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Topics of the Week.

The Congress Jubilee.

THE Golden Jubilee of the Indian National Congress will be celebrated throughout the country, as is but meet and proper, by all forward-looking Indians, irrespective of whether they are still in the Congress or had to leave it on account of the policy it adopted in recent years. The celebration is to be on strictly non-party lines, and there is no excuse for anyone to stand aside, particularly when the differences of opinion among the different sections of progressives are rapidly becoming thinner. The Jubilee, however, falls in a year when no political worker who is capable of a correct appreciation of the political situation will be in a mood of rejoicing, much less in a mood of exultation.

WE are glad to see that the leaders of the Congress are conscious of this. President Rajendra Prasad has forbidden illuminations as a part of the Jubilee celebration partly for the reason that such expenditure would not be justifiable at any time in a poor country like India, and particularly at a time of economic depression like the present, and partly—and we believe chiefly—because it is realised that “when repression is still rife in the country and thousands of men and women are in internment without trial” jubilation such as is indicated by illuminations would be altogether inappropriate.

REPRESSION is, however, only one aspect of the defeat which the Congress and the country as a whole have sustained at the hands of the Government on the question of reforms. The new constitution, instead of placing India near the culmination of her political progress as had been hoped, is a veritable shackle on that progress. No one who will calmly contemplate the situation can deny it for one moment. Those who pin their faith to constitutional means must recognise that the India Act is so framed that constitutionalism holds no promise for the future. Those who believe in direct action must equally recognise that this method will be unavailable hereafter, when an ostensibly Indian Government will be in power. The vested interests in Indian society—those that existed before and those that will be created anew, chiefly the Princes—entrenched securely behind the British Government will rule the country. We are caught in a vice. Never was the political situation more desperate than now.

NONE can afford, therefore, to take part in the Congress Jubilee in an exultant mood. They should rather be in a pensive mood, in a mood of self-introspection. Congressmen, ex-Congressmen and others should, without giving themselves up to pessimism or despair, take stock of the results that have flowed from the pursuit of the different methods, ruminating on the adjustments that are demanded in these methods by the new situation that confronts us—a situation to which there is no parallel—achieve a United Progressive Front and then attack the problems of the country's future progress in a chastened but undaunted spirit. Let us all use the Jubilee-celebration for once more restoring unity amongst our scattered forces, for once more setting ourselves resolutely to the task of sweeping into the discard all that has proved futile and mischievous, and for once more inspiring each other with a wise but intrepid courage to counter both the British Government and the Indian privileged classes in the interest of the Common People.

A Proselytisation Act.

THE *Indian Witness*, an organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Lucknow writes:—A member of the Legislative Council in the Central Provinces proposes to introduce a Bill for the purpose of regulating proselytisation. The proposed Bill has been published in the *Hitavada* and whether it is ever introduced into the Legislative Council or not, its proposed provisions have been made public. “Conversion” is defined as an act “of renouncing one and embracing another religion or faith.” Evidently all conversions are intended to come under the provisions of the Act.

One provision reads as follows: “Any person or society who proposes, or actually converts any other person or persons from the religion or faith to another

shall register himself or itself making a declaration to that effect." A heavy fine with the possibility of imprisonment extending to six months may result if due registration is not made.

A further provision is that reports giving details of conversions must be made to the District Magistrate, as they may be asked for either by the Magistrate himself or on application through him by any person.

Another provision is that "the person or persons to be converted shall be produced before a magistrate a week before the conversion" and the magistrate must be satisfied that the conversion is voluntary. The magistrate is to record such evidence as may be necessary in this inquiry. Again after the lapse of a week the person or persons to be converted shall appear again before the magistrate can endorse the intention first given.

A further provision is that anyone attempting to convert or converting a minor shall be punished with imprisonment that may extend to twelve months and with a fine that may extend to a thousand rupees. There are other details in the Act, but these are probably the most significant.

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A Christian Interpretation.

AFTER thus summarising the provisions of the proposed Act, our Christian contemporary proceeds to give its own interpretation of its effect. It says: "The very evident purpose in such an Act is to restrict religious freedom. By making a civil magistrate the authority who may sanction or refuse a person the right to reach his own decisions in religious matters is bringing a type of State supervision into religious matters that should be repugnant to India with its traditions of religious freedom. Since Hinduism has not ordinarily been considered a proselytising religion it will naturally be charged with seeking to restrict those faiths which do permit conversion. And Hinduism has all along prided itself upon its liberality.

"We do not believe that any such legislation will be passed by any Provincial Legislature. We doubt whether such legislation would be in keeping with the religious liberty which India at present enjoys.

"We feel, however, that the publication of such proposed legal restrictions should cause us to seek better to understand each other. We do not believe sincere-minded men and women of any religion believe that there should be legal restrictions placed upon religious beliefs. So long as no offence is given to society, there is no reason why the religious liberty enjoyed in India should not continue. And it should be clearly realized that genuine religious movements cannot be thwarted by impetuous legislation. If there are among the Hindus those of the depressed classes or others who seriously wish to change their faith, this cannot be prevented by any legislative measures. If those who favour such measures believe that difficulties can be put in the way of conversion so as to make it virtually impossible, we believe such an effort will end in failure. Persecution has never hindered religious development. The blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the Church.

"The Christian attitude towards such legislation would be that it attempts unnecessarily to interfere with the exercise of the individual's religious freedom. And we should oppose such legislation, not because it would restrict our efforts but because it would interfere with the personal privileges of the citizens of India. We do not believe such legislation would receive the whole-hearted support of a very large number even among Hindus. But communal disputes are

very often causes for expecting communal support for any and all communal efforts. It would be difficult to convince most people in India that such proposed legislation was not distinctly communal and in this lies its danger. We trust the Hindus of India will not be turned aside from their traditional support of religious freedom. And we also trust that others in India will let it be clearly understood that there will be no coercion in matters of conversion. Just what is meant by coercion is not easily understood and there is great danger at this point lest the coercion be on the other side."

* * *

Coercion or Freedom?

WE must confess that we are greatly surprised at this comment from our enlightened contemporary. The Bill probably needs certain detailed amendments. If the restrictions sought to be imposed by it are unnecessarily vexatious and unduly harsh, their rigour may be softened. But the underlying principle of the Bill no one can challenge. There are serious complaints made all over India, but particularly in certain provinces, that some of the so-called conversions are brought about by forcible means; that sometimes religious fanaticism and frenzy are the cause of such forced conversions; and at other times the dominating motive is political, seeking thereby to increase the weight of the community concerned in the legislatures and other public bodies. Whatever the grounds for these complaints, right or wrong, the complaints are rife.

* * *

THE obvious remedy for this state of things is registration of all conversions. Why should the *Indian Witness* look so suspiciously upon it? Registration of conversions is intended to serve the purpose which the appointment of a Protector of Emigrants fulfils in the case of those who wish to go to foreign countries as labourers. These labourers are often enticed away by holding out to them false allurements, and the Protector of Emigrants sees to it that the intending emigrant knows the conditions which he will confront where he wishes to go. The object is to secure that the emigration that may take place is really voluntary. Similarly, the object of registration of conversions is to ensure that the conversions are not forced, as they sometimes are.

* * *

TO say that the proposed measure will deprive people of the right of religious freedom is grossly to misrepresent its nature. It will not destroy religious freedom; it will secure it. Does the appointment of the Protector of Emigrants check voluntary emigration or promote it? If it encourages voluntary emigration why should registration of conversions stop proselytisation of the right type? The fears of the *Indian Witness* are entirely groundless. Our contemporary is confident that the measure will neither be introduced nor passed. We very much hope that it will be introduced and passed, not in the C. P. Council alone, but in all other Councils as well—with such amendments as may seem desirable.

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Calcutta Corporation Incident.

MR. A. K. FAZL-UL-HUQ, the Mayor of Calcutta, has resigned "under circumstances", as the Mayor himself says, "which every patriotic Indian will deeply deplore." A proposal sent up by 16 Muslim Councillors to the effect that 25 per cent. of the posts in the Calcutta Corporation services should be reserved for Muslims was referred to a special committee. There was, however, some trouble over the election of the committee's personnel. The proposed

set of names did not find favour with the Muslim members, who in their wrath, led by Khan Bahadur Momin, walked out. And the Mayor resigned his office.

TRY as we may, we cannot persuade ourselves that this was sufficient cause for the Mayor to resign. As the head of the Corporation he is supposed to be above considerations of communal politics and his resignation does small credit to his career as the Mayor. In justification of this inconsiderate step Mr. Huq said in an interview that he could not forget that he was an elected Councillor and when all the Muslim members had resigned, he could not but do the same. May we suggest in this connection that just as Mr. Huq was an elected Muslim Councillor, so was he an elected Mayor? Why should he have been oblivious of this obvious consideration is more than we can see. Instead of docilely following the Muslim members out of the Corporation, he might have earned the admiration of "every patriotic Indian" by showing an exemplary sense of detachment from all partisan and communal motives.

Excise in Bihar and Orissa.

THERE is nothing in the excise administration report of Bihar and Orissa for 1934-35 which will hearten up any temperance worker. As a matter of fact there is a good deal which will positively depress him; especially the fact that the province drank more of both country and foreign liquor. The rise of over a lakh of gallons or of 20 per cent. at one bound in a period of twelve months, in the consumption of country liquor is doubtless very disquieting and has apparently given cause for concern even to the Government themselves. The general tendency of all provincial governments is towards promoting increased revenue, even though such a course might involve added consumption. A reduction in the retail rates of country liquor which was carried out by the Bihar Government during the year under report exemplifies that tendency. Probably

when reducing the rates, they did not bargain for so fearful an increase in consumption. But it is reassuring that they see in the increase an evil which needs their careful attention and the restrictive action now contemplated is an increase in retail prices. May we suggest a return to the status quo ante?

THE increase in the consumption of foreign liquors too was no less alarming. Whereas in 1933-34, 12,116 gallons of spirit, 3,911 gallons of wine and 64,844 gallons of beer were consumed, the corresponding figures for the year under report were 13,837, 5,829 and 76,102 gallons respectively. India-made foreign liquor also was in demand on an enlarged scale. Its consumption was 2,828 gallons of spirit and 5,676 gallons of beer against 2,399 and 1,039 gallons respectively. Nor can these figures be taken to represent the total consumption of foreign liquor in the province, for it is stated in the report that many private persons and clubs, which are not required to take out licenses for sale of liquor to their members, habitually order a part of their requirements from other provinces. When this fact is borne in mind, the increased consumption of foreign liquor must give cause for greater concern even than that of country liquor. For while in the one case the total quantity consumed is measurable, in the other case it is beyond ascertainment.

THE writer of the report tries to explain this away by saying that the consumers are mostly Europeans, Anglo-Indians and the better off among Indians. The implication is obvious. It is that these are people whose social degradation, even if brought on by excess of drink, need not cause the Government any qualm of conscience. We are not sure that this view of the matter will commend itself to any well-wisher of the country. It is to be earnestly hoped that members of the Bihar legislature will not lose sight of this evil of fearfully growing consumption and not weary of pressing on the local Government the desirability and urgency of action designed to bring it down to the lowest possible limit.

HOARE GONE. WHAT NEXT?

SIR SAMUEL HOARE has been dropped out from the British Cabinet; but the British Government does not seem to have dropped his policy. Sir Samuel too did not like the peace proposals; he recognised, as his critics do, that they give the aggressor almost all that he could have hoped to get by aggression. But Sir Samuel felt that there was no help for it but to offer them. He was all in favour of laying an embargo upon the export of oil to Italy, and such an embargo would considerably weaken Mussolini, if not stop him altogether. But the cardinal principle of the British Government's policy is not to take isolated action, and collective action in an oil ban is impossible as France will not join in it. For, although M. Laval had declared himself to be in favour of putting a ban on oil exports to Italy, his opinion changed since it became known that Italy would treat the imposition of this sanction as an act of war. The British Government itself never contemplated the use of military sanctions, and if economic sanctions of the more drastic kind will lead to war—war in which France will

not take part and of which the brunt will have to borne by England—the British Government must abstain from these economic sanctions too. The only practicable course for England thus is to adopt conciliatory methods in favour of Abyssinia and to try to reach as favourable a settlement for her as may be possible in the circumstances. It is true that the actual settlement proposed is grossly unjust to Abyssinia, but it is only that kind of settlement that has any chance with Mussolini when it is once admitted that collective resistance of an effective type cannot be offered.

This is water-tight logic on the part of Sir Samuel Hoare, and Mr. Baldwin does not repudiate it at all. One must not therefore delude oneself into the belief that, with Sir Samuel gone, Mr. Baldwin will adopt a more vigorous League policy. There is no reason, however, why he should not. So far as stopping the supplies of oil is concerned, M. Laval's consent is immaterial. France is not an oil exporting country and whether his Government supports the ban or opposes it, it will not affect the ultimate issue one

whit. The League countries that matter in this respect are Russia, Rumania and Great Britain. Russia is agreeable to the oil embargo. Rumania's exports are only one-third or one-fourth of British exports; and Great Britain controls the oil of Iraq, Persia and Trinidad. In these circumstances there is no reason for England to run away from this sanction because France chooses to run away. The attitude of the United States is friendly, if negative. Though it has decided to remain neutral in this conflict, prohibiting export of the instruments of war to both parties to the conflict, the prohibition works in effect against Italy, and it is to be noted that the list of these prohibited instruments that was drawn up by President Roosevelt was bodily accepted by the Co-ordinating Committee of the League. In regard to oil, Mr. Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior and Federal Oil Administrator, informed the industry that it "ought to comply in the letter and in the spirit with the U. S. Government's efforts to prevent the furnishing of war materials to either of the belligerents." This happened on 21st November, but when the Government saw that in the League Powers themselves there was great lukewarmness about the use of this sanction it drew back, and on 3rd December Mr. Ickes explained that his former declaration referred to munitions and not to other materials indirectly useful for war purposes. But there is no question that the U. S. Government will fully co-operate with the League countries by using all the pressure it can upon the American shippers not to export oil if the League countries decide upon putting the oil embargo into effect, and in any case in keeping the exports of oil down to the normal level of the past few years, 20 per cent. of oil exported to Italy being normally supplied by the U. S. From all this it will appear that the key-position in respect to the oil embargo is held by Great Britain, and there is no reason why she should not press for the application of this most powerful sanction, whatever the attitude of France may be.

But, it is urged, the application of this sanction will immediately provoke Italy into war, and Great Britain cannot certainly think of conducting war with Italy single-handed. In the first place, it is erroneous to think that the oil embargo means war. Mad as Mussolini is, he is not that mad. On this point the *Economist's* opinion may be taken into consideration. "The oil embargo is one", it says, "against which Signor Mussolini can take very little, if any, effective military action." But, assuming for argument's sake, that he meets the oil ban with war, is there any reason for Great Britain to be apprehensive? Sir Samuel Hoare himself had no fear about that. If she decided to apply military sanctions she could do so effectively without help from other countries, but she does not want to take any action except in co-operation with them. For one country to go to war by itself with another country would be, Sir Samuel says, a private war, which Great Britain has undertaken not to enter upon. Such isolated action would be

opposed to the principle of collective security on which the whole League structure is based. This is mere quibbling. Great Britain must not go to war with Italy for her own purposes. But if she goes to war, not in her interest, but in obedience to the call of the League for preserving the territorial integrity of a threatened country her action would be not only justifiable but highly commendable. Indeed under the League Covenant, every Member State is obligated to do whatever it can to check the aggression upon another Member State, and it is not absolved from its obligation because other States do not fulfil their part of the duty. If Great Britain stands alone in enforcing military sanctions against Italy so much more glory to her. The idea that because France will not co-operate with England in doing what both are required to do under the Covenant England too may remain inactive is wholly wrong. But this idea governed Sir Samuel Hoare's policy, and Mr. Baldwin is not going to abandon it. France's record in this matter is extremely black. Mr. Lloyd George told the House of Commons on 23rd October that even when the League countries had decided upon the stoppage of the export of arms and war materials both to Abyssinia and Italy, France had been supplying Italy with huge quantities of prohibited goods. Between January and September of this year she sent to Italy 478 tons of the products of the distillation of coal, corresponding to what is known as T. N. T. "It is the material," Mr. George said, "for high explosives. In 1934 there were no exports of that kind to Italy from France, but 478 tons, not of explosive shells, but of explosives, were sent between January and September, three months after the embargo, from France for bombs and shells. During the same period, 697 tons of glycerine was sent; that is for the great guns—cordite. Anybody knows how important that is as a war material." England can never receive co-operation in imposing sanctions from a country which is guilty of such doings. It is no sort of justification, therefore, for her to refuse to put even military sanctions into force if she can do so because France will not co-operate with her.

The Hoare-Laval peace proposals are killed, but this does not mean that the British Government will put any more energy into its League policy. So far as Abyssinia is concerned, the situation will remain much the same as before. A "peaceful and honourable settlement" will not be attempted for some time longer, but the sanctions will not be stiffened either. Italy and Abyssinia will be left to fight it out between themselves. Collective security has thus vanished in any case. One good feature of the military situation is that Italy is not having all her own way in the war. She is meeting with stern resistance on the part of Abyssinia, and Italy's hope of conquering the country within the next three or four months before the rains set in again cannot be realised. After some more fighting peace terms will once more be in the air and we are afraid they will differ from the Hoare-Laval proposals, so unceremoniously turned down, only in detail. They will again be based, we fear, on the 1906 treaty—a treaty which should have been

declared null and void as being inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the League Covenant. The policy of carving up Abyssinia in economic zones reserved for different European countries will be revived, and that is little short of political dismemberment. Sir Samuel Hoare said that France in January had agreed to disinterest herself economically in Abyssinia. Mr. Lloyd George brought out the real implications of this. "It was more or less," he said, "like the sort of issue which arose between ourselves and France in Egypt.... The Entente between France and Britain was based upon our disinteresting ourselves in Morocco and giving France a free hand, France on the other hand withdrawing her claims in Egypt." Similarly, Mr. George pointed out, France's disinteresting herself in Abyssinia "was not a mere question of shares in a railway in Eritrea. That was a small matter. But France is able practically to leave her Italian frontier unprotected. I am told that France values that concession as 18 divisions—half the whole demand of Hitler for the German army. That is a tremendous concession. Where there is an agreement which has these tremendous results, where the concessions are of very great magnitude, and where France in return says, 'We disinterest ourselves in Abyssinia economically,' it means something. There was another circumstance to show that it meant a little more than the right to concessions in Abyssinia to work minerals or to sink oil wells there. Signor Mussolini was at that time sending troops there. He was building up an army at the beginning of that time. The moment the agreement was made he mobilised two divisions of regular troops. He organised 70,000 Black Shirts soon after this.... Any Foreign Minister, hearing a phrase of that kind ('France disinteresting herself economically in Abyssinia') immediately after the sending of troops there, would know at once what it meant. Abyssinia knew, and appealed to the League."

But even if reserving special economic zones for different countries or for one country has no political significance, one can easily see how very much worse this is than a mandate. This is brought out very clearly in the reply of the Ethiopian Government to the peace proposals. "The mandatory system," it is said in this reply, "always safeguards the rights of the native population, seeking to promote and encourage its economic progress. It includes as a fundamental principle equality of treatment of nationals of all Member States of the League. The project consecrating in favour of Italy an exclusivity of future economic initiative would assure the impossibility of competition in the development of a region by Italy alone for its own profit." The proposals thus "tend to institute in Ethiopia a system worse than a mandate." Nor indeed could Abyssinia be handed over, under the League principles, to Italy as a mandate. In the selection of the mandatory country care has to be taken to see that it is a country which the country to be put under a mandate has no cause to fear. You cannot appoint the declared enemy of a person his guardian or trustee. This is obvious. Lord

Lugard recently discussed in the *Times* the question of placing Abyssinia under a mandate. He said the League must first annex Ethiopia as international territory before it appoints a mandatory, which of course the League cannot do. If even a League mandate is not possible, how is an Italian mandate at all possible? Lord Lugard then recommended the appointment of a temporary Commission for the purpose of effecting reforms in Abyssinia, and he suggested—and this is the central point—that the Commission should "preferably be controlled by Holland, who has great colonial experience, assisted perhaps by Sweden, Denmark and Norway." Why were these countries suggested? Lord Lugard himself supplies the answer: "None of the these countries can be suspected of motives of self-interest." Even if a temporary Commission is to be appointed, we have rigorously to exclude from it representatives of countries which can be suspected of motives of self-interest. Can Italy then be appointed as a mandatory for Abyssinia? Certainly not, if the League principles are at all to be respected. But the Hoare-Laval proposals put Italy in absolute control, without the supervision of the League. The question has only to be put in this way in order that the enormity of the injustice involved in it may be fully realised.

Even if nothing else comes from the summary rejection of the Hoare-Laval proposals, even if it does not lead to strong action on the part of the countries which profess to have underwritten the sanctions policy, it at least has exposed the fraud of "an honourable settlement," and that is a distinct gain. If the League cannot help Abyssinia let it say so and keep quiet, but let it not under a false guise make her a slave of Italy.

HINDUISM ON TRIAL.

DR. AMBEDKAR'S determination to leave the Hindu fold is nothing but an ultimatum to the Hindu community to set its house in order. The Depressed Classes Conference held at Yeola, where as its president Dr. Ambedkar declared his intention, endorsed it in the form of a resolution and several meetings of the so-called untouchables have subsequently supported that resolution. At some of these meetings it was made clear beyond doubt that the self-respecting section of the untouchables are sincerely disgusted with the Hindu orthodoxy which believes in untouchability as an essential part of Hinduism and which considers social inequality as the corner-stone of its structure. This disgust was expressed by breaking publicly idols of Hindu gods and goddesses whom the depressed classes have been till recently worshipping and by burning books held to be sacred by the Hindus. This kind of demonstration may be considered by some as unnecessarily violent, but it must be remembered that it is not an easy thing for any people to hold such demonstrations without steeling their hearts against sentiments cherished for generations. Only a grim resolve can lead to such demonstrative actions. The outrageous conduct of caste Hindus towards the helpless

untouchables in a village in Nasik district which followed on the heels of the Kavitha incidents has added fuel to the fire.

It would be suicidal on the part of the leaders of the Hindu community to treat Dr. Ambedkar's declaration as an empty threat. Apart from his masterful personality and the immense influence he wields over the untouchable masses, not only in Maharashtra but also in other provinces, his declaration is but the reflection of the awakened mind of the down-trodden castes. An Ambedkar was bound to arise in this country. If those caste Hindus who resent his words and actions and want to preach the gospel of patience would reflect for a moment and honestly ask themselves how few of them would be proud of being Hindus in a society in which they were treated like dogs and pigs, they would find nothing unnatural or outrageous in Dr. Ambedkar's and his followers' attitude. It is argued by some that religion is not a thing which should be bartered and that its value, which is spiritual, should not be measured by a material standard. But a man who wants spiritual salvation may attain it through any religion or, for the matter of that, without any religious label, for spiritual salvation does not depend upon any particular dogma. Can it be reasonably contended that a section of mankind must submit to social degradation if they want to attain to spiritual salvation? The Hindu society is based on the socio-economic system of caste; there are degrees of social degradation and certain castes are condemned to the worst degradation and extreme humiliation. Spiritual salvation is a matter of speculation. There may be different conceptions about it, and there may be sceptics who will confess their ignorance of what those words mean. Such is not the case with the social degradation and humiliation which are involved in the caste system, especially those which the depressed classes have to suffer. It is a matter of every day experience. The present-day Hinduism asks the so-called untouchables to bear the indignities to which they are subjected in society in a philosophical spirit, to behave like good boys in the position to which they are relegated, and promises that if they follow this advice they will get their reward in heaven or in their next birth. Can we blame the matter-of-fact fellows among them who decline to accept this promise at its face value and treat it as a pious fraud?

Ambedkar or no Ambedkar, the revolt of the depressed classes against Hinduism—the Hinduism which professes to be inseparable from the steel frame of caste gradation—is bound to gather strength as time passes. Dr. Ambedkar is only a spokesman, an accredited spokesman, of that movement. The caste Hindus should consider it their good fortune that there is a leader of real influence through whom they can negotiate with the depressed classes. Some caste Hindu writers and speakers think that they need not attach much importance to Dr. Ambedkar's threat since the majority of the depressed classes would not follow him if he goes out of the Hindu fold. Granted that there is some truth in this belief, would it be

safe to sleep over the question? It would not be just to shelve the problem of untouchability simply because those who are branded with that stigma are for the most part too poor, ignorant and superstitious to dare to leave the religion of their forefathers, but it would not be safe either. The support Dr. Ambedkar is receiving from the various places and mass meetings clearly shows that a large number will follow him in whatever step he may take, and once the exodus begins nothing but a thorough overhaul of the Hindu social system will stop it. Why not then stop it just now? The tactics which some of the caste Hindu leaders are following call for a word of warning. The game of creating and fostering divisions among the depressed classes is a dangerous one. The futility of this kind of game was amply demonstrated before the Poona Pact. The Raja-Munje Pact which was meant as a measure to checkmate Dr. Ambedkar proved a worthless scrap of paper. The policy of pitting a Raja or a Rajbhoj or some such leader against an Ambedkar is but an imitation of the divide-and-rule policy of the imperialists, and it will never be paying in the long run. On the other hand it may accelerate the crisis and harden the hearts of men belonging to the militantly self-respecting section of the depressed classes.

It is time that the leaders of the Hindu society decided once for all not only that the caste system is not an essential part of Hinduism but opposed to its highest tenets, howsoever hoary the system may be. The caste system has been the weakest point of Hinduism. The sublime philosophy of the Hindus, and their achievements in art, literature and science—their progress in culture in general—have not been able to compensate for the mischief wrought by the caste system, which has been a veritable blight on the solidarity of the Hindu community. This iniquitous system has raised inequality and injustice to the level of sanctity and has been responsible for a good deal of valuable human material being thrown on the scrap-heap. Not infrequently has it asked unfit persons to discharge duties of the highest order. Untouchability and unapproachability are but an extension of this vicious system. The touch-me-not-ism of the Hindu orthodoxy assumes the most aggressive form with regard to the so-called lowest castes which also in their turn show the same spirit towards one another. Those who twit the so-called untouchables with observing caste distinctions amongst themselves conveniently forget the fact that the spirit of caste has percolated to the lowest strata from the highest. It is for the higher castes to set the right example. The abolition of the caste system is not only a communal but also a national problem in that the spirit pervading the majority community has affected other communities to a more or less extent. It is the greatest stumbling block in the country's progress in the direction of a strong, virile and united nationhood.

The annual session of the Hindu Maha Sabha which is to be held in Poona this week is confronted with a crucial problem. It must try to solve this problem honestly and boldly. It must base its

appeal for the abolition of untouchability, not on communal grounds, *vis-a-vis* the Muslim or any other community, but on higher grounds such as those of justice, equality and humanity. The Maha Sabha may not be supported in this attempt by the orthodox section; its efforts may be stoutly and vehemently opposed by that section. But the Maha Sabha must make the right choice without hesitation. Already the Hindu Maha Sabha does not com-

mand the allegiance of the orthodox party. It has therefore, little to lose by following the course dictated by conscience, common sense and emergency. A pious resolution disapproving of untouchability and the caste system will avail but little. Only a vigorous country-wide campaign can be expected to free the Hindu society from the grip of these ancient monsters.

A REFORMER.

A CLOSED CONSTITUTION.

ALL constitutions provide for future amendment therein, and the attempt of their framers should be to make them neither too easy nor too difficult to amend. It is not easy to strike a balance between too great a flexibility and too great a rigidity, but it is only that constitution that works successfully and without stress which takes a proper middle course between rigidity and too facile amendment. If a constitution errs on the latter side it fails to safeguard the liberties of the people; if on the former it invites revolution.

Our Indian constitution is not too rigid; it is wholly unamendable—by constitutional means. The British Government's part in making the constitution unalterable is universally recognised in India. No change of any consequence can come about unless the British Government desires it and the British Parliament approves of it. But it is not yet sufficiently realised—we have not yet seen a clear statement on this subject from any leading politician excepting Mr. Kunzru—that the British Government and the British Parliament too have not the last word on the subject. They have to get the assent (on all matters excepting purely provincial ones) of the rulers of all the federating States. If the States object—or even if any one of these States objects—to an amendment adopted by the British Parliament, then the amendment cannot take effect. We have been calling attention to this vital defect in the new constitution, but ours of course is a voice in the wilderness. Now, however, that no less an authority on constitutional law than Prof. Berrisdale Keith has expressed the same view we hope it will receive some attention.

Prof. Keith, in the *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law* for November, expresses this opinion. Referring, first, to the voluntary character of federation for the rulers of States, he proceeds:

"But federation once accepted binds the State; the right of secession is nowhere granted or implied. In s. 45 of the Act, however, an important change is made to meet the legitimate criticism that, as the Bill first stood, on the breakdown of the federation, the Governor-General might indefinitely rule without restraint other than that of the Secretary of State. The period is now reduced to three years; thereafter government must be carried on under the terms of the Act subject to such amendments as Parliament may make. But such amendments must be restricted within the limits defined by schedule 2 of the Act if they are not to affect the accession of the States. This touches a very delicate point, which may give

rise to serious trouble later. Each ruler must accept, if he accedes to the federation, the right of Parliament to amend certain provisions of the Act without prejudice to the validity of his accession. What is the position if Parliament goes further? Can the State claim a declaration from the Federal Court that it is no longer bound by the federation? The list of matters which may not be altered without affecting the accession of the States contains some items of great importance. Thus, Parliament cannot deprive the Governor-General of control of defence and external affairs or take away his special responsibilities for tranquillity and financial stability, without, it seems, affecting the adhesion of the States. Moreover, can a State tacitly acquiesce in change, and later at pleasure raise the objection that it is no longer bound? The net result is to create a federation in which full responsible government cannot be introduced by Parliament without affecting the adhesion of the States."

Mark Prof. Keith's words: "The net result is to create a federation in which full responsible government cannot be introduced by Parliament without affecting the adhesion of the States." If it be true, as he says, that "the right of secession is nowhere granted or implied," it means that no change in the federal part of the new constitution can be made which will be objectionable to *any* State, giving it ground to contend that its adhesion to federation is no longer valid. Thus all the States collectively and every single State individually is given the power to veto constitutional amendments that the British Government itself may wish to make. We are not so simple as to believe that the British Government will be bursting with the desire to make any radical changes, e. g., to transfer to popular control the departments of defence and foreign affairs, which are now reserved. Lord Zetland in his Cust lecture at the University College, Nottingham, was brutally frank about it. He said: "For a period which the boldest prophet would shrink from naming the defence of the country and the conduct of its foreign affairs will be administered by the Viceroy and will be beyond the control of the federal legislature. They will continue, that is to say, to be a responsibility of the Imperial Parliament." But even if the Government should agree to throw the responsibility for administering these reserved subjects on to the shoulders of Indian ministers, it would find itself unable to introduce the reform except with the consent of all the Princes. The dissenting voice of even one Prince who is in the federation will block the reform, though every other Prince and the British Parliament may be favourably disposed. Our politicians lash themselves into great fury because the British

Government does not make mention of Dominion Status as the goal of Indian political development in the body of the Act. In view of the veto power which is conferred upon the Princes and to which objection is not taken, all this fury is wasted. Even if Dominion Status were mentioned in capital letters in the Act it would have been wholly futile unless the Princes' veto was simultaneously removed and easy amendment procedure provided.

There is nothing in what we have said above which is new; we have said it a score of times before. But what is new is the weighty support which our contentions have received from such an acknowledged authority on constitutional matters as Prof. Keith. Our politicians condemn the Hoare constitution in the best declamatory style; but they *will* not condemn it for what is easily its worst defect. They may learn a little from Prof. Keith! Since the only thing that we for our part can now usefully do is to quote authorities which Indian politicians cannot ignore, we give below a fairly exhaustive statement of the procedure for constitutional amendment which various countries in Europe have adopted. It is taken from the speech which Mr. James G. Douglas made in the Senate of the Irish Free State on 16th May last year. The Irish constitution provides that, after the expiration of the period of eight years from the date of the coming into operation of the constitution, any amendments proposed must be submitted to a referendum of the people, and shall not be passed unless a majority of the voters on the register record their votes, and either a majority of the voters on the register or two-thirds of the votes recorded are in favour of the amendment. Within the period of eight years amendments of the constitution may be made by ordinary legislation. This period was later extended by the Irish Parliament to sixteen years, and Mr. Douglas brought in a bill re-introducing the referendum in regard to constitutional amendments for the remaining period within the sixteen years mentioned. He was a member of the Constitution Drafting Committee and was concerned to show that vital amendments of the constitution must be placed on a different footing from ordinary laws, and must be protected from the evil of too facile amendment. In urging his point of view he observed :

" I do not know of any country except *England* where constitutional changes can be made as easily as ordinary legislation. *England* is not a proper comparison as it has no written constitution, and it maintains a hereditary second chamber which provides a strong conservative block against constitutional change. In deference to the Government, I will begin with those countries which have only one House of Parliament. The most important of these is *Spain*, which established a single chamber Parliament after the Revolution. Considerable care was taken to prevent hasty constitutional change—the principal provision being that the Cortes is automatically dissolved if it passes an amendment to the constitution, which it cannot do without a two-thirds majority, and the amendment does not become law unless passed by the newly elected Cortes, which acts as a Constituent Assembly.

In *Finland*—another single-chamber Parliament—one-third of the Chamber can cause legislative

proposals to be deferred until after the next elections, and even then certain fixed majorities are necessary before constitutional amendments can become law. In *Estonia*, one-third of the Chamber can submit any law, constitutional or otherwise, to a referendum and in *Lithuania*, a three-fifths majority is required for constitutional amendments which are then submitted to a referendum if demanded by the President. *Bulgaria* does not permit the ordinary Parliament to alter the constitution. When revision of the constitution is proposed, a special National Assembly is elected, twice the size of the ordinary Parliament. Even in *Turkey*, which is very nearly a dictatorship, and which has only one chamber, two-thirds of the Assembly must vote for an amendment to the constitution before it can become law. If we turn to the bicameral States of Europe, we find that same desire to prevent alterations in the constitution without giving the people a chance of expressing their opinion. It is not perhaps surprising to find that in *Switzerland* a referendum on all constitutional amendments is obligatory, but it is particularly interesting to find that it is also obligatory in *Austria*, in *Denmark* and in *Australia*. In *Australia* a majority of the States as well as a majority of the whole electorate must agree, and in *Denmark* if both Houses agree to a constitutional amendment, they are both dissolved, and if the new Parliament passes the measure, it is then submitted to a referendum.

In *Portugal*, the constitution may be revised every ten years by a special Constituent Assembly. If two-thirds of the Assembly agree, it may be revised five years after the previous revision. In *Norway*, a vote of two-thirds of the Storting is required, and amendments must be introduced during the first or second year after an election. They are not, however, finally passed until after another election has taken place. In *Belgium*, the passing of a constitutional amendment causes the dissolution of both Houses, and a two-thirds majority in both the newly-elected chambers is necessary before it can become law. The position in *Holland* is, I believe, identical with *Belgium*. In *Rumania*, the position is very similar. Both Houses meet together and a two-thirds majority is required. They are then both dissolved and a two-thirds vote is necessary in the new-elected chambers. In *Poland* an amendment to the constitution can be passed if supported by a two-thirds majority in both Houses, but there is no provision for a referendum.

In *France*, both Houses meet together to consider constitutional changes, and an actual majority of the total membership of both Houses is required. I have not been able to ascertain the exact position in *Greece*, but I know that all legislation is examined by Commissions before being discussed by Parliament, which prevents hasty action. The present position in *Italy*, *Germany* and *Soviet Russia* is not clear, but I think we may safely assume that there is no referendum in any of these countries. It may be noted, however, that the Weimar Constitution in *Germany*, which has been superseded, though not finally repealed, provided for a two-thirds majority in both Houses as well as for a possible referendum to the people."

The above extract is from the speech of one whose object was to bring home the evil of inserting fundamental changes in the constitution by a bare majority vote in the legislature, as will be the case in *Ireland* from now till 1939. Constitutional amendments must always be made more difficult than ordinary legislation, and in some countries they are made very difficult indeed, e. g., by the requirement

that all constitutional amendments must be submitted to the people. But, however difficult they may be, they are not rendered impossible, as they would be under the new constitution in this country. In no other country are there so many as some 600 constituent members of a federal union, and in no federation is the consent of every constituent member required for the introduction of an amendment in the constitution. To require, as our constitution does, that every one of the 600 odd units of the federation shall agree to a constitutional amendment is to make the constitution immutable. As the *Round Table* for this month remarks, "It is in the nature of federations that the constituent units demand a precise legal formulation of their rights and are jealous of any encroachments thereon. . . . Hence it is in the nature of federations to be inflexible, to be tardy of growth to match the development of facts and opinions. The task, therefore, is to find some means of bending federal constitutions and allowing them to grow to meet changing circumstances." It thus becomes the especial duty of the framers of federal constitutions so to frame them as to admit of a reasonable scope for future growth by an easy amendment procedure. And in addition the courts often come to the rescue where the letter of the law seems to forbid change, in spite of the facility afforded for constitutional changes. The *Round Table* quotes a passage from a Privy Council decision in regard to Canada, in which Lord Sankey said: "While the courts should be zealous in upholding the charter of the provinces as enacted in s. 92 (of the British North America Act), it must no less be borne in mind that the real object of the Act was to give the central government those high functions and almost sovereign powers by which uniformity of legislation might be secured on all questions which were of common concern to all the provinces as a constituent whole," and then proceeds to say very truly: "The law must conform to the facts, or so much worse for the law," for "federation is a political expedient, not a moral principle." The Canadian constitution "contains several clauses that permit a measure of flexibility," and the courts often interpret the constitution beyond its plain meaning and facilitate growth. Even so in Canada tremendous difficulties are experienced because, with all these safeguards, the constitution still remains too rigid. And in Canada the particularism of only nine provinces has to be dealt with. If in India our advance to responsible government is placed at the mercy of every one of the 600 autocratic Princes who may be in the federation, will that advance ever become possible—even if Dominion Status were to be repeated ten times in every section of the Act? Our constitution is not open to change at all; it is sealed against all change — if constitutional means alone are to be used.

Reviews.

INDIAN TRADE UNIONS.

TRADE UNIONISM AND LABOUR DISPUTES IN INDIA. By AHMAD MUKHTAR. (Longmans, Bombay.) 1935. 22cm. 251p. Rs. 6.

THERE have been many books written about Trade Unionism and Labour Disputes in other countries but very few about India.

This book is "an attempt at presenting the recent development, present position and main problems with reference to trade unionism and labour disputes in this country". The author claims his "association with the conditions of Indian labour dates back to the last fifteen years."

In the first chapter, a brief historical survey of conflicts between Labour and Capital since 1884 among various classes of workers in different provinces of the country has been made. Plantation workers', textile workers' and railway workers' disputes in recent years have been specially dealt with. In spite of good material available in the Evidence Volumes of the Whitley Commission, the author has not made an adequate attempt to describe the conditions in the railways and other transport undertakings; the activities of the trade unions of Government workers have also been ignored. Nor is any space devoted to describe the situation in the Indian Native States. The author would have done well to refer to the History of various Trade Unions prepared by Mr. R. R. Bakhale.

The second chapter on "The Law and the Right to Combine" is a summary of Government reports on the working of the Trade Union Act. No criticism worth the name has been made of the vexatious rules issued by Local Governments such as those which in effect discourage amalgamation of registered unions catering for workers spread over a wide area. The defects of the Indian Trade Unions Act have not been dealt with. In this chapter, there is interesting information about the number of workers in the registered trade unions in different provinces, prepared from the Annual Reports of the Registrars.

The third chapter is on the investigation and settlement of labour disputes and a summary of the provisions of the Act is given, but there is no criticism of it. The Act has failed to deal with the most important disputes. It has been used to restrict the right to strike in the public utility services and the Government have in most cases refused to use the machinery of the Act to settle trade disputes in spite of frequent applications. There is no mention about the unsatisfactory regulations framed under the Act for entertaining applications. The recommendations of the Railway Court of Inquiry on the Act have not been dealt with. The non-recognition of trade unions as such in the Act when dealing with trade disputes has not received any attention.

The fourth chapter is specially devoted to the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association.

The fifth chapter on Trade Union Co-ordination deals with the history of the All-India Trade Union Congress and Nagpur split. There is no reference to the great part played by the All-India Railwaymen's Federation in co-ordinating the activities of nearly 50,000 railwaymen throughout India and Burma. The case of all-India organisations of Postal, R. M. S. and Telegraph workers is conspicuous by absence.

The last chapter entitled "Miscellaneous Remarks" contains noteworthy observations on

mediation and conciliation in industrial disputes. The author concludes after perusal of the official report that the Bombay Trade Disputes Conciliation Act "has been very serviceable to the labour population in Bombay," though this will be questioned by all trade unions. The criticism of organised labour against the Act has not been referred to.

The text of the Indian Trade Unions Act, Trade Disputes Act and Bombay Trade Disputes Conciliation Act is published in the appendices.

From a perusal of the book, it would seem that the author has based his material on the back volumes of the Bombay Government's *Labour Gazette* and blue books. The view-point of organised labour, the handicaps imposed in organising trade unions both by the employer and the Government, and the recent attempts on the part of communal leaders to introduce communalism among trade unions have not been satisfactorily considered.

To those who are completely ignorant of Indian conditions, the book contains useful and interesting information from official sources.

V. V. GIRI.

MR. NATARAJAN AS AN AUTHOR.

OUR TRIP TO AMERICA. By K. NATARAJAN. (The Author, Kamakshi House, Bandra, Bombay.) 1935. 20cm. 150p. Rs. 3.

THE book contains a series of articles published in the first instance in the pages of the *Indian Social Reformer*. While reprinting the articles in book form, a few changes were made in the original. Mr. Natarajan proceeded to the U. S. A. on an invitation received from the Chicago University to deliver a series of lectures known as Haskell lectures; and he was accompanied on this tour by his daughter Kamakoti, who, it seems from the accounts given in the book, made quite a favourable impression on the American and the Continental people. Miss Kamakoti deserves to be congratulated on so successfully playing the role of an Indian lady.

The book has in all 150 pages, containing 16 chapters. A rough calculation shows that nine chapters are devoted to descriptions of city life in some cities of Europe and America. Two contain information regarding the conveniences and discomforts and some observations in the course of journeys from and to India. Two others discuss some social trends of the peoples of the Eastern and the Western hemispheres, as also some notes on the lectures delivered in Chicago; and the rest of the chapters tell us about some interesting acquaintances formed by the author during his sojourn in America.

For those who have visited the countries of Europe and America the book helps in recalling old memories and at once establishes a contact which might have been lost through the passing of years. For others, however, the information contained in the book is not sufficient to form a true picture of the things the author describes. This is because of the smallness of the space devoted to such descriptions. A person who has never been abroad wishing to read this book will conjure up pictures of a short mental trip to U. S. A. when reading the book. He may however remain partly unsatisfied. It would have been better if Mr. Natarajan had devoted a few more pages to the description of the various preparations one has to make while travelling to far off countries, and also to such matters as the comforts and discomforts of hotel life in foreign cities.

Then again the discussions on the social and religious matters—comparisons between the peoples of the East and West; their present social trends;

etc.—are not discussed at length. Of course no one can demand of any writer that he should devote so many pages to such and such a subject, but coming from such a great social reformer and a mature thinker as Natarajan, one expects that the book should contain some detailed discussions on matters connected with social upheavals and trends.

One would not venture to remark on such deficiencies in the case of any other writer, but as Mr. Natarajan is a writer of very long standing, a reformer, and a journalist, we naturally expect greater things from him. I may be mistaken, however, or rather too hasty in making these remarks. Perhaps a bigger volume containing more substantial material is in the making, and as a prelude to it this small volume is very nice indeed.

And now as regards the material itself which is presented to the reader. The style of writing needs no comment. It is quite breezy and entertaining, and keeps the reader deeply interested till he has finished reading the whole book; only on finishing it one feels as if one wants a little more. That craving in itself speaks so much for the kind of work placed before the reader by the author. Though incomplete, I would strongly recommend it to the reader of every class.

L. V. GOGATE.

SHORT NOTICE.

RESEARCH IN SUGAR PROBLEMS AND UTILISATION OF BY-PRODUCTS. THE INDIAN SUGAR INDUSTRY AND PROBLEMS OF TRANSPORT. By M. P. GANDHI. (The Author, 135, Canning Street, Calcutta.) 1935. 20cm. 40, 13pp.

THE sugar industry of India has of recent years made striking progress. But this rapid achievement, it cannot be ignored, is the result of the impetus given to the industry by the heavy dose of protection rather than a sequel to any improvement in the internal organisation of the industry or to any reductions in costs either by agricultural or technological improvements. The importance of research in sugar problems, considering the strong Javanese competition, needs no further emphasis. Mr. Gandhi's two pamphlets may therefore be considered as most opportune publications. In one he gives a tentative programme of work that can be undertaken by the Research Institute. He relies, however, in this respect too much on Government initiative and expects them to spend out of the proceeds of the excise duties recently imposed about 37 lakhs annually, "which can be made easily available for research work". And what does he expect the manufacturers to do? Their active co-operation is to be availed of with a view that research should be more practical and "non-officials should be allowed to have a large control over the general policy of any institute of research." It is doubtful how far this sort of proposal would be acceptable. It should be noted that Government are already spending ten lakhs annually on such work. The utilisation of molasses and bagasse is the second problem. Mr. Gandhi lays great stress on the production of power-alcohol, denatured spirit &c. as competitive fuel products with petrol whose consumption is fast increasing and refers to measures adopted in other countries. He thinks that the interests of the Government would not suffer in any way. Bagasse can be used for the manufacture of packing paper, fibre boards &c. But the work should be done initially by experimental factories. The third important problem that forms the subject matter of the second

pamphlet is cost of transport. He pleads herein for a thorough revision of the rates policy with a view to provide distribution from up-country manufacturing centres to ports and inland consuming areas and not *vice versa*, as it is to-day. He has his own concrete suggestions to make and already some railways have taken a welcome move to reduce their freight charges. We believe that Mr. Gandhi sums up nicely the case for research and other problems on behalf of the manufacturing interests with a view that "Government should spend more liberally." We wish the author would give us further a bare statement of the work already done independently by the industrialists to convince the public that the sacrifices involved in protective tariffs are well worth making for the development of this industry. The interests of cane-growers and consumers should in no way be ignored.

S. G. PURANIK.

Miscellaneous.

TRIBUTES TO MR. DEVADHAR.

Numerous messages condoling and sympathising with the Servants of India Society in its grief are being received at its head-quarters in Poona. The following is a selection from them:—

Babu Subhas Chandra Bose writes from Vienna: I was exceedingly grieved to read in the papers of the sad and unexpected death of your President, Mr. Devadhar. I never had the privilege of knowing him personally though I knew from various sources of his remarkable and unostentatious work for his country for a whole life. People of this type are rare in every country including ours. I cannot let this occasion pass without placing on record my humble tribute to that great personality. His death has meant an irreparable loss, not only to your Society, but to the whole country as well. It is on such unostentatious but sound work that real nation-building can take place. There is no one in India today who does not mourn the irreparable loss.

The Sri-Dharma, Madras, writes: The death of Mr. Devadhar, the Hon. Organising Secretary of the Poona Seva Sadan, the President and one of the founders of the Servants of India Society and the author and the organiser of many other social activities for the amelioration and betterment of the lot of women and of the masses, has cast a gloom over the country. To many of us who have known him personally and who have been benefitted by our association with him, his death is a personal calamity and an irreparable loss.

He was a friend and colleague of the famous Gopal Krishna Gokhale and one of the founders and the first member of the Servants of India Society. While Mr. Tilak and Gokhale gave their thoughts and time to politics, Mr. Devadhar directed his intellect and energy to the service of the suffering women and the poor in his country. He was made of a different mould. He believed, rather he was convinced, that a mere political programme would not secure freedom for his country and social reform and social reconstruction should form an essential part of all efforts to achieve political emancipation for the country. Mr. Devadhar was a far-sighted statesman and seer in that respect as subsequent events in the country have amply justified his decision and to-day we find the Congress, the foremost political organisation, under the wise leadership and guidance of the greatest son of India, Mahatma Gandhi, has adopted the programme of village reconstruction and the revival of

village industries and the removal of untouchability. Mr. Devadhar wisely applied himself to the noble and selfless task of educating and enlightening the women, the masses and the so-called untouchables. He was particularly tender and sympathetic to all women irrespective of castes and creeds. His heart having been touched by the sorrows and by the miserable lot of the widows and other destitute women in the country, he chose to become a co-worker and colleague of Mrs. Ranade who founded the Poona Seva Sadan Society to find consolation and peace after the loss of her teacher and husband, Hon. Justice Ranade, the well-known Maharashtra reformer. Even though the good lady conceived the idea and founded the Society, it was left to the indefatigable worker and the devoted servant of humanity, Mr. Devadhar, to develop the institution and to fulfil all her objects.

The Poona Seva Sadan harbours nearly 2,000 women of all castes and creeds including untouchables, and under its auspices are run centres and branches all over the Bombay Presidency. The Madras Seva Sadan which derives its name from the parent Society is indebted to Mr. Devadhar for even its very existence. At a time when none in Madras came forward to manage the institution he was invited by the Women's Indian Association to come over and convert it into a branch of the Poona Seva Sadan. He did come here with his noble band of women workers, stayed a few months, interviewed the prominent men and women, published pamphlets and thus secured the sympathy of the local people for moral and material support for the institution. The Poona Seva Sadan is one of the many illustrations of the great organising capacity and selfless devotion of Mr. Devadhar to humanitarian work. He has taught us how the unwanted human material of our society, the widows, the destitute and the helpless women could be trained to become self-reliant and independent and how their natural genius, their womanly qualities could be developed to serve the different needs of the society to teach the young, to nurse the sick and to heal the suffering. Hundreds of these women missionaries fired with the same zeal and enthusiasm for selfless service have gone out as teachers, nurses, midwives, health visitors and are in charge of schools, nursing homes, orphanages, creches, welfare centres and hospitals, and have been the first to render help in times of great calamity, such as fire, famine, floods and pestilence, having been trained in first-aid, hygiene, preventive medicine and in sick nursing. He was the father and mother of the Seva Sadan and he spent most of his time and thought on that Society even though his services were in requisition all over India. He responded to many calls from the South and from the North in connection with many benevolent schemes for the benefit of the poor and the suffering. It was a wonder to many of us how he was able to give his time and thought to anything else when he had already undertaken so many responsibilities. He was more than human in his capacity to do service. Simple in habits and of an amiable and cheerful disposition, never complaining about anything in this world, he has left a mark behind which can never be erased by time. His life and example will ever be an inspiration to his associates and friends and to the present and future generations of men and women.

"Kala Nag" writes in the Bombay Scout: India has lost a stalwart son by the death of Mr. G. K. Devadhar on the 17th November. He was born at Poona in 1871 and from early in his life he was imbued with the highest ideals for the uplift of his country. His first effort in the service of the public was his work for the Aryan Education Society in Bombay to which he, with a few of his friends, devo-

ted a tremendously self-sacrificing life for a considerable time. The great body of self-sacrificing workers, known all over India, is the Servants of India Society, which owed considerably to Mr. Devadhar in its inception. Ever since, he has been a great prop of that Society.

Mr. Devadhar's work in life has been mainly organisations to offer relief to suffering humanity. He was the founder of the Poona Seva Sadan which, while beginning in an humble way, has now developed in an institution where over 900 Indian women under social disabilities receive training in such subjects as fit them out to a life of self-respect and service, thus earning the undying gratitude of a large section of womanhood. Mr. Devadhar's activities have been extraordinarily numerous; wherever there was a call for the relief of distress, you would invariably find Mr. Devadhar and his lieutenants harnessed to the task. In the work of flood relief in Gujerat, Kathiawar, Baroda, Sind, Orissa, in Malabar relief etc. Mr. Devadhar's name has been a prominent one. Social activities, the case of the India Press, co-operation, agriculture, all had the major of Mr. Devadhar's attention. To him there was nothing too small or too great to tackle, when it was a question of service to his country. Self-sacrifice is, we believe, the main characteristic of the great body of the Servants of India Society and it is but a fitting recognition of its greatness, even among the choicest band, that he should have been the President of that Society since 1927.

Mr. Devadhar is gone! He has done his duty, and he has lain down for his rest. May God grant peace to his soul!

Boy Scouts of India whose aims are citizenship and service can have no better model to mould their own lives upon than that of this great departed beloved son of India.

The *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* writes: The Bombay Municipal Corporation, by a unanimous vote, adjourned their meeting of the 18th November out of respect to the memory of Gopal Krishna Devadhar, President of the Servants of India Society.

The distinguished services of the late Mr. Devadhar, one of the earliest and ablest disciples of his illustrious master, the late Gopal Krishna Gokhale, has not only fortunately received from our papers and public bodies here the recognition and appreciation, which they are certainly entitled to. Mr. Devadhar was one of the pioneers in the field of social service in the Western Presidency, but his activities were not, of course, confined within its limits only. His work covered practically the whole of India, wherever human suffering or distress called him; wherever any constructive work claimed his services and attention. One of the foremost social workers of his time, the greatest achievement of Mr. Devadhar was undoubtedly his work for women. The Seva Sadan, Poona—which has trained a generation of Indian women to be "an effective factor in the vast, unchartered realm of social service"—would remain as a lasting monument to his undying spirit and his power of organization. Mr. Devadhar's death is a great loss to the cause of civic service, in its truest and widest sense, and this civic organ mourns it, deeply and sincerely, with hundreds of his admirers in all parts of the country. May his soul rest in peace!

RESOLUTIONS expressing sympathy and condolence were passed by the Board of Directors, Bombay Provincial Co-operative Bank; Government Servants Co-operative Society, Wadakanheri; Satara District Women's Co-operative Educational Society; Working Committee of the Akola Central Bank; the Sarva Samiti Boy Scouts Association; Members of the Staff of the Bombay Provincial Co-operative Bank; Nagpur Co-operative Union; Karachi Indian Merchant Association; City Municipality, Ahmednagar; Dhargar Hitachintak Mandal, Poona; Co-operative Conference of Central India, Rajputana and Gwalior; the Arya Mahila Samaj, Bombay; the Quilon Taluk Co-operative Union; Dohad Branch of the Bombay Provincial Co-operative Bank; Palghar Branch of the Bombay Provincial Co-operative Bank; the Municipal Council, Mangalore; the Sulur Local Co-operative Union; Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Charity Funds.

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