

# The Servant of India

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## Topics of the Week.

### Congress-Democrats Agreement.

THE main, if not the only, explanation of the birth of the Democratic Swaraj party in the Deccan was the keen desire of its members to make use of the Councils for the promotion of national progress. These were until recently abjured by the Congress, committed as it was to direct action and non-cooperation. With the abandonment of these extra-constitutional methods by that national organisation and the whole-hearted support which the cause of Council-entry has since received from it, the question naturally arose as to whether something could not be done to bring about closer co-operation between Congressmen and Democrats. The recent agreement between these two political groups marks the culmination of efforts in that direction. Even if the agreement does nothing more than lead to a temporary diminution in the bickerings between these two sections, it must be said to have justified itself. It is doubtful if any more solid results can be expected from it. In any case nobody has a right to prophesy that it will help permanently to harmonise the relations between the two sections of public workers who represent two distinct schools of thought with different political outlook and methods.

It is an open secret that what really divides Congressmen from Democratic Swarajists is the extent to which they are prepared to surrender their judgment to that of Mahatma Gandhi who

dominates the Congress organisation. It was because the erstwhile Responsivists under the new name of Democratic Swarajists felt that, in most important matters of national concern, the Congress had no mind of its own but Mahatma Gandhi's, that they felt compelled to raise the standard of revolt and while nominally remaining within the Congress, to reserve to themselves complete liberty of action. They cannot be blamed if they secretly entertain the fear that if to-day the Congress supports Council-entry, it does so under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and may perhaps take a different decision tomorrow under the same influence. Nor are they fully satisfied with the attitude which the Mahatma took up at the Round Table Conference, which will also be the attitude of the Congress in future deliberations on the Swaraj constitution. For instance, they wholly disapprove of the surrender which the Mahatma was prepared to make to the Princes, reserving all his demands for the British Government. The Democrats have specifically taken to themselves a power to follow an independent line on this point.

In these circumstances it is a puzzle to us how any extravagant hopes can be built, as seems to be fondly imagined in some quarters, on the slender foundation of this agreement for the whole-hearted or lasting co-operation of these two sections. It may be that exigencies of the forthcoming elections made the compromise possible, in which case the concord at may be expected to be short-lived. But even from the point of view of the immediate necessities of the situation, its terms cannot be said to be too favourable to the Kelkar party. As is well-known, the election is going to be controlled by the Congress Parliamentary Board, upon which Democratic Swarajists can only serve as co-opted members having no right to vote. This places the Kelkar group at a serious disadvantage, especially in view of the well-known fact that its influence in the Deccan is far greater than that of the Congress. But if that group sees nothing wrong in accepting such terms of a settlement with Congressmen, it is entirely its business, with which outsiders have no reason to interfere.

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### Rent Adjustment.

IT is a thousand pities that the U. P. Legislative Council last week adopted a resolution rejecting the system sought to be introduced by the U. P. Government which purports to adjust the rent and revenue demand according to major fluctuations in price. The large reductions that have become necessary in rent on account of the sudden slump in prices cannot be covered by any provision of the existing law. The law at present in force only contemplates abatement in rent on account of agri-

cultural calamities like flood and famine, but it takes no account of factors like the heavy fall in prices that we are now experiencing owing to the world economic depression. It is indeed pointed out that the remissions of rent granted in 1931 were, strictly speaking, irregular and that in no case could they be repeated year after year without a suitable change being introduced in the law as it exists at present. Again, when faced by a sudden emergency in the form of a sudden disruption of the price structure, Government could only take rough and ready means to alter rents, without attempting to base their action upon any scientific principle.

This defect Government had proposed to remedy by devising a formula, which would enable them to make automatic fluctuations in rents payable by the tenants to the zemindars and also in revenue payable by the zemindars to Government. The particular formula which was placed by them before the legislature (without as yet their own imprimatur) may be full of defects. If so, Rai Rajeshwar Bali and his zemindar colleagues who attacked it did not care to point them out for the enlightenment of the Council. Much less did they make any constructive suggestions for removing them. On the contrary, what appears to us as its principal merit they seem to regard as the most serious defect, viz. that the system will work automatically and will not place the tenants and landlords at the mercy of the revenue officer, as is the case at present. Rai Rajeshwar Bali thinks that it would imply a serious encroachment upon the right of the zemindar if he were not to make a downward readjustment in the rent of his tenants as he pleased, but if the collector were to come along and order any remission. It would in fact establish, he said, nothing less than an official landlordism. Much ignorant criticism in a similar strain was offered by the zemindars, and our regret arises from the fact that it was on the strength of such criticism that the so-called Turner formula was rejected.

There were however a few members like Rai Bahadur Babu Vikramajit Singh, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Fasih-ud-din and others who recognised the need of unofficial co-operation with Government in finding satisfactory solution of the problem created by a severe decline in the price level. They were prepared to give the proposed solution a trial. Government themselves put it forward as an experimental measure and did not want anything more than that the method should be tried out and improved as experience was gained. The system itself is very complicated, as it is bound to be. No one can tell how it will work in actual practice. That is no reason however for any one to refuse to allow the system to be enforced even in the way of an experiment. The general impression among the Council members seems to be that while, as a result of the introduction of the system, rents will not be lowered, the revenue demand will be enhanced. While this fear was often expressed, no ground was advanced on which it had been based. The Finance Member refused this suggestion, saying that if Government wanted to increase the revenue they could find a more practical and less round-about method of doing so. But this had no effect upon the zemindar members. The main reason of their disapproval of the scheme however is that it does not leave them free to deal with their tenants as they please, but it reduces them to the position, as one member expressed it, of mere rent collectors.

#### Political Piracy.

UNDER the above caption, the *Indian Social*

*Reformer* makes the following comments on the neutral attitude adopted by the Working Committee of the Congress towards the Communal Award. The paper says :

To adopt the epigram of a British statesman who afterwards became the leader of the Party he denounced, the Congress Parliamentarians have caught the Liberals sleeping and have walked away with their clothes. When five months ago, a number of citizens who met in Sir Chimaul Setaivad's office, to consider the possibility of calling a Non-Party Conference to consider the White-Paper proposals, decided to leave the Communal Award out owing to differences of opinion on it among different sections, the Nationalist newspapers were extremely scornful of the timidity of the Liberals. Those very papers are now applauding the decision of the Congress Working Committee and the Parliamentary Board to do the identical thing, as the wisest decisions that could be made. But the most startling proof of the rifling of the Liberal wardrobe by the Congress Swarajists is contained in the astonishing statement which Mr. Satyamurti published in the *Times of India* on Thursday. He was the first to hoist the flag of revolt against the boycott of Councils early last year. He was followed on this side by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. Then, suddenly Dr. Ansari and others brought matters to a head and announced the formation of a Swaraj Party. To Mr. Satyamurti, therefore, belongs the credit for the new development in the Congress and what he said may be regarded as representing the views generally held by the Congress Parliamentarians. Attention may be particularly called to his statement that Congressmen may have to work the White Paper scheme to the utmost limit of their capacity if it is adopted in spite of their protests. What has become of the "sanctions" which were vociferously demanded whenever any one spoke of having to work the new Constitution, unacceptably though it may be? The last paragraph expatiating on the greater value of a Conservative than a Labour Government for carrying through Indian reforms, is extremely suggestive. The tone of the statement, so obviously anxious to emphasise agreement with the *Times of India*, is also worth noting. The Parliamentarians are ready to outbid the Moderates for securing recognition at the hands of the powers-that-be as the political leaders of the country. The pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. What next?

#### Mr. Kanitkar's Suggestions.

IN his interview with Mahatma Gandhi during his recent stay in Poona, Mr. G. N. Kanitkar, a well-known local Congress worker, pressed on the Mahatma's attention two important points, bearing on the more vigorous prosecution of the constructive programme. One relates to the complete abandonment of the civil disobedience movement by the Congress. It is true that hereafter none but the Mahatma can offer civil resistance; but in Mr. Kanitkar's opinion, even this is not enough to ensure success for Congress activities in the villages. His experience was that, owing to the repressive policy of the Government which had been in force for the last two years and more, people in the villages were so terror-stricken that even under present conditions they refuse to have anything to do with Congress workers. Knowing as Mr. Kanitkar did the Mahatma's unshakable faith in civil disobedience, Mr. Kanitkar was afraid that his suggestion for the complete abandonment of the movement would not commend itself to the Mahatma. He therefore made an alternative suggestion, viz. that the Congress should dissociate itself from the movement and that a separate organisation should shoulder the task of popularising civil disobedience. Unless the

Mahatma is grievously misrepresented, Mr. Kanitkar's suggestions failed to receive acceptance at the Mahatma's hands. In effect he told Mr. Kanitkar that he (Mr. Gandhi) being the only true satyagrahi in the land at the present moment, he had reserved the right to resort to civil disobedience only to himself. If the Congress wants to deprive itself of his leadership it was free to do so, in which case he would think of starting an independent organisation to propagate civil disobedience. Mr. Kanitkar's suggestions, designed as they were to further the interests of constructive Congress activity in the rural parts, surely deserved more considerate treatment at the Mahatma's hands than they seemed actually to have received.

Another difficulty which the rural worker has to encounter, and which Mr. Kanitkar brought to the Mahatma's notice, arises from the fact that temple-entry forms an important part of his anti-untouchability campaign. It only acts as a needless irritant to the ignorant villagers, most of whom are caste-Hindus. Besides adding to the difficulties of rural work, it also adds, Mr. Kanitkar pointed out, to the persecution to which the Harijans are subjected at the hands of the higher classes. Nor were the Harijans themselves, Mr. Kanitkar believed, particularly keen on securing admission to temples. What they needed most was an improvement in their social and economic status. Even on this point the Mahatma's reply cannot be said to be satisfactory. Unless the reporter has done him a grave injustice, Gandhiji seemed to think that the stories of the persecution of untouchables in the villages were somewhat exaggerated and were by no means too numerous. It would be news to many that the Mahatma "laid no particular stress upon temple-entry." The public would indeed be hard put to it to reconcile his threatened Guruvayoor fast and his deep interest in the Temple Entry Bill with this statement.

#### Sir Mirza Ismail's Inconsistency.

IN the course of the budget discussions in the Mysore Representative Assembly the public demand for a democratisation of the State constitution was strongly voiced. But it fell on deaf ears, for the Dewan announced in his concluding address that there was no intention on the part of the State to do anything to meet it. This attitude, highly unwise and unstatesmanlike as undoubtedly it is, was supported by the Dewan with arguments which we cannot help characterising as ludicrous. In the first place he seemed to be far from sure that there was any public demand for a more liberal constitution. One wonders how he could be under such an illusion in view of the strong persistence with which such a demand finds repeated expression in the legislature and in other organs of public opinion. Sir Mirza Ismail must indeed be blind to the realities if he even yet remains unconvinced of the public anxiety for further reforms.

Further, he held the view that a change would be beneficial neither to the State nor to its people. One does not know the grounds for Sir Mirza's belief; but history furnishes numerous instances of such changes having done good both to the rulers and their people. And unless Mysore is going to be an exception to the rule, there is no reason to suppose that different consequences would flow in Mysore. Even supposing that such changes would be followed in Mysore alone by the most unusual results, is there anything to prevent Sir Mirza Ismail advising the Maha-

raja, in that eventuality, to withdraw what he granted? To him it was a surprise that a political advance should have been asked for at a time when "parliamentary democracy is decaying everywhere." Without accepting his statement unreservedly, it may be asked: if that is the ground of his opposition to the introduction of any further reforms in his State, why does he not with equal reason advocate the maintenance of the status quo in British India? Why does he show all the enthusiasm he does for the proposed Indian federation avowedly designed to confer larger powers of democratic self-government on the people of this country? Should he not on the same ground ask the British Government to hold up the grant of any further reforms to British India till Sir Mirza was assured that the process of decay of parliamentary democracy had come to a stop. Consistency, if nothing else, requires him to take this stand in relation to the Hoare reforms. But these he not only does not oppose; but goes to the length of advising the British Government to enact into law with as much speed as possible irrespective of any public resistance to them. Surely, he cannot have it both ways.

#### U. S. A's Silver Law.

ON the 19th inst. President Roosevelt signed the Silver Bill promoted by the silver block. The Bill has thus become law. The most important provision of the Act is that which "directs and authorises" the Treasury to purchase silver at a price not exceeding the coinage value of \$1.29 an ounce, until the metallic reserve against the currency is 75 per cent. gold and 25 per cent. silver. In order that silver backing may reach this proportion, the Treasury will have to buy, it is estimated, 1,300 million ounces of silver, at an expenditure of about \$650 millions, assuming the average price to be 50 cents an ounce. Although the Treasury is "directed" to make these purchases, the time for making them is left entirely to its discretion, and no limit is fixed within which they are to be completed. The mandatory instructions given to the Administration are thus rendered in effect purely permissive, and in fact the Administration may do nothing at all to carry them out. Even if large purchases are made, it is more than doubtful if the inflationists at whose instance the law is passed will be even moderately satisfied; for it is likely that the silver certificates which the Treasury is empowered to issue against such purchases will be promptly returned to the Treasury and Federal Reserve Banks, adding only to the country's idle currency and bank reserves and doing little to increase the volume of money in circulation. But it would appear that the silver party has received some sort of assurance that the silver purchase policy would be carried into effect to a certain extent. As we go to press, we learn that at least 1,000 million ounces will be purchased. The most important feature in this legislation is the President's declaration that negotiations have already been set on foot with "some of our neighbours in regard to the use of both gold and silver on a co-ordinated basis as a standard of value." The silver purchase policy now initiated by the U. S. A., independently of any action taken by other nations, is supposed to be only a prelude to the international action that is necessary for the general rehabilitation of silver for currency purposes.

## NEITHER ACCEPT NOR REJECT.

TO such an illogical and wholly fatuous conclusion the Congress is driven on the communal question, because it pursues two opposing policies in respect thereof. First, it desires, in devising a solution to this problem, to put itself before its own conscience and advocate what appears to it to be both morally just and politically expedient. Considering the question from that point of view, it has declared itself to be uncompromisingly opposed to communal electorates and in favour of joint electorates. It counts within its ranks members of all the communities which go to make up the Indian people—Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs, Christians and so forth—and it claims to speak for all. Being thus a truly national organ, it may well try to implement the principle it stands for without too much regard to the susceptibilities of the communities which are its component parts. In this case it will necessarily have to force its views upon some, be they communities or individuals, to whom those views may be unacceptable. Such coercion is a necessary consequence of all majority rule; and provided the Congress is certain that it represents a majority—and an overwhelming majority—of the Indian people, it need not be too squeamish about imposing its own will upon certain sections of them. But the Congress, on the communal question, is more anxious to arrive at a unanimous than at a right solution; and therefore it has declared that although an arrangement, based upon communal electorates, will be a wrong kind of arrangement, both ethically and politically, it will nevertheless accept it provided that it meets with approval on the part of all the communities concerned.

The resultant of these two forces, acting in opposite directions, is to be seen in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee on 17th June, which says, *inter alia*: "No solution that is not purely national can be propounded by the Congress. But the Congress is pledged to accept any solution falling short of the national which is agreed to by all the parties concerned, and conversely to reject any solution which is not agreed to by any of the said parties." The national solution can be attained, according to the Congress, only if communal electorates are rigorously kept out. This is the only solution that the Congress can itself propose. But if an alternative involving communal electorates is suggested by the communities themselves, it will accept such an un-national solution in preference to its own national solution if only all the communities join in suggesting it. So far the Congress position is perfectly intelligible: it will compromise its own principles for the sake of communal harmony and political unity. But if all communities do not agree to an un-national solution, as they do not agree to a national solution, then what happens? The Congress rejects it. Therefore it amounts to this, that the Congress will not insist upon joint electorates because some communities are too un-national to accept them, and it will not adopt communal electorates because some communities are

not un-national enough to accept them. There thus comes about an impasse from which no escape appears possible. If the whole country wanted either joint or separate electorates, the matter would be easy enough. But it is just because the country is sharply divided on it that the problem comes up before the Congress. What shall we now do in face of the existing division of opinion? This is the question that the country puts to the Congress; and the Congress says, you shall do nothing—till the division disappears. A deadlock, and an unbreakable deadlock, which is thus the only sure result of the Congress policy, will be regarded by most dispassionate observers as a complete justification of the Prime Minister's intervention to decide the issue.

Apart from this we cannot understand why the Congress, deciding to reject the whole White Paper, should boggle at rejecting what is only a part of it, viz. the communal decision. What is possibly to be gained by showing such deplorable weakness on a crucial point? Let us imagine for one moment that the Congress succeeds in compelling His Majesty's Government to withdraw the reform proposals or that it affords such strength to the oppositionists in England as to throw them out of the Houses of Parliament. The India Bill is put out of the way, and the stage is cleared for the summoning of a constituent assembly. If the constituent assembly is at all a true mirror of the nation as it should be, all the diversity of opinion that is now to be seen among the various communities will be reflected in the constituent assembly too. What will the Congress do in such circumstances? Will it require unanimity in the assembly for any conclusion that it may arrive at to take effect? If so, an impasse will arise then, as it has arisen now? If the assembly will decide all questions by a majority, why does not the Congress, claiming as it does to represent the whole people, decide the communal question now, in so far as it can do so? Why does it not say, we cannot accept the Premier's decision or any other decision which entails recognition of the vicious principle of communal electorates. In any case, even if we were to accept it, it would go into the melting pot along with the White Paper, and the constituent assembly would have to tackle the problem afresh. But the basic principle of the decision is utterly unacceptable to us and therefore we have particular reason to reject it along with other parts of the White Paper scheme. If the Congress took up this position, as one would have expected it to do, in what way would it stand to lose? Would the Nationalist Muslims break away? They agree on most matters with the communalist Muslims but differ from them on this one question of communal electorates. There is no reason then why the Nationalist Muslims should be so shy about the rejection of the communal award. Will the policy which the Congress has now adopted of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds improve the chances of the Nationalist Muslims at the ensuing

Legislative Assembly election? It will not improve them in the least. The present apostasy to truth on the part of the Congress is therefore altogether purposeless. Instead we should have much liked the Congress to be true to itself and to reject for its own sake the communal decision that it is going to reject as part of the White Paper scheme.

### EDUCATION IN INDIA.

THE Educational Commissioner's report on the progress of Indian education during the five years 1927-1932 published recently cannot be passed over by anybody who realises the important part which education plays in nation-building. The quinquennium, as is well known, was characterised by extreme financial stringency, much to the detriment of the development of the educational and social activities of Government. All that can be reasonably expected in such circumstances is that the progress already achieved should at least not suffer a setback. This expectation must be said to be satisfied by the state of education in the country as a whole during these five years. The number of educational institutions increased by nearly 11,000 to a little over 2½ lakhs and their strength by about 16 lakhs to nearly 1¼ crore. These figures sound imposing enough; but the point is not so much how many children are already at school as how many more are still awaiting instruction. An examination of the report from this standpoint shows what a wide expanse needs to be traversed before we can be in sight of the goal of the banishment of illiteracy from the land. In spite of the increased number of pupils, their proportion to the total population does not yet exceed 4.70 per cent. which is better than for the previous five-yearly period by only about .20 per cent. So far as boys' education goes, the quinquennium registered no progress whatever, the proportion of male pupils to the total male population being 7.33, both at the beginning and the close of that period. Female education advanced only a very short step forward, the proportion of girls at school to the female population having gone up from 1.53 to 1.89! Seeing how closely interwoven female education is with social progress, it goes without saying that its claims which have been woefully neglected so far deserve very much greater attention at the hands of Government than has been possible during the five years under report. Whether this will at all be practicable so long as the present economic blight lasts is more than can be said.

Of all provinces, literacy is the most widespread in Madras, the percentage of total population receiving instruction there being 6.25. The corresponding proportions for the other two presidencies, viz., Bombay and Bengal, were 6.11 and 5.55 respectively. Among the provinces the Punjab leads with 5.61. Assam coming next with 4.38. Bihar and Orissa with its 2.96 enjoyed the unenviable distinction of being the most illiterate province.

A reference to the figures of educational expenditure in the different provinces would here not be

out of place. It is seen from these that the province which spends the most on education is U. P. where the proportion of its educational expenditure to the total expenditure was 16.89. Next in order comes the Punjab with 15.89, while Madras with 15.74 stands third in the list. In this matter Bengal with 13.13 had the better of Bombay, which spent only 12.42 on education. Assam's educational expenditure was 11.64 of its total expenditure, while C. P., Bihar and Orissa and Burma with the level of their expenditure on education a little in excess of 10 per cent. could be bracketed together. It may be mentioned that among provinces the newest one, the N. W. F. P., spends the least, 5.20 on educating its inhabitants.

But what the man in the street would be interested to know is whether primary education made any progress at all during the quinquennium. The number of recognised primary schools for boys went up by over 6,100 with an increase of about 8½ lakhs in their strength. The largest number of boys at school, 22,65,000, was to be found in Madras; while the corresponding figure for Bengal stood at nearly 17 lakhs, U. P. had more than 11¼ lakhs and Bombay 9¾ lakhs. The significance of these figures will be better appreciated when it is remembered that the proportion of the male population of school age actually at school in the whole country was no more than 42.2 per cent. The percentage was the highest—59.6—in Madras and the lowest—24.1—in Burma. The position is thus described in the report: "Thus Madras has gone considerably further than half-way; Bombay, Bengal and the Punjab have nearly gone half-way; the other provinces have still far to go before they reach half-way." To all those that had expected universalisation of education within a few years after the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, the position is sure to strike as exceedingly disappointing; but, as can be seen from some statistics noticed above, female education is even in a more parlous state and cries out for urgent action for its quicker spread. Cannot something be done even in the existing straitened financial condition of the country to bring about its speedier development?

The report as usual makes an elaborate reference to the problems of stagnation and wastage in primary education, which adds little to our knowledge on the subject. It is a pity however that no attempt is made to suggest practicable solutions for these evils. Compulsion is admitted on all hands to be the only real and satisfactory way out of the difficulty; but it is obviously as futile to ask for its general introduction in the present circumstances as to cry for the moon. During all these 10 to 15 years, in which compulsory education acts have been in force in the different provinces, the number of urban areas under compulsion has hardly gone beyond 150 and that of rural ones 3,400. The situation is hardly likely to undergo any sudden transformation in the near future and it is up to our educationists to put their heads together and to hammer out a scheme by which the present expenditure on education, totally inadequate as it is, can be made to yield a better return by prevent-

ing the relapse into illiteracy of children who have spent some time at school. We hope our educational authorities, instead of merely contenting themselves by repeatedly pointing out the difficulties with which these problems bristle, will think of means of getting over them. Difficulties are meant to be overcome and must not be allowed to serve as a cloak for inaction or incompetency.

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## Our London Letter.

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( BY AIR MAIL. )

( From Our Correspondent. )

LONDON, June 14.

### PRIVILEGES REPORT.

THE Report of the Committee of Privileges, published only on the morning of the dispatch of the last air mail, came too late for comment in my last letter. As its contents are already widely known in India, there is now no need to do more than say that the Report generally confirms the anticipations of well-informed publicists and political realists. Even upon the statement of facts alleged by Mr. Churchill, when he first drew the attention of Parliament to the alleged breach of privilege committed by the Secretary of State and Lord Derby, it seemed clear to those people who could keep their heads and take a cool view of the situation, that the Secretary of State could not divest himself of his statutory functions merely on account of the fact of his membership of the Joint Select Committee, and that, in such exercise, he was entitled to invite the aid of any one who could influence the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to observe a sense of realities.

Mr. Churchill's charge, however, which the Report of the Committee of Privileges flatly rejects, was that Sir Samuel Hoare took the initiative and sought to induce the Chamber to modify the evidence that it had already tendered in its Memorandum. The facts as found in the Report are that the initiative never came from the Secretary of State but from the Chamber itself, and that the Chamber's decision to withdraw its Memorandum and to substitute new evidence resulted from a change of opinion consequent upon the representations of the Cotton Mission to India, which, having come into immediate contact with Indian opinion and the facts of the Indian political and industrial situation, realised that only by a policy of conciliation, understanding and mutual advantage could British trade with India be extended or even preserved. Indeed, throughout these proceedings it is clear that the true conflict was between two schools of thought in Lancashire, the one which had never reconciled itself to the fiscal autonomy conceded to India in practice long before the convention was recognised in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and thereafter, and those who may be, for convenience sake, be described as the "modernists," who recognised the fundamental changes that had occurred in Indo-British economic relations. There is not a single Secretary of State for India, from the time of Mr. Montagu onwards, that has not been pestered by the former to go back upon the convention freely recognised by the latter, and who has not consistently returned Mr. Montagu's well-known reply. It is therefore to the credit of Sir Samuel Hoare that, throughout the present proceedings, he has firmly declared that the Government were not prepared to alter their policy on this question in reply to the demand of the reactionary section

of the Chamber for increased safeguards for British trade in India.

It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that the Committee of Privileges reported that Mr. Churchill had failed to produce any evidence whatever in support of his main and his subsidiary charges. On the contrary, the Committee unanimously held Sir Samuel and Lord Derby fully exonerated, and even Lord Hugh Cecil, upon whom the diehards were evidently counting for a minority opinion, went no further than his colleagues, save to the extent to which he committed himself to an academic distinction between persuasion and over-persuasion; not that even the latter could be construed as a breach of privilege had it occurred (which, however, he joined with his colleagues in denying) but because its exercise might result in the stultification of a Joint Select Committee's work by the presentation on the part of a witness of unspontaneous evidence, which would not reveal his true mind.

Paragraph 21 of the Report is perhaps in many ways the most important, as it is probably the most interesting, since it contains the considered view of the Committee of Privileges of the exact status and functions of a Joint Select Committee such as the present one; and it held that the terms of the Standing Order of 1700 had little relevancy to the circumstances of the present case. The Report draws a distinction between a Committee exercising judicial functions and which is concerned to ascertain facts and to make a report thereon to Parliament, and a non-judicial body to which is referred the task of hearing opinion and advising Parliament upon a particular course of policy in relation to proposed legislation on a given subject. One would have thought, as *The Times* remarks ironically, that such a distinction, instead of being noted with exclamations of pretended surprise and horror, would have been welcomed by Mr. Churchill and his diehard colleagues as confirming the authority that they had sought, immediately the Joint Select Committee was set up, to retain their freedom to launch upon its personnel and proceedings every conceivable term of hostile reproach, and to justify them in pursuing a "raging, tearing propaganda" designed to destroy the White Paper policy and its authors, and their substitution by something vastly more reactionary and dangerous to Indo-British relations. Their pretence that until now they had always regarded the Joint Select Committee as a judicial body was fully exposed by the Government spokesmen in Wednesday's debate, who reminded them that had the Committee been in fact a judicial tribunal, they would have repeatedly rendered themselves liable to heavy penalties for scandalizing it and for other well-recognised public offences of the first magnitude.

These sanctimonious critics now hold themselves to be perfectly free to launch an even more devastating attack upon the Committee and all its works, on the score of its partisanship and partiality. But then they have done this all along, and it is difficult to believe that they have any fresh weapons in their armoury, though this will not prevent them from continuing to sew discord and suspicion in the public mind. In reality their sole object has been either to bring about the fall of the Government, and its substitution by a Tory administration, with Mr. Churchill holding high office, or at least to procure such delay in regard to the Indian constitutional proposals as to render them the sport of our own domestic political situation. For even had they really held the view that the Joint Select Committee is in its very nature a non-judicial body, ordinary political decency should have led them, as it had led the majority of the members of the Tory Party in the House, to await the Report of the Joint Select

Committee to the very Parliament which had set it up and which they affect to treat with the highest regard and consideration as the great bulwark of British liberties, and the palladium of the citizens' rights.

#### THE DEBATE.

Yesterday's debate on the Report of the Committee of Privileges was awaited with considerable eagerness in many quarters. Mr. Churchill and his friends affected to welcome it eagerly, for, according to them, the Report contained, so far as it went, convincing evidence of the truth of his allegations and the well-founded character of their suspicions regarding the dishonesty of the Government and the partiality of the Joint Select Committee. Realising that the Report was unanimous and fully exonerated the two intended victims, the only way in which Mr. Churchill could hope to escape the implied criticism of his own action in the matter would be to suggest that the Report was worthless in the absence of the documentary evidence, which, he alleged, by recommending that it be not printed in the public interest, the Committee was suppressing, with the result that the public was denied the opportunity of forming its own judgment as to the value of the Committee's findings. Indeed, ever since Saturday this has been the main theme of the political writers in the *Morning Post*-Rothermere Press. The definition of the Joint Select Committee as non-judicial had brought Mr. Robert Boothby into the arena with an amendment to the Prime Minister's tabled motion for the adoption of the Report to the effect that the House should institute an enquiry for further definition of the status of Committees. In winding up the debate, the Attorney-General had little difficulty in showing that Mr. Boothby's amendment, which he did not in fact move, was entirely misconceived, since the only question before the Committee and to which it had solely directed itself, was whether in the circumstances of the present case there had in fact occurred a breach of privilege such as was contemplated in the Standing Order of the House, to which the answer was a clear negative.

#### MR. CHURCHILL'S DISCOMFITURE.

If anything could have completed Mr. Churchill's discomfiture, it must surely have been the manner in which he conducted his own defence. He sought throughout, not merely to justify his original action, but the truth and force of the very allegations that had been unanimously rejected by the Committee that he had himself chosen as the tribunal for his vindication. Never once did he express regret that he had placed the Secretary of State for so long in a position of embarrassment and humiliation or gratification that Sir Samuel Hoare had emerged successfully from his ordeal. If, he urged, the whole of the evidence on which the Report was based, and which was incompletely and misleadingly summarised in the Report, could see the light of day, it would be found that he had been completely justified in bringing his charges. He then tried to draw the Government Front Bench into publishing the concluding sentence of one of Sir Samuel's letters referred to in the Report, and for the moment whilst the official spokesmen seemed to hesitate whether they would consent to the omitted sentence being read, and finally declared against it, it looked as though the sympathy of the House was veering towards him. Then came Mr. Churchill's tragic disaster. Instead of leaving the House under the suspicion that the Government were indeed suppressing something vital to his case, he took the responsibility for divulging the actual text of the sentence, when it became abundantly clear that, so far from aiding Mr. Churchill, it in fact showed that the Secretary of State

had acted with the completest propriety. This exposure drew upon Mr. Churchill the derisory laughter of the House, from which he never recovered during the rest of the debate.

#### "TRIPPING UP SAM."

Could anything have put the affair into its right perspective it was a quite unexpectedly hostile speech by Mr. Amery, a former colleague of Mr. Churchill. In mocking accents he described Mr. Churchill's motto, to which he always worked, as *fiat iustitia, ruat coelum* (let justice be done, though the heavens fall). Mr. Churchill fell into the trap so blandly set for him by his tormentor, whom, in a moment of indiscretion, he asked to translate. Swiftly Mr. Amery seized his opportunity by translating the Latin maxim into the vernacular wittily as follows. "If I can trip up Sam, the Government's bust". This phrase was worth the whole debate, and set the tone to all that followed. The House, which had already discredited Mr. Churchill after the missing sentence episode, rocked with laughter, for practically everybody realised that that was the essence of the matter so far as Mr. Churchill had been concerned.

Mr. Amery got in another shrewd blow when he quoted Mr. Churchill the Historian against Mr. Churchill the Politician. He quoted from Mr. Churchill's book on Marlborough, in which the author, writing of Macaulay's charges against the great soldier, said that he "assumed their authenticity with unquestioning glee, and proceeded to use them in the most sensational and malicious manner. The House was vastly amused by this pungent sally." One of to-day's papers describes Lord Hugh Cecil's speech, a rare event these days, as "judicial and damning." The matter, in his opinion, was not of very great gravity. It was obvious, he said, that the Select Committee on India was not a judicial or an impartial body, since you could not hope to "make a body impartial by mixing up conflicting partialities". It was engaged upon an enquiry into political reform, and there ought to be perfect freedom to use persuasion. They could rely only on public opinion, convention, and custom, for the whole question was one of commonsense.

Perhaps in many ways the most devastating criticism of the author of this attack fell from the lips of Sir John Simon, who has seldom spoken to such effect to an appreciative House. He described Mr. Churchill as a "picturesque but inaccurate historian", a hard blow to a man who prides himself upon being both picturesque and accurate as a historian. He tore to shreds Mr. Churchill's story of the chronology of events, he mocked decisively at Mr. Churchill's failure to make good his allegation that the missing sentence in Sir Samuel Hoare's quoted letter was of vital importance and would, if read, make all the difference to the value of the Committee's Report, and sent the House once more into loud merriment by repeating a well-known divorce court story. Then he turned triumphantly to Mr. Churchill's reliance upon Erskine May for authority in the loud charges Mr. Churchill had made against Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Derby of breach of privilege. What was the case that Mr. Churchill quoted? It was a notorious case in which the Parliamentary Committee had been set up to enquire into allegations against the Duke of York, then Commander-in-Chief of the British Army (of whom it is narrated that he led his army of ten thousand men right up the hill and then right down again) in connection with the alleged traffic in military commissions under the influence of his favourite, one Mrs. Clarke. During her examination a half-witted clergyman had

attempted to tamper with her evidence by suggesting to her that she should "out and run", and if she found herself and her family upon the other side of the Channel, they would be amply provided for. What possible analogy, asked Sir John mockingly, between that episode and the one upon which the present Committee of Privileges had been asked to report? He had hoped that Mr. Churchill would have found it possible to accept gracefully the Committee's Report and to withdraw his charges against the two members of the Joint Select Committee, and he still hoped that they would have heard the last of the matter. Mr. Churchill was foolish enough at this point to mutter, "Don't make any mistake about that". Sir John immediately caught up the ejaculation and denounced Mr. Churchill vigorously for having been far more concerned with an attempt to ruin Sir Samuel Hoare and to injure the Government than he had pretended to be interested in the question of constitutional proprieties.

#### THE SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Mr. Churchill and his friends appear to have succeeded at least to the extent of partly contributing to further delay until the autumn of the presentation of the Joint Select Committee's Report. Naturally, whilst the conduct of two members of such importance was under quasi-judicial consideration, the tempo of the Committee's work must have been slower and its rhythm less regular. Moreover, the very procedure of the Joint Select Committee, requiring voting upon every important passage of the draft Report, involves some degree of delay. I understand, too (though this is probably more in the nature of surmise than accurate knowledge), that various members of the Committee, either to the right or to the left, are pressing alternative views and methods, with considerable vigour, possibly even supported by alternative drafts, on particular points. I cannot, of course, speak with any authority, nor do I know it as a fact, but it may quite well be found ultimately that the Labour Members will have advocated very strongly the substantial amendments to the White Paper proposals pressed for in the British Indian Memoranda, even if in some respects they may not actually have gone beyond them. If it should be found that they have in fact done so, their views would probably be found recorded in annexures to the Report.

I rather gather from enquiries in authoritative quarters that the official view of the further delay in publication is that it will not affect, in any marked degree, the programme regarding the introduction and passage of the Reforms Bill, or the inauguration of the new Constitution at the beginning of 1936. I am wondering whether this is not too optimistic as expectations. It may be, of course, that, whilst these discussions are proceeding, the Bill is being actually drafted upon the lines of major decisions. And it may also be the official view that, notwithstanding the present threatened alarms and excursions in diehard quarters, the Bill, when presented to Parliament, will be found to be of such a nature as to facilitate its passage through Parliament with the minimum of delay. If that should be so, it would appear to indicate the contemplation of compromises on some of the White Paper proposals that would militate strongly against the value of the reforms scheme from the Indian point of view.

#### THE THOMPSON AND GARRATT BOOK.

"The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India" by Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt, just published, has been described by Mr. H. N. Brailsford as "scrupulously, and almost painfully, honest." Many books have been written about India but the vision of the writers on both sides has been

apt to be obscured by their passionate convictions, and this has led to a failure to face facts.

Lord Lothian, writing in the *Observer*, says of the authors of this new book that "they have written a fearless, but in no sense a propagandist, book." He welcomes its publication "on the eve of the fateful controversy which will break on Parliament and the country in the autumn of this year." He continues: "The great strength of their work is their admiration for what has been noble and courageous wherever found, and their hatred of what has been cruel and base. If there is a theme underlying their history it is that all that is best in British rule in India has been the creation of great men, and if the connection between Britain and India is to continue to be fruitful, it will be because Britain and India are able to throw up on both sides men who can master the new and unprecedented problems of the age." Mr. J. T. Gwynn writes in the *Manchester Guardian* on the whole with congratulation upon the work of the writers. At the same time he enters a protest against their denunciation, several times repeated, of what they describe as the "cant" found in the works of Mr. Vincent Smith and others of their predecessors. In Mr. Gwynn's view, however, Messrs. Thompson and Garratt, by reason of their socialist leanings, are themselves not immune from a similar charge. For example, he quotes them as speaking as follows of the Indian villages, in the period between 1901 and 1911: "The capitalist system was coming into full operation, draining away the surplus produce by a process as ruthless as that of the eighteenth century Mogul official, and more efficient." Mr. Gwynn then goes on to say: "The present writer spent some time in Indian villages during the period last mentioned, and saw the rise in the villagers' standard of living and the growth of independence resulting from the rise in prices and the increase in the demand for cotton and ground-nut, and he cannot but feel that the two generalisations quoted are 'cant', and not the kind of 'cant' Mr. Vincent Smith used to write, but still 'cant.'"

"The pressure on the land is a real evil, and so is debt, but the paradox which declares that the rise in the value of the ryot's land increases his poverty has been worked too hard. The village moneylender is neither so wicked nor so powerful as he is painted. Like other creditors, he finds it does not pay him to ruin his debtors. The ryot in debt is not a slave, unless he is a slave by nature, which most Indian ryots are not."

### Review.

#### BIRTH CONTROL IN THEORY AND PRACTICE.

SANTATINIYAMANA (Marathi.) By R. A. RAIRKAR. (Author, Poona 4.) 1934. 20cm. 154p. Re. 1/-

TARAPOREVALA'S UPTODATE HANDBOOK OF PRACTICAL BIRTH CONTROL. By GEORGE RYLEY SCOTT. (Taraporevala.) 20cm. 60p. Re. 1/-

DR. RAIRKAR'S is the third book in Marathi on the subject, my own book having appeared in 1923 (not 1925 as Dr. Rairkar says) and Prof. N. S. Phadke's in 1925. Dr. Rairkar justifies his book by saying that the other two books did not consider the theory of the subject sufficiently and gave undue space to practical instructions about birth control. In my book, only 30 pages are devoted to practice out of 130. If Dr. Rairkar finds this excessive, I differ from him.



The author has followed Dr. Marie Stopes because the book does not show that he has any personal experience of it in his own practice) in recommending the dome-shaped cap in preference to the Dutch cap for 'healthy' women. Apart from the opinions of medical authorities in general, my personal experience is just the reverse. The dome-shaped cap either does not remain in place, or if it is tight enough to stay on, it may cause irritation. It is also more difficult to fit, as the author admits. In fact, Marie Stopes is about the only authority (and she is not medical) who recommends it and one is justified in considering it merely a fad of hers.

I must also protest with all the emphasis at my command against the preposterous suggestion put forward by the author (page 95) to restrict the sale of contraceptives to persons producing a medical certificate that they need them. Even Lord Dawson's recent Bill is not so absurd. The medical profession as in general been against birth control, and that not always from disinterested motives. The main portion of doctors' incomes depends on women's and children's diseases, and birth control will certainly reduce these. It is only now, when patients continually pester them with demands for contraceptive knowledge, that they show any interest at all in the subject, because it is not pleasant to avow ignorance. It is non-medical people who have borne the brunt of the fight and now doctors want to step in and boldly propose that nobody should be able to buy contraceptives without a doctor's certificate. It is primarily the right of every woman to decide for herself how many children she will have, and no doctor can claim to dictate this to her. I feel my duty to warn the public against any such laws.

The author mentions several makes of tablets and gives the prices as Re. 1-8, Re. 1-13, and Rs. 2-4 per dozen for some English and German makes. He does not seem to be aware that I have got similar tablets specially manufactured in Germany and have put them on the market at Re. 1 per dozen. So also, a pair of good rubber, similar to the Pro-race recommended by him, and made in Bombay, is sold at a 1, while the Pro-race costs double. Among chemical means, he does not even mention jellies, which are certainly more effective than any tablets, enough of course, for perfect safety, a rubber cap could be used in addition.

On the whole, however, Dr. Rairkar's book may be considered more useful than the next one.

Messrs. Taraporevala Sons & Co. have taken advantage of the general interest in the subject evinced by Dr. Hutton's remarks in connection with the last census report to publish a practical book by Mr. Scott, who is already well-known for other sex books. And the book does give sound practical information in general. It is easy to see, however, at though the book mentions prices in rupees, because the book is intended for Indian readers, the author is not familiar with Indian conditions, for in all probability is Dr. Havelock Ellis, whose recommendation of the book appears on the title-page. He says in Chapter II, for instance, that the suitable size for the average woman (for a Dutch Cap) is 70 mm., but for a young and just-married woman, it will probably not be larger than 60, while the mother of two or three children will take 75 or 80. This is perfectly absurd for Indian women, at least on this side of the country, where 70 is one of the largest sizes required, while one larger than 75 would be very rare indeed. These figures are obviously based on measurements of European women, who are generally found to take larger sizes. He also recommends "contraceptaline", a jelly manufactured by an

English firm, which, in practice, we have found to be unsuitable for tropical climates, as it does not keep well. One should certainly know these things if one starts to write a book for Indian readers.

The figures showing the Dutch cap in position in both these books fail to give an adequate idea of the true position in which it lies when properly fitted.

Still the instructions are on the whole sound; but what is really required in India are cheap books in the vernaculars. Re. 1 for a book of 60 pages is certainly not cheap and it reaches only English-knowing people who form a very small percentage of the population.

R. D. KARVE.

#### SHORT NOTICES.

**COMMUNITY CIVICS.** BY E. CHANNA REDDY and R. E. ROBINSON. (P. T. I. Book Depot, Bangalore.) 1934. 131p. 18cm. Rs. 1-4-0.

CIVICS is a subject which can be made extremely interesting provided a living interest is created in it. But at the same time the interest in the subject can be easily killed if the teacher gives too much importance to the detailed information about the administrative machinery. The authors have tried to give a plan of lessons in which the student is gradually introduced to his civic duties. The course begins by introducing the pupil to a study of his local environment—home, school and community—and showing how this widens out to include the country and the whole world. In each chapter the aim of the lesson is clearly stated for the benefit of the teacher. He has to focus his attention on the problem and collect the relevant matter. He is to introduce the topic with the help of this material and place before the class the problems given in each chapter. The student is then guided to study them with the help of books, newspapers, etc. The answers to the questions are to be written down by the student in his note-book. The teacher should summarise the discussion finally. The book will surely help the teacher as well as the taught. It differs very much from an ordinary text-book, inasmuch as it leaves more to be thought out by the pupil than the actual information given in it. In the hands of a teacher who has a proper attitude towards the subject, this book will be a fine instrument to shape the minds of young students and instil in them the right spirit of citizenship.

B. D. KARVE.

**GUIDE TO BOMBAY AND POONA.** (TARAPOREWALLA.) 1934. 21cm. 217 + 120p. Rs. 3.

THE appearance of this guide has been occasioned by the last session of the Indian Science Congress. It may be explained how. It seems to be the practice of the organisers of the Congress to bring out for the benefit of delegates to the Congress such guides to cities where it may happen to meet for the time being. The last session of the Science Congress was, according to the original plan, to be held in Poona. A Poona guide was accordingly got ready. But owing to an outbreak of the plague epidemic at Poona last year, the venue had to be shifted to Bombay. This accounts for the Guide covering both the capitals of the Bombay presidency. Though primarily intended for the delegates and visitors to the Science Congress the book is sure to prove of great use even to the general public. For the information given relates not only to the scientific but to all sides of life of these two important centres of Indian culture. And the publishers deserve to be complimented on their publication of such a very useful guide-book.

G. H. K.

## INQUIRY INTO MILLHANDS' WAGES.

MESSRS. JOSHI AND BAKHALE'S VIEWS.

*The report of the Bombay Labour Office Committee which inquired into the question of the millhands' wages in Bombay was published last week. The views of Messrs. N. M. Joshi, and R. R. Bakhale on the report are contained in the following statement issued by them. The statement runs:*

**T**HE Bombay Labour Office enquiry into wages and unemployment in the Bombay textile industry was restricted, by its terms of reference, to the investigation of facts. Its report, therefore, makes no recommendations on the issue of wage cuts and, on that account, suffers from its immediate usefulness. However, it is an able document which deals with some of the important aspects of the textile industry and gives a number of useful statistics and charts. Having regard to the shortness of time at its disposal, it can be said that the Labour Office has discharged its task efficiently and, generally speaking, impartially. The facts the report has brought out confirm the general impression about the chaotic condition of the industry with special reference to Bombay City and justifies the complaint that the wage cuts are uncalled for and cannot be supported on any rational grounds.

### DEPRESSION.

One of the reasons for wage reductions in Bombay City given by the employers is trade depression. The Labour Office report points out that trade depression is not peculiar to Bombay and states on page 43 that, in spite of world-wide depression in the textile industry, the latter, so far as this Presidency except Bombay City is concerned, "enjoys a reasonable measure of prosperity." It puts its finger on the right spot when it says on the same page that "the explanation (for the depressed condition of the industry in Bombay City) appears to be the involved financial position of the mills."

With regard to wage reductions, the report has brought out that since 1926 Bombay has reduced wages by 21 per cent., and Sholapur by 17 per cent., while Ahmedabad has increased them by 5 to 6 per cent. A comparison between the actual wages paid in Bombay and Ahmedabad shows that the latter centre pays higher wages than the former. For example, the spinner's average daily wage on one side is Re. 1-1-0 in Ahmedabad as against Re. 0-14-10 of the Bombay spinner. The Ahmedabad two-loom weaver earns an average daily wage of Re. 1-14-4 as against Re. 1-8-1 of the Bombay weaver. One can estimate from these figures that the wages in Ahmedabad to-day are 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. higher than in Bombay. But on the other hand, the cost of living in Bombay is admittedly higher than in Ahmedabad. Even the Government of Bombay makes a discrimination in favour of Bombay in fixing salaries and allowances on account of the higher cost of living in this city. The Labour Office report further points out that the cost of living index number in Bombay has gone down by 29 points, while that in Ahmedabad is reduced by 31 points. As between Bombay and Sholapur, the difference between the fall in the cost of living index number is only 1 point in favour of Sholapur, while the difference between the wage cuts is 4 per cent. to the detriment of Bombay.

### COMPARISON.

A comparison between the relative efficiency of the Bombay and Ahmedabad worker, as brought out by the figures on page 11 of the report, shows that the Bombay worker is in no way behind the Ahmedabad worker in his efficiency. In 1933, the number of workers employed in Bombay was 1,05,448 as against

82,318 in Ahmedabad. The production of yarn and woven goods in Bombay in the same year was 253 and 214 million pounds respectively as against 168 and 160 million pounds in Ahmedabad. The ratio of production of yarn and woven goods to the total number of workers employed is practically the same in both the centres—it leans rather in favour of Bombay. A further comparison between the production figures of 1926 and 1933 for both the centres yields the same result. Taking the Bombay centre alone and comparing its production figures as given by the Tariff Board for 1926 and 1931-32 it is seen that while the number of workers is reduced by 13.5 per cent. the production of yarn and cloth has increased by 23.4 per cent. and 32 per cent. respectively. It is thus conclusive that since 1926 the Bombay worker has increased his efficiency and that his efficiency is as high as, if not higher than, that of the Ahmedabad worker.

Dealing with the real wages in Bombay, Sholapur and Ahmedabad, the report finds that taking the real wage index number at 100 for 1926-27, the index number today is 111 in Bombay and 115 in Sholapur and 154 in Ahmedabad. Much may be made of these figures. But the report itself gives a warning that the index number of real wages must not be regarded "as an exact measure of the change because the material for both wages and cost of living is not always complete or accurate." The report refers to the numerous difficulties in obtaining correct data of earnings and their variations to the impossibility of taking into account changes in the quantities consumed by the working classes and, with regard to the working out of the index number, to "the necessity of assumption that, at two points of time, the standard of life has remained the same." The real wage index does not, as the report points out, take into account any alterations in the standard of life. The report quotes the authorities of such economic experts as Professors Pigou and Dobb to show the inherent limitations of real wage index numbers and cautions the readers to use them with those limitations.

Moreover, these figures of real wages as given above show that while the cost of living index number varies at Bombay, Sholapur and Ahmedabad only to the extent of from 1 to 3 per cent. and while the fall in the cost of living is the highest in Ahmedabad, the latter enjoys in respect of real wages an advantage of 43 over Bombay and Sholapur respectively. The Bombay worker has thus suffered heavily both in nominal and real wages in comparison with his brother at the other two centres.

### STUDY OF INDEX NUMBERS.

In studying these figures, one cannot lose sight of a few other considerations bearing on them. The first of them is that, in determining the relation between the cost of living and wage level for two different periods, one must be satisfied, on the strength of adequate data, that the wage at the first period taken as the base period was an adequate living wage in terms of the cost of living. The Labour Office report takes 1926-27 as the base period upon which it has determined the present nominal and real wage level and the cost of living index number. But it has not shown, nor has it been shown by any other Government or other publication, that the 1926-27 wages were adequate in terms of the cost

of living. It is an admitted fact that money wages are slow in adapting themselves to changes in the cost of living. "Thus", the report points out, "in a period of rising prices they lag behind the rise of prices and there is a fall in real wages." This fact leads one to the conclusion that, having regard to the cost of living, the 1926 wages in Bombay were lower than they should have been. Ahmedabad is, according to the report, the only centre where a minimum standard of living appears to have been accepted as one of the principles underlying the fixation of wages.

The second consideration is that of the unemployed population. The report of the Labour Office shows that in Bombay City there are 28,000 unemployed persons as against 95,000 employed. The burden of supporting the former mostly falls upon the latter. In dealing with the question of wages and unemployment, Mr. Harold Butler, the Director of the International Labour Office, says thus in his last year's report:—

"In periods of depression the real test of the well-being of the workers is not to be found in the level of wage rates or even in their purchasing value. When millions are on short time or are not earning at all, the significant figure, both socially and economically, is the aggregate income of the working population."

Judged by this test, it is seen from the report that the wages bills of 35 mills in Bombay City, for which comparative data was available, was lower by 19.57% in December 1933 than in July 1926. Mr. Butler's test further shows that the small advantage from the rise in real wages is not such as is generally supposed to be; and this is particularly so in India where there is no unemployment insurance and where, as has already been pointed out, the unemployed generally depend upon the employed for their subsistence. The third consideration is the indebtedness of the worker. A man who is indebted to the shop-keeper, is at the mercy of the latter for the prices charged for his foodstuffs—a factor which to some extent deprives him of the benefit of the reduced cost of living. Moreover, the cost of living index number takes no account of the indebtedness of the worker and the interest he pays.

#### MILL METHODS.

The report has shown the haphazard manner in which rationalisation has been carried out in some mills and has referred to the difference in methods that Bombay and Ahmedabad have employed. In Bombay only two or three groups have introduced rationalisation; but their methods are not the same. In the Sassoon group of mills, for example, rationalisation has no doubt led to shorter working day and to an improvement in the employment situation; but it has also led to reduction in earnings. On the other hand, rationalisation in the Wadia group of mills has resulted in securing more earnings for the workers; but it has created unemployment for which no provision has been made. The report points out that there operatives are attending more machines than formerly, the workers have usually been given some more wages. This is admittedly unfair to the workers because where the latter are doing more work without the management incurring much additional expenditure, the more substantial portion of the savings should have gone to the workers. The employers may claim a reasonable portion of the savings accruing from rationalisation only if they incur any extra expenditure in improving or replacing the plant. The employers have constantly complained that they were prevented from adopting methods of rationalisation by the workers. The finding of the Labour Office enquiry goes almost entirely against this complaint. The report says that

"with the exception of four or five cases where the (rationalisation) system has not been tried owing to the opposition of the work people, in the majority of cases, it has not been adopted for technical and other reasons." These "technical and other reasons" are, according to the report, the old machinery or the working on coarse counts or weaving fancy cloth. This clearly shows that in Bombay there is not much room for rationalisation unless the employers overhaul their machinery. In Bombay City only such methods of rationalisation have been adopted as put extra strain on the operatives while in Ahmedabad, "rationalisation has been particularly directed towards improving the efficiency and type of machines used." The Labour Office report points to the necessity of securing adequate control over rationalisation; otherwise it has the risk of going into unhealthy channels in so far as the working classes are concerned.

#### SEVERE INDICTMENT.

The description of the conditions obtaining in the textile industry which the report gives in summing up the results of the enquiry constitutes a severe indictment of the management of the industry. According to the report, "there is no common labour policy and, therefore, no wage policy; still less is there any common sales policy and goods produced in one centre are sold in another although the same article is being made locally." "It is difficult", the report further says, "to find any one matter in connection with this industry upon which it is possible to generalise." This is a censure not only of the industry but also of those in authority who consider the industry as a national industry for the purposes of protection. The statement of earnings of the Bombay operatives given on page 30 of the report exposes a chaotic and anarchical condition of the industry. In the same city a winder gets Re. 0-8-7 in eight mills and Re. 0-14-0 in twelve mills; a reeler gets Re. 0-7-8 in six mills and Rs. 1-5-1 in twelve other mills; a weaver gets Re. 1-0-3 in 9 mills and Re. 1-14-0 in two other mills; and a spinner gets Re. 0-11-7 in 9 mills and Re. 1-0-2 in 13 other mills. It is high time that the Government of India undertook an exhaustive enquiry into the industry on an all-India basis so that the public can decide whether the industry deserves the protection it is getting at present.

The duty of the Government of Bombay is not over with the publication of the Labour Office report. They have helped in breaking the strike by putting the strike leaders in jail, even though some of them committed no overt act, by prohibiting workers' meetings and demonstrations almost throughout the period of the strike, by prohibiting picketing and by employing a disproportionately large police force at the cost of the public thereby frightening the workers. These measures, at least to the extent to which they were employed, were not necessary purely to maintain law and order. It is the moral duty of Government towards the workers who have suffered for two long months, to take effective steps to restore the cuts. We earnestly urge the Government of Bombay to appoint immediately a small committee to make definite recommendations with regard to wage cuts and other matters dealt with by the Labour Office enquiry. If they only sit on the report, they will be open to the charge of being partial to the employers and of having helped them to break the strike. Moreover, if it is the duty of Government to protect the property of millowners, it is equally their duty to protect the workers from an attack on their standard of life. The Bombay Government should also lose no time in securing the reorganisation of the industry, even though it may be confined to this Presidency.

Lastly, we make an earnest appeal to the public of Bombay. The textile industry which is regarded as a national industry, must be saved from the ruin which the Millowners' Association are bringing upon it. Since 1926, 23 mills have been closed, five of which are already scrapped on account of the wrong policy which the industry has been following under the guidance of, or sometimes, for want of any guidance from, the Millowners' Association. More than 50,000 workers have lost their employment since 1926 and many thousands of other people in the city have suffered on account of the sad plight of the industry. It is those who call themselves the "millowners" who will suffer the least if the industry is ruined. It is, therefore, the duty of the public of Bombay to insist that the industry must be saved by forcing upon it a better and more efficient and human organisation in which all interested parties will have due share of control and responsibility.

#### CONGRESS COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTIONS.

*The following is the full text of the resolutions recently passed by the Working Committee of the Congress.*

##### WHITE PAPER AND COMMUNAL AWARD.

THE Congress Parliamentary Board having asked the Working Committee to enunciate the Congress policy on the White Paper proposals and the Communal Award, the Working Committee declares the Congress policy on these matters as follows:—

"The White Paper, which in no way expresses the will of the people of India, has been more or less condemned by almost all the Indian political parties and falls far short of the goal of the Congress, if it does not retard the progress towards it. The only satisfactory alternative to the White Paper is a constitution drawn up by a constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage or as near it, as possible, with power, if necessary, to the important minorities to have their representatives elected exclusively by the electors belonging to such minorities.

"The White Paper lapsing, the Communal Award must lapse automatically. Among other things, it will be the duty of the constituent assembly to determine the method of representation of important minorities, and make provision for otherwise safeguarding their interests.

"Since, however, the different communities in the country are sharply divided on the question of the Communal Award, it is necessary to define the Congress attitude on it. The Congress claims to represent equally all the communities composing the Indian nation. Therefore, in view of the division of opinion, the Congress can neither accept nor reject the Communal Award as long as the division of opinion lasts.

"At the same time, it is necessary to re-declare the policy of the Congress on the communal question. No solution that is not purely national can be propounded by the Congress. But the Congress is pledged to accept any solution falling short of the national which is agreed to by all the parties concerned, and conversely to reject any solution which is not agreed to by any of the said parties.

"Judged by the national standard, the Communal Award is wholly unsatisfactory, besides being open to serious objection on other grounds.

"It is, however, obvious that the only way to prevent untoward consequences of the Communal

Award is to explore ways and means of arriving at an agreed solution, and not by any appeal on this essentially domestic question to the British Government or any other outside authority."

##### SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM.

"Whilst the Working Committee welcomes the formation of groups representing different schools of thought, it is necessary, in view of the loose talk about the confiscation of private property and the necessity of class war, to remind Congressmen that the Karachi Resolution as finally settled by the A. I. C. C. at Bombay in August 1931, which lays down certain principles, contemplates neither the confiscation of private property without just cause or compensation nor the advocacy of class war.

"The Working Committee is further of opinion that confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence. At the same time the Working Committee is of opinion that the Congress does contemplate wiser and juster use of private property so as to prevent it from exploiting the landless poor."

##### HINDU MAHASABHA.

*The Bombay and Suburban Hindu Mahasabha Conference which met last week at Bombay passed the following resolutions:*

##### COMMUNAL AWARD.

"This Conference puts on record its emphatic and unreserved condemnation of the Government solution of the communal problem of India known as the Communal Award, as it contravenes the principles of Minority Protection of the League of Nations, besides being grossly unjust to the Hindus, entirely subversive of all possibility of the evolution of India as a united Nation and that of real democratic system of self-government and calculated to create and continue racial and religious dissensions in the country.

"This Conference holds that the Communal Award is merely a decision of the British Government and in no sense whatsoever an Award of an arbitration and that, as such, every person or party feeling aggrieved over it has the constitutional right to question or reject it, which this Conference hereby does.

"This Conference emphatically protests against the attitude of the National Congress in respect of the Communal Award, the effect of which would be to justify the imposition by the British Government of the anti-national and reactionary demands of the Muslims on the majority community."

##### THE WHITE PAPER.

"This Conference puts on record its deliberate opinion that the constitution as foreshadowed in the White Paper will not allay but increase discontent as being most disappointing, inadequate and even retrogressive."

##### ANTI-UNTOUCHABILITY.

"This Conference reiterates the resolve of the Hindu Mahasabha for the complete eradication of untouchability and calls upon the Hindus to offer every facility to the so-called untouchables in the enjoyment of social and religious rights including Dev-Darsan, use of wells and other public institutions of the Hindus under the Sanatan Hindu Dharma equally with other Hindus. This Conference approves of the principles of the two Bills for removal of untouchability that have been introduced into the Legislative Assembly and calls upon the Hindu members to support them."