty and sentenced her to four months' rigorous imprisonment and to pay a fine of Rs. 100. The sentence was later commuted by Government to one of simple imprisonment. The Sessions Judge thought the conviction wrong and sent up the case to the High Court. His view was that the drink habit was almost universally regarded as very bad and any attempt to wean away drinkers is generally looked upon as praiseworthy. He also held that the evidence did not warrant the presumption that because the accused loitered near the shop, it was with a view to molest the owner and hinder the drinker from entering it. Mr. Justice Madgaonkar, who along with another judge heard the reference, found it difficult "to hold that a person who rightly or wrongly was convinced of the evils of drink and felt it his duty to prevent a would-be customer from resorting to the liquor shop should be presumed to have caused any loss to the shopkeeper or interference with his right." He went further and said "It was not going too far to say that in the case of the ordinary temperance worker, it was the moral aspect which occupied his mind and not the gain or loss to the shopkeeper." No temperance worker could have put his case more correctly. The sentence passed on Mrs. Lakhmani appeared to him "excessive" and as pointed out by him, "might even be criticised as vindictive." He further added a warning to magistrates which they would do well to bear in mind: "It is necessary at all times, but not in the least in times such as this, when law and order are undermined, that the courts should not by passing such sentences still further undermine the respect for law and order. Such sentences defeat their very object and have necessarily a contrary effect than perhaps what they were intended to do."

Mr. H. V. Tulpule of this city who was convicted under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and whose case was also taken to the High Court by the local Bar Association, was less lucky, though the commutation of his sentence to one of simple imprisonment must be regarded as a gain. This shows that even in this case the High Court considered the sentence of the lower court unduly severe.

The letter and the spirit of the law have been violated in many cases by the magistracy for the convenience of the Police or other executive authorities, and very few of them at all come up before the higher tribunals. For that very reason it is incumbent on the local Governments to take special care to see that law is not abused by the magistracy and that mere technicalities do not defeat justice.

* * *

Articles.

IMPERIAL RELATIONS.

AS we write one of the most momentous sessions of the Imperial Conference opens in London.

This Conference will settle more than any conference before it the political and economic relations between the various units in the Commonwealth of Nations. Though in his reference to the agenda of the Conference some months ago, the Premier, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, spoke at greater length on the economic relations, he took care to give the first place to the political. The prospect of economic co-operation depends very materially on the satisfactory settlement of the political status of the Dominions and India *vis a vis* Great Britain. In no uncertain voice the Imperial Conference of 1926 and the Balfour Note have declared the Dominions to be the absolute equals of Great Britain, and more recently, the report of the Committee on Merchant Shipping, etc, has further emphasised and elucidated the declaration. About one attribute of Dominion Status, however, there has not been absolute unanimity of opinion among publicists entitled to respectful hearing. There is a small minority of distinguished men who deny the constitutional right of the Dominions to secede from the Commonwealth. Sharp distinctions have been drawn between the constitutional and political interpretations of secession. While 'free association' implies, politically speaking the freedom to sever the association, the association, which may have undertaken corporate obligations, may not be severed without the consent of the rest of the partners, and without liquidating the obligations. There are those who see in the paradoxical phrase, 'free association', or to put it differently, free bondage, the very essence of the British Commonwealth, its pride and its unique achievement. It were formalism, bordering on vandalism, to attempt to analyse it or stress the antithesis in it, particularly when there is no occasion for it. No Dominion has yet made up its mind to secede, and therefore, it is not wise to dissect what is after all a living organism.

While there is much to be said for this view, it is, we fear, more unwise to shirk the issue any longer. South Africa, under Gen. Hertzog, has made up her mind to raise the question at the Imperial Conference and insist on an unequivocal declaration. There will be some among the Indian delegation to the Round Table Conference who are sure to raise the question. It is best, therefore, to tackle the question at the Imperial Conference and smooth the way for the cooperation of the units of the Commonwealth. It is best to answer the question from a broad political, commonsense point of view than be lost in constitutional pedantry. The unity and survival of the Commonwealth itself demands that the right of the Dominions to secede from it should be unequivocally allowed. The wider the door is opened to secession the closer will the Dominions stick together. As Dr. Gilbert Slater, who was for some

time Professor of Economics in the Madras University, said in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* of the 9th inst. "It is when the door is slammed and barred that human nature impels an effort to burst it through. If the door of the British Commonwealth of Nations is always open for egress or ingress, no constituent member will be anxious to go out without good reason." The denial of the right gives no moral or material advantage. It makes no material difference to the Commonwealth if a Dominion has the right to secede or not. A Dominion, with full internal and even external autonomy, with its resources for defence and offence fully developed, with direct relations with foreign powers, can, if it were so disposed, do as much harm to the Commonwealth as a similar state outside the Commonwealth. If a Dominion really makes up its mind to go out of the Commonwealth it cannot and should not be coerced to stay within, an unwilling partner, an enemy within the gates.

While, therefore, the Commonwealth stands to lose nothing, instead, will gain enormously, by gladly conceding the right of secession, it will, by denying it, only create disharmony and discord. The Dominions will strain at the least constantly, and become more obstructive than helpful. It may be urged with some justification that the right to secede should be subject to certain conditions, what may compendiously be called the liquidation of corporate obligations. The inclusion within the Commonwealth and joint credit of the nations within it gives certain benefits to each member, as for instance, cheaper credit in the world market. Granting the reasonableness of the argument, we should still deprecate the insertion of the conditions, and would rely entirely on goodwill and mutual trust and confidence. It is only a sentimental right that is demanded; nobody seriously proposes to exercise it. For the benefits of inclusion are so patent that it would be very foolish on the part of any constituent member to exclude itself from the Commonwealth.

The same argument applies with even greater force to the relations of India with the Commonwealth. The first need of the moment is to satisfy the *izzat* of India. If South Africa, with full Dominion Status, still chafes for the right of secession, India will not be satisfied with a lesser status. As the Rt. Hon. Sastri has more than once pointed out in his addresses in England, it is very unwise to define Dominion Status differently when applied to India. Why, it will make all the difference in the world whether India's goal is defined as Dominion Status subject to transitional reservations or as a great step towards Dominion Status. The first is the right thing; the second is fatal.

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND BRITISH OPINION.

THE peace negotiations and the Indian personnel of the Round Table Conference were the staple of comments in the British Press in mail week. The result of the Sapru-Jayakar mission, however deplorable, does not seem to have surprised anyone there. There was also widespread realisation of

the fact that the Round Table Conference would have to proceed on its appointed task without the assistance and cooperation of the Congress leaders which the *Manchester Guardian* goes so far as to describe as "an unmitigated misfortune." The Congress no doubt holds "the pride of place" among Indian political groups, and not merely among Hindu ones, as fondly imagined by the *Times*; but that is no reason for allowing its absence to "wreck" the Conference. This is all the more true when it is remembered that, "in essentials, there is no great difference in principle between the demands" of the Congress and the other political groups. We should have thought that where such large interests were at stake, nobody would be petty-minded enough to blame the Viceroy for allowing facilities to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar to interview the Congress leaders in jail or to the Congress leaders to come together for mutual consultations. Indeed the *Times* believes the Government was "fully justified in giving all possible assistance." Whatever misgivings the *Daily Telegraph* may have had on the point when the mission started on its self-imposed and patriotic labours, it now thinks that "it would have been unwise to refuse to Indian moderate leaders an opportunity from which they and all others like-minded hoped so much." Not so the *Observer*, however, which cannot understand "why they (negotiations) were sanctioned," "for there never was any possibility of alleged success except upon terms which would have made Mr. Gandhi dictator of India and the Viceroy his subordinate." We do not see why the *Observer* should have been in such a hurry to prejudge the result of the negotiations. As remarked by the *Manchester Guardian*, the failure need not be regarded as so much waste nor even as "a sign of weakness." But to come back to the *Observer*, it has a fling at the peace-makers, who,

Though usually called "moderates," are not at all moderate in the sense imagined by a large part of the British Press. They are both in favour of the surrender of the British Raj, though they are good enough to wish to bring it about by persuasion and with a little gradualness instead of summarily and by force.

The failure of the peace mission is, as can be easily imagined, attributed to the impossible nature of the Congress leaders' demands, which strike the *Daily Telegraph* as "the proposals of a lunatic" and objection was taken to the terms of the letter written by them to the Viceroy on August 15. According to the *Times*, the letter "was couched in a style that encouraged no hopes of peace." There was also a tendency to fasten the blame for the failure not so much on Mr. Gandhi as on the Nehrus. Indeed the *Times* says it in so many terms: "any tendency on the part of Mr. Gandhi to compromise was overborne by the Nehrus, father and son." The opinion of the *Manchester Guardian* is noteworthy:

The fact which emerges most clearly at this stage is that the Congress leaders are as uncompromising in their attitude as ever; that the Viceroy's sincerity and generosity—and he is not one to be niggardly in such matters—meet with no response on their side. They abide by the old formulæ and recklessly stand aloof from every attempt to arrive at a peaceful and reasonable solution of those

vast problems which arise out of any consideration of India's future; they imagine cunning and self-interest where there is really only a desire to give them all they want, battling against an Imperialism which no longer exists except as a sad feeling of responsibility for the dire consequences of Imperialism in those countries in which it has raged.

As is only to be expected, the *Sunday Times* is more emphatic:

But few, if any, even of those most closely in sympathy with Indian aims, seem to have anticipated success for the discussions; and when the terms on which alone the extremists were prepared to agree are examined, it becomes more and more clear, not merely that a settlement was impossible, but even that, in a sense, it was almost undesirable.

But let us concern ourselves more with the future than with the past. And here let us say in fairness that none of the more important organs of British opinion at any rate suggest the abandonment of the Conference. Diehard opinion as represented by the *Daily Telegraph* would of course look upon the absence of Congress representatives from the Conference as "rather a gain than a loss; for there is no proper place in discussions aiming at practical and rational results for those whose policy is simply fanatical unreason." The *Observer* is sceptical as to the results of the Conference. It may meet, but the paper prophesies that "no good will come of it unless British statesmanship at home shows that it has sane realism in its mind and courage in its marrow."

The *Manchester Guardian* shows, as usual, a better sense of appreciation of the realities of the situation when in assessing "the power and sphere of influence of the Congress party" it says:

Some would have us regard Congress as the spokesman of India, others as but a handful of agitators, full of sound and fury certainly, but signifying very little. Somewhere between these two extremes lies the truth. Congress is not India, but it is also very definitely a force to be reckoned with. Numerically it is probably not very large—little more than the tiny minority of educated Indians. Yet, apart from the fact that these men have considerable influence amongst the uneducated masses, it has to be remembered as well that any system of government in India depends entirely on them for its personnel. The universities are the only source of supply of Government officials, and the universities are Congress to a man. Again, Congress has much influence amongst the Indian business community.

As regards Mr. Gandhi, while it takes note of his "astonishing power" "over Indians of all types, especially over the peasants", it blandly states that

he is not a politician, and his association with men like the Nehrus is not an easy one, nor is it likely to persist. He is happiest in his Ashram with his spinning wheel, and though from time to time he feels it to be his duty to come out of his retirement and make a political gesture, like his recent march to the sea, he does it somehow without conviction, giving the impression of acting against his own better judgment. Mr. Gandhi cares more for the idea of freedom than for the substance of freedom, and is a fine prophet but a poor hand at framing a Constitution.

The paper also foreshadows a division in Congress circles and a tendency to swing to the Right, as happened "just before the Simon Commission went to India", when "India has a constitution which, if not the equivalent of Dominion Status, must be, whatever happens, a good deal nearer to it than the present

one." Whether history will repeat itself on this occasion will soon be clear.

British Press views on the Indian Delegation are varied. According to the *Manchester Guardian*, the Delegation "will be impressively representative of all interests outside Congress, political, religious, racial and economic." The *Morning Post's* article on the subject is full of mischief; and is more or less in the "I-told-you-so" strain. It would have liked to have along with the list of acceptances, one "of those who declined the invitation." If the insinuation is that this list would have been as big as, if not bigger than, the list of acceptances the paper is surely labouring under a delusion. For so far as our information goes, there have been but few non-acceptances. But perhaps the *Post* knows better. It then remarks:

Having failed with the Extremists the Indian Government makes what show it can with the Moderates. PETRUCCIO, having failed to tame the shrew, consoles himself with her less truculent sister.

In due course we are informed that "the Princes do not ask or want to be included in any British Indian constitution," their presence at the Conference being limited to safeguarding their own interests and to the prevention of any encroachments by Indian politicians on their independence. The *Post's* interest is centred in the group of Liberal politicians "who have failed in the past either to oppose the agitators or to support the Government." On the strength of information supplied by its all-knowing Simla Correspondent, it makes the astounding statement that "several of the best known among them, like Sastri and Sapru, have not dared to seek election either to the central or Provincial legislatures." So far as the former at any rate is concerned, we have no hesitation in saying that the statement is groundless. Then follows a deliberate attempt to belittle the representative character of the Liberal delegates:

Yet the list is largely composed of the names of those Liberal politicians. The Indian electorate consists of a trifling percentage of the Indian population; these Liberals represent probably a trifling minority of the electorate. Yet they form, as far as we can see, the largest group in the list.

After referring to some of the Muslim delegates, it expresses its preference for "the more candid, if less accommodating, Gandhi" knowing full well that there was no chance of that happening. Not knowing the principle upon which these selections are made the wondering world is told:

The Viceroy, in fact, has gone out into the highways and hedges of India and Burma and collected these gentlemen to furnish guests for the constitutional feast in default of others who refused to come.

In explaining how the Labour Government stands to gain by the Conference, the *Morning Post* says:

They are in a manner almost as good as a majority; they protect and prolong the life of an Administration. It would be considered as barbarous to defeat a Government about to have a Conference, as to hang a woman about to have a child. But from the point of view of a settlement in India we cannot see the advantage.

If in spite of these gloomy forebodings the Conference achieves any measure of success, the *Morning Post* cannot be blamed for it. So far as it was concerned

it had done everything it could to prejudice it in the public eye.

It is a great relief to turn now to the *Daily Herald* which likens the Conference without the Congress representatives to Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark and then says:

The Viceroy found Mr. Gandhi's terms impossible. Reluctantly, therefore, he found it also impossible to ask Mr. Gandhi to attend the Conference. Nor, were the invitation issued, would it be accepted.

It is an entirely regrettable position. Let no one pretend that the British Indian representatives fully represent India. They do not.

Gandhi is still the heart of the Indian Nationalist Movement. Congress is the spearhead of that "very strong, deep and urgent desire for equality of status" of which Mr. Benn has spoken.

Yet Gandhi will not be present. Largely, we think, it is his own fault. His terms to the Viceroy were in a sense an attempt to prejudge questions which fall within the province of the Round-Table Conference.

The Viceroy approached Mr. Gandhi in an attempt to meet him. Mr. Gandhi, it seems to many, virtually refused, by his terms, to co-operate in an essential enterprise.

That Mr. Gandhi should attend the Conference is the need of the moment. Very sincerely we still hope that he will.

In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, Dr. Gilbert Slater pleads for India being conceded the right to secede from the British Empire on two conditions: (1) that the corresponding British right to sever political connections with India be also asserted, and (2) that the right of the racially, linguistically, and culturally separate Burmese nation to secede from India be conceded. So far as the latter goes, the Indians in Burma have unequivocally declared in favour of separation, if Burma desires it. As Dr. Slater points out, freedom to secede is to Indian nationalists "the acid test of equality of status." Many Englishmen speak and act as if the right would be exercised the moment it is conceded to India. Dr. Slater says:

We need not fear that if the right to secede is recognised unequivocally it will be exercised prematurely. Secession is much more likely to come if the right is denied. It is when the door is slammed and barred that human nature impels an effort to burst through. If the door of the British Commonwealth of Nations is always open for egress or ingress no constituent member will be anxious to go out without good reason.

Mr. T. Harwood Redfern, Joint Secretary, Commonwealth of India League, also puts forward the same plea in the columns of the *Manchester Guardian*. He rightly reminds us that "although the Congress is not all India, a conference without the Congress cannot represent India." As the proposed Conference fails to satisfy Dr. Slater's "acid test of equality of status," Mr. Redfern fears that it is "doomed to be inconclusive." "The Indians who come—such as will—will come as suppliants arguing with a master, not as equals contracting with equals. Those whose influence counts for most in India will not come on such a footing of indignity and impotence." He emphasises the need for an assurance that a "constitution satisfactory to the representatives of the Indian people in the main, would be ratified without interference by the

British Parliament and could include the right to secede, which is the hall-mark of freedom."

Anything less than this, means tutelage, paternalism, overriding guardianship all the marks of bondage which Indians strain to be rid of. Leave out the right to secede, and India is bound to the Empire by something other than her own choice. Leave out the promise to endorse her own self-chosen Constitution and she receives what is given her, not what she creates by her own men. Propose to aid in drawing up the Constitution, except at her invitation, and it becomes a thing enforced upon her and but another system for the failings of which she is entitled to blame the British.

India continues to occupy Mr. Churchill's thoughts. Speaking at Glasgow in mail week he made a pointed reference to the breakdown of the peace negotiations and poured ridicule on the Government of India for opening negotiations with Mr. Gandhi who "dictates terms from his prison which even the weakest of all human Governments cannot accept," and wasting a whole month. He continues:

But, much more has been wasted than time. The authority and dignity of the Government of India have been deeply prejudiced. The prestige of Mr. Gandhi has been enormously enhanced. If the Government of an Oriental country, or indeed of any country, wish to make a rebel powerful and to rally all his supporters around him, there is one sure way to do it. The way is to persecute him and supplicate him alternately. That is to say, by imprisoning him without trial the Government win for him the sympathy of millions; by supplicating him they inform those millions how much they fear his power. In fact there could not be a more perfect plan for fanning and fomenting Mr. Gandhi's mischief-making influence than that which the India Office and the Government of India have pursued.

If Mr. Gandhi had broken the law he should have been tried and punished according to law, and while he is serving any sentence imposed upon him by the courts the Imperial Government ought not to negotiate with him in any way. The only safe rule is to follow the well-marked paths of law and justice, and calmly to face the consequences of their impartial administration.

As remarked by Sir Muhammad Shafi in his letter published in the *Times*, it is outbursts like Mr. Churchill's that "are, beyond doubt, calculated to weaken the hands of the Dominion Status Party and to strengthen those of the Congress School." "Looker-on" writing in the *Manchester Guardian* also says that Mr. Churchill's "strong words"

are reminiscent of the strong words that Lord Birkenhead used at one time when dealing with the Irish problem. After a period of grave unrest Lord Birkenhead took a responsible part in establishing by treaty the Irish Free State. Mr. Churchill's strong words may lead to a long period of bitter hostility between India and Great Britain, to repressions, and finally to a new humiliation for Great Britain. After a period of grave hostility and unrest Mr. Winston Churchill may then be willing to negotiate a treaty between India and Britain embodying conditions going far beyond what are sufficient to-day, if the right to freedom is conceded.

But it is useless to expect that Mr. Churchill will at this time of the day learn wisdom.

D. V. A.

Our European Letter.

THE LEAGUE ASSEMBLY.

(From our Own Correspondent.)

GENEVA, September 18.

THE FIRST WEEK'S DISCUSSIONS.

THE Eleventh Assembly settled down to the regular business of the sessions after the customary opening speech delivered by the President of the Council, Senor Ziumeta of Venezuela and the election of Mr. Titulesco, the Rumanian Minister in London, to the presidential chair.

The event of the week occurred early and consisted of the speech of M. Briand about the proposed European Federation and Mr. Henderson's speech which has been widely interpreted as a reply to it. Judging from the general Press comments M. Briand's speech has been considered as a rather weak defence of his brilliant idea and it is also believed that Mr. Henderson skilfully turned attention away from the plea of the veteran French statesman by setting forth the cause of disarmament as forcibly as he did. One of the reports from Berlin indeed stated that so great was the effect of Mr. Henderson's plea for disarmament, a traditional German thesis repeated in this Assembly by Herr Curtius, that even on the eve of the elections in Germany, public interest turned from party politics to the happenings at Geneva. There were many speeches on this subject and they tended to follow an indefinite and tortuous course until they were brought to a point by the definite suggestions of Mr. Motta, the representative of Switzerland. He made it quite clear that in the realities of the existing situation in Europe and in the light of the history of the last decade, the proposed federation can only be a moral entity, and the proper place for studying its nature was the Sixth Committee. Accordingly the proposal has been sent to it for consideration.

Meanwhile some pointed conclusions have been drawn in various quarters on this account, which however must be accepted with caution. It has been said for instance that the fact that M. Briand has so easily departed from his original position of setting up an independent organisation and resigned himself to his scheme being made part of the League is a sign of the total defeat of his idea. It has also been said that by pressing the cause of disarmament at this instant Mr. Henderson has succeeded in dealing a severe blow to the French attempt at organising Europe which is, after all, what is really at the bottom of the Briand idea. As against these suggestions, it has to be borne in mind that M. Briand, notwithstanding his undoubted idealism, is too shrewd a tactician to expect his idea to pass through in its original shape. Those, who are acquainted with the history of the Geneva Proposal and the various forms and shapes in which it has again and again appeared after its apparent demise, will hesitate to pass a final verdict on the Briand scheme from what is after all the very first stage in its evolution.

That is why such an experienced journalist as M. William Martin of the *Journal de Geneve* who sees in the Briand idea a danger to the League, as the Maharaja of Bikaner, (whose speech centred on this subject) also does, feels that the Assembly is playing with words.

"Mr. Motta spoke of the procedure, and said that the European question should not be abstracted from any of the regular organs of the League of Nations, and should be sent to the Sixth Committee in the first instance. This thesis was opposed to that of those States who held to an exclusive European Conference. We must render homage to the ability of French diplomacy; step by step, with reassuring words it has led the Assembly, including Switzerland, which has finally ceded so as not to be isolated, into unanimity. But to take this committee composed of 27 European States for a League Committee is to deceive oneself. It conforms neither to the regulations nor to the spirit of the League; it is an emanation from the European Conference and all that the defenders of universalism have obtained is to have this Committee baptised League of Nations Committee-*le Captivo carpem*. The Anglo-neutrals have exchanged a reality against a word."

More will certainly be heard of these discussions which will not be concluded in this Assembly, and a few considerations may be helpful in understanding it. They may be summarised as follows:

(1) The discussions in this year's Assembly have reflected the spirit of transition and uncertainty which has characterised the political situation in Europe for some time. As the results of the recent German elections have unmistakably testified, the order which was built on the treaty of Versailles stands in need of revision.

(2) That order was the product of political passions and the League was expressly devised to bring about the necessary change gradually. Ever since its inception it has tried to accomplish this task within its limits, but these limits are now being felt acutely.

(3) At the time the League was set up, it was conceived on a world basis, and the exclusion of United States was not envisaged, nor that of Soviet Russia.

(4) These last-mentioned factors have had a profound bearing on the character of the League. They have become permanent and the manner of re-organising the League appropriately to the existing situation is therefore a pressing question. In this connexion the problem of making the League Covenant compatible with the Kellogg Pact which this Assembly will decide, is a most important one.

(5) It is universally admitted that the order established at Versailles must be changed, but a political change cannot obviously be based on considerations of abstract justice. From a political point of view the London Naval treaty and its implications and the pointed reluctance of British public opinion to assume the responsibility for the working of Article 16 of the Covenant at present are enormously important. What is obvious is that the League must have leadership and its organisation must be made so close as to be effective.

It is too soon to say what ultimate form the

present proposals will take, but if European peace and world peace should be safeguarded, there is no escape from the conclusion that Franco-British cooperation is a vital necessity. To what extent and in what manner this will be possible, this Assembly will perhaps show.

Reviews.

WORLD PEACE.

WAR OR PEACE! ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

By V. H. RUTHERFORD. (Williams and Norgate, London) 1930. 19 cm. 96p. 2/6.

THIS handy volume by Mr. V. H. Rutherford is an excellent contribution to the political literature of the day. The purpose of the book is to awaken the conscience of the world against the folly of imperialism. As Great Britain today is the high priest of this cult, Mr. Rutherford has endeavoured specially and with great success to expose the "frightfulness" of British Imperialism and to bring home to the minds of British jingoists the error of their ways, so that the flood of British freedom may be turned from the "bogs and sands" into which it has sunk into the open sea of Internationalism, of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. In the elaboration of his theme, the author has to deal with a wide range of subjects, such as disarmament, the freedom of the seas, the development of Anglo-American relations, the task before the League of Nations, the evolution of the mandatory system and the future of the coloured races, but considerations of space, however, have rendered it necessary that these subjects should be dealt with in tabloid form.

No section of the book is distinguished by greater depth of thought, clarity of analysis, or boldness in treatment than the chapter dealing with India. The conclusions reached on the Indian question are particularly welcome at the present time when a crisis of the first magnitude had been reached in the history of India's connection with England. Dealing with the Indian problem, Mr. Rutherford points out that as long as a fifth of the human race remains in political subjection and economic servitude, freedom and internationalism will be impossible of realisation. Rudely tearing off the mask of benevolence from its face, the author exposes British imperialism in India in its true role as the most formidable obstacle in the path of freedom, internationalism, peace and progress. The handling of the Indian question, he asserts, is the acid test of British fidelity to the ideals of peace. Mr. Rutherford has the courage of his convictions and, therefore, does not hesitate to call a spade a spade. With forceful pen and inexorable logic, he makes the British victims of imperial insanity see the supreme folly of looking upon Napoleon and the Kaiser as road-hogs and murderers, whilst Clive and Rhodes are set upon pedestals as noble crusaders, bearers of British culture and "empire-builders". With refreshing candour, he points out that in the eyes of the spiritual East, the much vaunted British culture is nothing but "commercialism in shining armour", and that when applied by bombs, bayonets, and battle-ships, Gandhi's description of it as "satanic" is essentially true. This unsparing flagellation, coming as it does from a right-thinking Englishman, cannot be charged with any racial bias, and should, therefore, carry conviction to those to whom it is addressed. Pursuing his arguments to their logical conclusion, the author maintains that the British

Labour Government can save the situation only by being as bold and as resolute in India as it was in Egypt, at the Hague, and at Geneva. According to him the reactionary counsels of Tory "Imperialists" who would advocate repression should be discarded and Dominion Status should be conceded immediately to India. Mr. Rutherford's frank outspokenness and his transparent sincerity come as a whiff of God's fresh air into an atmosphere rendered fetid by the spider-web subtleties and plausible sophistries of many a bureaucratic "die-hard".

The Indian question, however, is treated in the book only as a side issue and the country's sad case is cited only by way of illustration of the author's central theme, that internationalism furnishes the only comprehensive solution to the problems of War, Empire and Freedom. It is his further contention that in the League of Nations and its offshoot the International Labour Office the principle has been permanently enshrined. The author points out that during ten years of good report and evil report the League has grown in power and wisdom, capturing the imagination and respect of the world, and is now rightly regarded as the world's "parliament" for the settlement of world problems and the ensurance of peace. To the populations of countries like Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and India, and of those countries of Africa, which are subject in greater or less degree to foreign nations the League conveys a great message of hope and comfort. Imperialism is incompatible with Internationalism; the subtle alchemy of Geneva is sure to effect a change in the "empire" complex of the imperialist nations of today. The powers of moral suasion of the League have been tapped only to an infinitesimal extent up to now, and yet the principles for which the League stands have already found expression in such achievements as the complete evacuation of the Rhine by the allied armies, the grant of Home Rule to Ireland, the practical handing back of Egypt to Egyptians, and the almost certain admission of Iraq to the League in the near future. It is also pointed out that in the L. L. O. Geneva possesses an agent of the greatest potency for the ensurance of social justice, and to see that the workers of the world are getting a square deal from capitalists. It is, therefore, not too much to hope that under the wide and humane guidance of Geneva, the old policy of pursuit of empire would be abandoned, and that by the grant of home-rule to India and by the extension of the mandatory system or of modified forms of it to all those countries which are at present in a state of political subjection, a really happy international structure of which every component national unit will be a free agent will be evolved in the not too distant future.

Such, in brief, is the argument of the book. The author, however, posits a condition precedent to the achievement of this consummation. America and England should co-operate wholeheartedly for the ensurance of world peace and the maintenance of international democracy—first, by coming to an agreement between themselves on the internationalisation of the seas and waterways, and on compulsory arbitration, and secondly, by America joining the League of Nations. If the peace of the world is dependant on the League Nations, the success of the League is no less dependent on the hearty co-operation of England and America—hence the title of the book "War or Peace? England and America".

K. E. MATTHEW.

THE CONSUMPTION OF WEALTH.

THE CONSUMPTION OF WEALTH. By ELIZABETH ELLIS HOYT. (Macmillan, New York.) 1928. 20cm. 344p. 8/6.

CONSUMPTION as a study is generally neglected in economic literature and for this reason we welcome the present volume which discusses it from all points of view including that of general sociology. After bringing out the relation of culture to consumption in a preliminary survey Dr. Hoyt discusses the psychology of consumption as it unfolds itself in societies, the central feature of which, according to her, is the dominance of social habits, traditions and customs even in higher cultures. The most important contribution of the author to the theory of consumption is the close analysis of the variety of factors affecting consumption in the cultural history of man. With regard to the influence of racial factors, the author refuses to endorse the current theory that any of the three races is biologically superior to any other; she recognizes that race is a convenient term used to cover many influences of diverse sorts. The merits and demerits of modern aggressive methods of salesmanship as a factor affecting consumption are impartially discussed by Dr. Hoyt in this connection; she admits that they stimulate interests which are sometimes harmful and often useless and that the cost of such methods is excessive. In the chapter on taxation and tariffs as factors affecting consumption, Dr. Hoyt has emphasized the consumer's point of view which has in the past been neglected; with regard to tariffs in general she refuses to believe that they are "honest efforts to serve the people", since they are generally subject to corruption.

A whole section is devoted to the discussion of the ways in which consumption is consciously controlled by the consumer. This is a new field of investigation and Dr. Hoyt has traversed it very successfully. She thinks that in the United States there are perceptible the beginnings of an effort to determine the conditions most favourable to healthy physical and sane mental life. She rightly bewails the woeful ignorance of consumers about the goods that are best for them and suggests the formation of a technology of consumption protecting him against fraud, teaching him the methods of recognizing size, weight and quality and teaching him what is best for his purposes. She approves of standardization laws and would welcome an extension of their field. She further recommends the development of the art of consumption leading to the best arrangement of our interests and the cultivation of satisfactions enduring as well as joyous instead of those that are evanescent. Dr. Hoyt has discussed the part played by the State in aiding and regulating consumption, without indulging in social utopias of the ultra-socialistic pattern.

The survey of the consumption of different cultures and nations given in the last part is not only full of erudition but highly stimulating and suggestive. The author shows how the standard of life depends on the philosophy of life held by different types of culture. The author distinguishes between the standard of living and the scale of living, defining the former as a sum total of satisfactions and not of things consumed; this is a vital distinction which is ignored in most of the studies of standards of life. In discussing the relation of population and the standard of life she refrains from dogmatizing about the effect of birth-control on the raising of the standard of living and this caution is a wise one in view the wide divergences of opinion on the question. It is interesting to note that the minimum American scale of living regarded as fair in the case of wage-earners ranges from \$ 1,500 to \$ 2,000; this really

corresponds to the income of the rich in India. The intriguing question in India is whether we should raise our standards or keep them stationary. In a separate chapter the author gives excellent advice to families for improving their budgets with a view to get more value for their money; one suggestion, which is not needed in India, is to spend 20% of the food money on bread and cereals, which give the greatest value for the money amongst foods. So far as evolution of consumption is concerned, Dr. Hoyt thinks that mortality and morbidity figures and death and sickness rates are the most conclusive tests for measuring civilization. She is convinced that material progress is a necessary condition of great thinking and wisdom, despite the teachings of Christ and the sages of India. Referring to education as another test she says that education is a better index of the welfare of a people than is the per capita consumption of wealth. She recommends in this connection that Americans should pay more attention to bringing the people into contact with the best thought of other times and other climes.

V. N. G.

SHORT NOTICE.

HISTORY OF KERALA, VOL. II. By K. P. PADMANABHA MENON. Ed. By T. K. KRISHNA MENON (Author, Ernakulam) 1929. 25 cm. 582p. Rs. 8/-

THIS volume shares all the merits and defects by now well known to readers of the first volume of this work published in 1924. Eleven letters (IX-XIX) of Visscher furnish the slender basis of the learned notes running to 563 pages. Two letters (XIV & XVII) describing the place of women in Malabar society and the activities of Roman Catholic priests elicit no notes. Those on the remaining letters furnish much interesting information on government, government and local taxation in Kerala, the political history of Cochin and other states, and the religious history of the Christians, the Jews and the Muhammadans on the West Coast. Though it is far from being a history of Kerala in any sense of the term, the work is a cyclopaedia of very valuable information indispensable to a future historian of the country. The index is good and makes reference easy.

K. A. N.

Miscellaneous.

MR. SASTRI IN MANCHESTER.

The *Manchester Guardian* comments on Mr. Sastri's speech at the Manchester Luncheon Club as follows:—

THE Right Hon. V. Srinivasa Sastri spoke on India yesterday to the Manchester Luncheon Club. It is a pity that everyone cannot hear Mr. Sastri, for, apart from the admirable form he gives to all that he says, there is an obvious sincerity about it, an obvious earnestness, which would give to most people of this country an entirely new conception of India and Indians. No member of the Manchester Luncheon Club who was present at his address yesterday—and, fortunately, there was a record attendance—will easily forget it or easily be hustled into supporting any foolish high-handedness in our future dealings with India. He did not attempt to stampede his audience emotionally, but quietly stated his case. They could not but be impressed, as the people of South Africa were impressed when Mr. Sastri was there as India's representative. Mr. Sastri is a member of the Indian Liberal

party, and he set himself, in his speech, to explain precisely what was the policy of that party in relation to the coming Round-table Conference. Like the Congress party, it stands essentially for Indian independence. Those people who imagine that Indians like Mr. Sastri, who are wise and cool enough to see the worthwhileness of co-operating with the British Government, will tamely accept anything that is offered to them are greatly mistaken. There is no single Indian alive of any consequence who will do this. Nor is there, in truth, any substantial difference between the substance of the demand put forward by the moderates and those put forward by the extremists. Only there is a difference in method. Indian Liberals are nationalists whose enthusiasm is orderly and so capable of expressing itself in a practical form, whereas the Congressmen are nationalists whose enthusiasm runs away with them and so exhausts itself in generalities and gestures. But they both want the same thing, and will accept nothing less.

Mr. Sastri and his like believe that the time has now come when India should be given responsible government with certain temporary safeguards. These concern the army, the rights of the Indian self-governing States, and the rights of the minority communities. They are prepared to admit that, since India has no army of her own, though she pays for one, military affairs must rest outside the control of Indian Ministers until the process of Indianising the army is complete. They are prepared to admit that for the present the princes and the minority communities are justified in being doubtful as to the impartiality of a Government which must inevitably be predominantly Hindu and based on democratic ideas which, though largely accepted in British India, are far from being so in the States; and that therefore the interests of these princes and minority communities should be adequately protected by the British Government. That is to say, the moderates demand responsible government at the centre and in the Provincial Legislatures, the departments of foreign affairs and war being reserved and the rights of the minority communities being specially safeguarded. It is obvious that an India Act along these lines would be acceptable to the Indian delegates at the Round-Table Conference, apart, perhaps, from certain of the princes. And Mr. Sastri most emphatically stated that in his opinion it would receive sufficient support in India to be workable. This is, indeed, more than likely. For there would certainly be large defections from the Congress party in favour of co-operating in putting such an Act into practice. No doubt a number of the hotheads would bravely carry on civil disobedience on the ground that India was still not completely independent. But the sting would go out of their appeal with the disappearance of most of their grievances; and the opportunity of office would tend to make even Congress leaders less intransigent especially as office would mean real power.

On our side the issue is not so simple. We can see too clearly the dangers and complications inherent in the kind of government, Mr. Sastri proposes for India to feel at all confident that it will succeed. At the same time we have to consider the alternative. If the Round-Table Conference fails to evolve a scheme which satisfies moderate Indian opinion the British Government will be forced either to govern India by force, with no considerable ally in the country, or to leave India to its fate, knowing only too well what that fate will be. We cannot, if we would, govern India by force against her own will, and our association with her has been too long and too intimate to be lightly broken. We have not in the past lacked courage in our dealings with India and it is courage that is needed now. We must dare to give way to a demand for independence based on the very principles which we ourselves prize most highly and which India has learnt from us. If we falter and take refuge behind rifles and bayonets we shall have failed in a great enterprise. It is still open to us to have to our credit as an Empire the saving of a continent from the kind of chaos that has lately befallen China. This chance lies in our realising that Indians are no longer a subject people, that they demand real power and must be given it, that Legislatures divorced from responsibility are vain shams. With courage the Round-table Conference may

yet make history. If it lacks courage it will be but the indecisive prelude to a long and weary struggle equally injurious to ourselves and to India.

MR. SRINIVASA SASTRI ON THE OUTLOOK.

Would a little strong government on the spot relieve the situation that exists in India to-day? If not, what is the remedy? Moreover, what are the aspirations of the Indian peoples, and what are the difficulties in the way of their realisation; and what can the coming Round-table Conference achieve toward solving the problem that now presents itself? These are questions which Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri assumed that British people would like him to answer as he spoke to the Manchester Luncheon Club yesterday.

In reply to the first, he said he could speak with a certain amount of knowledge and conviction. "It is not possible," he declared, "to control the situation merely by the power of the strong hand. The movement has struck its roots too deeply into the hearts of the people; it has spread too widely. The idea of a strong Government being able to restore order and ordered business relations may be dismissed without further thought."

A COMMON DESIRE.

"If I may mention any one point as being absolutely necessary to recognise in any future conception of what India's status shall be, it is this: that the Indian people have made up their minds that they cannot accept permanently within the Commonwealth a position of inferiority. We are very sensitive upon that point. As I said, we may be willing to temper our progress with safeguards, and to look forward with an eye to safety all round; but we cannot admit that we are fit only for forms of political institutions somewhat less advanced than those, for instance, that obtain in South Africa or in Ireland. If that point be borne clearly in mind I can now take you to another branch of the subject, and that is what may be called the restrictions to which we are prepared to submit."

The question of the army was the chief stumbling-block to their political advancement. It was argued that the army, consisting so largely of Britishers, could never be made over to the Indian Government. Now he was not there to discuss the propriety or the justice of that claim. But Indian administrators responsible to an Indian Legislature could never presume, even in the peculiar circumstances of the Indian situation, to order British soldiers about. He would take that for granted. The point to think about was: Is it or is it not a necessity of the situation that that army should be as quickly as possible converted into a really Indian army?

For many years they had been making this demand, but they had invariably been met with refusal. The process had begun; just a few people had risen to the rank of captain in the army; but the process, in their judgment, had got to be pushed forward as rapidly as possible until this consummation might be reached. That would take a long time, and during the transitional period what they called the Dominion status of India must remain a Dominion status greatly below that which they saw in actual working order in the other Dominions. For such delay they were prepared.

THE INDIAN POTENTATES.

Again, India contained within its area large tracts of country which were not altogether British, but held under British suzerainty by many potentates called maharajahs, rajahs, and so forth, who were bound to the British Empire by treaty or other engagements. By such instruments these potentates were committed to the British Empire, but they were not progressive in their rule.

"We are quite willing," said Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, "to wait for the time that will be necessary for us to establish ourselves and convince slowly those princes and potentates that we too are people with whom, without loss of honour, they may have diplomatic relations. In these ways, if not in others, our dominion status, if we get it, will be subject to very serious deductions."

"Then there is the very difficult problem of the relations between Hindus and Mohammedans. There are also other communities which hold themselves more or less distinct from the general life of India, and who wish to remain in their isolation. They have, rightly or wrongly, a certain fear that if majority rule were established it would be Hindu rule, and they desire in any new constitution that there shall be safeguards of one kind or another which will ensure the opportunity for the maintenance of their special religious, social, and cultural life. Now that is a legitimate demand which it will be impossible for any reasonable body of people meeting at the Conference to resist or refuse to consider."

"Now with safeguards inserted in the letter of the Constitution so as to accommodate minorities and to reconcile them to the sweeping changes we contemplate, you will ask how this consummation so devoutly to be wished is to be brought about. The machinery proposed is the assembly in London of a round-the-table conference to which certain people have already been invited."

"You will ask what I think are the prospects of this Conference. If we all go into it, whether British people representing Conservative, Liberal, or Labour interests, Hindus, Mohammedans, or representatives of other great interests in India—if we all go into it with the previous determination that we shall understand one another's difficulties, meet them as far as possible, prepared to surrender on certain points, and even to consider questions such as those of precedence,—if we all go into the Conference animated by this desire to terminate it successfully and not otherwise, I think there is very little between our will and the accomplishment of it."

A CONDITION TO FULFIL.

Finally the speaker said they would be justified in asking him whether there were in India any people likely to be represented at the Conference to whom the final voice in matters Indian might, with confidence, be transferred. It was difficult for him to answer "Yes" or answer "No" with assurance. But with the brains of the Mohammedan community and a good part of the Hindu community behind them, it was possible on one condition to pass on the political leadership, and that one condition was that the Constitution which should be framed in London must be really such as to satisfy the reasonable aspirations of the younger people in India. It was that condition they must be able to fulfil.

If the constitution bore upon its face the right stamp, and not one of inferiority, but of equality with other peoples, they thought they would be able to answer for the future of India not only to themselves but to the British people from whom they took it over. They would ask the British people with confidence to entrust them with their own destinies, and he knew that to the British people, brought up in the way of freedom and liberty, who valued these not only for themselves but for all who were able to benefit by them, it was not necessary to speak in terms or in a manner different from those which might be adopted by one man to another.

—Manchester Guardian.

Correspondence.

THE CASE FOR FEDERATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—The plea for an Indian federation as the constitutional goal of India, put forward by the Simon Commission, has provoked decidedly hostile opinion in important political quarters. It has been pertinently pointed out that, historically speaking, the essential pre-requisites of a federal development do not exist in India. What is particularly stressed is that under a federal system the Central Government will be a weak one and that centrifugal political tendencies will have easier and freer play. One more argument, I presume, advanced against Indian

federalism is that it will perpetuate the present unmodern autocratic governments in the Indian States.

These consequences of a federal development, as envisaged by the opponents of Indian federation, are serious indeed. But it will probably appear on a closer examination of the Indian constitutional problem that the dangers have been greatly overstated. At all events, if the dangers are there, they are due less to a federal government than to certain conditions of Indian political life which will call for a remedy in other than a unitary government. To the present writer, the balance of arguments lies decidedly in favour of a federal system evolved no doubt with reference to the special requirements of the Indian political situation.

The academic argument that historical conditions antecedent to a federal Government do not exist in India may be briefly dismissed. These conditions are purely a matter of coincidence in most of the known cases. Even assuming that they were important in that a strong local feeling militated against a complete union of the component members, there may be found other valid reasons for federalising the Indian provinces in the new career of self-government. A federation may not be historically forced on India to-day. But if considerations of good government point to federation as the best basis of a new Indian constitution, personally I fail to understand why India should be slow to take advantage of history and of the constitutional achievements of other people. It may only be noted here that even federation is not a rigidly stereotyped constitution. There is the U. S. A., as there is also the South African model.

'Weakness at the centre'—that is the whole burden of opinion against an Indian federation. I venture to feel that here at least the critics have been let down by their history. A charge of weak government can never be brought against U. S. A. The American Civil War is probably the most outstanding example in modern history of strong assertion of constitution. Casual recalcitrance on the part of one member of a federal state does not indicate any weak fibre in the political texture. Pre-war Italy presented the spectacle of one of the weakest governments in the last fifty years and all that despite her centralised government. It seems to me that the weakness of a particular government may be sought in quarters other than in the federal distribution of its powers. Regarding the centrifugal forces in a federal state, I think the modern South Africa can dispel all apprehensions. As Mr. R. H. Brand says in his work "the Union of 'South Africa'", it is remarkable that South Africa has succeeded in subordinating the local to the national feeling and that people of each colony should have been ready to merge the identity of their state in a wider national Union, which is still but a name to them". If it has been possible for South Africa to guard against the danger of disruption, no such fear should even be suggested in the case of India.

The position of the Indian States' people under a federal government is probably to a very large extent an after thought of the critics of the federal idea. For on ultimate analysis, the implication of their suggestion that the central government may be regarded as the guardian of the people's rights in the states is hardly complimentary to the statesmen of a democratic India, whether federal or unitary. If the intervention of the Political Department or for the matter of that, the British Crown, is arbitrary

at present, it will change its character under a new political regime. The fact is that in arriving at a *rapprochement* between the states and the British Indian people, ample securities for the rights and liberty of the States' people must be secured. There is no getting away from the fact. The position must be clarified once for all. It is in this way, by a definite constitutional charter of assurance, that the peoples of the States must be safeguarded and not by the periodic intervention of the central authorities. The nationalist India of the future must not carry forward the ugly traditions of the British Political Department. It must not stultify its democratic character, nor should it dally with imperialism in relation to its own people. To sum up, I maintain that the problem of Indian federation is not in any way affected by considerations of good government in the Indian States.

Hitherto I have examined the case for federation only negatively. I am, however, one of those who hold that ends of good administration under a system of self-government can only be realised if organised on a federal plan. In the first place, the country is too vast to be governed well by a centralised authority. And I think there is not a single self-governing country of even half the size of India which has a unitary government. Secondly, the country falls to-day into a number of well-defined economic units. Thirdly, despite the fundamental unity of Indian civilisation, the cultural expressions of various provinces are various in type. Both for the rapid economic development of the provinces and for the proper development of their cultural and social life, each province must have an autonomous existence within certain limits. To contend that these purposes may be as well advanced under a unitary government is to express one's lack of faith in self-government as an instrument of social policy. Indeed, whatever may be the origin, this is the moral basis of federalism as a form of government. I am aware that it has been held that 'let there be a devolution of power from the centre but no federation'. I am afraid the distinction attempted is one without much difference. A federal constitution can only evolve by a transference of power. Whether the transfer is from the centre to the circumference or *vice versa*, it is irrevocable, once it is effected. Constitutional devolution *does* make for federation.

After all that is said and done, I am aware that the real and inner objection to the setting up of self-governing provinces is not constitutional but political, and to be frank, communal. If difficulties there are, face them squarely and boldly; but for heaven's sake, do not tinker with the constitution to suit the exigencies of the communal situation of today. For we are building our constitutional fabric for the unborn generations. Let not our small visions mar their big future.

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