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Topics of the Week.

Assam Politics.

IN a recent issue we recounted the course of events in Assam which led to the resignation of the Saadullah Ministry and its replacement by the Bardoloi Ministry. The Speaker, who had adjourned the Assembly *sine die* on the 20th September last and had offered to convoke it about the middle of October in consultation with the new Prime Minister, has now decided to convoke it on the 1st December next. He has pleaded the Puja holidays of the Hindus and the Ramzan holidays of the Muslims and the unpreparedness of the new Ministry as the excuses for putting off the meeting till that date. The Speaker's justification for postponing the date is hardly convincing. The Opposition, which counted a majority in September, was anxious to demonstrate its strength and throw out the Bardoloi Ministry at once and before it had got into its stride. The Bardoloi Ministry, which had not yet completed its personnel, was equally anxious not to face the Assembly. It wanted time to consolidate and augment its strength before did so.

THE Governor's hesitation and bungling gave the Speaker an excuse for postponing the Assembly

sine die in September last. At that time the old Saadullah Ministry had resigned and the resignation had been accepted by the Governor. But the new Ministry had not yet been sworn in. There was thus no Ministry at all for a time, much less a Ministry to be thrown out. The Speaker might have adjourned the Assembly for a couple of days, until the new Ministry had been sworn in. But he chose to adjourn it *sine die*. And now he does not propose to recall it till the 1st December next. The Speaker has thus chosen to give Mr. Bardoloi more than two months to consolidate his strength before he has to face a "no confidence" motion. No wonder the Opposition is furious. We would, however, very strongly deprecate invoking the intervention of the Governor. We must correct our errors ourselves and not provide occasions for the Governor to intervene.

WE grant the Opposition has a legitimate grievance. Nevertheless, there seem to be circumstances to mitigate it. Party affiliations seem to be very loose and shifting in Assam. And there are too many parties as well. The Saadullah Ministry, which was in office for some fifteen months, suffered no end of defeats in the Assembly—so unreliable was its following. Finally, the defection of some of its supporters compelled the Ministry to resign rather than face a no confidence motion. Hardly had the Ministry resigned, when the seceders returned to the fold and cheerfully offered to throw out the new Ministry! Under these circumstances, it is not impolitic to give the Ministry and the Opposition some time to get over the temporary excitement and to settle down to deliberate policies. If circumstances in Assam had been more normal, the Government would not have been justified in asking for and the Speaker in granting such a long postponement of the no confidence motion.

Henlien-Jinnah.

MR. M. A. JINNAH has excelled himself in his speech to the Muslim League in Karachi. His intemperate and unbalanced fulminations against the Congress have by mere repetition lost their "kick." In Karachi he tried to revive interest by copying the manner of Henlien! He is reported to have said that "just as the Sudeten Germans were not defenceless and survived the oppression and persecution of two decades, so also the Mussalmans are not defenceless." Mr. Jinnah however did not reveal who was his Hitler. If Mr. Jinnah is serious in suggesting a separation of Muslim India from the rest of India, he will do well to elucidate his precious proposals, and await the reaction of his Hitlers. It is, however, unnecessary to

pursue the matter further. The Muslim League Conference has itself disowned his idea by dropping the fantastic proposal of a Pakistan.

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Mr. Jinnah accused the Congress of having divided the Muslims. He forgets that it was he who divided the Indians first, and by so doing, strengthened British imperialism against the Indian nationalism.

* * *

The Congress and the League.

MR. JINNAH again reiterated in Karachi his claim that the Muslim League should be acknowledged by the Congress as the sole spokesman of the Muslims in India. No national organization can ever grant coequal status to an avowedly communal organization without forfeiting its national character. It is as objectionable as the federation of autocracy and democracy contemplated by the Government of India Act. There are Muslims who are not members of the Muslim League; some who are even opposed to it. It would be an act of treachery for the national institution to let down the national Muslims and drive them into the arms of the communal Muslim League. No national institution should, under any circumstances have anything more to do with the Muslim League, or for that matter, any communal organization. The field of politics which is common to Hindus and Muslims and all others is so immense compared to the field that divides them, and is, besides, of so fundamental character, that equitable legislation and administration in that common field will eventually strengthen the national as against the communal sentiments in the people.

* * *

Indian Franchise in Ceylon.

WE are happy to think that, unlike the Ceylon Indian Association which asked for the restoration of communal electorates and the reservation of over-riding powers in the Governor, Mr. H. M. Desai, Vice-President, Indian Mercantile Chamber of Ceylon, has taken the right line when he asked that the franchise should be extended as the Donoughmore Commission had suggested. The Commission had advocated that the then existing communal electorates should be eliminated, that universal adult franchise should be adopted and that the franchise should be extended to all British subjects who were resident in Ceylon for five years. To satisfy the anti-Indian prejudices of some Sinhalese leaders, the last recommendation was modified by the introduction of the qualification of "domicile," which, however, was not defined but was of deliberate purpose left vague. The interpretation of this term by unsympathetic officials has succeeded in minimising the number of Indian voters in Ceylon. The remedy to this unfortunate situation is the restoration of the Donoughmore proposals for the franchise and not of communal electorates which the Commission rightly denounced.

* * *

The proposals of the Ceylon Indian Association and of Mr. Desai predicate an increase of Indian influence in Ceylon, or rather, the elimination of the artificial restriction of that influence which the Indians are entitled to by virtue of their numbers and contribution. This presupposes a change in the attitude of the Sinhalese statesmen who now guide the policies of Ceylon. Mr.

Desai suggests that the proposed trade negotiations between Ceylon and India should be preceded by a settlement of the political question, and that India should use the trade lever to persuade the anti-Indian Sinhalese to change their attitude. But perhaps it will be wiser to use the emigration lever first before fetching down the trade lever. The absolute prohibition of unskilled Indian labour emigration to Ceylon should be the first instrument of persuasion.

* * *

Mysore.

THE restoration of peace and good understanding between the Mysore State Congress and the Mysore Government is a matter for sincere congratulation. In moving his motion for adjournment of the Representative Assembly on the 6th inst., Mr. K. T. Bhashyam requested the Government to withdraw the last of the executive interferences with civil liberties of the people. He complained that the Government had still entertained some suspicions regarding the attitude of the Congress and repeated the assurance of co-operation of the Congress with the Government. The Dewan accepted the assurance and withdrew the orders complained of, thereby restoring normal conditions and securing more cordial co-operation between the Government and the Congress than ever before.

* * *

WE hope that this co-operation will be all along the line, and will not be exclusive of constitutional reform. It was somewhat unfortunate that the Dewan seemed to discount constitutional reform when he said that people should not make a fetish of political reform, and stressed that "what the country needs above all today is a steady and stable administration, a just and efficient administration." He, however, added that the country needed also "a constitutional government, of course, and no autocracy of any kind anywhere." Sir Mirza Ismail cannot be unaware that people emphasise political reform not for itself but only to secure the other ends that he commended. Autocracy, which the Dewan deprecates, can be effectively eliminated only by its substitution by democracy and responsible government.

* * *

Political Prisoners in Bengal.

IT is a thousand pities that the Bengal Government was unable to grant the request of Mahatma Gandhi for the release before the 13th of April 1939, of the few remaining political prisoners who number no more than some 1260. It will be recalled that the Government have already removed the restrictions on over 1,100 *detenus* and also released all convicted prisoners who were ailing. The point of difference between the Mahatma and the Bengal Government is this. The Mahatma wants that all these political prisoners should be released by the 13th of April 1939, within one year of his first request to the Government on the 13th April 1938. The Government would not agree to this time limit but proposed to refer the cases of the remaining prisoners to an Advisory Board in the first instance. The Government would consider the recommendations of the Board and then pass orders at their discretion. The Mahatma has no objection to the intervention of the Board as long as all the prisoners are released by the particular date.

* * *

The Mahatma has urged very cogent reasons for the release of all political prisoners, whether

they were merely suspects or were convicted of serious crime. The crimes, where they were committed, were for political ends. A part of the objective of the terrorists has already been secured. Law and order in the provinces are no longer in the hands of an alien irresponsible bureaucracy but of a national, responsible government. The terrorists themselves have acknowledged that further changes in the constitution must be brought about by the creation of public opinion and not by acts of terrorism. Further, if the object of incarceration in jail was not to take revenge, but to reform, the terrorists have given the assurance that they no longer relied on violence for achieving their goal. Under these circumstances, there is no justification for a popular Government to keep these political prisoners a day longer in jail. We still hope that the prisoners will be released by the 13th April next, if not earlier. We hope the Board will approach the question in the right spirit and unanimously recommend the immediate release of the remaining prisoners. Thus the Mahatma, the Bengal Government and the country will all be satisfied.

* * *

The West Indies Commission.

A Simla message states that as a result of the representations of the Government of India, the British Government has agreed to permit the Government of India to depute an "Indian Observer" to watch the proceedings of the Royal Commission on the West Indies in so far as they concern Trinidad and British Guiana and to assist the Indian communities to present their case before the Commission. We confess that this is very far from satisfactory. It does not advance the status of India and implement her right of participation when Indian and Imperial questions are concerned. On several occasions in the past the Government of India sent such observers to assist Indians abroad in presenting their cases to official commissions. The right to membership on a commission was first claimed by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, but that was refused. And that was long ago. One step was gained when a South African Indian was appointed to a commission in South Africa some time after the Second Round Table Conference in Cape Town. Later, in British Guiana the claim of local Indians for representation on the Riots Enquiry Commission in 1935-36 was turned down. And now the claim of the Government of India for representation on the Royal Commission on the West Indies has been turned down also. Thus the status of India in such matters has registered reaction instead of progress.

* * *

Apart from status, the most effective service is possible only to members of the Commission. They have the right to cross-examine witnesses, discuss the evidence and recommendations with their colleagues on the Commission, and if necessary, to submit dissenting minutes. An Observer can do none of these things. At best, he can help to draft the evidence of the local Indians and perhaps himself give evidence and no more. We trust that the Government of India will not sit under this adverse decision of the British Government but continue to press their very legitimate and very modest claim.

* * *

Articles.

TRAVANCORE.

THERE seems to be no ebb to the tide of repression in Travancore. The tension between the Travancore State Congress and the Government continues unabated. Recently, on his way to Simla, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Dewan of Travancore, issued a statement in Bombay in which he laid down the conditions for the cessation of hostilities. "If, following Mr. Gandhi's advice," he said, "the memorandum referred to above is unreservedly withdrawn and if civil disobedience which has demonstrably led to violent manifestations is terminated, there can be no objection to the pursuit of normal political activities within the law and to the release of those now in jail for civil disobedience." It will thus be seen that Sir C. P. lays down two conditions for the resumption of normal conditions: the unreserved withdrawal of the Memorandum and the termination of civil disobedience.

We have not seen the Memorandum referred to and are unable to comment on it. It appears, however, that the Memorandum was prepared by the leaders of the State Congress and that it contained personal attacks on Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's conduct and administration and ended with the conclusion that the continuance of Sir C. P. as Dewan was detrimental to the best interests of the State. The Secretary of the Travancore State People's Defence Committee, Bombay, states that the Memorandum was meant to be presented only to the Maharaja of Travancore, but that Sir C. P. had seen to it that it was not be printed in any press in the State and that it was not submitted to the Maharaja, and that in consequence, the "popular" document was printed outside the State and submitted to the bar of a larger public opinion in India. In passing, we may express our surprise that the Congress which claims a large following in Travancore could not find a press in the State to print the "popular" Memorandum! [Since writing this we find from the statement issued by Mr. N. V. Chacko, the seventh President of the Travancore State Congress, since arrested, that the Memorandum was actually presented to the Maharaja on the 31st of May last and that it was subsequently banned from the State.]

Now that the Memorandum has been published, to the contents of which Sir C. P. takes such strong objection, was it not open to Sir C. P. himself or to the Travancore Government to proceed against its authors in the courts of the land and not insist on its unconditional withdrawal by the authors themselves? Mahatma Gandhi advised the authors to withdraw the Memorandum on the ground, among others, that the authors were not able to prove their charges against the Dewan. Mr. Chacko

assured the Mahatma that the authors were prepared to prove the allegations. The truth of the allegations might easily have been tested in the courts; and if the authors failed to prove their charges, they would have suffered, and Sir C. P. would have been vindicated. That would be most honourable to Sir C. P. himself. A withdrawal of the charges either under duress or as a price of peace will not convince the public that there was no truth in the allegations against Sir C. P.

Sir C. P. has anticipated the suggestion and explained that the Travancore Government had intended to institute prosecutions under the ordinary law against the authors of the Memorandum, but as violent demonstrations had intervened, a new law, the Criminal Law Amendment Regulation, was passed and applied, and that as a consequence of it practically all the authors of the Memorandum were in jail for civil disobedience of the Regulation. We must confess that the explanation of Sir C. P. is far from convincing. We doubt if there was violence before he enacted the Regulation which alone provided the occasion for civil disobedience. Mr. Chacko said in his statement that the Memorandum was presented on the 31st May and the Regulation was promulgated on the 25th August and that during the interval there was no violence except one demonstration by students and that such violence as there was occurred only after the Regulation was passed and in consequence of it. Even if there were violence, was it of such a magnitude as to deter Sir C. P. from prosecuting the authors of the Memorandum in the courts? It is yet not too late for Sir C. P. to institute proceedings against them under the ordinary law. His insistence on withdrawal can only prove that he dare not go to court and that he has a guilty conscience.

Nonetheless, we would join Mahatma Gandhi in his advice to the Congress leaders to withdraw the Memorandum with a view to promoting the larger issue of responsible government for Travancore. As the Mahatma said, compared with the question of the future constitution of the State, the personal charges against the present Dewan are only of secondary and passing importance. Withdrawal of the Memorandum at this stage will not convict the authors thereof of false allegations; it will only mean that for the sake a larger cause, they were willing to abandon a personal matter of no permanent consequence.

In any event, we fail to appreciate the relation between the Memorandum and agitation for constitutional reform. Sir C. P. stated in his Bombay *communiqué* that if civil disobedience,

which had led to violent demonstrations, was given up there could be no objection to the pursuit of "normal political activities within the law." Now the Congress has repeatedly disavowed violence and even accused the Government of having been the cause of such violence as there was. Government, have in their turn, put the responsibility on the Congress. When both the Congress and the Government disavow violence violence did occur, for the violence the responsibility can be discovered only by an impartial commission, Mahatma Gandhi himself advised Sir C. P. to emulate the example of Sir Mirza Ismail, Dewan of Mysore, and institute an enquiry into the shootings by the police. As a matter of fact, an enquiry should automatically follow every such incident, without any special pleading. But Sir C. P. has so far declined to entertain the idea of instituting a thorough-going enquiry by an impartial committee which will command the confidence of the public. In any event, the Congress in Travancore has not advocated violence and has not condoned it or sheltered the perpetrators thereof. Government were free to deal with those who were guilty of violence according to law. Instead, they have applied the Criminal Law Amendment Regulation. But has that stopped violence? The abrogation of the ordinary law and the promulgation of new draconian law have not led to peace; they have only led to more violence.

Sir C. P. has asked the Congress leaders to terminate civil disobedience. But it was he that took the initiative in creating the occasion and the cause for civil disobedience. It was he that promulgated the new law and declared the yet un-born State Congress an unlawful body and prohibited public meetings by Congressmen and thereby invited civil disobedience. If he had not promulgated the new law, there was nothing for the Congressmen to offer civil disobedience against. What is the meaning of asking the Congress to terminate civil disobedience when the Criminal Law Regulation is still the law? "Within the law" would mean that the Congress cannot meet and function at all, as it is still an unlawful body. And no public meetings to advocate responsible government are yet possible as long as the Dewan holds the view that such a demand amounted to sedition. Mockery could go no further.

The Paramount Power is taking a heavy responsibility for Sir C. P.'s crimes in Travancore. It is time that it stepped in, unless Sir C. P. follows betimes the advice of Mahatma Gandhi and the example of Sir Mirza Ismail of Mysore.

LET THE FACTS SPEAK.

MR. GULZARILAL NANDA, Parliamentary Secretary to the Bombay Premier, who is the mentor of the Bombay Ministry in all labour matters and who is known to be the author of the notorious Labour Bill now on the anvil of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, recently addressed a lengthy communication to Mr. R. R. Bakhale, General Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress. In the letter Mr. Nanda accuses the Bombay Provincial Committee of the Trade Union Congress of having completely changed its views regarding the proposed Industrial Disputes Bill within a space of six months. The alleged transformation is also attributed to the circumstance that recently the two national labour organizations in India—the Trade Union Congress and the National Trades Union Federation—have united into one All-India Trade Union Congress.

Before the present Bill was introduced in the Bombay Assembly a considerably shorter Bill with similar objects and reasons was informally circulated among labour organisations. The then Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress had submitted to Government its views on that Bill. Mr. Nanda quotes certain stray passages from that Memorandum and tries to show that the B. P. T. U. C. had given their unreserved support to the principle of the Bill. The new Bill has been condemned by the new B. P. T. U. C. as "uncalled for, reactionary, retrograde and prejudicial and harmful to the interests of the workers." Mr. Nanda contends that this was due to "a certain re-orientation in the outlook and policy of the All-India Trade Union Congress." In support of his contention he quotes the following passage from the Memorandum of the B. P. T. U. C. on the first draft Bill :

We recognise that some sort of machinery compelling a recourse to conciliation before direct action in the shape of a lock-out or strike can be resorted to, is necessary. We can also have no objection to the registration and enforcement of awards which result from the process of arbitration voluntarily resorted to by a Trade Union.

In this passage, however, Mr. Nanda reads more meaning than it can possibly contain. He contends that by including these two sentences in the Memorandum the B. P. T. U. C. had given their "unreserved support" to the principles underlying the present Bill and that "the Government of Bombay proceeded on the clear understanding that the Provincial Trade Union Congress countenanced the measure." Two things may be pointed out in this connection. In the first place, so far as the general principles go, the B. P. T. U. C., for all we know, have not changed their views; and in the second place, the "support" that is alleged to have been given to the first draft Bill by the B. P. T. U. C. was by no means "unreserved." Instead of contenting himself with the study of two or three stray

passages from the Memorandum, Mr. Nanda would have done well to read it as a whole. He would have been especially benefited if he had carefully gone through at least some of the extracts from the Memorandum given below.

With regard to the conciliation machinery proposed to be set up under the Bill the B. P. T. U. C. Memorandum observed :

Industrial peace is no doubt a desirable end and conciliation machinery does help to preserve it. But an essential pre-requisite to the smooth, effective and fair working of such a mechanism is the existence of strong and well organized Trade Unions which can speak for the workers and which can deal with the employers on equal terms. But such Unions cannot exist unless the community forces the employers to deal with the workers' representatives, that is, to recognise their Trade Unions. We should suggest that employers should in general be compelled to recognize a registered Union.

In the same connection the Memorandum explicitly said :

No provision at all is contemplated for securing the recognition by employers of even genuine and representative registered Unions. . . . We have pointed out above how equal dealings between employers and Unions is the first condition of effective and fair conciliation proceedings. We would urge the Bombay Ministry with great earnestness to remedy this grave defect in their scheme. . . . To set up conciliation machinery without taking this essential step is like putting the cart before the horse.

It is wellknown that the present Bill makes the very registration of Unions entirely dependent upon the voluntary recognition of them by the employers except in the case of Unions which claim membership of more than 25 per cent. of the total number of workers—a condition which, on an average, cannot be satisfied in any country of the world except the U. S. S. R., let alone India. Not only did the Bombay Ministry disregard these requests with regard to the recognition of Trade Unions but they actively stopped the progress of a Bill for the compulsory recognition of Trade Unions, introduced in the Bombay Assembly by Mr. Jhabwalla.

With regard to the proposal to appoint Labour Officers who would be competent to represent the workers in case there is no recognized Union to represent them, the Memorandum had observed :

We are surprised to find that a Congress Ministry should advance the vicious principle of allowing a Government Official to represent the workers after the Congress has, for half a century, fought the same principle in the representation of the people in the legislatures. We suggest that where there is no recognised Union in the field, the workers concerned should elect their delegates and the Labour Officer should only act as their adviser in negotiations and in conciliation proceedings. Ordinary democracy demands such a thing.

The Bombay Ministry has shown complete disregard for these suggestions of the B. P. T. U. C. They seek to empower the Labour Officer to represent workers if there is no competent Union

Not only this. They want to invest him with extraordinarily wide and absolutely unnecessary powers of entering offices of Unions and even quarters of workers, inspecting documents and thus interfering with the work of the Unions and the business of the workers.

The B. P. T. U. C. in their Memorandum had, in the light of these general considerations, expressly characterised the proposals of the Bombay Ministry as "sound in certain respects" but "*utterly inadequate or positively dangerous in others.*" And still Mr. Nanda has the courage to write to the General Secretary of the Trade Union Congress that "the Government of Bombay proceeded on the clear understanding that the Provincial Trade Union Congress countenanced the measure, and that, since March last, "there has been a certain re-orientation in the outlook and policy of the All-India Trade Union Congress." We would like to ask in all conscience: Do the passages from the B. P. T. U. C. Memorandum quoted above indicate their "unreserved support to the principle of Bill"? Has the new Bill incorporated even the most important changes suggested by the Memorandum? Does compulsory recognition of Trade Unions precede the compulsory conciliation of trade disputes? Is the Labour Officer divested of his unlimited power? The uniform answer to all these questions is an emphatic NO. We maintain, for reasons enumerated above, that there has been no change whatever in the outlook and policy of the B. P. T. U. C., leave alone a re-orientation of them. We fear that Mr. Nanda in his attempt to prove this, has committed both the sins—that of *suppressio veri* and that of *suggestio falsi*.

As, in fact, there is absolutely no evidence of a change in the policy of the B. P. T. U. C., it would be idle to enquire into the causes of the supposed and alleged change. But it has become necessary to refer to this matter here for different reasons. Mr. Nanda, after persuading himself that there has been such re-orientation in the principles, tries to analyse the reasons of this circumstance. In his letter referred to above, he says:

It may be that because of certain recent changes in the composition of the Executive of that body owing to the affiliation of the National Federation of Trade Unions, there has been a certain re-orientation in the outlook and policy of the All-India Trade Union Congress. But it was expected that the change would be in the direction of a greater appreciation of the need of peaceful adjustment of industrial differences. This, however, is a matter in which a person like myself has no business to interfere.

It is well known that in April last at Nagpur, the two national organisations of labour in India—the Trade Union Congress and the National Trades Union Federation—united into one All-India Trade Union Congress. Mr. Nanda's suggestion in the above extract from his letter is that because of this Trade Union Unity the principles and policies of the T. U. C. have undergone change, and a change for the worse.

The implications are obvious. Mr. Nanda would have us believe that this Trade Union Unity has become detrimental to the interests of the Indian working class. We have, however, our own views in the matter.

THE WAY OF NON-VIOLENCE.

AN EPISODE.

"I present the way of non-violence for acceptance by the Czechs," wrote the Mahatma in the *Harijan* of the 8th October. If memory serves right, this is the first occasion when the Mahatma has given such advice to a foreign nation. During the Italian invasion of Abyssinia some of his white admirers in the United States of America, principally some Christian ministers, gave similar advice to Abyssinia. They advised the Abyssinians, as Mahatma Gandhi now advised the Czechs, to meet organised violence by organised non-violence, to refuse to fight but yet refuse to yield, to bare their breasts to the foe and die to a man without malice.

The advice was resented by some other American friends and, in particular, by some American Negroes. I met one of them at Yale. He was from Harvard. My turban located me; he guessed I was from India. India at once recalled to his mind the name of Mahatma Gandhi. And it was the Mahatma's white Christian admirers in the U. S. A. that had given the advice to the Abyssinians. So, we fell to discuss it.

He spoke bitterly of the white betrayal of black Abyssinia; he resented the "cynical" advice of the white American friends of the Mahatma. It was all right he said, for these friends, from their absolute safety and security in the U. S. A., to advice the poor wretched Abyssinians not to return violence but to bare their breasts to the Italian bayonets, and die to a man, if necessary. What was the ultimate objective of any resistance? Not self-immolation. Certainly it was not that the Abyssinians should die to a man. The object of the resistance was to prevent the invasion of Abyssinia by the Italians. Would non-violent resistance have succeeded in staving off the invasion? The resistance, violent or non-violent, might succeed or fail, but its objective was successful survival and not heroic annihilation.

Would non-violent heroism of the Abyssinians have brought about a change of heart in Mussolini and halted his invasion? Or, would it have merely enabled him to mow them down with greater facility and certainty? The murder of a million non-resisting Abyssinians would not outrage the moral conscience of Mussolini; the prospect of it would not deter him. The object of resistance would be frustrated in advance. In which case, there was no point in resistance at all, whether violent or non-violent. Survival could be ensured either by submission or by successful resistance. If non-violent resistance promised success, it might be adopted; but if it promised only annihilation, it was not worth it.

Thus argued my friend. Was the Abyssinian episode, then, a case to which the Mahatma's method of non-violence did not apply? I could not help sharing the view that Mussolini would not be deterred from his purpose by a million black Abyssinians baring their breasts invitingly to Italian bayonets; he would achieve it all the more easily. And what great purpose would have been served if the Abyssinians had died to a man? Should the women and children and babies-in-arms follow suit? If not, would Mussolini care for them himself after the men, young and old, had been exterminated? However heroic such mass-suicide might seem, was it not really cowardly?

Nor could I help agreeing with my Negro friend that resistance was justified only if it promised success. Otherwise submission was more sensible and heroic than suicide. Did non-violent resistance in this particular case offer a fair promise of success? Decidedly it did not. But why?

Granting, if only for the sake of argument, that in any contest, physical or moral, the stronger wins, would the moral force engendered by the non-violent resistance of the Abyssinians have been stronger than the physical force of the Italians? If the presumption was correct that the non-violent resistance of the Abyssinians would not have halted the Italian invasion, it followed that the moral force of the Abyssinians was not greater than the physical force of the Italians.

Was it possible to organize a stronger moral force than that of the Abyssinians which, if it did not guarantee it, had at any rate greater chances of success? Would non-violent resistance on the part of, say, a dozen leaders of world thought and power in Church and State prove a greater moral force than that of the Abyssinians? If, for instance, the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of England and the President of France, had told Mussolini that they would resist by non-violent means his invasion of Abyssinia, would that have deterred the Italian dictator from his purpose, at any rate, made him pause and think it over? If these heads of Churches and States had invited Italian bayonets against their own bosoms would Mussolini have accepted the invitation and bayoneted them? Whether it would have ultimately succeeded or not, would such intervention not be a greater moral force than the non-violent resistance of even a million Abyssinian soldiers? In the moral field quality counts more than quantity; a few outstanding people will mean more than thousands of common folk, more than a million of Abyssinian Negroes whom most white people despised on *a priori* grounds of race and barbarism.

Supposing that the impossible had happened and the heads of States and Churches in Christendom had offered non-violent but organised resistance to Mussolini in their own persons, what would have been the consequences? Either Mussolini would have

walked into Abyssinia over their dead bodies or he would have abandoned his campaign. If the latter, it would have been a signal victory of organized non-violence over violence. And much destruction of men and materials would have been saved. The leaders of Christian Churches would have vindicated their faith in Christ and Christianity.

If, on the other hand, Mussolini had met their non-violence by his violence, even so the leaders of the Churches would have vindicated their faith in their religion and followed the noble example of Jesus himself. What fate could be more glorious for a Pope and an Archbishop than to die in vindication of the religion of Christ? By the time a person becomes a Pope or an Archbishop, he was generally an old man with but few years more to live in any event. By the voluntary sacrifice of the few remaining years of their lives they would have saved the lives of thousands, perhaps millions, of other men, men in the prime of their lives, perhaps in their teens, with their whole lives before them, who had been conscripted to premature death and destruction.

The pity of it is that Churchmen and Statesmen who could put into the field the maximum of moral force, were not so keen about righteous peace as to risk their own lives for vindication and preservation. They would rather conscript other, younger people and hurl them against the horrors of modern warfare and see them mutilated and murdered than risk their own expiring lives in the pursuit of peace. Even Churchmen so far forgot their Lord and Master and his commandments as to urge young men to join the colours, go to the trenches to be killed or mutilated, to destroy or be destroyed. Non-violence under optimum conditions has not yet been tried.

BHISEMA.

A LETTER FROM PARIS.

I am afraid I have delayed too long in answering your very kind letter. But you will understand that our minds here were too much occupied by the anxiety and tension due to international events to allow us to attend to our personal correspondence.

I have been spending the last weeks alone in Paris, my son being still on his holiday in the South of France. Being alone, I have perhaps been able to share more intensely and more genuinely the general atmosphere that prevailed in Paris during these last weeks. I must say that the people here have been extra-ordinarily brave, simple and calm. I have witnessed the departure of the "reservists", as well as the courage of those whom they had left behind. I have seen the voluntary enlistment of women as well as young and old people into various organisations engaged in useful work for passive defence here, or other things. I have seen people anxiously listening to Hitler's speeches which they could

not understand (but the ferocious barking tone was eloquent enough!) and to other news on the wireless. I have scrambled with others in the streets for the latest special editions of the newspapers.

You can imagine my own anxiety as my son and two of my brothers and a good number of friends and close relatives of ours would have had to leave for the front if general mobilisation had taken place. And I think I am not boasting when I say that I felt the anguish of all other women as much as my own.

In spite of the brave determination of every one and absolute calmness in appearance, there was a great tension in the atmosphere.

It is therefore not surprising that the news that war had been avoided brought a reaction of tremendous relief. Smiles blossomed again on the anxious faces; people seemed to be born again to life and breathe freely once more just as they were preparing to die. The force of these collective reactions is stupendous. Nothing seemed to count for some time but this kind of animal joy of being alive, and the assurance that those we love most are not going to die, at least not just now.

I believe it is this kind of instinctive reaction alone, together of course with a very clever press campaign (it is proved now as never before that the press can manufacture public opinion in 48 hours) that can explain (I do not say justify) the tributes of admiration to Chamberlain and Daladier, which have been so conspicuous and seem to have left hardly any place to anything else, even sympathy and gratitude for the Czechoslovakian people.

But now people are beginning to cool down and they will start thinking again. And realise that this Munich agreement, which they have acclaimed like a victory, is really a most humiliating defeat for France especially, and a stupendous victory for Hitler in particular, and fascism in general. A victory which the French and English obligingly agreed to deliver themselves into Hitler's hand.

Failing to respect promises given to Czechoslovakia, agreeing to dispose of this poor country's fate without even inviting it to the debates, is an evident shame for countries who have constantly invoked the right of peoples to self-determination, and other great principles of international morality.

But even leaving aside this moral aspect of the question, it is evident that Czechoslovakia was the only bastion of peace, liberty, security and democracy in Central Europe, the only rampart against the German drive towards the East.

Apart from the tremendous prestige given by the Munich agreement to Hitler and Mussolini, especially inside their respective countries, the tangible advantages of this transaction for Germany are so enormous that it is difficult to believe

that they have been so readily granted. And we do not know yet what secret assurances have been given to Italy.

These advantages are strategic, as well as military and economic. Hitler can now easily establish his domination (veiled or evident) upon the Danube and the railways that skirt it. His present position will make it easy for him also to lay his hand before long upon the Hungarian wheat and the Rumanian oil. The important war and other industries which the Czechs have had to surrender into the hands of his ally Poland or into his own, complete the gift, and, in fact, give to Germany exactly what she was lacking to be able to challenge democratic countries successfully, to tower above east and west and provide an army on both fronts with food and armaments. A large part of the Czech line of defence, which had been built at the cost of enormous expense and taxation, has also been surrendered to the Germans: the Munich agreement has compelled the Czechs to destroy nothing in the countries they had to abandon. These fortifications will come intact into German hands, and they have been built upon the model of the Maginot Line in France. The Germans will find there all the secrets of the French fortified line.

From the military point of view, the Czech army was the only one that counted in Central Europe beside the German army. All the men of the Germanised regions will go to the German army and those of other regions claimed by the allies of Germany will also quit the Czechoslovakian army. This asset also is important.

Rumania had given her assent to allow the junction of the Russian and Czech armies through her territory. This will now become impossible under the German military hegemony. And most probably all the small, more or less wavering, peoples and countries of Central and Eastern Europe, after seeing Czechoslovakia's fate, will consider that the safest course is to seek protection under the German flag. It is interesting to remember that the Czechs had often received proposals from the Germans but had not accepted them. Czechoslovakia had wished to remain the principal element and real backbone of the "Petite Entente". Culturally even, as a link between the eastern countries of Europe and the western democracies, it was a serious obstacle to German penetration. Now all this will be changed.

And the economic balance also will be greatly modified. Czechoslovakia was in Central Europe the great industrial rival of Germany. I am told that 80 per cent. of the Czech industries are located in the Sudeten regions.

And on the top of it all, we hear now that before leaving Germany, your exquisite Mr. Chamberlain has taken the precaution to sign a separate agreement with Hitler by which Germany

and England have declared that their two Governments will never fight in opposite camps. As M. Gabriel Peri says in this morning's "Humanite", this amounts in diplomatic language to a pact of non-aggression. It is well known that Hitler's tactics consist in securing for Germany a number of neutral friendships with a view to ultimately isolating France and of course, Russia. France and England had concluded a series of mutual agreements after the denunciation of the Locarno Pact. On the 29th April, these agreements became a sort of military alliance. They postulated a mutual collaboration in case of danger; and, therefore, that Germany and England might fight each other if France was the victim of aggression. This assurance seems to have been destroyed by the Munich declaration. If only Mr. Chamberlain had said that previous agreements were still valid! But he has refrained from giving us this satisfaction.

In brief, war has been avoided to-day, but peace has not been founded for tomorrow, and the future is dark, especially for France.

Of course, we are also paying for our errors. But outsiders too often forget that the geographical situation of France is such that in our times she can hardly act alone with any efficiency. If only England had agreed to take a firm stand with us in the face of Germany, when the Rhineland was invaded, when Austria was invaded or on other occasions, the present situation could have been avoided.

And from the revealing speech of Monsieur Duff Cooper in the Commons yesterday, (I will not quote as you have certainly read) it is evident that this was also the case a few days ago. France and England had practically the whole world behind them. If they had been sufficiently united and firm, they could have frightened Hitler, who was bluffing considerably, and they would have not only avoided war, but established durable peace on a firmer basis. Now with the moral prestige and all the other gifts bestowed upon Hitler, things will be quite different in future. Indeed, one wonders whether there will ever be again any kind of international life except under the gruesome aspects of force and fear?

L. M.

Reviews.

COTTON MARKETING.

MARKETING OF RAW COTTON IN INDIA.

By M. L. DANTAWALA. (Longmans, Bombay.)
1937. 22cm. 268 p. Ra. 5.

THE problem of cotton in the modern world of trade and industry has its own importance, and this explains why so many volumes on this interesting subject are issued from time to time and there

is room for more. It must be said that books on this question as relating to India and as written by Indians are few. Hence this new book on the marketing of raw cotton by Prof. Dantawala is to be welcome. Modern Economics concerns itself not only with production, but also with distribution of goods; in fact, it is thought that the industries in this country suffer through deficient marketing. Government are trying to remove this defect with regard to agricultural products and are developing a new organization for marketing, from which much is expected. Prof. Dantawala has begun his book with an interesting chapter on the history of cotton, wherein he shows how India was a great exporter of cotton and of cotton goods by the beginning of the Christian era. The East India Company encouraged manufacturers to produce larger and larger quantities as export trade in cotton goods was very profitable. The position however from the English manufacturers led to the hampering of this export trade, and the so-called free trade and *laissez faire* policy was used by England to ruin this export trade of India. Ultimately it led, as everyone knows, to the exports of cotton goods ceasing altogether and India resting content with exporting raw cotton. India has again begun to export cotton goods, but such export is to Egypt, Mesopotamia, Africa, etc., but not to England. Up till recently the Indian market was at the mercy of Manchester; but thanks to the Swadeshi movement as also the protection afforded to the industry in India and due also to the competition from Japan, there is a heavy drop in the import of English piece-goods in this country. Manchester is now trying its level best to regain the lost kingdom. The author takes his readers on a very interesting tour from farm to exchange, acquainting them in the process with the problems of marketing, pricing, ginning, pressing, middlemen, etc. He correctly emphasises the fact that had the Indian farmer been not so poor and his land and its output so meagre, he could have, like the American grower, organised his own ginning and pressing. As matters stand, however, ginning and pressing have been taken up by a class of capitalists, and the farmers are left out of profits which they make. The ginning and pressing has been for a long time carried on without any restrictions or limitations whatsoever. In fact, both with regard to the conditions of labour employed and adulteration of cotton the "free" manner in which ginning and pressing industry was allowed to develop reacted unfavourably on the cotton trade and industry. Latterly efforts have been made by the Central Cotton Committee to grade cotton and prevent adulteration. The question of middleman plays a large part in the marketing of cotton. There is a tendency referred to in the book of condemning middlemen, and, as Prof. Dantawala remarks, "No proposal has evoked greater enthusiasm on the part of reformers than the proposal for the elimination of the middleman." He shows, however, that the middleman of the mufussil does not deprive the farmer of his legitimate return for his produce. He deals with several mal-practices and handicaps in marketing. "Unless the farmer has adequate storing facilities he will have to sell all his cotton soon after the harvest whatever the level of the price may be." Having dealt with the financial aspect of production, trade and marketing, he goes on to describe the evolution of the cotton market in India as also the organisation of future trade. Some of these questions, like the organisation of future trade, are very timely as

the Government of Bombay is at present engaged in examining the requirements of future markets. Prof. Dantawala appears to disapprove of unitary control on the ground that it gives a monopoly in the administration of the exchange to certain institutions. The view of trade appears to be otherwise; and it will be watched with interest how Government will solve this problem. Prof. Dantawala has written a very interesting book which is likely to be a classic for some time on the marketing of cotton.

J. K. MEHTA.

SOUTH INDIAN MAHARASHTRIANS

SOUTH INDIAN MAHARASHTRIANS. (CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES.)

(The Mahratta Education Fund, Madras.)

1937. 25cm. 167+41p. Rs. 2.

THIS is a volume published by the Mahratta Education Fund as its Silver Jubilee Souvenir in 1937. It is more than an account of the Mahratta Education Fund. It is a social and cultural study of South Indian Maharashtrians, and contains articles on the economic conditions of South Indian Maharashtrians, on the activities of the Marathas in the days of Shahaji, Ekoji, Shivaji and the Peshwas, and on the contribution of South Indian Maharashtrians to Marathi Literature, Music and Art, and on the ideals of Maharashtra.

South India, including Madras, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin, has a Mahratta population of over 2 lakhs, of whom Madras has over a lakh and Mysore some 91,000, according to the census of 1931. Mr. T. Ramchandra Rao shows that, while there has been an increase of 8.5 per cent in the South Indian population over the period of 1901-31, the Mahrattas have increased only by 4.7 per cent during that period. The Mahratta population of South India that went to settle there with Shahaji in 1638 and later with the other Mahratta Sardars under the Peshwas is mostly of a stationary character, and having lived there it has adopted Madrasi style of living, dresses and even names. On turning over the pages of this book one is amused to find photographs of a number of Mahratta Brahmins bearing the names such as E. Vinayak Rao, and C. Bheema Rao, who if they had been in Maharashtra would have been known as Mr. Vinayakrao Kshirsagar and Mr. Bheemrao Puntambekar. The results of the economic enquiry have been detailed separately for the Brahmins and for the Kshatriyas and we are told that of 302 Brahmin families 68.6 per cent were certainly above the standard, 9.3 were probably so and the rest were either struggling just on the level or much below it; while in the case of Kshatriyas the corresponding percentages were 22.5 and 15.7, and 43.1.

This progressive condition of the Brahmins can be easily explained by their readiness to take to new education and adapt themselves to the changed circumstances on the advent of the British rule in India. Although the percentage of those that have been below the standard is fairly high, particularly among the Kshatriyas, we can safely say that the Mahrattas in Madras are more favourably placed than their fellows in Maharashtra proper. This is not surprising. The emigrants generally come from the energetic and enterprising stock of the population.

The historical articles will be very useful to students of Mahratta history. Mr. T. B. R. Goswami refers to a number of sanads, documents, letters and paimash (?) accounts written in Modi that he came across as the Marathi Translator in the Madras High Court. The same writer tells how Iyers of Tanjore in Madras were familiar with Modi script and used it in the preparation of a legal document (page 151). The learned labours of men like Rao Bahadur R. Krishna Rao Bhonsle, Mr. Shelvankar and others deserve to be encouraged and their co-operation invited by the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal, Poona, for a fuller study of the Mahratta activities in South India.

The book gives short sketches of the lives of eminent Mahrattas in Madras Presidency, and one feels proud to know that the small Mahratta population supplied seven Diwans to the Mysore and Travancore States in the latter half of the 19th century. Sir T. Madhavrao, R. Raghunathrao, V. P. Madhavrao, T. Ramrao, T. Anand Rao are all Mahrattas concealed under South Indian form of dress and names. There is also an interesting article on 'Kirtan' wherein we are told how Ramchandra Buva Morgaonkar went to Tanjore in 1864 and popularised the institution of Kirtan.

The book is useful to establish a very real cultural contact between Maharashtra proper and the Mahrattas in South India, as also to create a feeling of affinity based upon intelligent understanding between the two. There is one deficiency in the book. The book does not anywhere deal with the social problem, the problems of marriage, female education, and what Mahrattas in Maharashtra proper can do to help them. The present writer knows that the general complaint of the Mahrattas outside Maharashtra is that their activities are not sufficiently noticed in newspapers of Maharashtra, and there are few occasions when the Brihat (Greater) Maharashtra and Maharashtrians proper can come closer together. If this state of affairs is to be improved the two groups ought to be brought closer together.

R. V. OTURKAR.

SHORT NOTICES.

MY EXPERIENCE IN CHINA. By M. N. ROY.
(Renaissance Publishing Co., Bombay.) 1938.
18cm. 94p. As. 8.

IN this booklet Comrade Roy has attempted to weave a little of his autobiography with the contemporary history of China. It may be within the knowledge of students of contemporary history that the Kuomintang Party fell under Communist influence in 1923, but that three years after, broke away from it. Roy who was one of the Communist leaders in China along with the Russian Borodin was accused as being responsible for the failure of the Communist Party in China. In this booklet Roy defends himself against the charges made by the Russian Comintern. But before estimating the part played by him in Chinese nationalist politics Roy gives a great deal of interesting information on the various phases of China's struggle. Though the period covered by the author is wide, he has brought all essential information in a narrow space.

Since Roy writes with a purpose, namely, to defend his action in China, he is not willing to lose any opportunity of showing his opponents in

unfavourable light. Whether one agrees with his views or not, we are sure that his booklet will be thought after by those who want to get a brief account of the 'Chinese puzzle.'

M. V. SUBRAHMANYAM.

THE WORLD'S NEED OF RELIGION. The

Proceedings of the World Congress of Faiths, Oxford, July 23rd—27th, 1937. (Nicholson and Watson,) 1937. 22cm. 189p. 5/—

THAT the world needs religion is amply shown in this book. It is right that all men of goodwill should meet and exchange their experiences. That they should meet in an atmosphere of friendliness and share their experiences to the full realization of what religion can do to make a man fulfil God's will is good. But one needs to be warned from shallow thinking that takes no notice of fundamental differences of the peculiar contribution of each system of religion to the world's thought.

YESUDAS

LETTERS BY M. N. ROY TO THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY WRITTEN IN 1934.

(Renaissance Publishing Co., Bombay.) 1937. 18cm. 78p. As. 4.

COMRADE Roy was attacked by the Congress Socialist Party for he was against the promotion of a socialist party within the Congress. The pamphlet before us shows how three years ago Roy objected to the formation of a Congress Socialist Party on the ground that the main issue before the country was to fight against Imperialism. In his letters written in 1934, 1935 and 1936 Roy pointed out that the immediate needs before the country were the strengthening of the Congress organisation, the radicalisation of its programme and capture of its leadership. He also felt that the conditions for the successful fulfilment of the socialist revolution were absent in India, the most important being the absence of a class conscious proletariat, who alone as a class, could actively desire and work for the advent of socialism. He also gave a number of theoretical arguments and tactical considerations why the socialists should not form a party within the Congress fold.

We feel that the Publishers by publishing the letters of Roy have enabled the latter to vindicate his discretion and honour against the misrepresentation and calumny of the Congress Socialist Party. We dare say that the pamphlet before us is sure to interest students of contemporary history.

M. V. SUBRAHMANYAM.

Miscellaneous.

Speech delivered by the Hon. Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, leader of the Indian Delegation to the British Commonwealth Relations Conference at Sydney, Australia, in September 1938.

May I on behalf of the Indian delegation express our great pleasure at being here today? There are various reasons for the feeling of gladness that fills us at finding ourselves in this room today but the warmth of the reception which you

have been good enough to accord us as humble representatives of India is mainly at the bottom of the feelings that are uppermost in our hearts at this hour. You have been thanked by the representatives of other countries for your splendid hospitality but, believe me, nobody is more grateful to you for your cordiality than the prohibited immigrants from India. Apart from this, since we touched the shores of Australia we have acquired knowledge and experience, the memory of which will never be effaced from our minds. We have seen here a degree of happiness and prosperity which has not met our eyes in any of the countries which it has been our good fortune to visit so far. It is a matter of great inspiration to us to realise that this happiness and prosperity are based on a more even distribution of the fruits of human industry, on greater social justice and on a larger measure of human freedom than are to be found in most of the older countries. We naturally believe that as the British Commonwealth of Nations meets in this atmosphere of justice and freedom, the deliberations of the Conference will lead to the creation of that spirit which will harmonise the internal and external differences to which Lord Lothian gave such eloquent expression.

To me the great value of the Conference lies in the fact that it represents not merely the people of one race or culture, but people who are representatives of different races, languages, cultures and economic interests. And if their interests are to be harmonised, and the conflicts we see between them are to be adjusted, we must find some means more potent and more lasting than force which, unhappily, western nations regard as a sign of greatness and glory. How is the spirit, which will make the solution of our difficulties possible, to be cultivated? The sages of my country long ago said that the basis of right action is the recognition of the great truth "Thy neighbour is thyself." We must cultivate universal ideals. National ideals are insufficient to bring peace to the world. We have to recognise that the interests of the peoples around us are quite as important as those of our own nation. Is not this only an extension of the fundamental principles of democracy which require that we should identify our interests with those of others? And it is for the fundamental principles of democracy that we all stand. Democracy has received rude shocks all over the world, but it fortunately still flourishes in a few countries, among which are the countries included in the British Commonwealth of Nations. These countries, therefore, have an important part to play in convincing the world of the value of democratic ideals. They must by their relations towards other members prove the value of the principles which they proclaim, and demonstrate by their actions and by the unity which they are able to achieve among themselves, that peace and goodwill are within the reach of the world at large, provided it chooses the same path which they have

followed. My country is not a part of the British Commonwealth, yet; it is only a part of the British Empire. I am at present a serf on Lord Lothian's estate, but I hope that the spirit which animates the British Commonwealth Relations Conference will spread, and inspire those who guide the politicians of the Commonwealth. I hope that the British Empire will give way to the British Commonwealth and the British Commonwealth, may I modestly put it, to an Indo-British Commonwealth.

The basis of the hope I entertain is this, with regard to the value of the Conference. The organisers of the Conference are not content with a conventional recognition of the value of the association of nations called the British Commonwealth of Nations, but are prepared to admit that this association may in certain cases bring serious disadvantage in its train. It is this open-mindedness, this largeness of spirit, that is at the bottom of the hope that we entertain, that its deliberations will lead to the creation of a better understanding and to the placing of the principles of justice and freedom on a firmer foundation. If this Conference is to seek practical guidance in its work it can get no more valuable lead than that given by the Statute of Westminster. The most important phrase in that Statute seems to me to be that which contains the declaration that the British Commonwealth is a free association of the nations within it. It is the result of the freedom which has been authoritatively recognised in this Statute that you see all over the British Commonwealth. I can wish for nothing better than that the spirit of that Statute should inspire the proceedings of the Conference. In this task the Dominions have an important part to play. You have in this city of which you are so proud, built a magnificent bridge over your harbour, but if we are to succeed in the achievement of the purposes we have in view, you must help the world to build a larger, more enduring and more magnificent bridge which will unite the various nations of the world and bring together the East and the West. The Dominions have acquired full nationhood only recently. They have, therefore, a stronger sense of the value of freedom and equality than most of the older countries. Moved by the spirit of freedom and inspired by the great opportunities for advancing our moral and material progress that lie before them, they can, if they will only realise their responsibilities, be the spearhead of the movement for freedom within the Empire and all over the world. I trust they will bear their full share in this sacred task, because it is only when the sun of liberty shines that it shall see dispelled the mists of ignorance and prejudice which are obscuring our vision and casting a blight on all that is divine within us.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

DEBT RELIEF.

THE stock argument advanced against any drastic scaling down of agriculturists' debts is that it will destroy their credit with the money-lenders. That might be the result if Government were to issue an *ukase* wiping out all rural debts. But there should be no fear of such a result ensuing from a scaling down of the debts to the level of the debtors' repaying capacity. A man's credit depends upon his financial position at the time he asks for a loan, and as the agriculturists will be more solvent after their debts are scaled down, their credit will have correspondingly improved. The scaling-down operation may cause a scare among the money-lenders just at first, but the scare is very unlikely to last. It is reckless borrowing and speculative lending at exorbitant rates that has brought the agriculturists to their present deplorable plight, and if, as the result of a drastic scaling down of debts, money-lenders refrain in future from giving credit where it is not deserved, that will not be at all a bad thing as it will prevent the peasantry from again sinking into the mire of indebtedness. It is of vital importance to pull out the peasantry from that mire and set it on its feet again. That can only be done by a drastic scaling down of its debts. It cannot be done by any half-measures that the fear of destroying future credit may suggest. Such measures would only perpetuate the present state of things.

I have previously suggested that the total debt of an agriculturist should be scaled down to an amount that he could repay with a moderate rate of interest by ten yearly instalments. That would mean the compounding of his debt for the surplus-fruits of ten years labour. I do not think more ought to be demanded of him, or his rehabilitation postponed beyond ten years. It is true that the maximum period over which Land Mortgage Banks spread their instalments is twenty years. But that is because the sole concern of these Banks is to give the utmost possible facility for paying off debts. It is not their province to lay down the principles on which the debts should be scaled down, or to determine for how long it would be proper to keep agriculturists tied to their debts. Their fixing the maximum duration for repayment at twenty years does not furnish any criterion whatever for scaling down debts. When debts are scaled down so as to be within the capacity of debtors to pay off in ten years, the Land Mortgage Banks will automatically grant only ten instalments in all cases.

I trust it will be the ambition of Government to see our peasantry relieved of their present load of debt at the end of ten years. Some of them, who will not need to have their debts scaled down in accordance with the above principle, will no doubt have been relieved of their burden long before that, but none should be left unrelieved at the end of ten years.

P. J. TALEYARKHAN.