

Servant of India

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OFFICE : SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY'S HOME, POONA 4.

VOL. XV No. 1

POONA—THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1932.

{ INDIAN SUBSN. Rs. 6.
FOREIGN 15s.

CONTENTS.

	Page
TOPICS OF THE WEEK.	1
ARTICLES :—	
The Viceroy's Blunder. By H. N. Kunzru.	3
No-Rent Campaign in U. P. By H. N. Kunzru.	4
OUR EUROPEAN LETTER :—	
Republic in Spain.	6
REVIEWS :—	
A Pocket Encyclopaedia. By R. Sadasiva Aiyar.	7
History of the Spanish Revolution. By M. V. Subrahmanyam.	8
MISCELLANEOUS :—	
Indian Liberals on the Situation.	8

Topics of the Week.

Lord Willingdon's Speeches in Calcutta.

WHATEVER else may be said against the repressive measures recently taken by the Government, it cannot certainly be said that they came upon the public as a surprise. Lord Willingdon in his numerous speeches in Calcutta during the last month had taken good care to see that the public was given no ground for complaint in that behalf. Indeed his speech at the European Association's dinner made it as plain as a pike-staff that the action on the part of Government designed to deal with the revival of civil disobedience would be far more drastic and comprehensive than in 1930. That he was uttering no empty threat has been amply proved by the events of the last few days. The Viceroy's speeches, as expected, also referred to the Government's desire to push on the work of constitution-building with as much vigour as possible. Lord Willingdon is never tired of expressing his happiness in the event of India becoming a Dominion with the corollary of the position of the Viceroy approximating to that of a constitutional Governor-General. In the particular speech referred to above too he did not forget to express himself in similar strain; only he was unexpectedly cautious in the use of words he employed for that purpose. There was no mention of Dominion Status which was replaced by "a great system of constitutional reforms," for which he had been working all these years. Perhaps the caution was considered necessary in view of the reactionary nature of the audience he was addressing. His speech contained an appeal to Mahatma Gandhi to co-operate with the Government in working out the details of the scheme of constitutional reforms. In the light of later events the appeal must be said to have an unreal ring about it. A Viceroy anxious for the Mahatma's co-operation would surely have dealt differently with his

eminently reasonable request for an interview with a view to understand the situation and would have, if necessary, gone out of his way to see that the charge of banging the door on negotiations would be the last that could be brought against him. No wonder that even the *Times of India* and some non-official Europeans regard the Viceroy's action in refusing an interview to the Mahatma as ill-advised and instrumental in hastening a deadlock between the Government and the Congress which it should have been the part of statesmanship to avoid at all costs.

* * *

Congress Reply to Mr. Gordon's Report.

THE Congress reply to Mr. Gordon's report of his inquiry into allegations about the use of coercive methods for the recovery of land revenue in Bardoli taluka has been published. Its perusal shows that the charges made by the Congress were at any rate not as devoid of substance as the Enquiry Officer tried to make out in his report. In the first place, it should be remembered that the Congress was at a double disadvantage in proving its case. For one thing since the commencement of the inquiry revenue and police officers whose conduct formed the subject of the inquiry stationed themselves at Bardoli. For this, of course, they cannot be blamed, but the result of their continuous presence there had, as can be easily imagined, a highly demoralising effect on some Congress witnesses. How uphill was the Congress task in these circumstances will be evident from the fact that one "khatedar and a witness for another complainant were made scarce so as to prevent any communication with them, or their being produced before the Enquiry Officer." Another disability under which the Congress had to work was that, thanks to the Enquiry Officer's ruling, it had been denied access to relevant Government records. The Enquiry Officer makes a great point of the fact that the enquiry was concluded with Congress withdrawal from it without the Government being allowed an opportunity to produce any evidence to rebut the charges made by Congress witnesses. If the Congress is to be believed, this was merely making virtue of necessity. The Congress does not think that even had this happened, it would have at all shaken the evidence it had been able to lead in the course of the enquiry. On the contrary, it says, "If the officers had attempted to give rebutting evidence and produced the relative documents they would not only have failed to rebut but would have been obliged to admit the coercion, as the Mamlatdar was substantially obliged to do." And as for the action of the Enquiry Officer in consulting Government, the conduct of whose officers was the main issue in this case, before finally disposing of the Congress request for the production of relevant Government records, the Congress rightly points out that it goes against all canons of equity and good conscience. Then, there remain its allegations that land revenue was

realised on a higher scale in Bardoli than in other parts. In order to establish this, the Congress was required to prove that the Khatodars in question were required to borrow with a view to satisfy the Government demand. In the absence of documentary evidence the Enquiry Officer, it will be remembered, held the evidence led by the Congress on this point as unsatisfactory. To expect every such borrowing transaction to be supported by documents is, as the Congress reply points out, to show a lack of knowledge of the economic life in rural parts.

* * *

Women in Conference.

THE All-India Women's Conference has had a successful session at Madras during the last Christmas week. The Conference came into being six years ago and was originally intended to deal with problems relating to female education in this country. Soon, however, it came to widen the scope of its activities with the result that it no longer confines its attention merely to educational problems affecting women. It now concerns itself also with attempts designed to raise the general level of women in the Indian social scale. This year's session was presided over by Mrs. P. K. Roy who has to her credit a praiseworthy record of work for the promotion of the education of Indian girls and women and who occupies a high place among the social workers of Bengal. She spoke with knowledge and practical experience when in her presidential address she pleaded for a system of female education suited to the changed needs of the times. Among the numerous resolutions, all important in their own way, passed by the Conference, only a few can be singled out for brief mention here. The Conference did well in asking for suitable female representation in the delegations to the League of Nations and international conferences organised under its auspices in view of the importance of the problems discussed there to women and children. It is only fair to expect that at least when questions affecting women and children form part of the agenda of such conferences Indian women should not go unrepresented. The Conference repeated its demand for free and compulsory education which in the present economic depression might sound more or less as a cry in the wilderness. The speeches made in support of the resolution, however, emphasising as they did the necessity of compulsion being enforced in the case of girls' education, unmistakably bring out the vast change that has come over public opinion which only a few years ago dismissed advocates of compulsory education for girls as cranks or unpractical idealists. In bringing about this change the Conference cannot be denied its share of credit. But more effective, we hope, will be its request to its constituent bodies to arrange for adult education within their areas. The Conference displayed its sense of the uncertainties surrounding the enforcement of the Sarda Act due to opposition from orthodox and obscurantist quarters when it entered its emphatic protest against any possible amendment of the same in the direction of weakening its effect or of securing the exemption of particular sections of the community from its operation. It may be mentioned by the way that, while the Conference was engaged in seeing to it that the Act remained on the statute book intact, the Marwaris of Calcutta were fulminating against it in their address to the Viceroy who should have summoned enough courage to tell them that their opposition to the Act clearly went against the dictates of advanced and progressive public opinion. That only lends force to the protest entered by the Conference.

* * *

Some More Retrenchment Proposals.

IN the second part of their interim report, lately submitted to the Central Government the General Purposes Sub-Committee of the Retrenchment Committee recommend reduction in public expenditure to the tune of a little over Rs. 1½ crores. Though the Sub-Committee is supposed to have scrutinised an expenditure of nearly Rs. 32½ crores, two-thirds of it hardly admitted of any cut, being made up of grants under various heads, pensions, etc. so that it had only Rs. 8¼ crores or thereabouts in which to suggest retrenchments. The Sub-Committee have come to the conclusion that expenditure under different heads has grown since the recommendations of the Inchcape Committee were carried into effect about eight years ago. This, in its opinion, is due to laxity of control on the part of the Finance Department which obviously must always be more vigilant in the matter of preventing any addition to existing expenditure. Nor has the Standing Finance Committee of the Assembly been able to act as an adequate check against increased expenditure. The point which the Committee tries to make out in their report is that while the present financial troubles of the Government in this country are due to world causes they are no less due, in its opinion, to causes which were by no means beyond the control of the Government. But instead of devoting undue attention to the past, let us concern ourselves mainly with the future. Among the methods of reducing expenditure suggested by the Committee there are many which can be put into effect without detriment to administrative efficiency. One such relates to the presidentship of the Council of State which costs the country nearly Rs. ¾ lakhs. What the Committee suggest in this connection is that instead of the presidentship which is more or less a *sine cure* going to a senior member of the Indian Civil Service as is the practice so far, the Law Member of the Government should combine it with his other duties. For a precedent the Sub-Committee turn to Great Britain where, as is well-known, the Lord Chancellor presides over the House of Lords. The Sub-Committee also recommend that the expenditure of about Rs. 32 lakhs on the Ecclesiastical Department should not be charged to Indian revenues. Its suggestion for the application of the axe to the Lee concessions, if carried out, would mean a saving of between Rs. 14 and 15 lakhs. Similarly, the effectuation of its recommendation in favour of the status of the Delhi province involving a needlessly high scale of expenditure being lowered to that of a district, would also mean some welcome relief to the Indian revenues.

* * *

Muslim Opposition.

A FACTOR in the present situation which should cause serious concern to those who engage in the civil disobedience movement is the apparent determination of the leaders of the Muslim community in general actively to combat the movement. Long before any signs of a renewal of the conflict appeared on the horizon Maulana Shaukat Ali is reported to have thus answered a question that was put to him in Cairo regarding the probable attitude of Mahatma Gandhi on his return to India and the Muslims' reaction to it:—

"There will be trouble, unrest, rioting. And not only will the British intervene, but it will be their duty to do so. We, the Moslems, are first to suffer when political rioting occurs, whatever the original reason for it may be. We have put up with a great deal and I myself have hitherto preached patience and forbearance towards the Hindus. But we shall eventually have to defend ourselves. Now, in my opinion, is the golden opportunity for Britain to effect

an honourable agreement with the Moslems of India. We in return will do our share and help Britain to keep order."

Sir Muhammad Yakub too has spoken in a similar strain. This shows what a grave danger there is of a movement aimed against the Government leading to a communal flare-up and a civil war. Apart from the injury which the resulting chaos and anarchy will inflict upon the country, will not the civil war be fatal to the continuance of the satyagraha movement itself? For whatever other points in it may be disputed, this much can be safely predicated about satyagraha, viz. that an atmosphere of peace and non-violence is essential to its success. The speeches of the Muslim leaders should give a pause to those who have felt it their duty to start the civil disobedience movement.

* * *

Operations of the Assam Labour Board.

So little is generally known about the working of the Assam Labour Board that we need not apologise for noticing here its operations during the year ending 30th June last, its report for which is just published. There were over 32,500 garden Sardars at work who recruited more than 43,000 adult labourers

though the total number of persons recruited by them was a little in excess of 50,500, the average recruitment per Sardar varying between 45 and 741. It is necessary to add that nearly 15,000 of the Sardars failed to recruit even a single labourer. In view of the economic conditions prevailing during the year under report these figures were lower than those for the previous one, in which as many as nearly 43,000 Sardars were at work who had a recruitment of over 58,000 labourers to their credit. The average advance per adult recruit made to garden Sardars, including payments made to defray village debts and advances made to the emigrants themselves during the year under notice ranged from Rs. 5-6 to Rs. 38-8. To judge from the certificate of good conduct given to Sardars in the report in the matter of handling money, the advances seem to be made discreetly and not extravagantly. In spite of the usual precautions, there were cases of irregular recruitment of labour with the result that 69 Sardars as against 107 in the previous year were prosecuted for the same, lesser offences being punished by cancellation of licenses. The labour supply for the Assam gardens is drawn mostly from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, U. P., C. P. and Madras, Bihar and Orissa making the largest contribution.

THE VICEROY'S BLUNDER.

THE Irwin-Gandhi pact which was to usher in peace was never worked in the proper spirit.

It did not satisfy Mahatma Gandhi's followers and there was no dearth of Congress leaders who regarded it as a truce and a golden opportunity to enlist new recruits in the breathing space allowed by it. To the best of our belief it ceased to find favour with the authorities also not long after the departure of Lord Irwin. It was officially regarded with misgiving owing to the position it conceded to the Congress in the enquiry demanded by Mahatma Gandhi in regard to the realisation of land revenue in some villages in Bardoli Taluka under the terms of the pact. It was felt that the pact might be used by the Congress, in the words of the latest Government *communiqué*, to constitute itself an intermediary between the Government and the people. The charges brought against one another by the Government and the Congress before Mahatma Gandhi's departure for England showed the instability of the position. The agrarian question too had already begun to be a source of serious friction in the United Provinces. Till Sir Malcolm Hailey's return from England in April last, the United Provinces Government had practically done nothing to lighten the burden that weighed heavily both on landlords and tenants. Sir Malcolm Hailey took early steps to rectify the blunder, but discontent still prevailed owing to the inadequacy of remissions and failure to give relief till popular agitation compelled Government to recognise the gravity of the agrarian problem. By the time Mahatma Gandhi returned the ill-advised no-rent campaign had been started. Fairness requires us to recognise the value of the efforts made by Congressmen to help tenants in their distress, but the extreme step which they took in advising tenants to withhold the payment of rent must be condemned equally frankly. The Govern-

ment on their part had promulgated ordinances in three provinces and had arrested Pandit Javaharal Nehru and Mr. Sherwani while they were on their way to Bombay to meet Mahatma Gandhi and to attend the meetings of the Congress Working Committee.

The outlook was therefore gloomy enough when Mahatma Gandhi landed in Bombay but hope had not yet completely vanished. He had definitely stated that he would take no action without studying the situation and his speeches, as admitted by the *Times of India*, gave evidence of his sincere desire to tread the path of peace. His telegram to the Viceroy was however not calculated to smooth matters, but the Viceroy's reply declining to permit a discussion of the ordinances was like a bolt from the blue. What justification can be urged in favour of it we are totally unable to conceive. The Government would have lost nothing and might have gained something by explaining the grounds on which they thought it necessary to arm themselves with drastic powers which the ordinances gave them. Differences between the Government and Mahatma Gandhi cannot of course be minimised, but difficulties in the way of a settlement were not less formidable when the Irwin-Gandhi negotiations were started in March last. In any case the Viceroy's action in refusing to let the greatest political leader in the country to place his views regarding the ordinances before the head of the Government cannot but be deplored as a blunder. It was both indefensible and discourteous. His Excellency later agreed at the request of Sir Phiroze Sethna to receive a deputation of representatives of public bodies all over India in connection with the ordinances but could not allow the Mahatma to approach him on the same subject! The country had a right to expect something better than an uncompromising assertion of autocratic power from the Viceroy who had more than once declared his ambition to be the

constitutional Governor General of India. Mahatma Gandhi had no difficulty in exposing the weakness of the Viceroy's position and pleaded for reconsideration of His Excellency's decision; but the Working Committee passed resolutions at his own instance authorising resumption of civil disobedience. The Viceroy's reply might have been anticipated. The Mahatma along with many Congress leaders has been arrested, the Working Committee of the Congress declared unlawful, the entire Congress organisation will soon be under a ban and the country is being practically governed under a series of executive decrees. The Government of India were probably not sorry to have an opportunity of terminating the Irwin-Gandhi pact, but they could not have done so without the support of the British Government which might not have been forthcoming had the balance of power in the House of Commons not been radically altered in favour of Conservatives at the last General Election. Perhaps they have been forced by the Conservative Secretary of State to show that they can govern with a strong hand. We have already gone back to where we were in February last.

But what about the future? Are the British and the Indian Governments prepared to inaugurate a plan considered and deliberately abandoned by Lord Irwin as stated by him in his recent speech in the House of Lords—"such rigid repression as would create a desert which we call peace"? Even if they are, they will be as far as ever from a permanent solution of the constitutional question. Can we chalk out a plan of constitutional reforms or work them satisfactorily without the support of the most powerful political organisation in the country? The experience both of 1921 and 1930 clearly demonstrates the futility of such a belief. The Government will therefore be compelled in the end to abandon their present policy and to walk along the path traced for them with great patience and discernment by Lord Irwin. The Round Table Conference is to meet again about the middle of this year; the committees appointed by the Prime Minister to carry on the work left unfinished by the Conference will soon arrive in this country. They will meet with vigorous hostility from large sections of our countrymen and warm welcome from none. In any case the Congress which will not participate in their work will attach no value to their recommendations. If the question of constitutional advance is to be settled with the consent of all parties the Congress will have to be invited to participate in its discussion sooner or later. The only practical result of the present policy in such a case will be to embitter feelings and increase difficulties of those who stand by constitutional methods.

The Government of India are indignant that British sincerity with regard to the political advancement of India should still be called in question. It is true that the Conservative House of Commons has endorsed the policy announced in January last by the Labour Government, but does this sufficiently guarantee its future reaffirmation? The previous policy is believed to be due in large part to the determination

of Mr. MacDonald to stand by India. If for any reason he has to sever his connection with the present Government, reactionary doctrines may gain ascendancy. Again, in spite of Mr. MacDonald's declaration that responsibility at the Centre is an integral part of the Government's scheme, Sir John Simon said in the recent debate on India in the House of Commons: "As a matter of fact advance to more complete self-government in the provinces is an easy step and I myself think it would be a wise step in advance of those more ambitious projects. We are not shutting the door to that in the least." Indians are therefore not without justification if they feel nervous with regard to the translation of the promises made to them into practice. Their doubts are shared by the organ of British public opinion whose political faith is the same as that of Lord Willingdon. "It is an illusion to suppose," says the *Manchester Guardian*, "that there is no serious division of opinion in Britain as regards Indian policy or that the Conservative Government as sincerely intend to lead to an early and full political independence as the Liberal or Labour Government." It will be idle to ignore the difficulties present in the situation, but drastic measures adopted by the Government will not enable it to surmount them. A return to Irwinism is urgently needed. The present policy will not serve either the political or commercial interests of England. Ordinances against picketing will not promote British trade. British imports into India have gone down since last year although there has been no organised boycott of British goods this year. It should also be noted that important commercial bodies in Bombay promised their support to Mahatma Gandhi the other day in his campaign against British goods. The best interests of India and England alike require that the present impasse should be terminated as speedily as possible. The fulfilment of this urgent task demands that our countrymen should act with circumspection and that the Government should go back to the policy of Lord Irwin. It is a truism to say that the problem of Indian unrest can be dealt with only by satisfying Indian political aspirations. As the *Manchester Guardian* has said, "co-operation of politically conscious India is only possible on the basis of real intent to give them what they want and when they want."

H. N. KUNZRU.

NO-RENT CAMPAIGN IN U. P. *

THE dispassionate and weighty communication which Babu Bhagavan Das has sent to the *Aj* regarding the no-rent campaign should receive the earnest consideration of those who have the good of these provinces at heart. His close association with the Congress, the readiness he has shown to suffer for his convictions, his character and his attainments should place him above suspicion and entitle him to be listened to with deep attention and respect. His letter is an urgent reminder to us that it is not too late even now to bring a fresh mind to bear on the consideration of the agrarian problem.

* Reproduced from the *Leader* of Dec. 30, 1931.

Baba Bhagavan Das holds that the no-rent campaign has been prematurely started and he forcibly asks whether it "will do any good beyond engendering class feud and warfare". The *Aj*, with which the leading Congressmen in Benares are intimately associated, has strongly supported his view in a series of articles. It thinks that the no-rent agitation is not justified on purely economic grounds. "We say," it writes, "that by advising the tenants not to pay, we are not at all helping the tenants but showing them the path of complete destruction.... We think it imperative and necessary to say that the result of it to the Congress, to the future struggle for freedom, will not be good, and this apprehension oppresses us." The vigorous opposition of the *Aj* to the no-rent movement does not reflect the views of leading nationalists in Benares only. I have good reasons to believe that the *Aj* speaks for an influential body of Congressmen all over the province who are apprehensive that catastrophic consequences may ensue from the agitation that has been started.

On the most optimistic calculation it could not have been supposed by anybody that it would be possible to secure a reduction of the rental demand by more than 50 per cent. Had rents been halved the relief given to the tenants would perhaps have satisfied even those who took the most pessimistic view of the present economic depression. Economic considerations, therefore, do not justify the advice given to tenants to withhold the payment of rent altogether. It has been said that the sad experience of last year did not warrant the belief that if the tenants paid a reasonable proportion of the rent they would be left in peace, but this seems to me a totally inadequate reason for taking a step which may plunge the province into a class war. The moral position of the Congress would have been stronger and it would have had the sympathy and support of many men who do not belong to the Congress, had it done the right thing and allowed its action to be determined solely by the economic necessities of the situation. A calm consideration of the position by the Congress is not an easy matter now but I hope it is not yet impossible. The Congress will rise in the estimation of all thinking people by abandoning a course of action which may be fraught with serious consequences to the future of these provinces.

Government too have a duty to perform in the matter. They should frankly recognise that the present trouble is to no small extent due to the harsh policy followed during the last *kharif*. Practically speaking, no remissions were allowed although a marked fall had taken place in the prices of agricultural produce and the distress of the tenants was acute. Had the same consideration been shown then for the difficulties of the landlords and tenants that was shown in connection with the *rabi* after Sir Malcolm Hailey's resumption of the headship of the province, the position would have been much easier both economically and politically than it is to-day. The effects of the suffering caused by official callousness last winter have not yet been obliterated.

The remissions sanctioned for the current agricultural year taken by themselves are not inconsiderable. About 110 lakhs of land revenue have been remitted out of a total land revenue demand of about seven crores and the rents (including cash and grain rents and the Siwai demand) which total 1940 lakhs have been reduced by 412 lakhs. The reduction in the rents thus amounts to 21.4 per cent. of the total rental demand, but the fall in prices, as admitted by Government, is about 50 per cent.

Addressing the Legislative Council on the 31st March, 1931, as acting Governor, Sir George Lambert

pointed out the complexity of the problem which faced Government and said:

"To reduce one aspect of the problem to its simplest form—and this is no imaginary illustration—we asked ourselves whether the Government which receives Rs. 25 in land revenue as against a recorded rental of Rs. 100 is to sacrifice any, or any appreciable, fraction of that Rs. 25, in order to secure rental reduction to Rs. 60 or Rs. 70. We know that the revenue could still be paid without undue hardship if only Rs. 60 or Rs. 70 were collected, and probably more could not be collected in present circumstances with or without formal orders from us."

It would have been highly unfair to the zamindars if the policy here contemplated had been carried out, but in any case it is clear that Sir George Lambert did not think that more than two-thirds of the recorded rents would be realised. The figures which he cited regarding land revenue collections showed that he had gauged the situation accurately. "Up to the end of February," he said, "we had collected only 208 lakhs of rupees out of a total *kharif* demand of 344 lakhs, that is little over 60 per cent." It is thus obvious that reduction in land revenue and rents, though substantial, falls short of what the present circumstances require.

The Rent and Revenue Committee estimated that according to their proposals the remission in rent would be about 5 crores but it demanded that the land revenue should be remitted proportionately. A perusal of its report leaves on one's mind the impression that Government would not have been averse to the rental remission proposed by the Committee had it stood by itself. Their unwillingness to concede the demand of the landlords led them to reduce the amount of rent to be remitted from 5 crores to 4.12 crores. The landlords who realise that we are living in very difficult times will, I am sure, be willing to let the rents be reduced by more than 5 crores provided Government are prepared to do justice to them.

The recommendations of the Rent and Revenue Committee can be looked at from another point of view also. The Committee, roughly speaking, proposed that subject to two conditions rents should be reduced to the level prevailing in 1900-01. The remissions should not exceed eight annas in the rupee and allowance might be made for general improvements such as increase of irrigation, development of communications, etc., by adding 20 to 25 per cent. to the rental demand for 1900-01. The recorded rents (cash and grain rents and Siwai) for 1930-31 amount to 1940 lakhs and those for 1897-98 (the earliest year before 1901 for which I have been able to obtain figures) to 1234 lakhs. There has thus been an enhancement of a little over 7 crores during the last thirty years or so. The remission allowed by Government, as already stated above, amounts to 412 lakhs, thus leaving a net rental demand of Rs. 1528 lakhs. The practical effect of the two conditions referred to above has therefore been an addition of 25 per cent. to the figure for 1897-98 (1234 lakhs). When the Rent and Revenue Committee's report was published it was thought that the provisos laid down by it would be applied in important cases only. Had it been thought that their effect would be, so to say, uniformly to increase the rental demand of each district about the year 1901 by 25 per cent. the report would not have appealed to non-Congressmen as much as it did when it was published.

There are two factors in favour of Government which fairness requires us to take note of. The area under cultivation has increased during the last 30 years and prices have risen recently. With regard to the first point it is relevant to point out that the population of the province has increased along with the area under cultivation. As regards the second point,

even if the rise in prices is not a temporary phenomenon the cost of cultivation has not gone down proportionately to the fall in prices and the widespread rains about the middle of October have damaged the crops in many places. It should also be noted that the arrears of rents have increased in the province of Agra from Rs. 219 lakhs in 1923-24 to Rs. 424 lakhs in 1929-30.

The remission granted to tenants by Governments amounts to about 3 annas 5 pies in the rupee. I believe that the number even of officials is not large who think that the demand of 12½ annas in the rupee is realisable. I have met scarcely any zamindar who entertains any illusions on the subject. The sheer inability of the tenants to pay makes the realisation of the legal demand impossible or highly improbable. It would be both just and expedient on the part of the Government to recognise the force of circumstances and give the tenants and the zamindars, a large majority of whom consists of small proprietors, the relief which is due to them. It is highly regrettable that in the debate which took place recently in the Legislative Council scarcely a word was said with regard to the need for larger remission and that the adjournment motion was withdrawn without any assurance from Government that a more liberal policy would be pursued in this matter in future. The withdrawal of the adjournment motion must be regarded as a serious misfortune if it led Government to think that responsible men were fully satisfied with the measures already taken by it to give relief to landlords and tenants.

The Council wanted to be assured that in spite of the wide nature of the preamble to the Ordinance it would be used sparingly and with great care and Mr. Blunt gave a pledge to this effect on behalf of Government. It is true that the Ordinance has not been applied to persons unconnected with the no-rent campaign—its general application to all citizens of the U. P. was inconceivable—and it has been used on a very restricted scale so far, but the arrest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Sherwani when they were not engaged in furthering the no-rent movement and were guilty only of a technical breach of the Ordinance in leaving Allahabad in order to go to Bombay, will be regarded by most men unconnected with the Congress as both unjustified and ill-advised and contrary to the spirit of the assurance given by Mr. Blunt.

Government have the situation well in hand as yet. They have shown that they can enforce the authority of the law and the tenants, generally speaking, have not assumed a defiant attitude. They can, therefore, reconsider the problem of alleviating rural distress and make the relief commensurate with the needs of the situation without loss of prestige. It is the primary duty of Government to maintain law and order, but they will finally be able to do so not by exercising the extraordinary powers now vested in them but by taking steps in time to remove the content of which the no-rent movement is a dangerous sign.

H. N. KUNZRU.

Our European Letter.

REPUBLICAN SPAIN.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

GENEVA, DEC. 19.

THE Spanish Cortes has given its approval to the new constitution which is the product of nearly five months of patient study and deliberation. 368 Deputies, including two priests, voted for the

constitution. There were as many as 100 abstentions which included the Basque-Navarre minority who walked out in protest when the articles against the religious orders were voted some time ago. Opposition has also been directed against the Defence of the Republic Act, incorporated in the constitution, which gives the Government certain emergency powers to interfere with individual liberty. Senor Ossorio-Gallardo, a prominent barrister of Madrid, regards that Act as incompatible with the promulgation of the new constitution. Theoretically speaking, the Act is no doubt a survival of an illegal and dictatorial system out of place in a country which made a revolution to vindicate strict legality. That the opinion of a police officer, even in times of emergency, should prevail against the decision of a judge must doubtless be repugnant to all worshippers of abstract liberty and republicanism. The law of defence is one of the main planks on which an attempt to produce a constitution acceptable to all Spaniards was frustrated. While the failure may be regretted by well-meaning critics of Spain, it must not be forgotten that the days of direct democracy ended with the small city states of ancient Greece. Modern democratic institutions have to be so constructed as to bring within their fold a large population and territory; and they cannot, therefore, follow the principle of direct representation. Nor is our experience of the working of modern representative democratic institutions altogether bitter or disappointing.

Another defect of the new constitution is its anti-clerical clauses. Hitherto Spain was groaning not only under a temporal but also a spiritual absolutism. The education of the youth was entrusted to the Catholic clergy whose methods were bigotted and narrow. Republican Spain has struck at the very roots of clerical power and influence over the people by vesting the supervision and direction of young minds in lay hands. One serious result of this sudden change will be a certain degree of discord in families where parents have been brought up in the old clerical style and the children will be brought up in a definitely different, if not utterly contrary, style. This effect will, let us hope, be only temporary. It is, however, unavoidable and must be put up with by the Spanish people, a good portion of whom has no marked sympathy for the professions and practices of the clergy. Senor Azana, the Prime Minister, and his trusted colleagues have indeed made a coup in proposing the name of Senor Zamora for the Presidentship. Senor Zamora was the head of the revolutionary government and first Prime Minister of Republican Spain. But his conviction in the Catholic faith is as strong as his republicanism. Disagreeing with his colleagues over the articles of the constitution which regulate religious practices, he declared, in a memorable speech some time ago, that the rest of his life would be dedicated to bringing about a revision of those mistaken articles. The Prime Minister deserves to be congratulated upon his unique success in turning Senor Zamora from a powerful life-long opponent into a staunch ally of the new Government.

It is unfair and unreasonable to attribute motives to Senor Zamora for his ready acceptance of the presidency. None can doubt either his talents or the purity of his republicanism. He has played a signal part in the stages prior to the ushering in of the new republic as well as during the initial stages of hammering out a constitution. His friends and foes alike would have deeply regretted the loss of his services in constructive enterprises. His breadth of outlook and deep religious convictions are effective safeguards against the excesses which enthusiastic republicans and their equally enthusiastic opponents

may be tempted to indulge in. It is perhaps a feeling of confidence in his own powers to cement together the discordant elements in the Cortes and turn their energies into useful and constructive channels that has actuated this striking personality to co-operate with his colleagues once more.

The formal installation ceremony of the new President was, to say the least, gorgeous. After the ceremony, he was taken in State to the Royal Palace through streets lined with troops. Saturday, December 5, was declared a public holiday in commemoration of his election. The eager crowds which watched his procession indicated not only the extreme popularity of the new constitution but also of the new President.

The first business of the President was of course the formation of a cabinet to succeed to the Provisional Government. After some difficulty, Don Manuel Azana succeeded in forming a Ministry on Wednesday, the 16th December. A noted absentee from the cabinet is Senor Lerroux, who was President of the Council of the League of Nations during 1930-31 and who was conducting the foreign policy of Spain since the formation of the Republic with remarkable success. He is perhaps the leader of the most powerful section of the Opposition in the Chamber of Deputies. The Prime Minister is expected to command about 50 votes. But if all the groups unrepresented on the Ministry were to join together, Senor Lerroux can raise an Opposition which may defeat the Government. It is said, however, that the most important opposition remains outside the Chamber, composed of the Conservatives and the Monarchists who partially abstained from voting in the election of the legislature. Nearly half the posts of the new Government are held by the same party men as in the Provisional Government. Don Jaime Caner, the Minister of Finance, has the difficult task of balancing a budget whose deficit amounts to nearly £ 20,000,000 at par exchange.

The Parliament consists of only one House. The absence of an Upper House which would be an effective check against hasty legislation is to a certain extent rendered innocuous by a referendum which may be demanded by a petition from 15% of those who enjoy the franchise. Even an amendment of the constitution may be set afoot by this process. Thus the last word in the government of the country is given to the people. Besides, the distribution of powers between the executive and the legislature is delicately constructed and balanced. The President is given the prerogative to dissolve the Cortes. The Cortes in turn can dismiss the President in certain circumstances.

The most noteworthy feature of the new constitution is the inclusion of a clause by which Spain, a signatory of the Kellogg Pact, undertakes to abandon war as an instrument of 'national policy'. No other constitution in the world to-day possesses this feature. It is true that the Spanish constitution provides for the maintenance of a standing army and the declaration of war and the conclusion of peace by the President. But Spain can enter into war only on two occasions—either when a special authorisation of the Cortes entitles the President to take war-like measures in self-defence or when the League of Nations seeks to punish by collective action any Power which violates the provisions of the Covenant of the League and is adjudged an aggressor by the League. So far as the paper constitution goes, Spain has abolished war except in the above two instances and set a noble example to the other members of the League whose representatives year after year go to Geneva and do nothing beyond preaching high ideals.

Another interesting feature of the new constitution is the position accorded to women in the

government of their country. In the monarchical days, their position was truly mediaeval. They had to obtain the consent of their husbands for the most trivial acts of daily existence. Divorce was totally forbidden. In fine, they led a life of seclusion and subserviency, which was not materially different from that of the Indian women to-day. Now, divorce is made easy for both the parties. The distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate children are abolished. Any woman of twenty-three years of age or more is entitled to vote. The women are accorded a status of absolute equality with men.

Thus the new Republic, which is officially styled as "The Republic of Workers," contains features which bear semblance to those of the German, American and other modern republics. It is interesting to note that the Deputies, in a nation mainly composed of peasants, include 123 lawyers, 65 professors, 41 doctors, 30 journalists, 15 authors, 16 engineers, 3 architects, 8 ecclesiastics, 8 soldiers, 18 business men, 10 clerks, 24 work-men, 6 druggists, 2 veterinary surgeons and 1 agricultural labourer. The chief difficulties before the new Government spring from the fact that Spain was for a long time not subjected to really strong centralised control and was made up of a number of independent, though fairly large, units. But the success so far achieved by the republican revolution which, comparatively speaking, may be described to be bloodless, augurs well for the future of Spain.

Reviews.

A POCKET ENCYCLOPAEDIA.

AN OUTLINE OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE. Ed. By WILLIAM ROSE. (Victor Gollancz, London.) 1931. 22cm. 1103p.

THIS microcosm of modern knowledge embraces the entire field of modern knowledge, to different spheres of which the reader is introduced by competent writers. A symposium of many minds like this would need a syndicate of reviewers to do justice to its range and variety of subject matter; but the temerity of the present reviewer may be pardoned in view of the absence of any such reviewing board ready for the task. The aim of the volume is not to make the reader a mediaeval schoolman usurping all knowledge for his province but to provide him with a synoptic foundation whereon he might build, if he chose, his specialized knowledge of his chosen science or, if that is not his ambition, to make him a knowledgeable person conversant with some of the revolutionary changes in physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and other sciences; and also familiarize him with the historic background of some. This aeroplane-flight through modern knowledge he gets at "rock-bottom price", almost for a song. To any person of ordinary intellectual energy interested in contemporary knowledge, but indisposed to disturb himself beyond a certain limit, this parcel of panmiconized lore will never be unwelcome, while to the general reading public it comes as the surest antidote to comprehensive ignorance. Some of the articles in this "Outline" like Dr. Aveling's on "Psychology" and Prof. Hearnshaw's on "The Science of History" admirably succeed in combining historical survey with exposition. In "Biology and Human progress" Sir J. A. Thomson brings to bear his genius for irradiating the facts of biology with philosophic significance and presenting them in phraseology that etones itself on our minds with the magic of vision and poetry; like every other of his writings this conspectus of his has the effect of endowing the reader with a sixth

sense as it were. On the same level, but revealing in a more specialized degree the rigorousness of the scientific method, is Dr. Crew's discussion of the problem of sex. Particularly interesting to the lay-reader is his refutation of the fallacy that sexuality is the condition of reproduction. Are sexual individuals the cause or the end of reproduction? he pertinently asks. "Reproduction leads to sexuality just as much as sexuality ends in reproduction". Then again the reader will learn from him how in several reaches of Nature, for instance, among many invertebrate animals, plants and unicellular organisms, the production of offspring without mating is as widespread as is reproduction with mating. Manifestly, therefore, sexuality is not essential for reproduction. The reader will also find appetising and nutritive pasture in Prof. Matthews on "The Idea of God", Mr. G. D. H. Cole on "Modern Theories of Industrial and Political Organization", Prof. R. A. Thomson on "Astronomy", Dr. R. R. Marett on "The Beginnings of Morals and Culture". There are essays on Music and other arts. Each essay concludes with a bibliographical note calculated to beckon the reader further on into the subject. We heartily recommend this pocket encyclopaedia not only to unlearned hungerers for knowledge but also to specialists compelled to walk in blinkers for want of panoramic surveys from such scholarly guides.

R. SADASIVA AIYAR.

HISTORY OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION.

SPAIN IN REVOLT, 1814-1931. By JOSEPH MCCABE. (John Lane the Bodley Head, London.) 1931. 20cm. 246p. 6/-.

DURING the last two decades several countries in Europe have overthrown monarchy and established republics. Spain was the last to do so, the Spanish revolution having taken place so late as April 1931. The establishment of a Spanish Republic took many by surprise. Many wondered how the Spanish people who were blindly devoted to the Church and Monarchy overthrew the latter and disestablished the former. The author of the book under review is of opinion that for over a century the Spanish people had been carrying on a struggle against the Church and Monarchy and that the establishment of a Republic in April last was the logical development of the century-old struggle for freedom. He traces the history of Spain from the days of the Peninsular War and proves how the Court was corrupt and monarchs tyrannical. In that period of Court corruption and tyranny the spirit of the people manifested itself in an agitation for representative institutions. The author exposes the scandals of the Court and that not one Spanish monarch before Alfonso XIII was moral. His picture of the Spanish Court life in the nineteenth century makes one shudder. Historians in Spain were not bold enough to write about the immorality of their sovereigns and courtiers restrained historical writers of other countries from discussing court morals. But with the Republic an accomplished fact, the author has made bold to paint a lurid picture of the Spanish Court life. The loose morals of the Spanish monarchs in the nineteenth century, the influence of the French Revolution, the public attraction towards a constitution on the English model contributed to popular outbursts against royal tyranny. As the Church was in alliance with the rotten Court, it was also hated by the people. All through the nineteenth century there were attempts on the part of the Spanish people to limit the power of the Kings as

well as that of the Church. In 1870 a Republic was actually established but it was shortly overthrown. The author brings the history of the struggle to April 1931 when Alfonso XIII was forced to abdicate and a Spanish Republic proclaimed. He thus gives the lie direct to the opinions held by many that the Spanish Revolution of April last was a sudden explosion of the popular mind.

It may appear to some that the author is very cruel to Spanish royalty in exposing the licentiousness of Kings and Queens, but he is put to that painful necessity in order to justify the Spanish revolution. As he himself says "leniency to dead sovereigns may be an admirable trait, but it is more important to do justice to the Spanish nation."

This book represents a piece of good earnest work and supplies thoroughly reliable information about conditions of life in Spain. It is one of the few publications on the Spanish Revolution. We can therefore strongly recommend it to all who want to have a knowledge of the Spanish Revolution.

M. V. SUBRAHMANYAM.

Miscellaneous.

INDIAN LIBERALS ON THE SITUATION.

THE present political situation in the country was anxiously considered by the Council of the National Liberal Federation of India which met at Bombay last week. The resolution passed by it on the subject was as follows:—

"The Council of the National Liberal Federation condemn without reservation the anarchist outrages perpetrated in Bengal and elsewhere and view with grave apprehension the starting of the no-rent campaign in the United Provinces and deplore the recent provocative activities displayed in some parts of the country. At the same time, the Council regret the issue of Ordinances by Government with certain provisions of a very drastic character which are calculated to encroach upon the personal liberty and even amenities of ordinary civic life. Government by Ordinance is always repugnant to Liberal principles and, even though they may be justified under very exceptional circumstances, they must always be worked with such caution as to remove the possibility of affecting the liberty of citizens engaged in legitimate political work. The Council urge upon Government the necessity of eliminating all the unnecessarily severe provisions in the Ordinances and their administration with due caution and consideration so as not to aggravate the situation any further.

"The Council earnestly appeal to the Congress not to restart the campaign of civil disobedience which will prove disastrous to the best and abiding interests of the country; but to assist in the formation of a common understanding between all the progressive political parties in the country for the speedy achievement of the desired goal."

SWADESHI PENCILS.

We have received from the Madras Pencil Factory, now taken over by Messrs. V. Perumal Chetty & Sons from the Madras Government, some specimen pencils, which we find on use to be fairly good and deserving encouragement. We understand that 90% of the raw materials used are swadeshi, as is the whole of labour.