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Topics of the Week.

No Sympathetic Strike.

IN a press interview in Bombay Mr. C. Rajagopalachari is reported to have stated that Constitutionalists in India should refuse to co-operate with the Joint Select Committee of Parliament unless and until the Government accepted their advice and released Mahatma Gandhi and the other political prisoners. Nobody can be in any doubt about the earnestness and persistence with which the Constitutionalists have advocated the release. One of the results of the first R. T. C., most cherished by the Constitutionalists, was the release of the then political prisoners and the subsequent participation of the Congress in the Second R. T. C. Now again they are pleading hard with the Government that the political prisoners should be released and the Congress invited to the Joint Committee.

But it will not be in the best interests of the country that the constitutionalists should stake their participation in the further stages of constitution-making on the release of political prisoners. A constitution evolved solely by the Government is bound to be worse than the one in which the Constitutionalists took a hand. It may be better still if the Congress also participated in it. Congressmen do recognise that constitution-making for India is an important work. By their co-operation with the Government over the Harijan Bills they have virtually abandoned non-co-operation. It seems more reasonable that they should face facts squarely in the face, and not allow their prestige to override their reason, and instead of asking the co-operators to non-co-operate just when the non-co-operators themselves are co-operating, widen the range of their own co-operation, call off civil disobedience and pull their full weight in shaping the new constitution for India.

R. T. C. Results.

LAHORE, Poona and Allahabad have followed the lead given by Bombay and Madras with respect to the R. T. C. proposals. At large and representative meetings held at these places, which are indicative of the return of public interest in constitutional reform, resolutions have been passed expressing keen disappointment with the scheme of reforms as it emerged from the discussions at the last R. T. C. and insisting on great improvements in it in order to bring it up to the level of the people's expectations or the promises made by Lord Irwin on the authority of His Majesty's Government. The speeches of the Chairmen of these meetings, Prof. Ruchi Ram Shahni, Mr. B. S. Kamat and Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, were dignified and restrained and, therefore, the more weighty. They gave a lucid exposition of the scheme and subjected it to well-merited criticism, particularly with reference to the "safeguards." It was pointed out how the reforms delineated by the Secretary of State failed to satisfy such eminent moderate politicians and experienced statesmen as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. M. R. Jayakar, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, to mention only a few.

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Welcome Moves.

NATIONALISTS all over India will welcome every endeavour to eliminate, and if that is not possible, to check the further growth of the communal spirit which has been such a sad and crippling feature of public life in India. Dr. Muhammad Alam of Lahore, one of the most prominent among the nationalist Muslims in the Congress, has recently announced his intention to devote himself to anti-communal work. The lead has since been taken up by such representative men of different communities as Dr. S. K. Datta and B. L. Rallia Ram (Christians), Prof. Ruchiram Sahney and B. S. Sachbar (Hindus), Sirdar Mangal Singh and Sirdar Sundar Singh (Sikhs), Khalifa Fazal Din and Prof. Abdul Majid (Muslims) who have constituted themselves into an Anti-Communal League and who intend to extend the scope of the League to all provinces of India. Mr. Haradatta Sharma, of the Servants of India Society, Lahore, is one of the Secretaries of the League.

Simultaneously, there have been moves in Delhi, Cawnpore and Madras to reorganise the political parties in the country on non-communal lines. It is noteworthy that these moves have been sponsored by Sir Abdul Rahim, Dewan Bahadur Ramaswami Mudaliar, the Raja of Bobbili and the Kumara Raja of Venkatagiri, none of whom has hitherto been known as a pronounced non-communalist. It is yet too soon to judge of these moves, but their developments will be watched with interest.

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Social Reaction.

It is a matter for sincere gratification that the Legislative Assembly summarily threw out the bill proposed by Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamachari to repeal the Special Marriage (Amendment) Act, which was passed in 1923 at the instance of Sir Hari Singh Gour and which permitted inter-caste marriages. It is noteworthy that so faithful an exponent of orthodoxy as Mr. Amarnath Dutt had no objection to the Act, as it was optional in character, and he, therefore, did not support the Raja Bahadur's contention.

The religiously hyper-sensitive Haji Wajihuddin moved for circulation of his bill for exempting the Muslims from the operation of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, popularly known as the Sarda Act. The Haji contended that the Sarda Act interfered with Islamic law which permitted marriages at all ages and that therefore it was opposed to the religious law of the Muslims and should therefore be made inoperative as far as Muslims were concerned. Sir Muhammad Yakub and other Muslims supported the bill on the ground not that they favoured infant marriages but that they objected to the secular legislature interfering in "religious" matters. Sir Harry Haig, on behalf of the Government of India, disowned any intention on the part of the Government to interfere with religious practices and beliefs of any community, and maintained that Government had supported the Sarda Act as a step in dealing with what was a social evil of no mean magnitude. It was intended to alleviate human suffering and promote the welfare of the race. It was a general law applicable to all communities and not a communal law. He, therefore, stoutly opposed the present reactionary and anti-social bill. Sir Abdulla Suhrawardy foamed at the mouth in angry protest against the Government's attitude and he so far forgot himself as to threaten that the Muslims, who had so far resisted the temptation to join the civil disobedience movement, might now do so! He was not impressed by the facts pointed out to him by another Muslim that social reforms of the kind were enacted in Turkey and Egypt, Muslim countries.

The Muslim members are not unaware that though Muslim law does not enjoin infant marriages, and they themselves do not support them, still such marriages do occur on a fairly large scale, particularly in Bengal. They have done nothing to stop them. It is wholly unreasonable and cruel to exempt the Muslims from the beneficial effects of the Sarda Act and condemn thousands of innocent children to much suffering and misery. Social reformers and the public generally will support the admirably firm stand taken by Sir Harry Haig.

Responsibility vs. Safeguards.

IN a very instructive letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, Prof. Sir A. Berriedale Keith, the eminent authority on the facts of British Imperial history, pointed out that responsible government and external safeguards were mutually incompatible. "Either safeguards or responsible government must fail. Nor is there much doubt which will go under." The facts of the history of the British Dominions conclusively proved that external safeguards were futile. Neither the vesting of wide over-riding powers in the Governor or Governor General, nor the retention of a British Army under their control, nor other safeguards of the kind have in the past worked in Canada, or New Zealand, or Natal. With the Government pledged to the rapid Indianisation of the Civil Services, the British Government would have no means of enforcing their safeguards. What

Governor General or Governor would be prepared to defy the wishes of an Indian Ministry and Parliament, relying on the dubious support of the British Government? He, therefore, advised that, instead of relying on external safeguards, British interests and control should be secured "by a wise constitution of the legislature and by using the best elements of the States", assisted with "advice and aid" from Great Britain. Sir Samuel Hoare has bettered the advice given by Sir Berriedale Keith: he has introduced both internal and external safeguards. The constitution of the legislature on a communal basis, with weightage for minorities, and the representation, with weightage, of the Indian States by the nominees of autocratic Princes, themselves subject to the control of the Paramount British Government, is a British "safeguard" which is difficult to improve upon. Besides it, Sir Samuel Hoare proposes to have external safeguards by crippling the powers of the Responsible Government of India. This double combination of "safeguards" leaves precious little of responsibility. As between the two, the internal safeguards are more deadly to responsible government in India than the external, as Sir A. Berriedale Keith well knows.

Trade Union Unity.

THE final session of the Trade Union Unity Conference which was organised under the auspices of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, was held in Delhi in the last week of February and has resulted in the organisation of a third all-India body for labour. There is already the All-India Trade Union Congress (which, by the way, is divided into two groups) and the Indian Trades Union Federation; and the organisation of a third national organisation might be considered, and perhaps rightly, as a step which, instead of bringing about unity, has only perpetuated and intensified the disunity in the labour movement.

This feeling gets all the more strengthened when one recalls the assurance of Mr. Jamnadas Mehta given at the first session of the Trades Union Federation that in case the Trades Union Congress failed to accept the Platform of Unity evolved at the Madras session of the Trade Union Unity Conference, he would unhesitatingly recommend to the Railway Unions that they should join the Federation and would not insist upon the change of name of the latter. We are not aware whether Mr. Jamnadas made any effort to carry out his assurance when he was officially informed that the Trade Union Congress would not be a party to the Platform of Unity.

We are, however, free to acknowledge the earnestness with which the Railwaymen's Federation carried out its job to the best of its ability. We also feel that the organisation of the third all-India body for labour will, instead of retarding, hasten the final unity of all non-communist groups in the country. The mischievously inclined elements in the Unity Conference and the sitting-on-the-fence unions have automatically dropped out by the organisation of the third body and it will be far easier to bring about the amalgamation of this new body and the Trades Union Federation. We sincerely trust that the sponsors of the new organisation and the office-bearers of the Federation will not allow any personal or extraneous matters to interfere with their objective and will soon take such steps as are necessary to bring the two bodies together to effect the much needed amalgamation. The sooner they do it the better for labour and the country. Time is a factor which they should not fail to reckon with.

THE CENTRAL BUDGET.

SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER was able confidently to tell the Assembly last week that the plan he had proposed in 1931 had worked and that the finances of the Indian Government were again on a fairly sound basis. Whatever be the circumstances helping to bring about this eventuality, there is no doubting the fact that, within limits, Sir George Schuster was able to present a balanced budget to the Assembly for the ensuing year. Almost half the Finance Member's speech was taken up with reviewing the economic conditions in India during the last two years and it may be necessary to comment a little on what he said in this connection. There is little doubt but that circumstances have been very propitious. The plan was adopted in September 1931 when the situation was perhaps at its worst. The snapping off of the gold standard proved the main liberating influence and the gold exports that followed effected that balancing of international payments without which all the Finance Member's efforts would have been in vain. It was natural, therefore, that Sir George Schuster should devote a very considerable time to the exposition of the effects of the gold export and defend the policy adopted by Government with regard to it. We have on a former occasion explained in these columns our attitude towards gold export. We then explained that in our opinion an embargo on gold exports was harmful to the interests of those who found themselves driven to fall back upon their gold reserves and we had also expressed doubts regarding the wisdom of Government being asked to buy the gold that was offered for sale in the market. We, therefore, agree substantially with what Sir George had to say on this question and are of opinion that but for these exports Indian trade position would today have been very much worse.

We are, however, unable to follow the Finance Member in the complaisant conclusion he draws regarding the condition of the Indian masses. The Finance Member's case rests on two arguments. First, an argument from consumption statistics. He seems much impressed with the "extraordinary power of resistance which India shows in maintaining the consumption of certain standard necessities of the masses." But this surely is a strange argument for proving that the masses are fairly well off. It is a commonplace of economics that the demand for such necessities as salt is extremely inelastic. The same is true of kerosene and even perhaps of cloth, when its average consumption is so low per head as it is in India. Even setting aside these considerations, the comparison which the Finance Member institutes is misleading. His main plank is the consumption of cloth and the figures he has used are the figures for the year 1932 as compared with the average of the decade 1920 to 1930. Now it is well-known that in a number of post-war years, on account of the high price of cloth, the consumption of cloth in India had reached a remarkably low level and that even in the last few years of the twenties the pre-war figure of the per capita consumption had

not been reached. The decade whose average the Finance Member uses for comparison is, therefore, one of remarkably low cloth consumption in India. Moreover, the trade and production statistics of the year 1932 show many exceptional features. The figures used by Sir George are those of imports plus production and not of actual consumption; and imports during this period had notoriously increased on account of the Japanese exchange situation. As a matter of fact, the Finance Member himself goes on to point to this fact later on in his speech and to note that these imports cannot be expected to continue at that high level next year and that already since this January they have shown a remarkable fall. The continued consumption of salt and kerosene at a given level especially when prices are falling proves nothing more than that people have not yet reached a stage when they cannot even afford to buy salt. And the large imports under specially favourable circumstances from Japan and stimulated production in Indian mills under assurances of a protective regime are facts which throw no light whatsoever on the actual consumption of cloth during the year or on the economic condition of the masses.

There is, however, another argument on which Sir George seems to rely. This is the increase in Post Office cash certificates and the Savings Bank deposits. He says: "The proceeds of gold which have been sold have only to a limited extent been balanced by the purchase of consumable commodities. A great portion has undoubtedly been invested." We put it mildly when we say that in our opinion both these statements are entirely unproven. The only undisputed fact about these gold exports is that "India could not with exports at their present level support the present volume of imports simultaneously with meeting her external obligations unless they were supplemented by gold exports." We know that a few necessities of the masses have just maintained their old level while imports of such things as sugar have badly fallen. What proof is there for saying that gold exports have financed the imports of consumable commodities only to a limited extent and what data are there to support Sir George's assumption that those who have sold gold have put the proceeds largely in the Saving Bank deposits. We know precious little about how and by whom gold is held in India or how and by whom it has been sold. It is, however, generally agreed that it is chiefly the agriculturist who has been the hardest hit by the prevailing depression that has sold gold in huge amounts. The journalistic phrase "distress gold" puts the case in a nutshell. Now it is entirely wrong to assume that the increase in funds available to Government has come from the agriculturist who hardly knows how to make the two ends meet today. In relation to the Post Office Savings Bank, the Central Banking Committee have to remark: "The Post Office Savings Bank is the most far reaching agency created for the promotion of thrift. The majority of its depositors, however, belong to the professional classes and the

intelligent middle-class people." The fact is that the sale of gold has had nothing to do with the increase in P. O. Savings Bank deposits and cash certificates. The phenomenal fall in prices has benefited immensely the class of *rentiers* and the salaried classes. And it is these classes that, finding no safe outlet for investing their savings, have rushed to buy Government securities and to put their money in the Post Office. There is nothing in the Indian economic situation during the last two years to warrant such comforting conclusions as Sir George Schuster draws and it is clear that even with the phenomenal gold hoards of India we cannot long continue the process of financing imports of necessaries by exporting gold.

Coming down to the details of the budget proposals themselves, we find that in almost all respects it is proposed to retain the status quo. The most important exception is the restoration of half the cut in the salaries of Government servants. The one relieving feature of this proposal is that the highly objectionable exemption from income-tax surcharge vanishes thereby. Sir George duly takes credit for doing away with this but forgets that he was himself the author of this peculiar feature of the cut and that he stoutly defended it only a year ago. It cannot also be said that the slender margin of Rs. 43 lakhs in a budget of nearly Rs. 130 crores warrants the dispensing with a cut which if retained would have increased the margin by nearly Rs. 50 lakhs. The Customs duties are all to be retained at their old level. The Finance Member is entirely satisfied that in no case is the import duty so high as to have reached a point of diminishing returns except perhaps in the case of silver and sugar. In both these cases, however, the decision has been taken to retain the old duties. The reasons adduced by the Finance Member for retention are, however, not convincing. We object specially to the retention of an unnecessarily high duty in the case of sugar. That so high a duty is not advantageous from a revenue point of view is obvious and sugar imports have declined enormously during the past year. It is not justified either as a protective measure; for it is substantially higher than the measure of protection recommended by the Tariff Board. In imposing the duty revenue consi-

derations were said to weigh most. If now the duty is found not to yield a proper revenue it should be reduced at least to the level recommended by the Tariff Board and retained there as a protective measure. The protection at present afforded is unnecessarily high and imposes too much burden on the consumer. We attach very considerable importance to this point. For there are in this budget two other duties included—on boots and shoes and on artificial silk goods—which are described as revenue measures with a protective significance. We are emphatically of opinion that the method of granting protection only as a result of public enquiry and confining it to the minimum recommended by a Tariff Board should in no case be departed from. In the grant of protection or the enhancement of it by the executive on its own initiative there lies grave danger to true public interests. There is only one other point we would note in connection with the budget. This is the proposed reimposition of the duty on cheques, a measure which has rightly been universally condemned. Sir George has almost misrepresented the finding of the Central Banking Committee in this behalf. It is hard to understand how the Central Government was induced to reintroduce a vexatious obstacle in the way of banking transactions for the sake of raising a paltry sum of Rs. 7 lakhs.

For the rest, the budget or the Finance Member's speech offers nothing new. The exchange and the sterling position has been rendered satisfactory by the gold exports and successful conversion schemes have been launched by this as by other Governments in the world. Revenues are coming in according to expectation and expenditure is kept within limits. But in India because of the peculiar financial division, the Central Government's finances present a lopsided view of the situation. It is the provincial finances with all the really important expending departments borne on them that need watching. It is their improvement that is most to be desired and it is the immense curtailment and postponement of all useful governmental activity by the provinces that is the real sacrifice entailed on our people by the hard times through which we are passing.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND GAOL DELIVERY.

I.

MR. JAMNADAS DWARKADAS has had the courage to say out what most people, and several Congressmen amongst them, have been feeling for some time about the civil disobedience movement but for reasons of expediency or personal loyalty to the Mahatma, have refrained from saying in public. In a letter to the Mahatma which has since been published, Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas has submitted the campaign to a searching criticism based on inside knowledge. In the early days of the campaign he was frankly its opponent. But later he was captivated by the high idealism which underlay the Mahatma's adventure and willingly joined

the non-violent army and repeatedly went to jail. While in the midst of the campaign he had seen things done in the name of Truth and non-violence and civil disobedience which disillusioned him completely but personal attachment to the Mahatma kept him within the ranks of the Congress. The limit to his complaisance was reached recently when the Mahatma from within the prison walls authorised co-operation with the Government over temple entry bills. He has now recanted his faith and forsworn his acquiescence in civil disobedience and has further roundly charged the Mahatma with doing injustice to his followers and with running away from facts, and wound up by advising him to call off civil disobedience.

Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas's criticism has the ring

of sincerity about it, and is therefore particularly significant. He had served the larger part of his sentence in jail. Obviously prospect of release could not have been the motive of his recantation. He knew that his action would be considered as that of a traitor in orthodox Congress circles and would be reprobated by large masses of the public. He had nothing to gain and everything to lose by his exposure of the Congress and its dictator. With the strength of conviction that comes of first-hand and intimate knowledge, he has shown up how grievously the Congress and the Mahatma have departed from their professions.

"In the Congress in which I used to visualise the highest of ideals," he says, "I saw the presence of intrigue, distrust, craving for power and such other petty things." What is worse, he says that "under the guise of admiration for you, believing that your coming into power was a certainty, selfish exploiters, who had not hesitated and even now do not hesitate to sell the country for their own benefit, started hovering round you and Sirdar Vallabhai Patel." These "selfish Sethias" ran away from the Mahatma when the present campaign started but did not hesitate to exploit the misfortune of the country to make money for themselves.

As regards the justification for the present campaign of civil disobedience started in January 1932, Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas says that some of the followers of the Mahatma who disliked the Gandhi-Irwin Pact had secretly plotted to produce circumstances in the country which would force the Mahatma's hands on his return to India from the second R. T. C. and succeeded in their attempt. The justification for re-starting civil disobedience was of the flimsiest. It was no wonder that the "present struggle, since it was not based on any important principle, failed to create the interest that the 1930 struggle created."

Reviewing the Congress activities as a whole, he says that today it is difficult to see a "vestige of Truth" in what is going on in the name of *Satyagraha*. The Congress, "which professed the highest ideals, came down to a level where it was no longer in a position to claim that it was very much better than any other institution in the world."

Mr. Jamnadas next turns to the Mahatma himself. The Mahatma cannot disown knowledge of some of these unidealistic happenings. "To profess before the world that we are fighting for Truth, our end is Truth and our weapon is truth, and at the same time to connive at this kind of behaviour is, to my mind, the worst type of sin."

Apart from this negative act of weakness, Mr. Jamnadas accuses the Mahatma of positive acts which were unfair and unjust. "No sensible man can ordinarily have anything to say against your fight for the "untouchables", but to engage all your time in carrying on this campaign by accepting conditional freedom which to your knowledge thousands who have gone to jail at your behest cannot secure, is, I must draw your attention, in the first place, an act of grave injustice." He proceeds: "I have read all your explanations but am still unconvinced, and the last, in which after declaring non-cooperation

and condemning numerous people to imprisonment you justify your resort to cooperation, is the limit." He then goes on to say: "If you think that cooperation in some form is necessary, then instead of playing with the lives of those who are in prison, you ought in all honesty to call off the civil disobedience." He is not impressed with the excuse that the Mahatma could not call off civil disobedience because of the limitations imposed on him in prison, inasmuch as the Mahatma found no insuperable difficulty in promoting from within the prison the Poona Pact and the anti-untouchability campaign.

Finally, he accuses the Mahatma of having exploited his followers—an evil of modern civilization, the Mahatma's revolt against which was the chief attraction Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas saw in the civil disobedience campaign. "The speed with which, depending upon your own free will, without caring for or consulting anyone, even against the declared policy of the Congress, you are going on organising one activity after another from the prison, makes me suspect that there is in your heart and mind some distinction between yourself as leader and your followers. If it is your belief that the discipline which is binding on the ordinary member of the Congress who is a prisoner, (not in the matter of prison life but in the freedom to carry on public work) is not binding on you, then that state of things is intolerable to me. For in my humble opinion it is this belief that makes a person or a class an exploiter of another person or class."

II

The Mahatma is one of those rare personalities with whom moral considerations count for everything and considerations of purely political expediency almost for nothing. He would talk of sin and virtue where others would talk of utility or necessity. He would sacrifice political benefits for ethical consolations. It is this high idealism in him and his endeavour to impregnate Indian and world politics with such idealism that have won him universal admiration and respect. He imported the doctrine of non-co-operation with evil into the political field. He has repeatedly asserted that the present system of government in India is "satanic" and co-operation with it "sin", and has advocated civil disobedience in order to defeat that system and bring about a wholesome change in it. The justification for the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was that the Mahatma perceived "a change of heart" in the Government. He then promptly offered co-operation. On his return to India from the second R. T. C. he was persuaded that the Government had gone back on its change of heart and had become evil again, and he resumed non-co-operation and civil disobedience. The Congress ordered civil disobedience and prohibited cooperation. That resolution of the Working Committee stands unrepealed. And yet the Mahatma and his Cabinet have ignored the Congress mandate and have been co-operating with the Government over the Harijan Bills. Being in prison, it is of course not open to the

Mahatma to offer civil disobedience. But surely he could have abstained from active co-operation if it were sin. The Mahatma however went out of his way to seek from Government partial freedom to work for the Untouchables from within the jail. Similarly, those of his lieutenants who are out of jail have under the mandate of the Congress no option but to repeat their acts of civil disobedience and go to jail. But far from doing so, or even far from remaining neutral, they have actively been cooperating with the "satanic" Government. They have actually gone the length of seeking special favours of the Government. And all this when there is no reason to believe that there is a change of heart in the Government and in fact just when it is crowing over its victory over the Congress.

Far be it from us to suggest that we in the least disapprove of the Congress cooperation with the Government or suggest that the Congress leaders out of jail should promptly go in. They have done what is politically very expedient and the thanks of the country are due to them for their bold action. But it cannot be that they would do anything that is politically expedient if they believed that it was morally sinful. The impetus that Mahatma Gandhi is giving to the campaign of removal of untouchability is of the highest value, and it would be a national misfortune if we were to be deprived of it by notions of sinfulness of everything done with Government's assistance. Even the elevation of the untouchables, of the utmost importance as it obviously is to the future of the country, Mahatma Gandhi would give up without any compunction if in his view it savoured in the least of moral sin. The fact however that he is promoting it with his characteristic energy shows that he no longer believes that even a good work becomes bad by mere association at one point or another with a bad Government. Political expediency here happily coincides with ethical virtue. This being the case, time has certainly arrived for the Congress leaders to consider whether they should not abandon civil disobedience and help in other things which, however useful, seemed taboo till now. If they will give a dispassionate consideration to the whole question we have no doubt that they will decide to call off the movement.

III

While we beg the Mahatma and his Cabinet to call off the civil disobedience movement voluntarily, we at the same time hope that the Government will not persist in the attitude taken up by Sir Harry Haig in replying to the volley of interpellations in the Legislative Assembly on the 1st inst. Government may have sufficient justification to crow over their victory over the Congress, and it is a very understandable failing for it to insist on abject surrender on the part of the Congress. But it is a most unwise, futile and wicked thing to do. Whatever be the faults of the Congress and the miscalculations of the Mahatma, they both are held in great regard and affection by the people of India and their humiliation would be a national humiliation. No Indian will have the heart to crow over the defeat of the Congress.

Non-Congressmen of the highest rank and influence have therefore appealed to the Government not to humiliate the Congress and not insist on abject surrender. There is ample evidence to show that, short of open acknowledgment, civil disobedience is ended. Its proud originators have sufficiently unbent themselves as to seek the cooperation of the Government.

If the Government persists in its course, the battle will be long-drawn, for prestige will stand in the way of some of the Congress leaders acknowledging defeat, and much unnecessary and avoidable suffering will continue to be inflicted on the people. Moreover, the bitterness of the Congressmen will deepen and it will be increasingly shared by non-Congressmen and that will be an unfavourable background for the consideration of the new reforms. Government will be wise to be content with practical results being satisfactory. Let not the future of the country be sacrificed for momentary vanity.

The press reports that Mahatma Gandhi and the other political prisoners will be released in the next week or two have raised great hopes in the minds of the people. We hope the report is true, and that Government will do the right thing and in good time. We also hope that the Mahatma and his advisers will not be blind to circumstances in the country but will wholeheartedly bend their great energies and power to win Swaraj for India by constitutional means.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

FRENCH BUDGET IN PARLIAMENT.

THE new Government's financial plan was discussed and passed with some modifications, some ten days ago by the Chamber of Deputies, in the course of a long and hectic debate. The plan, thus modified, has been brought before the Senate, where further discussions resulted in inserting further modifications in the plan. The resulting scheme is going to be examined again today by the Chambre des Députés, and the causes of disagreement between the two Assemblies are expected to be numerous. The French people are hoping nevertheless that a definite decision will soon be reached on a question which is of such urgent interest for national welfare.

"The rapid vote of the plan by the Chamber," said M. Bonnet, our present finance member, "shows the desire to leave the period of hesitations and enter the period of action." The last vote of the Chamber was passed after an uninterrupted sitting of thirty-seven hours. This is said to have been the longest sitting since 1875.

Several important questions came up for discussion, but the two most crucial points seem to have been the cuts in the civil servants' wages and the reduction in military expenditure. The cuts in wages have raised considerable protest from those who have the task of defending the civil servants' interests; we have also alluded, in a previous article, to the public meetings which have been held in pro-

test. Nevertheless, an important section of public opinion is in favour of reduction, both in the pay and in the number of civil servants. In this time of insecurity and unemployment, an assured permanent situation is such a privilege, that those on whom the State confers it should be prepared to take their share in the sacrifices that the nation has to consent to in this critical juncture. Many tax-payers are heard to say with a kind of semi-indignant and semi-ironical bitterness that no private concern could afford to be so extravagant and so irresponsible regarding their employees as the State is towards its employees.

The reduction proposed in military credits did not win the favour either of the representative of the Navy budget, or of the president of the Army Commission and they both invoked the present international situation to defend their arguments. But M. Daladier intervened to prove that the reductions contemplated would in no way enfeeble national security; the reduction would in fact correspond to an organic reorganisation of the army and should therefore be welcome in the very interest of the country. In spite of the remaining opposition, M. Daladier's eloquence finally persuaded the Chamber to vote the article on the reduction of military expenditure. M. Herriot had previously given expression to his support of the whole financial plan and the Radical Party's loyalty to it.

As it was to be expected, the Senate, in its turn, has voted the plan, but not without important alterations. One must be thankful however that the question of the cut in civil servants' wages appears to have been solved for good, at least on principle, even if the definitive scheme is to be rather different in detail from the initial one. Another point also seems to have been settled by both Chambers on principle, and even in many of its details, and that is the reduction on War Pensions. The same thing cannot be said, however, as regards the reduction in military credits; in spite of an energetic intervention from M. Daladier, it has finally been rejected by 170 votes to 155.

To-day, the Budget will be discussed again by the Chamber of Deputies, and although there are many points upon which the two Assemblies are expected to disagree, there is also a rumour that "a wind of conciliation is blowing", and that Parliament will not indefinitely delay decisions that are so essential to national, and, indirectly to general, stability.

It is high time indeed that difficulties of inner policy should be settled and France left freer to turn her thoughts towards the present international situation, which is at present so complicated and so disquieting that it would suffice to occupy the attentive study and activity of any nation.

JAPAN AND THE LEAGUE

In this respect, no news perhaps is more serious than the recent decision of Japan to reject the Report Scheme of the Committee of 19 members. How long has Europe been talking of "the incident in the

Far East"? How long shall we be able to go on using this or that other pleasant euphemism, and close our eyes to the fact that a real war has begun between Japan and Tchang Sio Léang?

The League's inability to avoid conflict is a sad conclusion and unworthy answer to the fervent hopes, the enthusiastic efforts, and the beautiful confidence that the weary post-war world had placed in international institutions. This present war may not affect us directly, but only superficial minds may affect to disregard the possible and far-reaching consequences of this failure of a great principle.

The question of sanctions has often been raised by France in international discussions; is not the present weakness of the League partially due to the lack of provision in that respect? No doubt the question is difficult to solve, military sanctions or others. Before taking their decision, the Japanese have probably made sure that certain private interests will lend their complicity. For instance, the London correspondent to *Paris-Soir* telephones that while the British Government has a policy of non-interference in the conflict between China and Japan, it is thinking over all the measures that might be taken to minimise its consequences before it develops further. One of the most practical measures immediately applicable would be to lay an embargo upon all the armaments and munitions destined to both belligerents. But this can only be possible and efficient if it is simultaneously conducted by all nations likely to be involved in such traffic. It is evident that Governments will meet with resistance in dealing with armament manufacturers. To take the case of England only, it is an open secret that several firms there have been working at full speed of late making munitions of all kinds and tanks for Japan. One firm alone has sent over 36 millions of cartridges in the Far East in the course of the last two months. Another has sent 30 tanks to Japan since the month of December and is working for further orders, etc. Such facts emphasise the inadvisability of letting the manufacture of armaments remain in the hands of private concerns.

This morning's papers bring the news that Japan has decided definitely to leave the League of Nations. What will be the consequences? The Japanese delegation has declared once more that Japan bears the responsibility of maintaining peace and order in the Far East. China represents one-fourth of humanity. If Japan is out of the League, as well as Russia and the United States, the Far East will completely escape the influence of Geneva. What part will Europe have, henceforth, in China's future destiny? And, in a slightly more distant future, in the destiny of India and of Indo-China?

Is there a possibility of an understanding directly between China and Japan, and if so, under what conditions? Was the thought of such a possibility underlying Mr. Matsuoka's mind when he declared about a week ago that if the League tried to carry out the penalties of Art. 16 of the Covenant, the result would be another world-war? This may sound

attractive to a few people who might be able to take advantage of the situation, but nations are tired of getting killed and ruined for the benefit of a few, one knows it well at Geneva.

Yet, outside Europe the present Sino-Japanese war might not be viewed by all with equal displeasure. Chang Kai-Chek would no doubt welcome the defeat of the rival who deprived him of the Northern Provinces two years ago. The United States, well prepared to play the part of a neutral power, would find thereby an excellent opportunity to take Japan's place in the commercial field. Russia would be justified in fortifying her occupation of Mongolia and Turkestan.

In any case, the situation is serious, and it is high time that all the forces of reason and common-sense should unite to face it.

L. MORIN.

Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

(From Our Correspondent.)

LONDON, February 24.

DEFEAT OF THE DIEHARDS.

IT is not often that the motion of a private member of the House of Commons arouses such interest as was witnessed last Wednesday when Sir Henry Page-Croft brought forward his definite challenge to the Government. The reactionaries had worked hard for some considerable time to win supporters to themselves, and probably believed they were making headway. They came down to the House in force and filled with the expectation of making an effective demonstration against any policy of progress towards self-government in India. For several days beforehand the public were being confidently assured that many more members of the Conservative Party, and even those outside, had come to realise the danger of adopting such proposals as were put before the Round Table Conference, and there was talk of such a formidable vote in favour of the Page-Croft resolution as would make the Government pause in its headlong career towards democratic perdition.

The propagandists of the Indian Empire Society certainly did their utmost to achieve their desired result. They have been button-holding Tory members ever since the session began, and their labours appeared to be so fruitful that the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Mail* were predicting at the beginning of this week that the vote against central responsibility might reach as many as one hundred. They summoned their forces to a preliminary meeting on Tuesday night, which, it was said, was attended by nearly one-hundred and fifty members who listened with great attention to the warning voices of General Page-Croft, Sir Michael O'Dwyer and others. But all their big guns seemed to have missed fire somehow, for all they were able to do was to secure a miserable vote of forty-two in the division of the following day.

So however we may deplore the inadequacy of the Government's proposals from a Nationalist standpoint, and condemn repression which is preceding them, it is a fact that the opponents of all constitutional reform are gaining no converts whatever. On the contrary, they are losing ground. Mr. Winston Churchill, however, admits no defeat. He declares that the fight is going on and that it will be long and bitter. He apparently has never heard that Indians said years ago the same thing and has in no way felt alarm at the Churchills, or abated their energy and called off the fight.

The opener of the debate was in stentorian form. He has a commanding presence and a resounding voice as becomes an old soldier, and he made as much of them as if he had been on the parade ground. He was full of fight against any and every concession to Indian aspirations. He drew the most alarming picture of what would happen if any attempt was made to establish responsibility at the centre. No one doubted that he spoke with a sense of conviction, but the whole of what he said was out of date by at least a generation. The real secret of the opposition of which he was the mouthpiece may be found in the two following sentences heard in his speech: "We ought to consider our vested interests in India." "Invested wealth in the Indian Empire amounted to something like between 700 and 1,000 millions sterling." Possibly a sufficient reason for all the obscurantism which could be marshalled against any move forward, but naturally none of them admitted it in so many words. All the supporters of the resolution professed to be disinterestedly solicitous for the welfare of India's dumb millions. In that case they ought to have provided themselves with a more effective argument.

The diehards made up in noise what they lacked in numbers, and Mr. Churchill, though he made no set speech, was the noisiest of the lot. He sat scowling in his corner seat throughout the afternoon a perfect embodiment of implacable Imperialism. Judging by the cheers which greeted some of the sweeping sallies of the mover and seconder of the resolution it might have been supposed that they were going to get their full hundred votes in the division lobby. There were signs of anxiety on the front Ministerial bench, not of course lest the Government should be in any jeopardy, but because of the party disadvantages which might result from any considerable score on the part of the malcontents. But as it turned out, their voices, though full of sound, signified nothing of any moment. At the same time, it was probably correct to say that they do speak for a strong section of the Tory Party outside.

Commander Marsden (who defeated Mr. Saklatvala in Battersea) having seconded the motion in some glib and high-sounding phrases, Lord Eustace Percy came forward with his amendment to the effect that it was inadvisable to make any declaration of policy which might be interpreted as signifying a change in the general attitude of Parliament or as restriction of its freedom to pass a considered

judgment in the future. No one would accuse Lord Eustace of being an ardent democrat, but he has grasped some of the realities of the situation, and he talked about them in a manner which impressed the House much more profoundly than the tub-thumping asseverations of the previous speakers. He however soon found himself in conflict with Mr. Churchill; indeed, that was the experience of every speaker who supported the Government or pleaded for a more sympathetic understanding of India's claim. The Member for Hastings stuck well to his text in spite of the interruptions from beneath, and he certainly convinced many of his hearers that it was impossible now either to go back or to stand still. The Government owed him thanks for a well-reasoned, if cautious, exposition of their policy. The essence of his argument amounted to this, that we ought to go forward because we must, and to go forward now is the best way to avoid having to go too far at one step.

Major Attlee was the only Member who spoke for the Labour Party. He expressed more or less mildly the general attitude of the front Opposition Bench, but he has never quite thrown off the incubus of the Simon Commission. The robust home-thrusts of his Leader would have been a much more enlivening performance. He did, however, put in another plea for the release of the political prisoners, and he warned the House against the falsity of suggesting that India could be governed without considering the demand of Indian Nationalism. It is a pity the Labour Party makes so poor a show on these occasions.

Mr. Holford Knight, who is one of Mr. MacDonald's small party, was once upon a time a delegate to the Indian National Congress. Nowadays he supports the continued imprisonment of the Congress leaders, offering as a set-off a few platitudes in favour of standing by our Indian commitments. Following him came a well-argued speech from Mr. Somervell, the Tory Member for Crewe, who put the case for the policy of the Round Table with considerable effect, showing how impossible it would be to establish provincial autonomy or an All-India Federation without responsibility at the centre.

Next came a breezy ten minutes from Mr. Bernays, who soon found himself at loggerheads with the irrepressible Winston. This promising young Liberal, however, knows how to hold his own, and Mr. Churchill had to return into his corner with the best grace he could.

Sir R. Mitchell Banks is one of the cleverest speakers in the House, and much to the surprise of everybody on this occasion he came down substantially against his diehard friends. It seemed as though his attitude was symptomatic of a strong feeling on the Conservative side, which hesitates to vote for such an uncompromising formula as the Page-Croft resolution. It prefers to wait and see, and possibly when the White Paper appears and the Joint Committee is set up it will be the most dangerous element with which that body will be confronted.

It was now 6.45 and the House was well filled in anticipation of the Secretary of State's reply. He had not looked very happy during some of the previous speeches, and he was in no mood to answer some of the posers which were put to him. No Cabinet Minister likes to see his own side quarrelling among themselves. But the revolt, if it is a revolt, never looked like being serious for a Government with such an overwhelming majority. The Prime Minister at any rate, did not think the occasion of sufficient importance to put in an appearance until the division was called, though Mr. Baldwin was there most of the time to hold in his flock as far as possible.

It must be said for Sir Samuel Hoare that he stood up well to the critics who came from his own party. He certainly gave nothing away to them and there was no attempt to buy off their opposition with compromising concessions. He was as imperturbable as ever, whether he was dealing with the wild statements of his own reactionaries or the graver realities of the Indian situation. The Conservative leader knew what he was about when he got this astute, plausible and smooth-spoken politician appointed to the India Office. His speech on Wednesday was quite a characteristic performance. He cleverly warded off the attacks of the Churchillians on a policy which has not yet been fully revealed, reassured the main body of his own party as to the Government's loyalty to Conservative principles, refrained from provoking any hostility from the Labour benches, established the fact that Parliamentary opinion was overwhelmingly favourable to an All-India Federation on a stable basis, with responsibility at the centre, persuaded nearly everybody that the position in India had vastly improved upon what it was a year ago, and conveyed the impression that while civil disobedience would get no consideration from him he was always ready and willing to co-operate with any sections in India who were prepared to work the Constitution about to be offered to them.

The picture presented to Parliament of the conditions prevailing in India to-day might not be recognised by Indians who know more of the facts. It seemed to many of his supporters, with only a facile knowledge of the situation, that the Secretary of State was able at one blow to demolish the pessimism of the diehards and the Nationalism of the Congressites.

To the plea for a political amnesty the Secretary of State still returns a stiff refusal. He pointed out, in answer to a question put to him just recently, that the number of persons in prison for political offences had been reduced by more than two-thirds in the last few months, and that the numbers were still going down. Surely one is entitled to remark, since the numbers have dwindled so effectively and India is, according to the British optimist, once again peaceful and orderly, it would be a good move on the part of the Indian Government to release the remainder of the prisoners, so as to create a better atmo-

phere for the new Constitution when it does appear.

But beyond the old offer, for what it is worth, of co-operation to all who would accept the Government scheme at Sir Samuel's valuation, nothing seems to be moving to placate or win the applause of the Indian Nationalist. It is expected that the White Paper will be issued in a few weeks and the Joint Select Committee will then be able to get to work. There is every sign that this coming White Paper will meet with a fair and, on the whole, favourable reception in the House of Commons.

Review.

INTERNATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT.

WORLD SOCIAL ECONOMIC PLANNING. Ed.

By M. L. FLEDDERNS. (I. I. Relations Institute, The Hague.) 1932. 25cm. 585, 352p.

THE two volumes under review are companion volumes to the publication "International Unemployment" published by the Industrial Relations Institute, and reviewed in these columns a few months back. The earlier volumes contained introductory analyses of fluctuations in employment prepared for study in advance of the World Social Economic Congress held in August 1931 under the auspices of the International Industrial Relations Association; the present volume furnishes to the reader extremely valuable data resulting from the labours of the Congress and affords in handy form to the research student in economic and labour problems the considered verdicts of the experts assembled at the Congress on what are admittedly some of the most burning questions of the day.

The volume consists of fairly exhaustive summaries of the two dozen and more informative and learned papers read at the Congress. These papers present the various facets of the unemployment and cognate problems with a freshness of appeal and vivacity of touch that would not have been possible if but one mind had attempted to deal with diversified problems. Their brilliance notwithstanding, these loosely-strung papers, the individual productions of different writers with differing outlooks, give, on the whole, a disjointed presentation of the problems they deal with. The essential sequence of thought and continuity of purpose running through the series is, however, brought out in an admirable way by the masterly review of the papers contributed by the Chairman of the Programme Committee of the Congress and published by way of introduction to them.

The publication poses in strong relief the present paradox of acute conditions of unemployment in the midst of phenomenal economic progress. The facts relating to world-wide unemployment and the recent strides made in the world's productive capacity are put in significant juxtaposition and the moral is drawn that the ill-effects of the situation can be combated only by social economic planning on an international scale. Sceptics are confuted by the irrefragable testimony of splendid results obtained as the result of such planning in both the agricultural and industrial spheres, and, in this connection, the two papers on "Labour in Soviet Planned Economy" and the "Planning and Development of Agriculture in Soviet Union" by the Director of the Labour Research Institute in Moscow, are specially commended to the reader. After enunciating the

principles demonstrating the practicability, and establishing the need for social economic planning, a final series of papers deal with the resultant enhancement of both productive capacity and buying power and consequent improvement in all-round improvements of standards of living.

For India, particularly, the publication conveys an inspiring message of hope and relief, for nowhere is there more need of economic planning than in this country, where haphazard conditions of production and unjust methods of distribution are the order of the day. The profound truth that economic integration must precede political co-operation and the converse, that the test of political wisdom lies in the contribution which a nation or country can make to the better and more harmonious adjustment of the world's economic life, have a special significance for this country. The volume under review sounds a clarion call to leaders of business and labour, economists and social thinkers, and representatives of governmental activities in India to seek for a sound basis of co-operative, constructive effort towards a planned development of productive capacity and standard of living and it would be no overstatement of the case to affirm that the country's progress in the immediate decades to come will depend in great measure on the nature and extent of the response evoked. Altogether a thought-provoking and stimulating publication which every serious student of economic problems in this country should make a point to read.

K. E. MATTHEW.

SHORT NOTICES.

IMPERIAL FARMANS (A. D. 1577 TO 1805).

Trs. into English by KRISHNALAL MOHANLAL JHAVERI. (The News Printing Press, Bombay.) 21cm.

THE proverbially conservative tendency of Indian ancient families and religious heads no doubt ensures the preservation of old documents. But their methods, in this respect, are generally antiquated and characterised by ignorance. The leaven of western education, however, is slowly transforming all this and we now find the intelligent suggestion of the late Mr. Telivala — of having the *Farmans* of the *Vallabha Sampradaya* published with translation — actually followed. The custodians of old papers belonging to other *sampradayas* also will do well to imitate the example set by the volume before us. They should clearly realize that the best way of preserving and using old historical records in their possession is to hand them over to research workers in history for being critically edited and published. The work of correctly reading and dating such papers is no doubt tedious and sometimes requires the cooperation of experts working in different branches. But scholars like Mr. K. M. Jhaveri can be found to undertake such work as a labour of love and also to secure the necessary co-operation. Mr. M. P. Khareghat, who has ascertained the corresponding dates of the *Farmans* according to the Christian Calendar, rightly refers the readers to Prof. Hodiwala's excellent paper on the Julius years of Shah Jahan; and we may add, before concluding, that Messrs. V. S. Bendre and V. V. Deshpande of the Bharat Itibas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona, have been able to make some important additions and corrections to Prof. Hodiwala's conclusions by the find of an old Sanskrit work named *Parasiprakash* composed by Vedangaraya, the astronomer royal at the court of Shah Jahan.

D. V. APTE.

GANDHI. By CARL HEATH. 1932. 17cm. 30p. 6d.
 THE author is a frank and enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Gandhi and came into personal contact with him on the occasion of the second Round Table Conference. The religious side of Gandhi's personality has brought him a number of friends and admirers in England and America and the author is one of them. The author is particularly delighted to find that Mr. Gandhi has drawn his doctrine of Satyagraha from the New Testament and has extended its scope from the religious to the political field. In simple and charming language he gives us a few of his impressions of Mr. Gandhi and is evidently sad at heart that, instead of listening to his advice, the Viceroy has clapped him in to gaol. He is firmly of opinion that reconciliation is the crying need of the hour and that a policy of drift as also one of 'firm hand' is harmful.

A.

Correspondence.

TEMPLE ENTRY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—In your issue of February 23, referring to the resolution passed at the Hindu Conference in Bombay on the 25th September 1932, you contend that no reference to Temple Entry was made in that resolution. You also draw attention to the fact that in the text of the resolution as published in Mr. Pyarelal's "The Epic Fast" no mention of Temple Entry is to be found.

The fact, however, is that a very clear declaration was made in that resolution for the removal of disabilities now imposed upon Harijans in respect of admission into temples. In this connection the following facts may be stated.

It is recalled by many of those present at the Conference of the 25th September that the resolution which was read out by the Chairman, Pandit Malaviyaji, and passed unanimously contained a reference to temples. This reference occurred in a separate paragraph at the end of the long resolution. By a curious mishap most newspapers in their reports of the proceedings of the Conference omitted that paragraph. Some time after "The Epic Fast" which adopted the newspaper text of the resolution was published the discrepancy was noticed. It was then found that the correct text had been published by the "Times of India" whose representative must have either secured the original copy of the resolution or written it down when the resolution was read out by the Chairman.

The following is the full text of the relevant part of the resolution passed at the Bombay Conference including the paragraph under reference:—

"This Conference resolves that henceforth, amongst Hindus, no one shall be regarded as an untouchable by reason of his birth, and that those who have been so regarded hitherto will have the same right as other Hindus in regard to the use of public wells, public schools, public roads and all other public institutions. This right shall have statutory recognition at the first opportunity and shall be one of the earliest Acts of the Swaraj Parliament, if it shall not have received such recognition before that time.

"It is further agreed that it shall be the duty of all Hindu leaders to secure, by every legitimate and

peaceful means, and early removal of all social disabilities now imposed by custom upon the so-called-untouchable classes, including the bar in respect of admission to temples."

The correct text of the resolution is published in "My Soul's Agony", which is a collection of statements issued by Gandhiji from jail, and also in the latest pamphlet issued by Mr. C. Rajagopalachari entitled "Plighted Word."

The public meeting subsequently held in Bombay, also under the chairmanship of Pandit Malaviyaji, on the 30th September passed a similar resolution adding that no compulsion shall be used in regard to the removal of disabilities and that peaceful persuasion will be adopted as the only means. In this connection it may be useful to point out that reference to "legitimate and peaceful" means is also made in the Conference resolution. The following is the relevant portion of the resolution passed in the public meeting:

"This public meeting of Hindus resolves that an All-India Anti-Untouchability League, with its headquarters at Delhi, and branches in different Provincial centres, be established for the purpose of carrying on propaganda against untouchability and that for this purpose the following steps should be immediately taken:—

- (a) All public wells, dharamshalas, roads, schools, crematoriums, burning ghats, etc. be declared open to depressed classes;
- (b) All public temples be opened to members of depressed classes.

Provided that no compulsion or force shall be used with regard to (a) and (b), but peaceful persuasion will be adopted as the only means."

—Yours faithfully,

DEVIDAS GANDEL

C/o Parnakuti, Poona.

"HARIJAN BILLS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—The leading article in your issue of the 23rd February, on the subject of the anti-untouchability bills now before the Assembly, is, as usual, a most helpful and clarifying piece of writing on the issues involved. There are, however, two points in the article, to which I am afraid, exception might legitimately be taken.

(1) "Supposing the temple-entry bill was passed, and temples thrown open to Harijans by a majority vote of the caste Hindus, will that abolish untouchability?" You ask, and then argue that "the orthodox minority will continue to treat Harijans as depressed classes (evidently meaning 'as untouchables') and perhaps abandon the temples 'polluted' by them. Untouchability will not be mitigated if Harijans enter and the orthodox leave the temples."

Though I would agree with you as regards the need and urgency of greater concentration on the purely civic disabilities of the Harijans than on the temple ban, we should not lose sight of the facts that untouchability in Hindudom is a 'religious' institution, and that the temples are, so to say, the strongholds of Hindu religious life. It is therefore expected that with the recognition of the Harijans' right to enter temples the back of the monstrous custom of untouchability will be broken, if it will not be killed outright. Without the removal of untouchability from the temples we will be far indeed from its re-

removal from popular Hinduism. Popular Hinduism itself, as manifested in the temple cult, may not be the best form of Hinduism or any-ism. Temple reform may be a highly desirable thing, but that is a different matter. English spelling may be badly in need of reform, but that is no reason why the benefit of the spread of literacy in English should be denied to Indians till the English-speaking world chooses to rationalise its orthography. So it is with the temple-entry question. Even from the secular point of view it cannot be denied that the temples have a certain significance of their own which should not be belittled. They are in fact for the Hindu masses in the villages the only centres for communal and cultural life. Apart from and more important than the *pujas* and the other strictly religious forms of the temple cult, there are the *kathas* (or *kalakshepams*), puran-readings, folk-plays, etc. which are the only or the most important means by which both instruction and recreation are provided to the Hindu villagers in their temples. In fact they may be called the town-halls of our country side. Exclusion of the Harijans from the communal activities conducted inside them, which are not wholly unedifying in themselves, means the denial to the excluded of so many opportunities of cultural uplift open to the higher castes.

But that is by the way. What I wish to emphasise is that when the majority of the 'caste Hindus' are determined to abolish untouchability even from the temples, the 'orthodox' minority by retaining the custom will themselves be untouchables—only self-made ones. It will then be with the temples as it is now with some other public utilities. If an 'orthodox' fellow objects to travelling in a bus in which a Harijan is seated, he must leave the bus and hire a special car or travel on foot or not travel at all. If the anti-reform minority 'abandons' the temples, and their abandonment of them means, as it must reasonably be taken to mean, relinquishment of their management to the pro-reform majority of caste Hindus with the addition of the Harijans, then it will be the minority who will have to shift for themselves in the way of temple amenities in 'unpolluted' isolation. Thus they themselves will be untouchables, but only willing ones unlike the Harijans now. In this connection I am reminded of the retort courteous that Mahatma Gandhi gave through *Young India* to a Madras correspondent of his who had asked him whether removal of untouchability in his Swaraj meant that every Brahmin would be compelled to touch a Pariah. He got the reply that while nobody would be obliged to touch a Pariah, everybody would be free to make *himself* an untouchable, not to keep others away as untouchables. Obviously a minority cannot, unless backed by authority, maintain untouchability against the majority.

(2) Secondly you write, "Opening a temple to Harijans at the instance of a majority of Hindus and in the teeth of opposition by a minority . . . might lead to breaches of the peace, and what the referendum permits the exigencies of law and order policy may be obliged to deny."

Putting the best construction on this, one can only say that your view of "the exigencies of law and order policy" in the case is the expression of your fear as to what the Government's policy *might* be, and not your opinion as to what it *ought* to be. For I hope you do not disregard the fact that it is the duty of the State not merely to maintain peace, but to do so without violating lawful rights.

It is an elementary principle of civilised government that when a lawful action on the part of one is sought to be prevented or obstructed by another by unlawful force, the State should employ its force to put down the unlawful party, not to prevent the lawful party from exercising his right on the plea that its exercise might provoke a breach of the peace. Only a Government that is irresponsible, cowardly or addicted to political bargaining may prefer the latter course to the former. In India in recent times there have been too many cases in which the custodians of "law and order" have on the convenient excuse of a likelihood of a breach of the peace prevented 'politically undesirable' citizens and communities from exercising their lawful rights in a lawful manner. I hope you do not suggest that actions such as these on the part of the British Indian authorities are precedents worthy of being followed by them in the temple-entry disputes that may arise when the reform is legalised.

You may fear, as I also do, that in such disputes the authorities may abdicate their dutiful functions, and, by following such precedents, prove themselves to be consulters of convenience rather than maintainers of justice and right. But if they do so, such "law and order policy" is surely one to be condemned and deprecated. Therefore the supposed "exigencies" of such a policy are no argument why a right which the Harijans do not at present enjoy (and cannot enjoy, thanks to the British judge-made law,) should not be secured to them by means of a legislative enactment, although the right may prove to be one on paper only for some time on account of the policy. It is up to the people to do the right by the Harijans through their legislatures, and let the authorities put themselves in the wrong if they choose. But why encourage the authorities in their irresponsible policy by confidently anticipating the worst of it as though it were an inevitable or the only way for them?—Yours, etc.

S. D. NADKARNI

Karwar,

Feb. 26, 1933,

[There is really no difference in the views expressed by our correspondent above and in our own views. We like him are unreservedly in favour of the right of temple-entry of the untouchables being recognised by the public. Our only point in writing the article in question was (and here our correspondent agrees with us) that to give precedence in our anti-untouchability campaign to an item which is of lesser benefit to the Harijans and which provokes violent opposition from the orthodox "high-castes" is not the best way to tackle the problem.—Ed., S. O. I.]

BOOKS RECEIVED.

- FARM ACCOUNTS IN THE PUNJAB, 1930-1931. By SARDAR KARTAR SINGH. (Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, Lahore.) 1932. 25cm. 249p. Rs. 2.
- GLEANINGS. By MANOHAR LAL ZUTSHI. (The Indian Press, Allahabad.) 1933. 25cm. 274p.
- AMONG THE HINDUS. By R. MANOHAR LALL. (Minerva Press, The Mall, Lahore.) 1933. 20cm. 238p. Rs. 2/12.