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Topics of the Week

Chinese Currency and Silver

IN the Chinese fight against Japanese aggression the maintenance of the Chinese national currency occupies a prominent place, and it was well known that the Japanese blockade of Tientsin was really intended to secure the withdrawal of British support from this currency. The military authorities of Japan made no secret of this, but still Anglo-Japanese talks were opened at Tokio in the hope that a settlement of the problem of preservation of order in the Concession could be reached without touching the wider problem of currency which affects the whole of China. The British Government went into the Conference under a stipulation that only local problems would be discussed, but it was inevitable, considering the constitution of Japan under which the Army can pursue a policy independently of the civil authorities in Tokio, that the wider problem be raised at one time or other; and it has now been raised by the Tokio Government.

EVEN on the narrower issue of maintaining order in the Tientsin Concession, the Tokio formula is dubious. By this formula the British Government "fully recognise the actual situation in China" and note that "the Japanese forces in China have special requirements for the purpose of safeguarding their own security and maintaining public order in regions under their control." This really amounts, as Mr. Noel-Baker said in the House of Commons on 4th August, to "a quasi-recognition of the Japanese invasion", and it is, in fact, so interpreted in Japan. The British

Government no doubt repudiated the interpretation, but no one can doubt that the formula is open to such an interpretation. All that the British Government achieved by adopting a formula which was perhaps made deliberately so vague was, in Mr. Mander's words, "to buy a little delay." Nor is the delay very long either, for all the other demands, voiced so far by the Army but now endorsed by the Tokio Government, are being openly made on Britain, and one of them is as regards the Chinese National Government's currency.

THE vital connection between the stability of the Chinese dollar and Chinese resistance of Japanese aggression was well brought out by Mr. Noel-Baker. He said: "It is common knowledge that the Chinese peasants have vigorously and consistently refused to touch the bogus Japanese currency in the invaded areas. It is common knowledge that it is with Chinese Government dollars that the guerillas have purchased their foodstuffs and kept their bands alive. The guerilla movement has become the most important single factor in the Chinese war. . . . The Japanese know that their only hope is to destroy the guerilla movement, and incomparably the most effective weapon they could have would be to destroy the Chinese peasants' faith in the Chinese dollar." If the stability of the Chinese dollar is destroyed, it will be impossible for China to secure munitions and other assistance from abroad.

THE Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, knows this. He said, in replying to Mr. Noel-Baker, "I do not take exception to what the hon. Member said as to the connection between the maintenance of the Chinese currency and the capacity of the Chinese to carry out a guerilla warfare in northern China. I recognise that, behind the question of currency, which I agree with the hon. Member is probably in the minds of the Japanese the fundamental question in this matter, there is a much larger question, and that is the ability of the Chinese to carry on the war successfully". The Japanese demand for the surrender of \$50 millions in silver deposited in Chinese banks in the Tientsin Concession is also inspired by the same motive, viz. thereby to stop Chinese resistance in the occupied areas of North China. The British Government, instead of returning an emphatic negative to these two demands of Japan, only plead for the necessity of consultation with the French and U. S. Governments. Mr. Chamberlain said on 4th August: "We have made it perfectly clear to the Japanese Government that we are not prepared to settle with the Japanese alone these two questions of silver and

currency, but that they can only be settled after consultation with other Governments who are as concerned as we are in the general question of the future position of silver and also of currency". This has now been repeated in a Foreign Office statement. And the Japanese Government is now preparing to break off all negotiations unless the British Government is prepared to discuss these two questions independently of other powers and to come to terms thereon. A deadlock will thus result, and the British Government will have to think of retaliatory measures of an economic nature to compel Japan to raise the blockade.

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Hyderabad Amnesty

IT is a matter of considerable relief and satisfaction that, as a result of the "clarifications" of the policy of the Nizam's Government with regard to religious freedom in the State, the satyagraha organised by the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Maha Sabha has been abandoned and that the Nizam took advantage of his birthday to proclaim a general amnesty, and that the prisoners are being released. The objective of the satyagraha by the Arya Samaj was primarily religious freedom, though it was bound to have political implications. It may be a mere coincidence that the "clarification" regarding religious toleration so closely approximated in time to the announcement of political reforms. There seems to be no organic connection between the two, except that both in political and religious matters the Nizam's Government has displayed a more liberal attitude than it had before. It remains to be seen to what extent the liberal spirit of religious toleration enjoined by the Nizam will inform the actions of his subordinate officials, for the complaint hitherto was not so much against the law as against its illiberal enforcement by the officials, the great majority of whom have been and are Muslims. In any event, a re-enunciation of the liberal policy by the Nizam will, it is hoped, have a chastening effect on the overzealous Muslim officers of the Nizam, and that they will have greater respect for religious freedom and toleration in the State.

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Indian Troops Abroad

WHEN the news, emanating from outside India, that Indian troops were despatched to Egypt and Singapore was published in India, there was a general protest against the action of the Government of India. The Congress Working Committee, which met two weeks ago at Wardha, joined in the protest and made it one of the reasons for the boycott of the next session of the Central Legislature. A prominent member of the Muslim League has also published the draft of a resolution which he proposed to move at the next session of the Working Committee of the League protesting against the despatch of Indian troops abroad. Now it is reported that the leaders of the parties in the Central Legislature were consulted by the Viceroy either directly or through the Provincial Governors. It is inconceivable that the leaders of the Congress and Muslim League Parties would not have been consulted by the Viceroy.

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IF the Congress Working Committee resolution is not contrary to the advice tendered by the Congress party leaders to the Viceroy, it is clear that the advice must have been against the despatch

of Indian troops. The same may apply to the Muslim League. In which case, it would appear that the Viceroy had not the consent of the party leaders to his action, and he has flouted their advice. It is inconceivable that the Congress party leaders would have given their consent and the Congress Working Committee would have overruled it. But in view of the doubts cast in certain quarters, it is advisable that all the party leaders who were consulted should now take the public into their confidence and clear up the mystery. Either the party leaders consented to the despatch of Indian troops abroad and they were overruled by the Congress Working Committee, or they refused their consent and the Viceroy overruled them. Now that the news has been published that Indian troops have been sent abroad and that party leaders were consulted by the Viceroy, there is no further justification for maintaining secrecy in the matter.

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Agricultural Marketing

AGRICULTURAL Marketing Acts are already in force in some of the Indian Provinces and States; and some of the regulated markets, mainly for cotton, have done useful work. At present, two such measures have been or will soon be brought forward for consideration before the United Provinces and Bombay Assemblies. The main feature of such bills is the setting up of a market committee comprised mainly of growers of produce and traders in the market, which is meant to be a body corporate administering a fund and exercising powers conferred upon it for regulating trade transactions, settling disputes, etc. A specific area is marked out for the operations of the market, in which private markets are prohibited from working. It is a well-known fact that the Indian cultivator is heavily handicapped in securing an adequate price for his produce from the claim of middlemen who connect him with large national and international markets. The regulated market is an attempt to assimilate the older conditions to newer methods of trade and finance.

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THE Select Committee on the U. P. Bill has thrown out a noteworthy suggestion, which needs to be kept in mind while framing marketing bills in other provinces also. They point out that produce is sold in a variety of ways. Seldom more than one-fifth of the total produce is sold by the actual cultivator at the markets of the type which can be regulated this way. Marketing legislation of this type would be inadequate to prevent malpractices. It is hence essential to provide for the regulation of the sale of produce in the villages and at periodical markets. Organisation of co-operative marketing in villages is necessary. They suggest also the regulation of smaller markets by legislation. Adequate consideration needs to be given to this suggestion in Bombay also.

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THERE is already on the Statute Book in Bombay, the Bombay Cotton Markets Act, 1927. It is now being proposed to provide for better regulation of buying and selling of all agricultural produce including cotton and the establishment of regular markets for that purpose in the Province. In view of the more comprehensive legislation, the Cotton Markets Act is being repealed. It has been found, however, that regulated markets are a costly affair. Further, systematic marketing involves detailed organisation of the various processes of assembling,

grading, packing, storing, financing, etc. It needs to be carefully considered whether a single-commodity market is not after all the better method.

MARKETS of a mixed character as visualised in the Bombay Bill can be set up in municipal areas by inviting municipalities to set up special marketing committees. The Agricultural Commission has given its opinion against leaving the regulation of wholesale markets with municipalities. As pointed out by Mr. D. R. Gadgil in the Survey of Marketing of Fruit in Poona, municipalities need to be given a trial in this matter, as they are the best agents under the circumstances for this work.

Punjab Shop Hours Bill

IN the Punjab there is at present no law to protect the rights and regulate the working conditions of persons employed in shops and commercial houses. A Bill is now brought forward to secure these objects. It prohibits in the first place employment of children under fourteen years of age in all shops or commercial establishments, and from the definition of "shops" are not excluded restaurants and places for the sale of refreshments. The maximum number of hours a person can be employed is 61 in a week or 11 in a day, inclusive of intervals for rest or meals (provided that in a week in which a public holiday occurs employment for 14 hours in two days will be allowed). The interval for rest or meals will be at least an hour. All shops and commercial houses will be closed on Sundays and public holidays (though the Government may exempt some from this provision, and apparently eating houses will come under the exemption).

AN important provision is about holidays with pay. "Every employee in any shop or commercial establishment who has been in continuous employment for a period of one year shall be entitled to not less than 14 days holidays with full pay; or if he has been in continuous employment for a period of nine months he shall be entitled to not less than 10 days holidays with full pay; or if he has been so employed for a period of six months he shall be entitled to not less than 7 days holidays with full pay." Another provision is to the effect that employees shall be paid at the end of a fortnight at the latest, but this is "subject to the provisions of any contract, either express or implied, between the employer and the employee to the contrary." The utmost allowable deduction from wages will be at the rate of one pice per rupee, the proceeds being always credited to a Welfare Fund which is to be applied in the interest of employees. The Bill also gives power to Government, after proper inquiry, to order all or any particular shops or commercial establishments closed at a certain hour, but such an order will not apply to shops for the sale of newspapers, medicines, vegetables, sweets, cooked food, refreshments, etc. The Bill, after it becomes law, is intended to apply eventually to the whole of the Punjab, but in the first instance its provisions will be enforced only within the municipal and cantonment limits of Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Rawalpindi, Sialkot and Lyallpur.

East Africa

TWO Reuter's telegrams, both emanating from Mombasa on the same date, the 21st August, report two contradictory items of news about the proceedings of the Conference of the East African Associated Chambers of Commerce. At the opening of the Conference a resolution was passed unanimously, it seems, to the effect that subjects relating to creeds, races and politics should be excluded from the deliberations of the Conference. On the heels of this resolution the Conference is reported to have passed another resolution calling for a round table conference of representatives of all communities and interests in the earnest endeavour to compose their differences and to prepare a scheme for the union of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. Apparently to reconcile the two resolutions, the Conference suggested that the Union was in the economic interests of all the three territories. But none can be deceived by such tricks. The campaign for closer union of the East African territories, which was started by the European settlers in Kenya and which was scotched by the Closer Union Commission, has been revived.

It would appear that the foundations for this new move were laid over a month ago in Tanganyika. The question was not taken up by the Tanganyika League whose object was to retain the country under the British mandate. An *ad hoc* informal conference, limited to *Britishers*, was held at Iringa which formulated a scheme for the closer union of the East African territories on the model of the Union of South Africa. The first resolution of the Iringa Conference ran as follows:

In the opinion of this Conference, the best interests and the permanent prosperity of East Africa can and be secured by the early union, under the British Crown, of the Protectorate, the Crown Colony and Mandated territory concerned.

Adhesion of Zanzibar at a subsequent date was also contemplated. It was decided that the capital of the new Union was to be Nairobi. South Africa as the model and Nairobi as the capital are ominous portents. The status of Asiatics and Africans under the new scheme was thus envisaged:

No legislation shall be introduced in the Assembly which is repugnant to existing treaties, obligations or rights of the territories concerned, while all existing rights and privileges of the Asiatic, African and other communities shall be adequately safeguarded.

It is clear as crystal that the Iringa Conference contemplates the concentration of political power in the hands of the British settlers and the subjection of non-Europeans to European rule.

To implement the resolutions of the Conference, an association called the British Association was constituted. Its object is the consolidation of British rule in Tanganyika and a complete union of the East African territories. Its full membership is open only to "European British residents" in Tanganyika, while others can be Associate Members.

THE British settlers are at it again. India must do all it can to frustrate the imposition of this most objectionable white oligarchy over non-whites in East Africa.

The Truer Remedy

UNSKILLED Indian emigration to Ceylon and Malaya has been prohibited, the latter for nearly eighteen months, and the former since the beginning of this month. It is interesting to note the reactions. An Indian correspondent from Malaya, writing in the *Hindu* of the 19th August, says that the ban on emigration had not achieved its purpose of raising the wage level of the Indian labourers. Instead, it had led to the displacement of Indian by Chinese labourers. It had further caused inconvenience to certain Indian labourers settled in Malaya who wished to pay a short visit to India and return to Malaya; they could visit India, but under the Government of India's ban they were not free to return to Malaya. Moreover, the displacement of Indian labourers by Chinese labourers had adversely affected the custom of Indian merchants whose principal customers were Indians. All told, it is Indians, both labourers and merchants, that suffered, and not the planters.

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IN the same issue of the *Hindu* is published a United Press message from Colombo which stated that the Ceylon planters were gravely apprehensive of the results of the ban and were putting pressure on the Ceylon Government to get it lifted. The Ceylon Ministers, however, wished that Indian labour should be displaced by Ceylon labour as far as possible. In the meanwhile, the Ceylon Government has not only persisted in its policy of the dismissal of its Indian employees but is rigorously excluding non-Indians from its services, and in particular from the teaching profession.

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IT is hoped that the Government of India will soon publish an appreciation of the situation in Malaya and Ceylon. If the Malaya correspondent's statement be correct, it is possible that the same results will ultimately accrue in Ceylon as well. The Ceylon Government is insisting on the increased employment of Ceylon labour on the estates; and the supply from India has been cut off. It is inevitable that the planters will soon be reconciled to the situation, even as the planters in Malaya are, and will perforce be obliged to employ Ceylonese labourers, or follow the example of the Malaya planters and employ Chinese labourers. According to the *Hindu* correspondent from Malaya, the superstition that Indian labourers were more docile than Chinese and hence indispensable to the Malaya planters has been exploded. The Chinese are neither docile or truculent; some Chinese are docile and others truculent. Similarly, the Ceylon planters may soon discover that Ceylonese labourers are as good as Indian labourers and increasingly employ them in the place of Indians. Thus, as a purely retaliatory measure, the ban on unskilled Indian emigration has doubtful value. In fact, the Government of India did not adopt the policy as a measure of retaliation.

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THE ban can be justified in the interests of the Indian labourers themselves settled in Malaya. If unrestricted Indian emigration be permitted, the wage level may sink lower. Of course, this may happen even when unlimited Chinese immigration takes place in Malaya. But the traditional Chinese wage is higher than the Indian wage in Malaya; it is unlikely that the Chinese labourers will accept a lower wage than was being paid to

other Chinese or to Indian labourers; at any rate for some time to come.

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OF course, the only justifiable and permanent remedy is to improve conditions in India itself, so that Indian labourers need not feel tempted to go abroad to improve their standards. As long as Indian wage levels are lower than those in Malaya and Ceylon, there is sure to be a certain regret that some Indian labourers are being prevented from improving their lot by emigration.

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Kolhapur

IN our comments on the administration report of Kolhapur State for 1936-37 appearing in our issue of the 20th ult., attention was pointedly drawn to the unconscionably heavy proportion which the Kolhapur Civil List bears to the revenue of the State. The administration report of the State for 1937-38, far from weakening the criticism, provides stronger justification for it. During that year, the net revenue of the State went down from Rs. 55½ lakhs to less than Rs. 54 lakhs. And yet the Palace expenditure rose from nearly Rs. 11 lakhs to about Rs. 11¾ lakhs—a rise of about Rs. 70,000. The budget provision under this head has uniformly been Rs. 8,60,000 every year. One searches the report in vain for some explanation as to how and why the budget provision came to be exceeded. But explanation or no explanation, one cannot escape the conclusion that to spend Rs. 11¾ lakhs out of a net revenue of Rs. 54 lakhs, which works out at nearly 22%, on the upkeep of the Maharaja and his family is to show a callous disregard for the welfare of the people of the State.

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BUT to suppose that Rs. 11¾ exhaust all the Palace expenses is to make a totally unfounded supposition. It is observed that a sum of nearly Rs. 2¾ lakhs was spent on what are described as important public works, whose list is fortunately given in the chapter dealing with the Public Works Department. Even a cursory glance at this list will show that it contains a number of items which directly concern the convenience of the ruler and his family. It has been calculated that the cost of such "public" works exceeds Rs. 1 lakh, which must legitimately be added to what are described in the report as "Domestic Charges." When this is done, the proportion of the expenses of the Khasgi department to the State revenue will be found to be nearly 24%. These facts are so startling that we refrain from adding any comment of our own.

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TURNING to education, we find that though the number of educational institutions decreased by 12 to 691, the number of scholars increased by about 1700 to just a little over 48,000. This is satisfactory, so far as it goes. The educational expenditure too, which in 1936-37 was a little less than Rs. 6½ lakhs, shows a slight excess over Rs. 6½ lakhs. All the same no careful reader will fail to note that the total educational expenditure which affects over 9½ lakhs of souls forming the entire population of the State represents just about one half of the amount annually spent on the royal family. And yet the public is asked to believe that

"the budget assigns most of the income of the year to nation-building activities directed to promote the well-being of the people!" We can only say that this is making too heavy a demand on public credulity.

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Australia and India

PROF. K. H. BAILEY has a thoughtful and helpful article, "Indians and Australia", in the June-July number of the *Austral-Asiatic Bulletin*. He recognises that the cordial goodwill of India is essential for the stability of the British Commonwealth and that "rapid progress towards self-government" is "the condition upon which alone full co-operation can be expected from India either in peace or in war." He assures that "Australia least of all the Dominions will underestimate the strategic value, in war, of cordial Indian support." And he urges that Australia should do all it can to promote India's goodwill.

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HE realises that the immigration policy of Australia, as that of the other Dominions, is a sore point with Indian nationalism. India does not challenge the right of each Dominion to control the nature of its population and impose suitable restrictions on immigration; India does not challenge the right and the duty of each Dominion to maintain its standards of living. But India feels it a "personal insult" that that Indians as a race should be excluded from the Dominions, including Australia. Commenting on the Indian plea Prof. Bailey says:

This is, in my opinion, a very strong case. The dictation test was no doubt accepted once by Japan as the least objectionable method of restriction. It can hardly be thought so to-day. Indeed, we have ourselves adopted the quota system in dealing with a number of countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe. I can see no effective reason for refusing to extend it, with any special modifications thought necessary, to Indians—or the Chinese and Japanese, too, for that matter. At any rate, the question should be most carefully and sympathetically considered, in view of the great issues at stake in India's place in the British Commonwealth.

After conceding this, Prof. Bailey enters a caveat. He thinks that the matter is urgent, but it is not at this stage for the Australian Government to handle but the Labour organisations in Australia. He suggests a conference between the labour organisations in India and Australia.

Articles

BOMBAY LAND REVENUE BILL

THE problem of Land Revenue has been long with us. "Based on systems inherited by the Britishers from the most decadent period of Indian rule and formulated by men who were aliens to the country and could with difficulty enter into the feelings of the people", land revenue assessment has been defective all over India. Because of long-standing grievances, the Joint Parliamentary Committee, 1919, advocated the laying down of fundamental principles. The Report

of the Land Revenue Assessment Committee in Bombay, appointed according to the recommendations of the J. P. C. and the discussions that followed upon it, had prepared the ground for improved legislation in the Presidency. It is thus a matter of grave regret that the Bill sponsored by the Congress Ministry in Bombay on this subject of such vital interest to the cultivators has been based on the same old outworn principles, discredited long ago.

The main point of debate in the Legislative Assembly in Poona last week was regarding the fundamental basis of the assessment of revenue. As laid down in the Bill and firmly upheld by the Revenue Minister, the basis of assessment is 'rental value' of land, defined as "consideration in money or kind... for which land could be leased in open competition for a period of one year for its most advantageous use." Mr. Jamnadas Mehta brought in an amendment to substitute the term 'agricultural profits' for 'rental value,' which was defeated by a majority of votes.

As the Taxation Inquiry Committee has put it, at present "rate of assessment is arrived at in Bombay with reference to general economic conditions and is based on actual rents; i. e. subjective impressions and knowledge of the Settlement Officer." The basis which this Committee recommended supports Mr. Mehta's view of basing land revenue on 'annual value', meaning thereby "the gross produce less cost of production including value of labour as actually expended by the farmer and his family on the holding and reasonable return of enterprise". The basis of 'rental value' has been persistently supported by officials as "it was easy to handle and draw conclusions from, and can be mechanically used to justify enhancement proposals." Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee puts the facts in stronger words when he condemns the method as the Government's way of rack-renting by "encroaching upon the standard wages of cultivation and exacting an undue share of the produce". Further, as Principal D. R. Gadgil has pointed out, "as long as the majority of revenue payers in the Presidency are cultivating owners, statistics of rental value are an unsafe guide". Rental value depends on the bargains of the market, on 'demand and supply' factors with their individual peculiarities differing from village to village. Pressure on the soil would increase rentals, while production would actually go down. Lastly, the term 'rent' is rather misleading as it has been confused with the expression in the Ricardian sense of unearned income, return for "the original and indestructible powers of the soil". With the cultivator of an uneconomic holding getting impoverished day by day, rental index is a sign of bankruptcy rather than prosperity.

Mr. Morarji Desai's defence of 'rental value' seems to be based on flimsy grounds. He said that he had given much sympathetic considera-

tion to the amendment of Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, but was unable to accept it, perhaps because of administrative exigencies. He said that Government proposed to see that figures relied upon by Government did not contain fictitious figures. Agricultural profits, he said, would always be a nebulous figure, and since a great part of agriculture was conducted on a deficit economy, it would virtually mean that Land Revenue would have to be abolished.

The second fundamental drawback in the Bill is that it accepts without challenge the principle of a flat rate of assessment, irrespective of the consideration of the capacity of the cultivator to pay. Falling heaviest on the poor holder of an uneconomic unit of land, its incidence becomes less on the more prosperous proprietors, and thus it constitutes a flagrant violation of all canons of taxation. "Land Taxation systems in other countries," to quote the authority of the Taxation Inquiry Committee again, "combine the following elements: (1) A flat rate on annual value kept comparatively low; (2) Progressive tax on income; (3) Death duties and other capital taxes; (4) A local rate." Mr. Parulekar's amendment tried to introduce the principle of graduation. The particular scheme formulated by him may be open to objection, and indeed no scheme that anyone can formulate with the scanty data that are available on the subject can be free from objection. Mr. Parulekar's scheme, which was confessedly provisional, was, however, entitled to greater consideration at the hands of the Government. The main principle underlying it is that of assimilating the land revenue system as far as possible to the income-tax system, which in its turn has graduation of taxation for its main feature. The Government might well have accepted this principle and undertaken to examine to what extent and in what manner effect could be given to it. If they did not wish to commit themselves even so far, at least they could have appointed a committee of experts to make recommendations on the definite question of remodelling the land revenue system on the principle of the income-tax system. This would no doubt have involved suspension of the consideration of the Bill now before the legislature. But that would have done little harm since the Bill only embodies the existing rules on the subject, with a few minor changes, into statute, and Bombay, having waited for some twenty years for the reform, could well have waited for a year more. But the larger reform which the Province really needs is practically shelved by undertaking only this nominal reform. The Bombay Government stands condemned for having virtually killed this larger reform. As it is, the Bill only tries to systematise the assessment and collection of land revenue by fixing standard rates of rental value classified into groups and it aims at adjusting the pitch of assessment according to changes

in prices. All this is already implicit in the existing system, however, and what stands out is that the opportunity for fundamental reform for the welfare of the peasantry has been grievously and culpably missed.

OIL

IN our issue of the 27th July last we referred to the report that the Bombay Government contemplated enacting legislation to control the maximum and minimum prices of petrol in this Province, and we gave our support to the policy, though we were not unaware of the difficulties and risks involved in it. In reply to a short-notice question in the Bombay Assembly on the 21st August, the Bombay Finance Minister made a statement confirming the intention of the Government to introduce legislation on the subject of price control of petrol, because the oil combines were making excessive profits and declined to absorb the recent sales-tax on petrol but passed it on to the consumers, and because Government had at present no powers to look into the accounts of the oil companies in order to ascertain if they were not profiteering and also driving out competitors by unfair rate-wars. In his letter to the *Bombay Chronicle* of the 18th August Mr. Mulji Tulsidas gave figures, which, if true, confirm the conclusions of the Bombay Finance Minister and Prof. S. R. Davar that the oil companies operating in Bombay have practically formed a formidable combine and were exploiting the consumer by high prices and were effectively keeping out competition by means of unconscionable rate-wars. According to Mr. Tulsidas, the Burma-Shell Group operating in India sold petrol at Re. 1-5-6 per gallon before 1932, when the W. I. C., a purely Indian firm, came into existence. Promptly the Burma-Shell Group brought down its price to 15 as. per gallon! When this step crippled the W. I. C., the Burma-Shell Group raised its price to Re. 1-2-0 per gallon. On the 27th July, when the W. I. C. imported 20,00,000 gallons of petrol, the Burma-Shell Group reduced its Bombay price to Re. 1-1-0 and at the same time raised its Calcutta price, where the W. I. C. does not operate, to Re. 1-3-0. If Mr. Tulsidas' figures are correct, it would appear that the Burma-Shell Group unconscionably exploited the Indian consumers and engaged in a rate-war to put out of action a rival competitor which happens to be an Indian concern. Such practices are not unknown in the field of commerce, but that does not mean that they should be suffered longer than necessary.

While State intervention in the interests of the consumer is justified and essential, we suggest that legislation should be preceded by a thorough investigation of the oil trade in all its aspects, including all the links in the chain from importation to retail distribution, and all kinds of oils, such as kerosene and crude oils besides petrol.

It is a pity that the Bombay Government consulted only some oil companies and not all parties interested in the matter. As the Finance Minister himself stated, the last official investigation was as long ago as 1928, when the Tariff Board published its report on the Oil Industry. An equally comprehensive and more up-to-date enquiry might well precede any fresh legislation on the subject. The problem is not limited to the Bombay Province, but it applies to the whole of India. There is no reason to suppose that it is more acute or urgent in Bombay than elsewhere. It should, therefore, be tackled on an all-India scale. The Government of India, and, failing it, all the Provincial Governments, should combine in organising the investigation, and as far as possible follow a uniform policy. At any rate, such co-ordination ought to be more easy in all the Congress Provinces. Speaking at the informal meeting of the British-Burma Petroleum Co., Ltd., in Bombay on the 17th August, Mr. M. A. J. Noble, one of the directors of the Company, is reported to have said that oil products were world products and that it was not possible for a Government to fix their maximum and minimum prices which were governed by world prices. If this is true to any extent, it will be far more difficult for a single Provincial Government to act than for all the Governments in India, including the Indian States.

The problem is not one merely of fixing maximum and minimum prices of petrol; it is not merely of ensuring a fair deal to the consumers and the dealers in India as well as to the producing companies. A monopoly is bad enough in all conscience, but a foreign monopoly is worse; and a foreign monopoly in such products of universal and essential consumption as petrol, kerosene and the crude oils is the worst possible. India is at the absolute mercy of foreign producers, and the failure of supply of these essential commodities will paralyse light and power services in India. It is desirable that India should achieve national self-sufficiency in the supply of these essential services.

In the first place, the foreign monopolists may attempt to defy or defeat the desire of the Government to regulate their commerce. They are now powerful in their combination, and will not hesitate to snuff out a competing rival. Govern-

ment will be enabled to bring these foreign monopolists to a reasonable frame of mind only when they demonstrate that they could do without them, if it came to the pinch. It may be necessary to promote a rival Government-controlled company and secure a rival source of supply of these essential commodities.

Considering the national importance of oil products, there is no reason why their importation and sale in India should not be undertaken by the State itself. If the Government of India is not willing to undertake it, the provincial Governments should be able to do so co-operatively. It would be a great advantage to the consumer if a national board purchased in bulk the needs of India in oil products and sold the same with a minimum margin of profit. The oil trade should be nationalised. It is easier to do so now than later when private vested interests will have grown greater.

But even the importation of oil products by a single central board for India is not enough. India must be made self-sufficient in the supply of power and light services. The possibilities of finding oil within the four corners of India should be vigorously pursued. Furthermore, indigenous substitutes for petrol and kerosene, etc., should be discovered and marketed. With the rapidly growing market in India, there will be room for imported as well as indigenous products.

Power alcohol from molasses seems to be a feasible substitute for foreign petrol. Then, there is electricity for power and light services. Electricity can be produced in India and need not be imported. Electrical machinery, however, has yet to be imported. The less India depends on foreign petrol, the better. In this connection, it is worthwhile to consider whether attention in India should be turned more to the production of electric cars rather than of motor cars. According to the *Hindu* of Madras of the 15th August, a rival of the motor car is the battery-driven electric car, of which Germany has already some 27,000. Italy and France and even England have gone in for the electric car. To the extent to which the electric car displaces the motor car in India, to that extent India will be free from pathetic dependence on foreign monopolists.

THE CAPE TOWN AGREEMENT

I

DURING the debates in the South African Assembly on the Asiatics (Land and Trading) Bill in May last the Cape Town Agreement came in for a great deal of criticism, and the suggestions were made that it should be terminated and that the Indian Agent-General withdrawn. Mr. J. H. Grobler said that the Agreement

was obsolete; it had become obsolete even in 1932; and it should, therefore, be formally terminated. Mr. G. H. Nicholls, who was a member of the second Round Table Conference and subsequently of the Asiatic Colonization Committee, not only advocated the termination of the Agreement, but even denied that it was still in operation! He said that the second

Round Table Conference in 1932 merely agreed to explore the prospects of Indian colonization, but did not renew the Cape Town Agreement of 1927. Dr. D. F. Malan, who, as the then Minister of the Interior, piloted the two Round Table Conferences of 1927 and 1932, affirmed that the second Conference renewed the Agreement in so many words and that it was in operation. But he, too, advocated its termination, and even blamed the present Government for not having terminated it earlier! The present Minister of the Interior, Mr. Stuttaford, made a somewhat enigmatic statement about the Agreement. He said, "Personally I should not like to say in public what I think about the Cape Town Agreement." But his earlier references to it in the debates hardly concealed his antipathy for it. Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr, on the other hand, urged that the spirit of the Agreement should be continued.

The critics of the Agreement averred that it had failed of its purpose, and urged that it should, in consequence, be terminated. They contended that it was a bilateral agreement, and that South Africa had fulfilled to the hilt its obligations, but the Indians had failed to fulfil theirs. It is necessary to examine these contentions. The critics insisted that the main, if not the sole, purpose of the Agreement was the repatriation of Indians from South Africa and that the uplift clause in the Agreement was contingent on the reduction of the Indian population to a given minimum. Mr. Nicholls said:

The attempt to establish limitation of the Indian population is the very core of our Indian policy. We have been prepared to deal very generously with the Indian population, provided it is limited to a given residue. Agreements which we have hitherto made have been based upon the attainment of a manageable residue. . . . The 1927 Agreement was based upon an anticipated reduction of the Indian population. It was expected that with the assistance, which would be given by the Indian Government in furtherance of the repatriation scheme therein adopted, we should be left with a residue to which the whole principle of the uplift provided in the Agreement would apply.

Dr. Malan confirmed this view when he said:

The kernel of that agreement was co-operation between the Government of India and the Government of the Union to get as many Asiatics as possible out of the country. . . . It was said then that there was one possible solution of the question above all other solutions, namely, to get as many Indians as possible out of the country. . . . The Government of India thereupon informed us, "If that is the solution which you are aiming at, we are prepared to discuss with you how we may be able to assist you in that regard." Discussions, thereupon, took place and an arrangement was come to as to the repatriation scheme, and the assistance which the Government of India rendered us in order to get Indians out of the country was the result of these discussions.

It could hardly be true that the Government of India would have sent a delegation to South Africa solely, or even primarily, to help the South African Government to get rid of as many Indians as possible from South Africa. No Indian Govern-

ment could have entered into any negotiations with the South African Government on that basis. As a matter of fact, that was not the basis of the Conference. Mr. Blackwell read out the relevant passages from Dr. Malan's own statement announcing the first Round Table Conference. It said:

The Government of the Union has impressed on the Government of India that public opinion in South Africa will not view with favour any settlement which does not hold out a reasonable prospect of safeguarding the maintenance of Western standards of life by just and legitimate means. The Government of India are prepared to assist in exploring all possible methods of settling the Asiatic question, and have offered to enter into a conference with the Union Government for the purpose.

There is here absolutely no mention of the Government of India acknowledging that the "one possible solution of the question above all other solutions" was the reduction of the Indian population in the Union, nor any offer on their part to assist the Union Government in that regard. Even the Union Government suggested only the maintenance of Western standards of life by just and legitimate means as the solution. The Joint Communique, issued simultaneously by the Union Government in South Africa and the Government of India in India after the conclusion of the Round Table Conference, stated that the two Governments "agreed to hold a Round Table Conference to explore all possible methods of settling the Indian question in the Union in a manner which would safeguard the maintenance of Western standards of life in South Africa by just and legitimate means."

Nor do the conclusions of the Conference itself justify Dr. Malan's thesis. The very first operative clause in the Joint Communique said:

Both Governments re-affirm their recognition of the right of South Africa to use all just and legitimate means for the maintenance of Western standards of life.

The second clause ran as follows:

The Union Government recognises that Indians domiciled in the Union, who are prepared to conform to Western standards of life, should be enabled to do so.

The third clause began as follows:

For those Indians in the Union who may desire to avail themselves of it, the Union Government will organise a scheme of assisted emigration to India or other countries where Western standards are not required.

And the fourth said:

The Government of India recognise their obligations to look after such emigrants on their arrival in India.

In the face of these very clear and unambiguous provisions, it is inconceivable that anybody, least of all Dr. Malan, should pretend that the "kernel" of the Cape Town Agreement was the reduction of the Indian population by assisted emigration. On the other hand, the kernel was the maintenance of Western standards of life in

South Africa, and the duty of the South African Government to enable the Indians who were prepared to do so to conform to these standards. The more sincerely and zealously the South African Government carried out this primary obligation and the Indians responded to it, the less the occasion for the use of the assisted emigration scheme. *The greater the success of the Agreement, the greater the assimilation and the less the repatriation.*

In the very speech in which Dr. Malan contended that repatriation was the kernel of the Agreement he admitted that it was a secondary contingency. It applied only to those who *could not and did not wish to adopt Western standards of life or wished to leave South Africa anyhow.* He said :

I imagine, however, that the position may be cleared up if I say that the Cape Town Agreement drew a line between those Indians who *did not assimilate themselves with conditions in South Africa, who could not or would not accept the Western civilisation or who still wished to leave South Africa and return to India because they would feel more at home in Indian surroundings—between those and other Indians, especially those who were born in South Africa and who had never known India. The Cape Town Agreement differentiates between those two. (Italics ours.)*

Under the Agreement the first alternative was assimilation to Western standards; it was an *obligation* on the South African Government and a *choice* to the South African Indians. Even those Indians, who, in spite of the efforts of the Union Government, could not or would not accept Western standards, were under no obligation to leave South Africa; they were free to stay on. On the other hand, the assisted emigration scheme was available not only to those who could not and would not adapt themselves to Western standards and therefore wished to leave South Africa, but also to those who could and would adopt the standards but nevertheless preferred for some reason to leave South Africa.

Nor is there any warrant in the Cape Town Agreement for Mr. Nicholls' view that the uplift clause was *contingent* on the reduction of the Indian population to a given or manageable residue. Even if, as Mr. Nicholls contends, repatriation were the primary object of the Agreement, it was nowhere stated to what extent the Indian population in South Africa should be reduced before the uplift clause could be invoked. As a matter of fact, all evidence goes to show that, in the *first* instance, Indians were to be enabled to conform to Western standards of life, and only those who for any reason wished to leave South Africa were to be assisted to do so. It was not the case of emigration first and uplift last, but of uplift first and emigration last. It was no doubt true that the South African Government's solution of the Indian problem was repatriation and segregation, but the Government of India's solution was assimilation. They finally agreed to this: *assimilation first, emigration last but segregation never.*

II

While the Round Table Conference made the maintenance of the Western standard of life the kernel of the Cape Town Agreement, it did not define the standard. Nor did it describe what the Indian standard was and how it differed from the Western standard and how the Indians were to be enabled to conform to the Western; nor did it suggest the means by which to test if the Indians had conformed to the Western standard. Inasmuch as the Indians were to be enabled to conform to the Western standard, there was a presumption that there were two standards. And, what was more important, there was an admission that *Indians could conform to the Western standard of life, whatever that may mean, and that their biological and racial characteristics did not stand in the way of assimilation.* It was obviously left to each Indian to decide whether he or she conformed to the Western standard of life, or whether he or she would and could do so, if enabled by the Government. It follows, therefore, that all those Indians who decided to stay in South Africa were satisfied that they had already conformed to the Western standard of life, or would and could do so, if assisted by the Government.

Since the objective of the Agreement was to enable the Indians to conform to the Western standard of life in South Africa and since the positive constructive provision in it was the uplift clause, it may be presumed that the uplift clause was the means to achieve the objective, viz., enabling Indians to conform to the Western standard of life. The uplift clause asked for the extension of educational facilities, for better housing, for the application of the principle of equal wage for equal work, for facilities for industrial apprenticeship and for the liberalisation of licensing laws and the provision of judicial safeguards against discriminations. It is not obvious that there is anything in these which is characteristic of the Western standard of life and which differentiates it from any other standard. In any event, in so far as they constitute the Western standard of life, all Indians in South Africa ask for nothing better than to be enabled to conform to it. Their sole complaint is that, far from being enabled to conform to it, they are being prevented from doing so.

If the Cape Town Agreement has not, in so many words, defined the Western standard of life, some members of Parliament expressed their views on the subject. For instance, Mr. Nicholls said that the difference between Western and Indian standards was due to "the complete difference in racial outlook." No individual can change his race. But, according to the Agreement, Indians could conform to the Western standard, which postulates that they can do so in spite of the relative immutability of their racial characteristics. Mr. O. R. Nel said :

Nobody can deny that Asiatic culture and Asiatic methods of living, the food they eat and their outlook

are totally different from ours, and the Asiatics have a totally different religion. . . . Our religion is as wide apart from that of the Asiatic as the north pole is from the south pole, and the Asiatic mode of living is entirely different from ours.

Referring to the assimilation of the Coloured community some years ago, Dr. Malan had thus indicated what he evidently meant by the Western standard :

The Coloured people have adopted the white man's civilization. They dress the same and eat the same food as the Europeans, and also live in brick houses, and support their own church and send their children to school.

It will be highly interesting to examine if any of the criteria mentioned above is a constant characteristic of the Western standard, or whether there are greater variations within each of the Western and the Indian standards than between the two. If living in brick houses, sending children to school and supporting their own churches, Hindu, Muslim or Christian, constitute the Western standard, it can hardly be doubted that Indians in South Africa have already conformed to it, or will enthusiastically do so, if not hindered but helped. It is very doubtful if the Agreement contemplated that all Indians should conform to the religion of Mr. Nel in order to conform to the Western standard. The Jews are supposed to have the Western standard, notwithstanding that they are not Christians. And Christianity itself is not Western. In any event, Mr. Nel did not offer to assimilate Indian Christians and repatriate only Indian non-Christians. Notwithstanding that the Cape Malays are Asiatics in race and Muhammadans in religion, Dr. Malan himself said of them that "they will never be regarded as Asiatics" and "the Government will always try to give the Malays a higher status than what they have, and that is equal rights with the white man."

Mr. S. C. Quinlan, who did not pause to define the Western standard of life, thought that Indians did not come up to it. He said :

Although they (Indians) have grown richer materially, they have generally not come up to the Western standard of civilization spoken of by the hon. member for Piquetberg (Dr. Malan) and the test laid down by him.

He added however :

When I say that, I do not want to dogmatise. I do not think that it is so in all cases, but it is generally the case.

Mr. Nicholls, who took a racial view of civilization and standard of life, said :

Most of the Hindus living in Natal today have their feet in two civilizations, the East and the West. Their children are being well-educated. Their capacity for education may be judged from the fact that not only are they being educated in European methods and in our own education, but they are also being educated during their spare hours, after school, in the vernacular. They retain a pride in their Eastern heritage.

He added, however, that :

Though they are adapting themselves to the European environment, they remain essentially different. More and more they are evolving their own economic life. They are leaving the avocations of their fathers. . . .

On the showing of Mr. Nicholls himself, it is clear that, if the standard of the Indians in South Africa was essentially different from the Western, it is equally different from that of their forefathers who came from India or of Indians in contemporary India. Mr. D. B. Moltano emphasised this point when he said :

I have listened carefully throughout this debate for any real philosophical justification of a measure of this kind. We are dealing with a people who, we are told, have a lower standard of life, and yet when it comes to repatriation it is admitted that the standard of life in India is much lower than they are accustomed to here. So they are caught between the two: their standard of life is too low for the West and too high for the East, the obvious implication being gradually they are being absorbed into Western economy and Western civilization.

Mr. Moltano turned the tables when he said of Indians :

I may add also that we are dealing with people who in their own country have had Western institutions of self-government applied to them, and they are now in operation. We are dealing with a people whose home-land is a country in which Western ideas of democracy are making progress, and we, on the other hand, are putting the clock back.

As a matter of fact, a number of individuals who have racial characteristics in common have not a single standard of life in common also. Uniformity of standard can co-exist with differences in races, and a variety of standards can exist within the same race. Mr. Kentridge pointed out that as members of the same race rise in economic status and standard, they tend to separate themselves from other members of the same race — Englishmen from Englishmen, Afrianders from Afrianders and Jews from Jews. And it is the same with the Indians also, as Mr. Madeley observed :

Who wants to get into the European community? Which portion of the Indian community is it that desires to get into the midst of the Europeans? It is only the trading and advanced financial classes of the Indian community who want to get amongst the Europeans, and it is not the mass of Indians.

The European community is not immune from such situations. Mrs. Ballinger said :

I would point out that there is friction in communities where Europeans are a homogenous block. People, even Europeans, resent the intrusion into their area of people of a lower level in the social scale, largely because it not only tends to annoy, but it reduces property values. That extends all through the economic life in Western countries.

There is, however, no proposal to segregate the poorer Europeans from the richer, those who have lower standards from those who have higher within the same race.

P. KODANDA RAO

Reviews

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

CENT PER CENT. SWADESHI OR THE ECONOMICS OF VILLAGE INDUSTRIES.

(Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad.) 1938. 22cm.

212 p. Re. 1-8-0.

THIS is a collection of articles that were contributed to the 'Harijan' by Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers Mahadeo Desai, Pyarelal, Kumarappa and others. The object of the publishers in bringing out this volume is to elucidate the programme and principles of the All-India Village Industries Association. But they have achieved something more. They have given us a book containing the economic philosophy of Mahatmaji. The readers will have no difficulty in discovering that this book is a sequel to, and elaboration of, the 'Hind-Swaraj'.

Mahatmaji's economics has centred round the spinning wheel and now it is extended to the village industries. This is not, however, a fundamental change and his economics is therefore branded as the *charkha* economics. To many this economics seems to be rather too narrow, unscientific and primitive. May be so; his economics has the redeeming feature of being intensely humane. His social philosophy is at once realistic and is based on the conditions peculiar to India and is therefore better suited to the genius of her people than all the exotic economics and philosophy that we are accustomed to. His constructive programmes—khadi, Harijan work, Rural uplift—etc.—are no mere dreamy visions, nor mere political stunts often providing convenient strategic vantage ground for retreat from frustrated political activities. They represent the very core of his philosophy.

Village industries constitute the next logical step from the spinning wheel, and the All-India Village Industries Association is but the natural sequence to the All-India Spinners Association. This, however, means neither the suppression of the *charkha* nor the exclusion of all other economic activities. To Mahatmaji the village is the centre of Indian life and culture and the revival of village life as the immediate task pervades all his thoughts and programme of activities. "I have been saying" writes he, "that if untouchability stays, Hinduism goes; even so would, I say that if the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India. Her mission in the world would get lost" (p. 5). In this work of reviving the rapidly declining village life, first came the spinning wheel in 1918, and then the revival of the village industries in 1933, Harijan work and the village work in all its comprehensiveness slowly came in. Thus the programme of Gandhiji has comprehended gradually and touched all spheres of Indian life. Yet the *charkha* is the main stay and the centre of the Gandhian system. Now what exactly is the meaning of this cult of the *charkha* is a question answered in this book; though it ostensibly attempts to make out a case for the village industries as opposed to mechanised and factory industries.

The *charkha* is symbolic of Mahatmaji's philosophy. In the realm of politics it stands for "Swaraj" which means complete independence from alien control and full economic independence (p. 97). It stands for non-violence and truth; and for non-aggression. It abhors violence and discountenances all power-politics. It represents the peculiar Gandhian pattern of anarchism based on self-discipline, self-reliance and self-sufficiency of the individual. It is peculiar for incorporating in itself the apparently incompatible ideologies. It recognises dictatorship, not military dictatorship, but the leadership of the servants who use persuasion and not force in the task of organising society (p. 118). It stands for the non-violent freedom (p. 64) but permits centralisation, not centralisation of administration, but centralisation of thought, ideas and scientific knowledge (p. 31). It emphasises the importance of the self-sufficiency of the individual and the village; and yet recognises the need for international exchanges. But the urge for the international intercourse should not be based on the economic necessity for a market or colonies for raw materials; nor should it be a form of veiled economic imperialism, but it should be for a genuine international understanding (p. 138). In the sphere of economics the *charkha* is not a symbol of poverty, its advocate does not worship *Daridrarayan*. It stands for an economy of self-sufficiency and plenty. But its ideal of self-sufficiency is not of the type of the Nazis or the Fascists who have developed the megalomania of economic nationalism. The ideal of plenty that the *charkha* represents is not of the American pattern of abundance which necessarily involves the wanton destruction of wealth produced (p. 139) but its aim is to create plenty of work for the people and thereby to provide plenty of the material means of enjoyment of life for one and all. The *charkha* has no contempt for science. It accepts machines, mechanical power and inventions provided they do not result in the degradation and exploitation of man by man. Socialism based on industrialism has no fascination for this *charkha*-philosopher. Yet he claims to be a socialist and calls his socialism, the socialism of the spinning wheel (pp. 97-98). It implies firstly work for all and therefore bread for all, secondly production for use rather than for profit. Thirdly a proper apportionment between work and leisure. He is not lured by leisure that machinery if employed can create. The problem in India, as he sees it, is the existence of enforced idleness of millions and not the need for leisure. Excessive unused leisure is considered to be a source of social menace. The employment of dead machines in the name of science will leave the human machines unemployed and thus will create new problems without solving the old ones. Fourthly the *charkha* implies production for the masses instead of mass-production which even under socialism can at best substitute State capitalism for private capitalism and which cannot solve the problems of industrialism. Lastly, it implies cent per cent swadeshi. Gandhiji denounces the swadeshim of the Indian millowners and all the recent attempts to dump foreign industries in this country in the swadeshi guise of "India Ltd." His definitions of swadeshi (p. 5) and of Indian Industry (p. 66) bring out the social, ethical, political and economic import of his programme of the spinning wheel and the village industries. Through them he will work his socialism without violence, (p. 98).

These are days of slogans coined by politicians and vested interests. We hear often of "Swadeshi" "Rapid industrialisation", "Rationalisation of industries," "Socialism", "Protection" and so on as the immediate need of this country. But these prescriptions perhaps deal with the symptoms and not with the disease of our country. They are often vague; and they lack the sense of reality, not to speak of their practicability or desirability. They are in some cases the illusions of modern specialism, or the obsessions of experts, and sometimes they are rallying war-cries of vested interests in this, our acquisitive society. Readers of this book will stand to benefit a great deal, for they will be placed on their guard if they examine and accept the definitions and implications of the most current concepts of the day such as "Swaraj", "Swadeshi," Indian Industry, Machinery, Socialism, Work, Leisure, Village Work etc. which can be found in this book. Besides, there is food for thought for all economists and politicians if they keep an open mind on a number of problems like crisis, employment, production, distribution and a host of other things. The whole book should create a re-awakening.

K. S. VENKATARAMAN

BHULABHAI DESAI

SPEECHES OF BHULABHAI J. DESAI.

1934-38. (Natesan & Co., Madras.) 1938. 24cm
615p. Rs. 3-8-0.

THIS is a beautifully printed and handsomely bound volume of sixty-six speeches of Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Congress leader in the Central Legislature. Fourteen of these speeches were delivered on public platform and fifty-two on the floor of the Assembly. Mr. Desai is a late comer in public life and in Congress politics as can be easily seen from the fact that all these speeches were made during the last four or five years. It would be unfair to compare this volume with similar volumes containing speeches and writing of Gokhale or Mehta. Mr. Desai's speeches are characterized by legal acumen and robust commonsense. They lay claim to no literary excellence. They do not take their readers to the aetherial atmosphere of passion or imagination. Nor is it Mr. Desai's effort to do so. He plants his feet firmly on ground, and there he would like to meet his opponent, be he armed with whatever weapon of offence or defence. Sober, serious, subtle and argumentative, Mr. Desai almost imperceptibly demolishes the case of his opponent and wins the verdict in his own favour. He wields the burden of Congress leadership in the Assembly with a conscious dignity which adds to the weight of his arguments and now and then brings fire to the coldness of his logic. As he himself has more than once admitted, he is no scholar. But he possesses what most professional scholars lack, breadth of outlook and detachment, intellectual and temperamental. This broad, detached outlook is, in our opinion, Mr. Desai's chief claim to greatness. Where his Con-

gress commitments are not at variance, Mr. Desai's approach to questions of importance does great credit to his personality. According to Mr. Desai, Nationalism, Democracy and Secularism are the distinguishing characteristics of a modern state. "It is impossible to imagine that any state could be built up or any patriotism could grow if you mix up religion with politics" (p. 567). It is refreshing to hear this from Mr. Desai, the Congress leader: "It is a matter for you to deeply consider whether the time has not arrived to recognize that patriotism cannot grow on any other basis except that of nationalism, except that of attachment to the earth that has given you birth. If you are men and women enough to understand anything at all, I enjoin you in the name of what is accepted in every land that the only basis of your future state is the basis of genuine nationalism with a secular state as the basis of it" (pp. 569-70). Being a firm believer in democracy, Mr. Desai naturally gives first place to U. S. America "as an example of the best democratic expression of a modern state" (p. 568). In sharp contrast with U. S. America stands the Germany of today. But Mr. Desai declares that he is "one of those who believe that in less time than you imagine the present Nazism and Hitler's authority would have been found to have served their purpose and the German republic of the future will consist of men and women, drilled though they were as human elements, superior in character physically, intellectually, spiritually" (p. 571). This optimism of Mr. Desai, this faith in the ultimate destiny of things does great credit to his heart and proves that he will be no party, if left to himself, to the introduction of Nazi or Fascist methods in Indian politics even as a temporary measure.

A.

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