

# The Servant of India

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## Topics of the Week.

### Defiance of Public Opinion.

HOW little public opinion counts with the Government these days is admirably exemplified by the decision of the Madras Government to prolong the life of its legislature by another year. As pointed out in these columns last week, the Council had only a few days ago given expression to its unmistakable dislike of any further extension of its life. The Home Member undertook to bring the Council's wishes to the notice of the Governor—a promise the former must not have failed to keep. And yet the Government's reply as indicated by their decision is in the nature of a slap in the face. Whether or not the Government intended it as such, that is how it can and will be justifiably interpreted. The uncertainties of the political situation and a desire to save the presidency from the expenses and disturbance of an election are cited as grounds for the continuance of the present antiquated legislature. If these are the only arguments that can be advanced in its support, all we can say is that they are not sufficient to justify this affront to public opinion. Since it is difficult for anybody to foretell with any precision when the new constitution would be in working order in the provinces, the proper thing to do would have been not to grant any fresh lease of life to the existing legislature but to see that it was replaced by one enjoying closer touch with the people. The desire not to launch the province in avoidable expense is indeed very laudable. But obviously it must be held in check if public opinion demands, as in the present case, a course of action different from that which happens to commend itself to the Government. After all it is the Govern-

ment which is for the people and not the people for the Government. Let us see what steps are taken in Madras to make the Government realise the depth of public resentment at this calculated defiance of public opinion.

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### A Minister's Weakness.

WE do not think the president of the Punjab Legislative Council can at all be said to have gone out of his way in giving the advice he gave to the Hindu Minister there upon the latter disowning responsibility for the acts of his subordinates like Commissioners and Deputy-Commissioners. The control of the ministers over the services under the present regime is slender in all conscience; but if even such shadowy authority as the ministers possess over them is to be still further reduced by the "weakness" of the ministers, to borrow the expression used by the Muslim Minister in describing the conduct of his colleague, the services virtually become the masters of the situation and can play fast and loose with the ministers' policies. If the minister cannot prevent this kind of tampering with his policy, he is not worth his salt. According to constitutional practice, it is for the ministers to lay down policies and for the services to carry them out faithfully. If any member of the services is found to be acting inconsistently with such policies, the minister's obvious duty, as pointed out by the President, is to seek redress at the hands of the Governor or of higher authorities. Failing this, he should go even to the length of resigning the ministership with a view to exposing the misconduct of the refractory subordinate. If instead of exploring all possible avenues of ensuring compliance on the part of his subordinates with his orders, a minister merely throws up his hands out of supposed powerlessness in relation to the services, even such restricted responsibility as is now enjoyed by the provincial legislatures would be reduced to a nullity. The Hindu Minister must indeed be said to have a very inadequate realisation of his power over the services if, as he said, he cannot interfere with the doings of his I. C. S. subordinates. No better proof of the hollowness of his contention need be given than the flat contradiction which his statement of the position drew from his Mahomedan colleague. The incident illustrates how if the ministers had been strong enough, even diarchy could have been made to yield better results.

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### Reactionary.

BY rejecting the resolution moved by one of its lady members favouring the removal of the sex bar in regard to candidature for election to local bodies, the Punjab Legislative Council has written itself down as a reactionary body. Nor has its action in question the merit even of consistency. If it had

been excluding women from its own membership, its barring of their entry into local bodies as the elected representatives of the people might perhaps have been defended at least on the ground of consistency of conduct, howsoever condemnable it might otherwise have been. But the presence of more than one lady member in the Punjab legislature itself deprives its action even of that excuse.

It appears from press reports of the debate that the fate of the proposal was decided not on merits but on communal considerations. It seems to have been feared that if women should be allowed to stand for election to local bodies which had failed to make arrangements for separate communal representation, it might result in disturbing the local communal balance, which is sometimes very delicate. It may be admitted at once that the extension of the right to stand for municipal and district board elections to women is likely to have that effect. But can it be seriously contended by anybody that in the existing social conditions of the province the number of women successfully offering themselves for election would be so formidable as seriously to upset this balance? It may be safely predicted that for years to come this number would be disappointingly small. All that the passage of the motion would have done would have been to bring the civic status of women into line with that of men. It is a thousand pities that the Punjab Council refused to do even this act of theoretical justice to women. If the actual working of the grant of this new right to women had been found to have led to placing certain communities at a disadvantage, there would have been time enough to devise methods for correcting such deficiencies. But to refuse to recognise women as the equals of men in civic matters without the provision of separate communal representation as a condition precedent to such recognition is to compel a section of the community to swallow a thing for which it has, speaking broadly, no relish.

It is noteworthy that the motion secured the support of a majority of elected members—a measure of the progressiveness of public opinion but was defeated because the official and nominated *Mlec* threw its weight decisively against it. The minister concerned, though wholeheartedly approving the principle underlying the proposal, voted against it. He might as well have remained neutral. His remarks give ground for the hope that his sympathy for the motion will find practical expression in the nomination in greater numbers of women to local bodies. We must learn to be thankful even for such small mercies.

#### Capitation Debate in Upper House

THE net result of the capitation debate in the Council of State is most disappointing. Beyond a promise from the Commander-in-Chief that the dissenting minutes of the two Indian members of the Capitation Tribunal would be shown in confidence to any member of the legislature provided he bound himself not to make any public use of it, the debate was productive of hardly any good. The promise no doubt goes some way to meet the public demand for their publication, but can never be regarded as a satisfactory substitute for it. So far as the main question of the adequacy or otherwise of the British Government's contribution towards India's military expenditure goes, the head of the Indian army was even less responsive. While public opinion is united in looking upon the contribution as altogether inadequate and doing scant justice to India's claims in that respect, the Commander-in-Chief's remarks give one the impression that he is far from sharing the public dissatisfaction at the manner in which the question has been

disposed of by the British Government. In fact he went so far as to characterise the verdict of the Tribunal as "a decisive victory" for this country and so the question of appealing against it, as suggested by public opinion, does not, according to him, arise. Sir Philip Chetwode must be a hopeless optimist as he expects public opinion to see eye to eye with him on this point. With regard to the public misgiving whether India's acceptance of the contribution would not impose on her the obligation of maintaining the Indian army at a particular standard of efficiency, he did well to make it clear that the fear in question was unfounded and India would not be required to maintain her army at a level of efficiency not demanded by the strict requirements of Indian defence. We have no doubt this assurance will cause widespread relief.

#### Treatment of Political Prisoners.

PROBLEMS relating to jail administration received consideration at the hands of the provincial Inspectors-General of Jails who recently assembled in conference at Allahabad. Its decisions on points concerning the treatment to be meted out to political prisoners are by no means such as will meet with general satisfaction. These officials have no objection to A class prisoners being allowed to use their own clothing; but this, they say, should be limited to 'reasonable quantity.' Why should it be assumed that this class will misuse the concession by wantonly going in for an unusually or needlessly large number of clothes? And supposing it did so, how would it embarrass jail administration? The insistence on the supply of prison clothing to B class prisoners and the refusal to issue *dhoties* to them is equally indefensible. The withholding of this kind of apparel is defended by the ingenious plea that it would be used as a means of escape. Now, whatever sins of commission or omission may be laid at the door of the recent-day political prisoner, the last charge that can be brought against him is that he would stoop to secure his escape clandestinely. As is generally known, he is not in a hurry to get out of jail but is anxious to have his stay prolonged there as much as possible. If the jail authorities cannot bear to see him put on *dhoties*, they must find out other excuses to cover their prejudice or distrust of the innovation.

But their decision in regard to the punishment of such prisoners deserves even stronger condemnation. In spite of the fact that public opinion has all along looked with deep abhorrence on flogging, this Conference is not prepared to forswear its use. In fact they want even the safeguard of a reference to the local government to be replaced merely by the prior assent of the district magistrate. We should have thought that considerations of administrative convenience, if nothing else, would have shown to these officers the wisdom of dropping this form of punishment. Its administration is always attended by sympathetic hunger-strikes and other forms of protest on the part of the colleagues of the unfortunate prisoner marked out for this brutal punishment, adding enormously to the difficulties of jail management. The other forms of punishment like reducing the prisoners to a lower class, the withholding of remission of a part of the sentence for good conduct, etc. ought to suffice for all the reasonable needs of the situation. It is to be hoped that the Government will not fail to consult public opinion before sanctioning the proposals of this Conference.

#### Ladies' Hostel.

AMIDST the numerous public functions and engagements of this week in Poona came off the

pretty little function of opening the Saraswati Quarters for lady students at the Fergusson College. As the Principal said in his opening remarks, the new and the third extension of the lady students' quarters bringing up the total accommodation to 40 lady students was made possible by the generous donation of Ra. 8,000 of Her Highness the Ranisahab of Sangli who made this contribution in remembrance of her happy days passed in the Fergusson College as a lady student. The function took place in the old Hall of the main building of the Fergusson College. It was very well attended, which indicates

how well the Fergusson College and its activities are appreciated by the public of Poona. But the whole audience was surprised and disappointed to see that the Hon'ble Minister of Education Dewan Bahadur Kambli could not be present and declare the Quarters open on account of indisposition. At the eleventh hour Shrimant Chiefaheb of Ramdurg graciously agreed to take up the presidentship and Shrimant Chiefaheb addressed the gathering in a nice and fine speech and declared the Saraswati Quarters open.

## PROBLEM OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

By DR. R. P. PARANJPYE.

AT the Inter-Universities Conference held at Delhi a few days ago a good deal of discussion took place on the length of the course at a University leading up to a degree. The opinion was generally expressed that the two years' course after the Intermediate did not produce satisfactory results and it was the general opinion that a student should remain in the University for at least three years before getting an ordinary degree. The question was somewhat complicated by the fact that while some Universities in India regarded the whole course after the Matriculation examination as constituting University education, in the more recently established universities, which are generally of a unitary and teaching character, the Intermediate examination does not form part of the work of the University and is managed by the High School and Intermediate Education Board. Consequently such universities as Lucknow and Allahabad have only a two years' course after the Intermediate for qualifying for the ordinary degree. While there was this general feeling in favour of extending the university course, after the Intermediate, to three years, the decided opinion of practically everybody was that the total length of the course from the primary stage to the University should not be extended over what it is at present. Various proposals were therefore made to achieve this object and when I threw out in my speech a comprehensive suggestion about reorganising the whole educational course it received general approval. This was embodied in the following resolution, which was unanimously accepted by the Conference:—

"While this Conference favours an extension of the course of study for the degree examinations over three years instead of two, as at present, at the same time it is strongly of opinion that it would not be desirable to add one more year to the ordinary pass degree course, or to reduce the period of study for the degree examination from four years after the high school stage to three, unless and until the standard of instruction in secondary schools is materially improved; and that, in order that the university will be able to do better work, it is desirable that the period of study for a university for the pass degree should be at least three years, but the total period of instruction of the pupil should not be increased but should be divided into definite stages of primary and middle, in which stages education in non-language subjects should be entirely through the vernacular, and higher secondary, in which education in non-language subjects shall be through the vernacular, wherever practicable; and university educa-

tion; covering five (or four), four (or five), three, and at least three years, respectively, there being a formal examination at the end of each stage only thus avoiding abuse of too many formal examinations; and that, until this re-organisation is effected, the total period of study for the pass degree should not be reduced to three years after the matriculation from the present four years."

At present our whole educational system apparently implies that every child joining a primary school will as a matter of course go on to the university and the courses are so arranged and the teaching is so imparted that this is regarded as the only object of education. As a matter of fact only a very small percentage of pupils joining a primary school go to the middle stage, a small proportion of the students of the middle stage go on to the Intermediate colleges and only a minority of students passing the Intermediate go on to the university. The interests of the vast majority of pupils are sacrificed for the very small number who do actually go to the university. It will be generally accepted that while university education is very important, the education of everybody should not be made subordinate to its needs. The four stages mentioned in the resolution are intended to satisfy the needs of different classes of pupils entering on their education. Instead of making each stage as only subsidiary to the next, it should be the accepted policy that each stage should be complete in itself and while it should enable a pupil to enter on the next stage properly qualified, it should accomplish the object for which it is intended.

There is another important point in favour of such a re-organisation and of having distinct institutions for each stage. At present in the same institution pupils are found who differ from each other to a very wide extent as regards their physical, mental and psychological development. The effect of such inequality can easily be realised. If every institution is to have a proper corporate life of its own, it is very necessary that the pupils in such an institution should be approximately on the same level and the establishment of such different kinds of institutions will allow such equality among the pupils to be achieved.

The primary stage should be catered for by primary schools established in almost every village. It is hoped that at a very early date primary education will be made free and compulsory all over the

country and the object aimed at in this stage should be only a proper grounding in the three R's. A pupil passing through this stage should acquire effective literacy so that he will not relapse into illiteracy on account of insufficient grounding in his school. The Compulsory Primary Education Acts in most provinces lay down the age limits 6 to 11 for this compulsory stage with the proviso that a pupil who has completed the course laid down for primary education before the age of eleven will be excused from compulsion. In one or two provinces this limit extends only over four years and consequently the resolution mentions an alternative of 5 or 4 years in this stage. But, it is hoped that all provinces will sooner or later fall into line on this matter and extend this stage over 5 years as soon as possible. In this stage all subjects except Reading, Writing and Arithmetic should be done mostly in an indirect manner by means of suitable lessons in their regular reading books, but, the principal aim of a complete mastery of the three R's should not be lost sight of. Subjects like History, Geography, Health, Nature Study should be taught mostly in an indirect way. Ordinarily pupils should not be allowed to continue in a primary school after the age of twelve, and it is not expected that pupils will complete the whole course before the age of nine or ten. As this stage is intended to apply to every child, there is no further need to explain the objects for which this stage is intended.

After completing the primary course, a considerable proportion of the pupils will have ordinarily finished their education and will take to their ordinary pursuits, but a certain proportion, and it is hoped a growing proportion of them, will also go on to the middle stage. This stage is intended to cater for the needs of "boys" and "girls" as contrasted with "children" and should be finished ordinarily at the age of fifteen. It should extend over four years (five in the case of those provinces where the primary course extends over four years) and its aim should be to provide for persons who will be of a higher calibre than the mere labourer, like intelligent craftsmen, substantial cultivators, overseers in factories and so on. The course of studies should include a practical knowledge of spoken and written English, with History, Geography, Elementary Science, Drawing and Manual Training as optional subjects. A second language and elementary Algebra and Geometry may be provided for. The education in non-language subjects should be entirely through the vernacular so that rapid progress may be made without being handicapped by the difficulties of a medium. Pupils successfully passing this course should, after a two years' course in a normal school, be quite competent to serve as teachers in primary schools. They should also be competent to take up lower-paid clerical posts and a certain number of these schools should provide vocational education of a suitable character. Pupils should not be allowed to remain in a school of this type above the age of sixteen and should ordinarily not be able to complete the course before fourteen. It is hoped that at some future time this course also will be taken by the majority of boys and girls. In

advanced countries of the West the age of compulsion is up to fourteen and its extension up to sixteen is being constantly advocated. Although in India such a consummation appears to be far-off, there is no harm in keeping this ideal before our minds also. While a primary school should as a matter of course exist in every village with at least 500 population, in the case of middle schools the aim should be to have one such institution in every town of about 5,000 population so that pupils will not have to go very far from their homes to attend them.

After the pupils have completed their middle course it should be possible for them to enter on their work of life, but a certain proportion of them will naturally wish to go higher, and for such, higher secondary schools should be established. Such schools will cover normally a period of 3 years, the pupils being between 15 and 18 years of age. These age limits should not be extended by more than one year on either side. This stage is intended for adolescent boys and girls who desire to receive education of a higher type. Those who pass out of such institutions should be able to enter on higher professional training as in medical, engineering, agricultural or technological colleges. The course of study should provide for various optional subjects, though it is neither intended nor expected that every institution should teach all these optional subjects. Different institutions should specialise in different subjects, some laying special emphasis on subjects ancillary to agriculture, others engineering and technology, others commercial and others purely literary and scientific. Facilities for vocational training of a higher character should be provided in such institutions. The English language should be properly studied though still mainly from the practical side, although the pupils should be encouraged to develop a taste for good literature. The education in non-language subjects should as far as practicable be imparted through the vernacular, though it is recognised that this may be occasionally difficult where the pupils in the same institution have various vernaculars. Pupils passing out of these institutions should be quite competent, after two years in a training institution, to act as teachers in middle schools. They should be also eligible for posts under Government and under private employers requiring a competent education and posts in the subordinate and provincial services should be open to them. Pupils entering such institutions will generally belong to what is called the middle class, though by means of scholarships, etc., intelligent children of the other classes should be given facilities for going through this course also. The course of education in these institutions should ordinarily provide for educated leaders in towns and villages and it is hoped that our future legislatures will contain people who have at least completed the course of education in such institutions. Such institutions should be available at least in each district and in every town with a population of over 30,000. There should be a formal public examination at the

end of this course providing for the various optional subjects. The aim in such examinations should be testing the thoroughness rather than the extent of the knowledge required. In the Intermediate Colleges, as constituted at present in these provinces, there are two formal examinations, one at the end of the second year and one at the end of the fourth year. The present Intermediate Colleges do not provide an efficient corporate life as many of the students in the last two years come to them quite fresh. The new class of institution contemplated will keep the student under its roof for three years at least and he will be able to derive full benefit from association with pupils of approximately his own age.

With these three stages properly organised the universities should enter on their work. The excessive numbers entering universities at present lead to a lowering of the standard. The universities should aim at producing highly educated people and should not cater for mere numbers. The university will have its pupils at least for three years in its charge and will be able to impress its special stamp upon its *alumni*. For some time at any rate the university will have to conduct its education through the medium of the English language. As it is intended that the education in non-language subjects in the proposed higher secondary schools should be in the vernaculars as far as possible, a certain amount of time will be required for the transition from the vernacular to English in studying these non-language subjects; but, if proper attention is given to the teaching of English in the middle and the higher secondary stage, this transition should be capable of being easily effected in the course of three or four months. The three years at the university should be able to produce well educated men capable of attacking any new problem in their special branches of study. In the university, specialisation should be the aim, while not neglecting the claims of general cultural subjects. But it is

unnecessary in this place to speak in detail about this stage of education as the objects of university education are well appreciated though, in the present state of things, they are not always fully attained.

These four stages would apply equally to pupils of both sexes. I do not contemplate that any difference in the course would be required in the first and the fourth stages, but in middle schools and in higher secondary schools a certain amount of difference, especially in optional subjects and in subjects of a vocational nature, will be required. It will probably be possible at no distant date to use the same institutions for both sexes in the primary and the university stages while in the middle and the higher secondary stages normally there should be separate institutions for boys and girls.

To bring into existence these four types of distinctly marked institutions will, it is recognised, present several practical difficulties. Vested interests will have to be brushed aside in order to achieve a well regulated system. A notable and often praiseworthy ambition of an institution to attain to higher status may have in some cases to be severely repressed. Each institution should be made as efficient as possible of its class. Institutions of various kinds should be provided in sufficient numbers to meet all requirements and unhealthy competition should be sternly repressed. Such of the present institutions as are making praiseworthy but often vain efforts to keep up a higher status should be definitely required to confine themselves to the class of work which they can efficiently do, while some others with adequate resources may be helped to attain a higher status. If public opinion strongly supports reorganisation so this nature, the authorities in charge of our educational future should lose no time in effecting this re-organisation, for on a properly organised and effective system of education depends the future of our country.

## FEDERAL FINANCE & INTER-PROVINCIAL JEALOUSIES.

IT now appears certain that the inter-provincial squabbles, which resulted from the Meston Award during the last decade, would easily be outshaded by the new turmoil which has been caused by the gift of the jute export duty to Bengal. The vehemence, with which the controversy has been carried on in the press, on platform and in the legislatures, gives food for thought as to the future of the proposed Federation and as to the nation's solidarity. It must be apparent from the talk at Delhi, Bombay and elsewhere that the Bombay-Bengal controversy promises to be an ill wind which blows no one any good.

Issues of this kind are by no means new to finance in foreign federations, and particularly in Canada and Australia the Units of federation have shown what a Canadian representative once characteristically described as "a most calf-like appetite for the milking of this one most magnificent government cow" of the Federal Government. The indecent scramble for "doles" from the Federal Govern-

ments in those countries is only one aspect of the difficult problem of federal finance. In India, as elsewhere, inter-provincial rivalries now bid fair to become a more or less permanent feature of the system of financial relations. Moreover, the complexity of the financial issue in India is by no means made less complex by the presence of a number of semi-autonomous States which have developed an independent scheme of relations with the Government of India based upon ancient treaties, *sanads* and engagements for which they are claiming an inviolable sanctity. Unfortunately the federal scheme, which is now on the anvil, is only going to perpetuate the so-called "treaty rights" of the States, some of which are not only anachronistic in their spirit, but contrary to all the known canons of federal finance.

So far as Bombay is concerned, there are two main questions to be tackled, viz., that of the diversion of its trade to the new ports, which are springing up like mushrooms on all sides, and secondly, that

of the uneven burden of Central taxation which it has to bear, as compared to her sister Provinces. Both are typical of the broader problems of the future of ports in India and of the inter-provincial and federal-provincial relations as to finance. It is necessary that these should be settled not in any narrow, parochial spirit, but with the larger interests of the country as a whole in view. Indeed, it would ill become a premier province like Bombay to lead what would easily develop into an inter-provincial *melee*, which would be all the more deplorable in view of the coming Federation.

Admittedly, something must be seriously wrong with the financial theory of the Government of India that has given cause for complaints of unfairness on more than one occasion. However, the Government of India at any rate seem clear in their conscience as to this transference of jute duty to Bengal. Their only fault may have been, it is said, that they precipitated a line of action which was already proposed by the Round Table Conference committees, but for the rest they have been true to their financial dogma. This financial dogma, however, has never been properly analysed and the criterion of budgetary deficits, which has been selected by the London Committees and accepted by the Central authorities for their gifts and endowments, still remains unchallenged. To the present writer at any rate it is incomprehensible why a Province, which has not out its coat according to its cloth and which has chosen to remain in a state of perpetual budgetary disequilibrium, should be deemed a fitter recipient of Central doles than its more careful confreres. At that rate any Province could play the prodigal and live at the expense of the Federal Government and other Provinces. That would be an impossible situation.

It is necessary, then, to find a more reliable formula for making these concessions and grants to particular Provinces. Such a formula will be readily available if we compare the real wealth per head in the different Units of Federation and use it as a criterion for judging the "necessitousness" of a particular Unit. This is the only true test that can be applied. For the rest, what a particular Unit has spent within its area from its own coffers and what has been the degree of taxation are points of small interest to a third party, because the advantage or disadvantage of such operations would only accrue to the people of the Unit concerned and has no bearing upon its relations with other Units or the Centre. In the collection of such data relating to wealth per head, I should think the projected economic survey would be extremely useful.

The other and entirely separate question is that of the new ports which are springing up on all sides—Bhavnagar, Okha, Mumbra, Kundla, Nawanganar, Vizagapatam, Cochin and others. These are diverting the trade, both import and export, from the older ports of Bombay, Karachi, Calcutta and Madras. The diversion has involved the finances of the respective port trusts, municipalities and Governments in budgetary difficulties which, unfortunately, have come on top of a severe trade depression. The country must indeed be proud of its new wealth of port facilities. It is also true that the commercial community must have their goods transported in the cheapest possible manner. But a costly machinery has been created in these old ports and investments have been made which must pay their way. You cannot scrap up all this equipment and start building anew. Besides, in the permanent interests of the country, underbidding and reduction of dues is a form of cut-throat competition which must end in the ruin of all the ports in India.

A check, therefore, will have to be administered

and that too pretty soon to the unhealthy competition which is growing up between the State ports and British Indian ports. As it is, however, the State ports are relying upon their secured treaty rights to protect them from interference. The treaties are by no means unalterable. Agreements with the Kathiawar States, for instance, were entered into in 1917 putting their ports on the same basis as British Indian ports. These were for some time cancelled in 1923, but again revived. What with the new-found freedom of the State ports and the admittedly weak administration of the Viramgam cordon, it has now become necessary to review the whole situation from a fresh angle. That the authority to levy customs should be so scandalously diffused into hands other than those of the Federal Government itself is a principle unheard of in any federation in the world. This constitutional position will have to be cleared before any Federation is established in this country, or at least when the States will be making their entry into it. The Davidson Committee have saddled the future Federal Government with a net burden of Rs. 1 crore in working out the "debits and credits" for the various claimant States. That may be an excellent carrot to dangle before the State donkey to entice it into the Federation; but before any final commitments are made, the Federal Government must see that it gets an unquestionable right to the customs of the Indian Empire.

The Davidson Committee proposed a semi-permanent Commission to settle separately in each case the financial issues between the Government of India and the States on the eve of their entry into Federation. It may be possible to go further and say that machinery of the kind will not only be necessary to make such settlements but also to determine the burdens and benefits to be shared by the various Provinces as well. A permanent National Finance Commission might be instituted immediately to the great advantage of all concerned.

B. P. ADARKAR.

## TRADE DEPRESSION AND THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY—II.\*

THE industrialists are certainly not a set of people who will unnecessarily and aimlessly create a row about the Japanese competition without some ulterior purpose behind it. The truth is that Japanese competition has recently assumed a serious menace not to the production of the textile industry but to the rate of profits of the owners of the industry. Japanese competition has not in the least hindered the production of cloth as demonstrated above, but seems to have prevented the Indian Millowners from piling up enormous profits. We meet with a graphic description of the calamity from which the industrialists suffer today owing to Japanese competition in the review of Indian trade. "The chief cause of the fall in prices of cotton piece-goods" says the report, "was the selling of cotton piece-goods in India by Japan at very low rates. The very low prices at which Japanese goods were offered increased their consumption and the prices of competing goods of other than Japanese origin had also to be lowered to keep pace." It will be obvious therefore that the industrialists are indifferent about the increase in production of cotton cloth but that they are solely concerned with increasing the rate of profits. The grievance of Indian Cotton Capital against Japanese competition is that it has been cruelly deprived by the latter of the

\*The first article appeared in our issue of the 15th inst.

opportunity of squeezing the vast population in the country by increasing the prices of cloth as it had done during the boom period. A glimpse at the table (Appendix B) showing the average wholesale prices of piece-goods in Bombay will show that the industrialists had increased the prices of cloth by nearly 300 per cent. It must be realised that blood ties count less than nothing where profits are concerned. The primary and the sole consideration of capital, whether at home or outside, is more profits.

That those who run the industries for profits only and not for satisfying the needs of the community should claim that the stream of profits should flow into their coffers incessantly and unhampered as a condition precedent to the production of the necessities of the community is intelligible. But it is difficult to understand why persons who are not directly interested in the profits of the possessors of the means of production should tacitly and naively accept that claim, acquiesce in the position that the immediate needs of the community should naturally remain unsatisfied for want of commodities if their production does not yield profits to the industrialists, and condone and justify the measures adopted by them for shifting the load of trade depression to the shoulders of the poor toilers which results in mass misery and degradation as regrettable necessities and the inevitable price for getting rid of it. The industrialists are seen clamouring hoarsely for the creation of conditions favourable for trade revival. They demand that an all-round reduction in wages should be effected and higher tariff introduced. It is therefore necessary to examine whether the measures suggested by them are likely to cure the disease and eliminate the cause of trade depression which I have clearly illustrated to be the low purchasing power of the people.

The capacity of the masses of the people in a country to obtain food, clothes, housing and all other necessities and comforts of life is entirely regulated by two factors, viz. their earning and prices. That when earnings rise or prices fall an increased "effective" demand is created for goods consumed by the masses and the production of the necessities of life is stimulated, are facts which are admitted by financiers, industrialists and their economists. An increase in the purchasing power of the masses can alone stimulate production and in the absence of production profit ceases. But what is most stupefying is the demand of the industrialists to reduce directly the earnings of the masses in order to tide over trade depression which will result only in preventing the masses from obtaining more commodities. For the readers do not require to be told at length what will be the effect of a wage out on the purchasing power of the masses. How is it conceivable that we can ever escape trade depression by further reducing the purchasing capacity of the masses when their low purchasing power is its real cause? The impoverished masses cannot buy back the goods they produce in which case the only alternative open to the industrialists is either to allow them to rot in their warehouses or deliberately to destroy them. The application of this suggested remedy will knock the bottom out of the home market. The policy of wage reduction as a remedy for trade depression breeds fatal contradictions. The industrialists impoverish the masses in order to exact their toll of profit but at the same time try to sell them more manufactured goods. The masses are too poor to consume. Consequently prices go lower and lower and the wages of the workers are reduced still further in order to cheapen the goods and get profit. This vicious circle goes on and will continue until a serious deadlock appears on the scene followed by a terrible crash. It

will be a digression to illustrate how a wage out in one industry will lead to an attack on the wages of the workers of the other industries and will ultimately result in decreasing the purchasing capacity of the whole mass of population. Industries can have no isolated existence. They are very intimately and closely interrelated and interlocked. It will be interesting to notice why the industrialists are so much enamoured of wage reduction as a measure to meet trade depression. Wage reduction helps them to transfer their burden to the shoulders of the masses of the population. This transfer deludes the naive into the belief that trade depression has disappeared and that though the measure of wage reduction involves irreconcilable contradictions it might be curing the disease somehow mysteriously. What really happens is that trade depression does not disappear but only changes its scene of action. It takes hold of the weaker victim offered by the industrialists for being sacrificed. It is sure to reappear again in greater rigour as wage reduction does not eliminate the cause of the disease. On the contrary the disease becomes chronic and worse. The claim of the industrialists that this remedy of trade depression is efficacious in solving the problem of trade depression is grotesque and illogical.

The Cotton Capital in the country wants to seize the weapon of tariffs to make war on the enemy without. The slogan of war with a foreign enemy blinds many of us to the real situation, sidetracks our attention and paralyses our power for finding out the correct solution. No arguments are necessary to explode the theory that tariffs help the nation to tide over trade depression. The readers have only to look around for being convinced that it is only a quack remedy. If tariffs help to solve economic crisis, stimulate production and reduce unemployment why is it that economic collapse and mass unemployment are common to every capitalist country, whether it adopts the policy of free trade or protection? The different countries in the world are raising their tariff walls and yet never was there so much machinery lying idle and so many millions of workers thrown on the streets. America the most elaborate system of tariff in the world and yet it has not escaped the grip of trade depression. The figure of unemployment on the contrary is at present the highest that ever was. Protection cannot cause trade depression to melt away as it is a remedy which not only leaves the main cause of trade depression severely alone but helps the disease to develop rapidly.

Let us briefly study what would have been the effects on the textile trade in the country if the protection that was being asked for by the industrialists had been granted in 1931-32. Supposing that their most sanguine expectations had been fulfilled, they would have at best been able to keep out foreign competitors and would have had the home market under their control. But it would be a fallacy if we were to jump to the conclusion that the Indian textile industry would have been required to produce 776 million yards of cloth to replace the import of foreign cloth in that year. If prices rise the masses cannot buy as they do before the rise in prices and obviously less goods are required in the market. The total consumption of cloth under those circumstances would have certainly been much less than 3467 million yards of cloth. As a direct consequence of protection the price of cloth would have naturally risen and the demand for cloth would have decreased. Rise in prices is inherent in tariffs and they therefore cannot increase the consumption of commodities but on the contrary result in decreasing it. By raising the price

of commodities, tariffs in effect reduce the purchasing power of the population. It is not necessary to emphasise how absurd it is to indulge in the belief that the remedy which decreases the purchasing power of the masses is likely to be efficacious in solving the economic crisis. It is also unnecessary to repeat at length the arguments to show how tariffs only result in deepening the crisis and the industrialists are charmed with them as they render it possible for them to shift the crushing load of trade depression to the heads of the workers.

I want the readers to grasp the full significance of the demand for protection of the industrialists and those who support them. The misery of the toiling millions in the country baffles all description. I do not at all take into consideration the possibility of the industrialists raising the prices of cloth enormously for fulfilling their insatiable desire for profits but will base my observations on the assumption that they will not utilise this opportunity beyond availing themselves of the advantage which protection naturally concedes. The readers can have some rough idea of the wretched condition of the masses by glancing at the table (Appendix C) which gives the figures of mill cloth available for consumption per individual per year in the country since 1913-14. The remedy of tariffs means in simple terms that those who approve of it desire that the vast mass of population in the country may not have even that much rag of cloth to cover their bodies which at present they can manage to have. Is there any one who dares to suggest that what they have is enough? The demand therefore amounts to this that the number of naked people in the country may increase and those who have just enough to cover their bodies may reduce it to the minimum and may rest content with only a piece of loin cloth. Can we conceive a more preposterous and inhuman proposal? These considerations may not deter those who advocate that the sole aim and object of production of commodities is not the economic welfare of the community but the earning of profits and the accumulation of capital by the few industrialists and would even justify the destruction of the necessaries of life for the attainment of their objective from making even more preposterous and more inhuman proposals. But there must be some who support such demands of the industrialists thinking that these are regrettable necessities and labouring under the impression that the only alternative to them would be that most of us would have to go naked. I would like to appeal to them to consider whether it is reasonable to suppose that in a country in which within a quarter of a century astounding progress in the method of production of cloth has taken place and the potential capacity for producing cloth has increased enormously, the only alternative to protection can possibly be all people going without cloth.

Capitalism is a medley of conflicting interests. Only a brief reference will show the contradiction that will arise out of the policy of protection. If Japan is hit by protection, the Japanese industrialists will surely retaliate and there is another set of capitalists who deal in cotton and will be howling hoarsely as being hit by trade.

The fact that the remedies of wage reductions and tariff walls which are perpetually suggested by the industrialists as solutions for trade depression have been tried and have proved unsuccessful a thousand times overall over the world is their sufficient condemnation and shows up their worthless character. These remedies only result in rendering a ghastly situation more hideous. It may be asked: why do

the industrialists embark on a policy which will make matters worse instead of better? The answer is that they are led to adopt that course for the same reason that a dying man will change his medicine in sheer desperation and a drowning man will catch at a straw. The capitalists blinded by the grab for profits are heading towards destruction. These remedies render the lives of millions of men, women and children more destitute, wretched and miserable. An economic system that flourishes upon the secret mulcting of the masses of mankind and is sustained upon it might be an institution for the benefit of a small class of people but cannot be a system that is reconcilable with the perpetuation in comfort of the human species upon the face of the earth.

### Appendix A.

Table showing the approximate yardage of piece-goods available for consumption in India.  
(In millions of yards.)

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32
Total Production of Indian Cotton mills.	1161	1136	1441	1578	1614	1451	1640	1551	1732	1725	1792	1970	1954	2259	2377	1893	2419	2561	2990
Total Imports.	3197	2446	2148	1934	1556	1212	1081	1510	1090	1593	1486	1823	1564	1788	1973	1937	1919	890	776
Less Exports by Sea and Land.	285	228	390	471	384	354	384	275	297	312	313	343	384	440	409	389	330	269	299
Total quantity of piece-goods retained for home consumption.	4076	3354	3299	3041	2786	2309	2337	2816	2525	3006	2965	3450	3134	3607	3921	3441	4008	3182	3467



## APPENDIX B.

Average whole-sale prices of piecegoods produced by Bombay mills.

Year.	PIECEGOODS.		
	Long cloth As.	Table cloth As.	Chaddars As.
1905	9.38	9.56	9.30
1906	9.46	9.45	9.38
1908	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	8 $\frac{1}{8}$
1910	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
1912	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
1914	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	9 $\frac{1}{8}$
1915	9 $\frac{1}{8}$	8 $\frac{7}{8}$	8 $\frac{7}{8}$
1916	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
1917	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{8}$	14 $\frac{1}{2}$
1918	29 $\frac{1}{2}$	26 $\frac{1}{2}$	25 $\frac{1}{2}$
1919	25 $\frac{1}{2}$	24 $\frac{1}{8}$	24 $\frac{1}{2}$
1920	29 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 $\frac{1}{8}$
1921	26 $\frac{1}{8}$	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	24 $\frac{1}{8}$
1922	25 $\frac{1}{2}$	22 $\frac{1}{2}$	23 $\frac{1}{2}$
1923	21 $\frac{1}{2}$	19 $\frac{1}{2}$	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
1924	22 $\frac{1}{2}$	21 $\frac{1}{2}$	20 $\frac{1}{8}$
1925	19 $\frac{1}{2}$	18 $\frac{1}{2}$	18 $\frac{1}{2}$

## APPENDIX C.

Figures of mill cloth available for consumption per individual per year.

Year.	Per Capita.
1913-14	12.93
1914-15	10.64
1915-16	10.47
1916-17	9.65
1917-18	8.84
1918-19	7.33
1919-20	7.41
1920-21	8.85
1921-22	7.94
1922-23	9.45
1923-24	9.32
1924-25	10.84
1925-26	9.85
1926-27	11.34
1927-28	12.33
1928-29	10.82
1929-30	12.60
1930-31	9.04
1931-32	9.84

S. V. PARULEKAR.

(Concluded.)

## Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

(From Our Correspondent.)

London, March 16.

## A CONTRAST IN ATTITUDE.

WEDNESDAY'S *Times* contains two letters (one of which is duplicated in the *Manchester Guardian*) relating to the Indian reforms, which are in striking contrast with each other. The one bears the signatures of Mr. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Francis Younghusband, Lord Dickinson, Lord Allen of Hurtwood, Lady Layton, Dr. A. Maude Royden, Lady Frances Stewart, the Dean of Canterbury, Canons Tissington Tatlow, W. E. S. Holland, and A. W. Davies, Principal A. E. Garvie, Mr. Carl Heath, and Mr. G. P. Gooch. It directs attention to the fact that whilst in this country the controversy on Indian constitutional reform is ordinarily considered to stand as between the supporters and the opponents of the White Paper proposals, it is forgotten that there has come from India a volume of serious and constructive criticism of those proposals deserving of the most careful consideration of the British public. This criticism, the writers point out, is contained in such authoritative documents as the two Memoranda now under consideration, among other matters, by the Joint Select Committee, submitted by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and his three colleagues and by the British Indian delegation, respectively. The letter does not for obvious reasons reproduce the detailed proposals contained in these Memoranda, but contents itself with defining, in the words of the subscribers to the Memoranda, the purposes which they desire to achieve, and points out to the public that the Memoranda can be easily and cheaply obtained from the Stationery Office for more careful and elaborate study by those who should be interested in learning at first-hand the nature of and the reasons for the views held by responsible, representative, co-operative Indian leaders in regard to the official constitutional proposals. The signatories conclude by commenting that, the Memoranda "provide the key to much that is obscure in the present political situation in India. It seems to us, therefore, opportune once more to draw attention to them, so that the public here may the better appraise the importance of the criticism of certain significant details of the White Paper proposals that has already been put forward in anticipation of the Joint Select Committee's report, and by which the recommendations of that report and the subsequent Bill are likely to be judged in India." I understand that the credit for the publication of this letter was primarily with the Indian Conciliation Group.

The second letter was almost to be expected so soon as the diehard element had got to work on Lord Brabourne's speech. It is signed by Sir Reginald Mitchell-Banks, an old opponent of Indian reform, and a baker's dozen of his colleagues in the House of Commons, and is a protest not only against such general sentiments as those contained in the Viceroy's and the Governors' speeches over the heads of Parliament, in general support of the White Paper proposals, but also against the official disapprobation of diehard activities, in opposition to the White Paper proposals, whilst they are sub-judice with the Joint Select Committee. The signatories consider it derogatory to the dignity of the Imperial Parliament that officials, however highly placed, should presume to anticipate its deci-

sions. "Our sense of loyalty and obedience to our leaders has been, in our opinion, deplorably abused; and we run the risk that unless we, too, 'come out into the open,' we shall be committed (against our will) by official pronouncements, which, it will be assumed, commanded our approbation since we kept silence when they were made." The last passage appears to be obviously an attack upon Mr. Baldwin and more than a hint that a section of the Conservative Party, known to be generally hostile to the reforms, but hitherto remaining quiet, will now openly support the Churchill faction. Yesterday, however, another Tory M. P., Mr. R. Croom Johnson, entered a protest against his fellow members' attitude, and points out that Mr. Baldwin has done nothing to deserve the censure, since he has given an explicit promise that after the issue of the Report of the Select Committee, and before introducing the Bill, an opportunity will be given to the Conservative Party to consult together on the whole matter. It is to be expected, however, that as the time comes nearer to the necessity for taking practical action on the question of constitutional reform for India, all those with a common interest in thwarting any serious proposals for that end will band themselves close together, regardless of alleged loyalty to the avowed policy and principles of the National Government. This union among reactionaries and vested interests is considerably less common than among the votaries of progress, and one ought not to be unduly surprised at such a nefarious coalition.

#### MAHATMA GANDHI AND POLITICS.

Mr. W. N. Ewer writes an interesting article in the *Daily Herald* explaining why Mahatma Gandhi has left politics. He considers, whether rightly or wrongly, that "the Gandhi era of Indian nationalism is over, and the leadership passes to men of the type of Nehru and Bose. That at any rate makes for clarification. They think and speak in terms that the Western mind can understand." I am afraid that Mr. Gandhi has created the impression upon most people that he speaks a language whose meaning is clear as crystal to himself but is incomprehensible to every one else except a small personal group or else the uneducated people of his own country to whom he stands rather as a symbol of holiness than as a political leader. After all they may be right.

#### LORD WOLMER ON INDIA.

When Lord Selbourne presided over the Joint Select Committee at the time of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, he was not regarded as a particularly progressive member of the Tory Party. His son, Lord Wolmer, is even more reactionary. In a recent address to the City Carlton Club, where he had most congenial surroundings, he bewailed the fact that Conservative Party principles were being consistently sacrificed. In particular he denounced the Government's India policy as having no mandate from the electors of this country or from the great "inarticulate masses" of India. What the Tory Party would do if they could not drag in this well-worn phrase, who can say? Similarly, Lord Carson, than whom no truer diehard lives to-day (in comparison his old lieutenant Mr. Winston Churchill is almost a Liberal), considers that the Government's India policy is a clear betrayal of British interests, and that the so-called safeguards, as in the case of the Irish Free State, are a snare and a delusion. Sir Henry Page-Croft makes an excellent third in this trinity of last-ditchers. He asks in to-day's *Daily Mail* "shall Britain quit India?" He appears to be quite oblivious of the fact that in the opinion of competent Indians the present proposals do not bear the slightest indication in the affirmative.

#### EARTHQUAKE RELIEF IN BIHAR.

To-day's *Times*, in announcing that approximately £47,000 has been received at the Mansion House for the Lord Mayor's Indian Earthquake Fund, independently of sums that have been contributed direct to the Viceroy's Fund or through the High Commissioner's Office, or that are being raised in the Provinces, warns the public that the present contribution is infinitesimal in relation to the need, as the reconstruction of the devastated area in Behar is authoritatively estimated to require an expenditure of over £20,000,000 sterling. A timely warning of this kind should be useful in reminding people that for a long time to come the needs of the distressed area will be a first call upon the generous instincts of the British people. Dr. Gilbert Slater in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* has suggested that in the interests of human solidarity, as an expression of the Christian spirit and as a stimulus to the charitable sentiments of the public, the British Treasury should announce a pound for pound contribution similar to that which the Treasury undertook to make in connection with the purchase of the Sinai Code.

### Our Parliamentary Letter.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

New Delhi, March 25.

#### FINANCE BILL.

THE whole of the last week was devoted to the consideration of the Finance Bill, and even the second reading is not yet completed as there has been a formidable list of amendments to be gone through. On the first reading members ventilated their grievances ranging from a reduction of freight rate on rice to the alleged ill-treatment of respectable persons by the troops in the Midnapore District. Mr. Millar claimed that Burma stood in as great a need of financial assistance as Bengal, and appraised the House of the keen feelings of the Burmese in the demand of half the export duty on rice. He warned Government that if the Government of India did not accede to the demand Burmans would think that India regarded Burma as the milch cow of India. Mr. Jadhav pleaded for the revision of the Company Law in India and characterised the rise in the book-post charge as a tax on knowledge. Sheth Haji Abdulla Haroon put forward the Muslim demand for the creation of an autonomous province of Baluchistan. Sir Hari Singh Gour bitterly complained that abnormal taxation had been resorted to by the Government of India for the last fourteen years and had reached the formidable level of 50 crores—a matter for serious consideration when the country's income had been going down. He thought that they should have carried deficits over rather than have resorted to such high taxation. He again put forward a plea for the reorganization of the services on a cheaper basis. Dr. Ziauddin drew the attention of the Government to increased unemployment among the educated, whom he termed as a factory product without the necessary arrangement for its absorption. He wanted the Government to seriously tackle the problem and overhaul the present system of education, which has been quite unsuited to the needs of the situation. Mr. Vidya Sagar Pandya complained that there seemed to be an epidemic of Committees and Commissions, and Government did nothing to implement their recommendations. Mr. S. C. Mitra took the opportunity to ventilate the grievances of the people in the Midnapore District regarding alleged ill-treat-

ment by the troops stationed there. He narrated a number of incidents in which respectable persons and sometimes the women also were molested. Regarding the detenus he asked the Government to devise some means to bring them round to the constitutional methods, rather than keep them indefinitely under restraint. The Home Member Sir Harry Haig replied, the next day, to the allegations against the alleged excesses. He disputed the authenticity of the facts cited by Mr. Mitra, as they were on a previous occasion found to be distorted out of all recognition when the Government of Bengal had made an inquiry into them. It seemed to him that a campaign of misrepresentation had been started. He explained the function of the troops employed in that district and asserted that splendid results had been achieved by their presence and the situation had greatly improved. Mr. Mitra, while speaking about the detenus had said that the spirit of patriotism would be kindled could not be killed by repression, which Sir Harry Haig gave a crushing reply. He asked a straight question to Mr. Mitra whether the cult of political murder was patriotism and whether Bengal alone had a monopoly of patriotism. Government was faced with this peculiar problem in Bengal and what they were out for was the stamping out of this cult. Amnesty they had tried, but it was of no avail. They had to make them realise that force would not succeed.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir put forward Bombay's complaint regarding the diversion of her trade and suggested that the Central Government should make good the loss the Bombay Government and the Bombay Corporation suffered by removing the Town duty on Cotton, as Bombay had made herculean efforts to make both ends meet by raising taxation to the limit. He showed that Bombay alone had brought down the establishment bill to the level of that in 1914 and that in trying to maintain a balanced budget the incidence of taxation per head had been the highest in India. Sir George Schuster however could give the only consolation of allowing the Bombay Corporation to postpone the debt redemption provision which amounted to nine lakhs—small mercy for which Sir Cowasji thanked him. The Finance Member replying to the debate claimed that in giving Bengal half the export duty on jute, he had merely followed the White Paper plan and brought a day nearer when other provincial Governments would look forward to a share from the Income-Tax. He repudiated the suggestion that the law of diminishing returns had been in operation during the last two or three years in regard to the taxation duties and challenged the members to prove that a reduction in any duty would give them a larger turn. He asked the members to disabuse their minds of the idea that the Central Government had more elastic sources of revenue. They were in fact such as were liable to be affected seriously by depression as had been amply shown in recent years. Government's non-tax revenue had also gone down from Rs. 30 to Rs. 5¼ crores in the last ten years. He concluded by telling the House that the Central Government also had brought down their net expenditure from Rs. 93 to Rs. 76 crores, a performance which had no equal in the provinces.

#### SALT TAX.

During the second reading a number of amendments were moved by Mr. Amarnath Dutt to lower the tax, which has become a hardy annual but they all failed one after another. Division was once again aimed to record their protest against the high tax.

#### IMPORT DUTY ON TOBACCO.

The reduction of import duty on tobacco raised the important question of the protection of the

indigenous industry. Mr. Maswood Ahmed claimed that a reduction of duty on imported cigarettes would badly affect the home industry. Mr. Hardy explained that owing to the high duty on imported cigarettes, its importation had stopped and Government suffered a loss of revenue. Government would gain about a crore and a half by the alteration proposed, but at the same time admitted that it would lead to a setback to the indigenous industry—a statement which was pressed to advantage by Sir Cowasji Jehangir, who said that the old duty had the distinct advantage of setting up factories in new fields and Government would be ill advised to lower it now. After an informal consultation of the representatives with the Finance Member an agreed solution was arrived at, which was later adopted in the open session of the Assembly. The Finance Member admitted that the new proposal was better than his own.

#### EXPORT DUTY ON HIDES.

The proposed abolition of the export duty on hides brought into play provincial jealousies. Madras representatives defended the export duty, representatives of Bengal Bihar and U. P. supported the abolition. Mr. Vidyasagar Pandya moved for the deletion of the clause removing the export duty. He contended that the abolition would practically kill the indigenous industry, which had flourished in Madras and other parts of India. It had provided employment for three millions of people and the fall in export was due to the general trade slump. He suggested that the right course would have been to impose a high duty to protect the industry. Mr. Wilayatullah and Mr. Sadiq Hasan thought that the abolition would accelerate the export. Mr. James from Madras showed that the Hide Cess Inquiry Committee had laid down that the tanning industry was a key industry and should be encouraged. Diwan Bahadur Mudaliar was surprised to find that no indication had been given before that the duty would be taken away and it would deal a death-blow to an important industry from an industrial and military point of view. Dr. Ziauddin opposed the amendment on the ground that it unnecessarily increased the price leading to wastage of surplus hides, even a fraction of which would not be consumed by the tanning industry. Sir Joseph Bore defended the action of the Government on the ground that exports had fallen in recent years very considerably, and European markets were very highly competitive; even a small increase in the price was bound to affect their sales. He admitted that tanning was an important industry, but he failed to understand what Government could do when the industry itself had not made out a case for protection when Government had thrice asked it to put it up before the Tariff Board. After Sir George had explained the necessity of its abolition the amendment was defeated.

#### POSTAGE RATES.

There were a number of amendments to the proposed alteration in the postage rates, all of which were defeated one after another. There are still some more to be disposed of. Every time a change was suggested in the form of an amendment moved, quick came the reply from the Member in charge, Sir Frank Noyce, that the department would suffer by the proposed change in the Government's proposals. The deficits thus cited ranged from some lakhs to a crore and a half in one case and Government were not in a position to lose so much in the days of such financial stringency. Although there are some amendments still to be considered, they will obviously share the same fate as the others have done.

## EARTHQUAKE RELIEF IN BIHAR.

### SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY'S ACTIVITIES.

*Mr. G. K. Devadhar and Pandit H. N. Kunzru, President and Vice-President respectively of the Servants of India Society, recently spent a few days in Bihar studying the earthquake situation on the spot. In the course of a statement giving the impressions of his visit, Mr. Devadhar says :—*

**T**HE people are full of hope that both the Government and the rest of the country would come to their rescue and would give them such help as would go a great way in restoring the normal life of the Province. The great response made by the country as a whole to the Viceroy's appeal as also to the appeal made by Babu Rajendra Prasad and of the several other important organisations, about a dozen of them, now working in the field has put great cheer and encouragement in the minds of the broken-hearted people. The illustrated brochure styled "Devastated Bihar" issued by the Bihar Central Relief Committee, which is now the principal non-official agency with large public funds at its disposal and which is now going to be registered under the Societies Act, makes mention of about 74 small and big organisations that ran to the help of their countrymen as soon as the dreadful news flashed over the country soon after the earthquake. These organisations have given in the first moments of the calamity the necessary assistance to the people as they approached them without any definite plan, which is generally not possible on such occasions at the commencement. But now that the second stage of the preliminary relief has been reached with the help of funds collected for gratuitous relief, it is time to think of relief of a permanent nature.

Soon after the dreadful occurrence of the earthquake the Upper India Branch of the Servants of India Society spared Pandit Shri Ram Bajpai for work in the affected areas of Bihar preferably to assist any other non-official organisation already working in the field. After having met some of them Mr. Bajpai was advised to open an independent centre of work at Muzaffarpur and its neighbourhood for the kind of work that was immediately needed. The following would be some of the forms of relief so far undertaken by Mr. Bajpai and his volunteers :—

1. Distribution of a large quantity of new and old clothes collected with the help of the Seva Samiti Boy Scouts from all over India.
2. To help the people for restarting their ruined trades.
3. Construction of temporary huts for those who were without shelter.
4. Supply of direction to the Marwadi Relief Society and co-ordination of activities undertaken by some of the non-official agencies in that area at present.
5. Introduction of some standardized printed forms for the use of the latter body and later on adopted by the other societies.
6. Supply of free engineering advice relating to repairs to damaged houses and estimates for constructing semi-permanent structures.

Mr. Bajpai has been advised to get some of the local young volunteers trained to cope with the situation that might be created in case there were terrible floods during the monsoons. And consequently we found Mr. Bajpai ready to train his young band of volunteers, whose ranks grow soon, in the art of swimming, rowing and doing the rescue work in the flooded areas. The work also will include instruction in first aid, home nursing, signal-

ling by various methods and training in the construction of temporary bridges and pioneering work of that nature.

But what has appealed to the people as I noticed from my talks with several of them at Muzaffarpur is the plan of establishing colonies of a self-contained nature for people dispossessed of their houses settled in more or less semi-permanent structures with all the social amenities such as schools, gymnasias, libraries, reading rooms, a common guest house, dispensary—Unani and Ayurvedic—and a small meeting place like a Community Hall for meetings and playlets including Ladies' Recreation Clubs.

At present one such colony is planned and is nearing completion on a plot of ground placed at Mr. Bajpai's disposal by the Municipality and it is further suggested that the same should be established on a co-operative basis getting it registered under the Co-operative Societies Act. And it is believed that such a form of relief at the present stage will appeal to a large number of people of modest means provided they are enabled both by the Government and the local bodies to secure suitable sites and loans through co-operative societies at a low rate of interest so as to enable them to become ultimately the owners of these properties. This is a matter for propaganda and I have no doubt that the Co-operative Department and the several co-operative financing agencies will do their best to promote this form of relief of a self-reliant character with the help of loans from Government as is the case in the Bombay Presidency.

Among the various items of relief which the Servants of India Society would like to carry on in the future based upon the experience of such work in other areas in the past would be in the direction of promoting the idea of getting model villages started on higher ground wherever necessary and more or less with the help of a co-operative society or a local Panchayat if there be one in the village. Should the Province be threatened with scarcity of food and fodder owing to regular floods or famine as it is feared it may be, the Society would like to start relief along recognised methods of charity like cheap grain shops and fodder shops and distribution of medicines.

Moreover, it is expected that both townspeople as well as villagers would like to receive advice and help for reconstructing their damaged houses for which the Society's centre has fortunately secured the honorary services of Mr. P. N. Zutshi with English qualifications and degrees in Engineering. And it may be necessary to start some other work by way of taking charge of orphan children or helpless widows in need of training, for which there is an offer received from the Secretary of the Delhi Seva Sadan who has told me that he would be willing to receive such needy people in the Seva Sadan Home at Delhi. From my own experience of the Poona Seva Sadan I may also say that even other institutions outside would not lag behind to extend a helping hand to the Province of Bihar in giving relief to its stricken people in this particular direction.

Mr. Devadhar concludes his review of the situation with an appeal for funds for the work which the Society would like to carry on along specific lines, some of which are noted above.

Contributions may be sent, if necessary earmarked for various purposes, to (1) Secretary, Servants of India Society, Poona, (2) Pandit H. N. Kunzru, Servants of India Society, Allahabad, or (3) Pandit Shri Ram Bajpai, Servants of India Relief Camp, Muzaffarpur, Bihar and Orissa.