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Editor : S. G. VASU

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## Topics of the Week

### Congress Premiers' Conference

LAST week was held in Poona a conference which was attended by most of the Congress Prime Ministers and was presided over by Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel. The object of the Conference was to enable the Congress Prime Ministers to exchange notes regarding the progress made in each province in implementing the Congress policies and to co-ordinate them. The Conference did not pass any resolutions formally, though it discussed several questions of public importance, particularly from the point of view of practical administration. From the brief official bulletins issued it would appear that the Conference considered such questions as the achievement of complete prohibition within the next year, the emancipation of Harijans, labour legislation, and the settlement of labour disputes, the development of industries, particularly the textile, handloom and sugar industries, and scouting. Conferences of this kind are most useful in promoting uniform and coordinated policies all over the Congress provinces and prevent inter-provincial rivalry or lag. It is to be hoped, however, that the result of such coordination will not be to slow down the pace of the more forward provinces but to accelerate the pace of the less forward ones.

BUT the most important question which naturally engaged the attention of the Conference was the international situation and the policy of India in case of war. The policy was very recently laid down by the Working Committee, and it was not, therefore, open to the Conference to evolve a new policy so much as to discuss the procedure to be followed in implementing the old one. No authoritative statement was issued as to the decisions, if any, of the Conference on the interna-

tional situation. Press gossip has it, however, that the Wardha resolution of non-cooperation with the Government of India and Great Britain was adhered to, and that the Ministers would refuse to carry out the instructions of the Government of India. The reason seems to be that the Provincial Ministers are not responsible for the policies of the Government of India adopted over their heads, and would not, therefore, be able to defend them as their own before the Indian electorates to whom they owe allegiance.

It is clear that the moment war is declared and the Governor-General declares an emergency, the Government of India will become the supreme and undivided administrative organ in India, and provincial autonomy will be greatly attenuated, if not wholly superseded. The Provincial Ministers will only have the choice of being the instruments of the autocratic Government of India or of quitting their posts. The question here is not so much of the righteousness or otherwise of the war policy of the Government of India as of the responsibility for taking it. The Provincial Ministers have no constitutional responsibility for deciding such a question. Even their moral responsibility does not seem to have been acknowledged by the Government of India. In the circumstances the position of the Ministers will at best approximate to that under the discredited system of dyarchy. They could carry on, after openly disowning their responsibility for the war policies. It would appear, however, that the Congress Premiers would not be content to declare their constitutional non-responsibility, nor resign their offices either, but would continue in office and actively non-cooperate, thus compelling the Governors to dismiss them. It has since been reported that the Congress Working Committee has been called together to review the situation.

### Muslims and War

WHILE the Muslim Premiers of the Punjab and Bengal and Sir A. H. Ghuznavi, President of the Central National Mohammedan Association, Calcutta, have made fervent appeals to the Muslims of India to rally round England in case of war, notwithstanding the grievances of Indian Muslims against England, and the two Premiers hoped that the Council of the Muslim League which met in Delhi the day after their appeals, would endorse their views unequivocally, the Council of the League was faced with a resolution moved by Sir Currimbhoy Ibrahim that the Indian Muslims should, in view of their grievances, both internal and external to India, against the British Government, non-cooperate with the British Government in case of war! Finally, after much debate, the amend-

ment moved by Sir Haji Abdulla Haroon was passed which, after enumerating the grievances of Indian Muslims, said that, if the British Government wished to have the co-operation of Indian Muslims, it should immediately concede their demands, which, however, the Council thought it was premature to determine at the moment. Meanwhile, the Council wished to consult opinion in Islamic countries with a view, evidently, to create a pan-Islamic Front. Final decision was left to the Working Committee should a contingency arise. Thus, far from endorsing the opinions of the Muslim Premiers, the Muslim League took a *non-possimus* attitude and put off the evil day of having to take a decision. There was even a proposal to censure Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Punjab Premier, for his statement of Muslim policy!

### The Communal Award

THE fourth session of the All-India Anti-Award Conference was held last week-end in Calcutta to protest against the so-called Communal Award, including the Poona Pact, which now forms part of the current constitution. Such eminent persons as Sir Manmanath Mukerjee, ex-chief Justice of Bengal, Sir N. N. Sircar, ex-Law Member of the Government of India, Sir P. C. Ray, Mr. Syam Prasad Mukerjee, ex-Vice Chancellor of the Calcutta University, were among those who took part in the Conference, which was presided over by Mr. M. S. Aney, M. L. A. It is well-known that Hindus as a whole and in particular of Bengal, and the Nationalist Muslims and the Indian Christians, particularly the Protestants, have all along been opposed to the system of separate electorates. Special interest attaches to the speech at the Conference of Prof. H. C. Mukerjee, the President of the All-India Conference of Christians. Though belonging to a minority community, he cordially supported the abolition of separate electorates altogether. If, however, other minorities asked for and were content with reservation in joint electorates, he would ask for the same for the Indian Christians. If, on the other hand, other communal minorities were given separate electorates and weightages, he would claim the same for the Indian Christians. He was, however, willing to join in a crusade against separate electorates and hoped that Indian Christians would soon form part of the general electorate.

NOTHING can be a stronger condemnation of the Communal Award, particularly as it applies to Bengal, than that of Lord Zetland himself when he was a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee and before he became the Secretary of State for India. His Lordship had said:

It is one thing to concede separate communal electorates for the purpose of giving a minority reasonable representation in various legislatures; it is entirely a different thing to employ the system for the purpose of conferring upon a majority community in any particular province a permanent majority in the legislature unalterable by any appeal to the electorate. Such a course has never hitherto been adopted. It was considered and rejected by the Statutory Commission.

As regards Bengal, His Lordship added:

When the relative position of the two communities in Bengal in everything except actual numbers is taken into account, it will be seen that the reasons against placing the Hindu community in a position

of permanent statutory inferiority in the legislature are particularly strong.

SUMMING up the operation of the Award, Sir M. N. Mookerjee said:

We find that the working of the Award has been even more disastrous than that foreshadowed by the British Premier. We have today legislative and administrative measures frankly conceived in the interests of the majority population; nay more, for the purpose of humiliating and crushing the minority which is admittedly more intellectual, more politically minded and contributes a very much more proportionate amount to the public funds. Indeed, so far as my Province is concerned the attempt is frankly to rob Peter to pay Paul.

It is one thing, however, to condemn the Communal Award; it is quite another to find ways and means to get it modified. On this aspect of the matter, special value attaches to the opinion of Sir N. N. Sircar, who till the other day was the Law Member of the Government of India. He said:

I do not want to mislead the audience by suggesting that it is easy to get the Act in relation to the communal decision changed. Indeed, I realise it is a matter of great difficulty.

He, however, added the significant words:

But I cannot accept the position that a change is impossible, or that it is more difficult than securing the modification of any other important provision of the Statute.

THERE is the rub. If the Communal Award can be modified, so can the other equally obnoxious provisions of the Act. It is not less difficult to modify the Award than some other provisions. If India can forge sanctions strong enough to modify the one, she will be in a position to obtain swaraj fashioned by herself. But how to forge the necessary sanctions? Mr. Aney deplored the official attitude of the Congress towards the Award and suggested that the Congress Ministries should put of maximum constitutional pressure on the British Government, which would not find it easy to resist. Here again, it may be asked why, if the maximum constitutional pressure of the Congress Ministries will be strong enough to bring about a modification of the Communal Award, it should not be applied, in the first instance, to the wholesale modification of the Constitution itself? The Congress has not concealed its abhorrence of the Communal Award as of several other provisions of the Act. All that can be said is that, while the Congress has not worked the other obnoxious provisions of the Constitution, it is working the Communal Award in the Provincial sphere. But that criticism can be made even against the Congress working the Montagu Constitution, particularly the present central legislature with its communal electorates and weightages. If the Congress were to have nothing to do with communal electorates, the only alternative was and is to boycott the Constitution altogether. But that course, which was followed for some time, was ultimately given up in favour of working the Constitution.

IT is very embarrassing and unfortunate that at the very moment when the Anti-Award Conference was asking the Congress Ministries to

create a crisis to persuade the British Government to modify the Award, the Council of the Muslim League in Delhi was asking for the extension of the communal electorates to local bodies as well! The nationalists have to fight on two fronts at the same time; the British imperialists and the Muslim communalists.

#### Meaning of Roosevelt's Gesture

The notice served by the U. S. A. Government on Japan of its intention to terminate the Treaty of Commerce of 1911 was interpreted almost everywhere as the adoption by President Roosevelt of a retaliatory policy against Japan's aggression on China. The action may have, in the President's mind, an element of economic sanctions against an aggressor, but a Washington correspondent points out in the *Manchester Guardian* that it may as well have been inspired by natural domestic economy and may not have any motive of an international or political nature. He says:

For years we have been exporting to Japan our natural resources and raw materials we need ourselves or will need in the future, and have received in return little of lasting value. The absurdity of an industrial nation exporting its raw materials in exchange for things that are not really needed has at last been understood even by those who in the past made money profits out of the trade with Japan. When conservative chambers of commerce, liberal middle-of-the-roads, and radical liberal leaders for perhaps various reasons see alike on a subject and call for the same thing, action should not be wholly unexpected.

It may well be that President Roosevelt timed this action so as to give what was desired by all an appearance of a gesture against Japan's aggressive adventure in China, but we should do well not to build two high hopes upon America's resolve to resist unprovoked aggression.

#### Assam Agricultural Income-Tax Bill

THE Assam Agricultural Income-Tax Bill, passed by the joint session of the Legislature on 3rd August, received the assent of the Governor on 18th August and has become law. This is very satisfactory news, as there was some doubt whether, the principal industry affected by the tax being the tea industry mostly in the hands of the European planters, the Governor would not withhold his assent or at least reserve the Bill for the signification of His Majesty's pleasure. The planters perhaps expected some such action on the part of the Governor as that alone would account for the passionate opposition that they offered to the Bill. Such expectations have, however, been disappointed. The passing of the Bill also disposes finally of the contention of the planters that the Dominion relief granted by the Income-Tax Act of the Central Government but denied by the Assam Bill was part of an agreement between India and the United Kingdom. The Assam Government took up the position, and quite rightly, that the relief was no part of the agreement, and that India, like some other Dominions, was free either to grant or refuse it. Relief should be sought in this particular case, the Assam Government stated, rather in the United Kingdom than in India. Whatever the merits of the case, Assam's right to refuse this relief has been accepted, and the assent by the Governor to the Bill is an index of the authority which a popular Ministry, strongly

supported in the Legislature, can wield under the new dispensation.

#### Nationalise Oil Trade

THE Western India Oil Distributing Company has issued a statement on the recent history of the trade-war in the petroleum products trade in India which makes out a *prima facie* case for the view generally held that the foreign oil combine has ruthlessly exploited the Indian consumer and is engaged in snuffing out its rival in the business by unconscionable rate-wars. The final truth can only be known when the oil combine issues its rejoinder and a committee has gone into the matter thoroughly. The statement refers to the action taken by the Governments of New Zealand and of Goa and in the U. S. A. in fixing the minimum as well as the maximum prices of petrol. In New Zealand the Motor-Spirits (Regulation of Prices) Act (No. 36 of 1933) was passed in 1933 to confer express powers on the Governor-General with respect to the fixing of maximum and minimum selling prices of motor-spirits. According to the Year-Book of 1939, the wholesale minimum price in September 1937 was 1s. 7d. per imperial gallon and the maximum price was 1s. 11½d. in New Zealand currency. The retail prices were approximately 3d. per gallon higher. Nearer home, the Goa Government, according to the statement of the W. I. C., had to tackle the problem of monopoly profiteering. For a time the Government felt helpless, until a local company came forward to import oil and sell at prices fixed by the Government. The Government then felt bound to support the new firm, from being undercut by the foreign monopolist and took power to fix not only the maximum price but also the minimum, and fixed the price at Re. 1-4-0 per gallon, which the Government calculated as a fair price. The least that the Government of India or the Provincial Governments can do is to follow the example of the Governments of New Zealand and Goa.

BUT far better still is to nationalise the trade in petroleum products. There are several precedents for this policy even in England where marketing boards do the buying and selling of certain products. New Zealand provides other examples. In India itself Government are running several of the railways, all the telegraphs, and have a monopoly in salt. The increasing demand for nationalisation and municipalization of national industries and services shows the prevailing tendency. The purchase and sale of petroleum products by the State in India would in the circumstances appear to be the best solution. The imminence of war in Europe is bound to compel even the Government of India to undertake the control of prices of several products, even if petrol is not one of the first to be touched. Advantage of the present situation may well be taken to nationalise such a basic trade as that in petroleum products.

IF, however, the State fights shy of this step, the next best course is, as suggested above, to control both maximum and minimum prices. As far as minimum price is concerned, we repeat the suggestion we made some time ago that it should be left to the competing firms to bring down their prices, provided the minimum price is uniform throughout their jurisdiction and for a fairly long period. This will ensure that there shall be no unfair price-cutting with a view merely to oust a rival.

### "The Indian States"

A SMALL brochure of 27 pages entitled "The Indian States: Reform and Federation" has been published by the Indian Conciliation Group of London. In this short compass the constitutional position of the States *vis a vis* the British Government, the policy followed by the Paramount Power towards them, recent incidents in Rajkot, Jaipur and Orissa States, change in the Congress attitude to the States problem, etc. are clearly discussed. The British public will be greatly helped in understanding the realities of the problem by a perusal of this brochure. The principal point made therein

is the need for a policy of active intervention in the States' affairs by the Paramount Power. It says: "The view is now being very widely expressed in the whole of the Indian Press, and even in some British-controlled newspapers, that it is the duty of the Paramount Power to take more vigorous and constructive action in the small and backward States. It is being urged that the reputation of the Paramount Power and the interests of the great and progressive States are being injured by a non-intervention policy which is out of date and unsuited to the rapidly changing conditions of modern India."

## THE RUSSO-GERMAN PACT

**N**EVER was nation guilty of an act of greater perfidy than Soviet Russia when it entered into a pact of non-aggression with the very country against whose aggression it was engaged in negotiating plans of effective resistance. Instances are numerous of countries failing to implement their guarantees either because of their real or supposed unpreparedness to meet the threats of aggressors or because of a deliberate policy of pacifying the aggressors for the moment, hoping thereby to restrain their future aggression. The British Government's Munich policy is perhaps the most prominent of such instances. Here obviously both considerations were at work, and it cannot be doubted that the purpose of Munich, as certainly its effect, was to drive Russia into isolation. It was natural for Russia thereafter to mistrust Great Britain's intentions and to hesitate undertaking any definite commitments in the interests of collective security in Europe. In the recent speeches of MM. Stalin and Molotov this mistrust becomes plain. Russia felt that the Western Powers were only instigating Germany to attack the Ukraine so that they might themselves be left undisturbed in the west. M. Stalin in March last said to the Congress of the Communist Party: "This policy (of non-intervention) revealed an eagerness on the part of Great Britain and France not to hinder aggressors in their nefarious work, to let them embroil themselves in wars, especially if possible with the Soviet Union, with the ultimate object of exhausting the combatants and then stepping in with fresh forces 'in the interests of peace' and dictating their own terms... Germany was given Austria, then Sudetenland, after which lies were spread about the weakness of the Red Army, riots in the U.S.S.R. and so forth, as though to invite Germany to push further east and embroil her in a big war 'against Bolshevism'!" And he asked the Party "to be cautious and not to allow their country to be drawn into conflicts by war-mongers who were accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them."

Thus, while Russia's misgivings about the real intentions of the British Government were not devoid of some justification, the conclusion of a

non-aggression pact with Germany, leaving Great Britain and France high and dry in the midst of conversations concerning the building of an Anti-Aggression Bloc, had no moral justification whatever. For one thing, the British Government has definitely turned its back upon the policy, if at any time it had embraced such, of giving Germany a free hand in the east. Whether Britain would not again weakly agree to some unfair compromise on the question of Danzig or the Polish Corridor and bring off a second Munich peace was a matter about which Russia might well have entertained doubts, and the long-drawn negotiations on the triple guarantee appeared to everyone to be not without reason. In these negotiations one might feel that Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy has been slow and unsympathetic, but it cannot be asserted from what one knows about their progress that all the difficulties were not on one side and that Russia herself put forward demands which could not be agreed to without careful examination. Ultimately the only outstanding difference was whether the pledged common resistance to indirect aggression would not involve too great an encroachment upon the independence of States which did not require and would not accept a guarantee. The Soviet Government has latterly professed to stand for a comprehensive anti-aggression pact. But while such a wide-scale Peace Front was in process of construction, it leaves off the negotiations and arrives at a non-aggression pact with Germany, a country from which aggression is feared every moment against Poland. Herr von Ribbentrop, after signing the pact at Moscow, said of his chief's remarkable diplomatic success: "Russia was about to be brought into the encirclement front. The Fuehrer acted quickly and has kept Russia out." Russia has bought peace for herself at the cost maybe of destruction, of the independence of other countries. This is far more shameful than Munich.

M. Litvinov's dismissal from the post of Commissar of Foreign Affairs in the beginning of May had given rise to the suspicion that Russia had decided to retire into her shell, leaving all the other peace-loving countries to their own devices. M. Litvinov ostensibly was relieved of his charge

of foreign affairs "at his own request"; but it was widely feared that this signified Russia's going back upon her much advertised policy of pooled security. Miss Vera Dean in the issue of 15th July of the Foreign Policy Association's fortnightly journal says: "The resignation—or dismissal—of M. Litvinov, long identified with the cause of collective security as expressed in Soviet collaboration with the western powers through the League of Nations, indicated that Moscow had decided once again to play a lone hand in international affairs. What upset the calculations of many chancelleries was that the Soviet Government played its hand not in accordance with ideological concepts, which had hitherto been thought to shape Soviet foreign policy, but with what it regards as Russia's national interests. Whether national interests will dictate eventual co-operation with France and Britain—on Russia's terms—or a trade deal with Germany, which would place Soviet raw materials at the disposal of the Nazi war economy, will depend on the future course of events in Europe and the Far East as appraised by Stalin and his subordinates." When in the light of what has happened one looks back upon what was said by Russian statesmen one finds it difficult to resist the conclusion that Russia, while pouring cold water on uni-lateral or bi-lateral guarantee pacts and pressing for an all-in guarantee pact, was all the time watching her own national interests as a by-stander and as an aloof observer as to who would next fall a victim to the aggressive designs of the totalitarian States and intending to take no part in the encirclement of the aggressors provided her own integrity was not threatened. She satisfied herself that there was not much reality in the anti-Comintern talk; that it was possible to come to separate terms with Germany; and that it was best to do so and not involve herself in war for the defence of other countries. On the 31 May, M. Molotov, the Prime Minister and the new Foreign Minister, said in the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R.: "Not so long ago the rapprochement between Germany and Italy was camouflaged by the alleged necessity of a joint struggle against communism. In connection with this there was much talk about the 'anti-Comintern Pact.' This anti-Comintern fuss in its time played a certain part in diverting attention. Now this screen was no longer necessary, and there was not a word about the struggle against communism in the Italo-German Military Pact." Seeing that the Soviet regime was not the target of German attack, Russia decided

apparently to leave the other powers to their fate. To make her own position secure, she only thought it necessary to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany.

This is indeed a reversion to M. Stalin's policy since his break with M. Trotsky. Only for a year or two after the Revolution was Russia's foreign policy in consonance with the policy of bolshevism, which inspired the Revolution, of bringing about a world revolution in the capitalist States of Europe and establishing a world soviet republic on federal lines. But when these conscious efforts to light fires of revolution in every land failed miserably, it was borne in upon the Russian statesmen that it was necessary in this wicked world to live in peace, at least temporarily, with capitalist States. The attempt to sovietise the world was then halted and attention concentrated upon securing Russia's military security against external aggression by building a non-aggression system and maintaining thereby a barrier against aggression. Thus non-aggression pacts were concluded with the border States and with Turkey and Germany. In none of them was mutual assistance provided. Indeed, the Soviet set its face like flint against all agreements for help in the restraint of aggression. This explains its vehement opposition to the Geneva Protocol or to the Locarno Treaties, which involved collective coercion of a Covenant-breaking State. In order to offset Locarno, it made the Treaty of Berlin with Germany in 1926, on which the present disgraceful non-aggression pact is based. This Treaty "was regarded by Moscow as a definite blow at the structure of peace erected at Locarno." It is true that by its treaties with Turkey and Germany "the principal land and water routes for attack on the Soviet Union were virtually barred, by conventional stipulations, to potential enemies of the Soviet State." It was only after the rejuvenation of Germany under Herr Hitler and the accession of strength to Japan on the Far East that Russia came to favour collective security, because her own self-interest pointed that way; and it gave opportunities to M. Litvinov to talk big about collective resistance to aggression. But from what has happened recently it appears that the dictator in Moscow never changed the fundamentals of isolationist policy and was always willing to connive at aggression so long as the aggression did not affect Russia and possibly so long as Russia could not take effective action in revolutionising the capitalist States of Europe.

## CRIMINAL TRIBES OF BOMBAY

THE report of the Bombay Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee and its recommendations may be considered to be a step in the right direction by all those who are interested in the welfare of the so-called 'Criminal' Tribes.

Opinion will differ as to the very necessity of such a drastic Act as the Criminal Tribes Act, for it offends the very first principles of Civil Liberty, as it deprives those people of the common privileges and liberties of citizens. It brands an

entire community as 'criminal' for the lapses of a few individuals and leaves them so branded for generations. It is, therefore, condemned as an inhuman statute which has outlived its purpose and its continuance is considered as an outrage on civilized humanity. As, however, criminal tendencies are still found to exist in many of the tribes to a marked degree, the Committee has come to the conclusion that the need for maintaining the C. T. Act has not yet clearly disappeared. It recognises that the so-called 'Criminal' Tribes are not criminal in the sense that their criminality is necessarily hereditary or that no amount of attempt at improvement can alter their habits, and hopes that ultimately there should be no 'criminal' tribes as such. Its recommendations are, therefore, drafted as a step towards the end we all desire and in no sense are to be considered as the final word.

The total population of the Criminal Tribes in the Bombay Presidency to which the C. T. Act is made applicable by notification is 11,75,459. It does not mean that all the population of the tribes all over the Presidency is brought under the operation of the Act. When the Local Government finds that any tribe, gang or class of persons or any part of the tribe, gang or class is addicted to systematic commission of non-bailable offences, that tribe, gang or class is declared as a Criminal Tribe for the purposes of the Act. The above figure of the population of the Criminal Tribes includes such persons only. Once a tribe is declared to be a Criminal Tribe, its hard lot can be easily imagined, when we see the very drastic provisions in sec. 23 of the Act, to which it becomes liable. That section lays down that a member of a Criminal Tribe, having been convicted of any of the offences under certain sections of I. P. C., shall be punished with imprisonment for seven years on a second conviction and on a third and subsequent conviction with "*transportation for life.*" Its terrifying effect can easily be imagined; the Committee has rightly called it 'brutal' and has recommended the repeal of this section. A long awaited reform will thus be brought into effect when effect is given to the Committee's view.

The Committee found during its inquiry that notifications had been made indiscriminately and many tribes roped in quite unnecessarily under the Act. It has definitely recommended that Bagdis, Chapparbands, Futgudis, Kamnis, Katbus and Vanjaris be immediately denotified and freed from the operations of the Act, as they have shown definite improvement and can no longer be considered 'criminal.' The Committee has further asked the Government to examine the incidence of criminality among Berads, Kolis, Lamanis, Waddars and Waghris in order to see if these tribes also could not be denotified, as they have shown marked improvement in recent years. One has merely to glance at the figures of the population covered by these tribes to assess the importance of this recommendation. It will be found that the

population of tribes proposed for an examination for denotification numbers a total of about seven lakhs—more than fifty per cent. of the whole of the population—which is now liable to the provisions of the Act. It is now the first duty of the Government to see that these people are freed from the restrictions under the Act, if their criminality has gone down below a certain percentage, and it is hoped that there would be no undue delay in the matter.

Notifications under the Act have been issued indiscriminately and these poor people have been thus harassed, for no fault of theirs. Government have laid down a certain procedure before a notification is issued, but the Committee has found it to be defective. It has, therefore, recommended that a quasi-judicial inquiry should be held before a tribe is declared 'criminal' and that they should be given an opportunity to defend themselves. It would certainly have been far better if the Committee had suggested that those people might be allowed to be defended by outsiders, instead of merely allowing their leaders to defend themselves against the allegations of the police authorities. It is also found that the C. T. Act is treated by the police as an easy substitute for investigation into and proof of crimes against specific individuals under the ordinary criminal law. The Committee has certainly done well in insisting that the investigating authority must give reasons for its findings before a tribe can be chastised.

After a tribe is notified either the whole tribe or some persons from among it are registered, against whom there is a reasonable suspicion of having been concerned in the commission of non-bailable offences. Once a person is registered he is practically hounded all along whenever he goes; his movements are immediately restricted and he has to report himself to the Police Station at stated intervals. Registration, therefore, may be used by the subordinate police officers and Police Patels as a constant threat against the members of the notified tribe and would serve as an engine of oppression in their hands. The Committee has, therefore, now recommended that before a person is registered, the District Magistrate, or the registering authority, should make a careful scrutiny of evidence and should hold a quasi-judicial inquiry before coming to a decision. It is very necessary, here also, that the man should be allowed to be defended by an outsider, which has been debarred under the existing rules. The Committee, on the other hand, should have laid down certain minimum conditions to be fulfilled before a man could be registered, instead of allowing mere reasonable suspicion to be enough to fetter the man for his life. Until now every child below the age of 18 was exempt from being liable to registration; the Committee has, however, lowered the limit to 16 years—certainly a retrograde step for which no justification has been given by it. Government should better leave this reactionary amendment alone.

Once a member is registered, he has to submit to various restrictions including that of reporting himself at fixed intervals, of reporting any change in his residence and not to leave the place without a permit from the Police Patel or some other police officer. The power of varying the periods of giving roll call and partially or wholly exempting them from this onerous restriction is given to the District Superintendents of Police; but it has been found by the Committee on inquiry that this power is not at all adequately exercised by these authorities, with the result that the poor wretches continue to be under the restrictions owing to the negligence of those higher authorities. The Committee has quoted telling figures of persons of various tribes who should have been exempted from the roll call and freed from all restrictions. It is high time that Government takes a note of this negligence and gets those persons immediately free from those restrictions. The object of the restrictions such as roll call is to wean a man away from bad influences and give him no time to relapse into his old habits. It should, therefore, provide an incentive for betterment, and therefore there should be some adjustment when the intervals of the hazri, i. e. roll call, might be extended and the roll call itself ultimately cancelled. It is found that the Abeyance System now in vogue in Madras has worked well in this direction and the Committee has recommended a graded reduction in hazri with ultimate extinction after 5 years and a welcome relaxation in the rules about notifying absences. This automatic system, if brought into operation, should certainly remove the abuses that have come to light, and would prove a boon to the registered persons.

A registered person who has at least four convictions under certain sections of the I. P. C. or C. T. Act or has an aggregate conviction of 7 years is interned in a settlement with his dependents. He is to eke out his living and support his family by manual labour in the nearby town. The problem of employment of the settlers, therefore, is a very important one and on it depends the success of a settlement. Settlements have, therefore, been established in industrial centres such as Sholapur, Hubli, Ahmedabad, etc., where the settlers could easily get employment in mills, factories and workshops. It is not, however, easy to absorb all the settlement population in these industries and although the management is charged with finding employment for the settlers, unemployment is always rampant within these settlements, resulting in consequent crimes. The Committee has realised this glaring defect in the present organisation of the settlements and has recommended to the Government that a comprehensive scheme of running certain industries in these settlements should be worked out with the help of the Department of Industries and the settlers be employed in them. If these settlements are really to be industrial, Government must make an earnest attempt to

carry out this important recommendation. Much of the present discontent among the settlers will vanish if they are assured of such continuous employment, and it will have a very salutary effect on their conduct.

Settlers are discharged from the settlement to the "free" colony after a stated period. The 'free' colony is, however, a misnomer, as it consists of probationers released on license and not of really free men. The Committee has, therefore, recommended that such a colony should hereafter be called a "Probationers' Colony." It has also suggested that restrictions on the probationers residing there should be reduced to a minimum, so that they could lead a freer life and would be able ultimately to assimilate themselves in the general population, by behaving well and trying to get the restrictions removed by this means. If this experiment is tried it is bound to have a salutary effect both on the probationers as well as on the settlers themselves, for they will have the ultimate goal of freedom within their easy reach.

The discharge from the settlement on probation either to the free colony or to their village takes place in case of members of wandering tribes after they put in 8 years in the settlements and in case of others after 6 years. The Committee has found that discharges have not been as liberal as they should have been. The reason for this is not far to seek; it is to be found in the narrow interpretation of Settlement Rules No. 62 and No. 63, both by the management and by the Backward Class Officer. A settler is expected to be discharged from the settlement he has no disciplinary punishment to his credit during the last three years of his stay. It is found that trivial offences like a quarrel between a man and his wife is held as a sufficient cause for not recommending the discharge of the settler, because it leads to disciplinary action under the Settlement Rules. No more ridiculous reason can be found to intern a man for an indefinite period. The Committee has, therefore, laid down that only the more serious offences be taken into consideration when decision about discharge is to be taken. It has given its opinion that the present rules are elastic enough for a Criminal Tribes Settlement Officer to allow, in his discretion, to shorten the statutory period of 6 and 8 years, as the case may be. It has merely recommended that the system of discharge be exercised more generously than has been the case so far. Having recommended exemption of roll-call and even cancellation of registration in case of registered persons outside settlement under the new system of roll-call, it is really disappointing that the Committee should not have been generous enough to reduce the period of residence in a settlement, or should not have laid down certain definite conditions for easy discharges, instead of expressing a pious wish for a more generous policy. While the Committee was engaged in its deliberations, it is understood

that a circular was issued to the managers of the settlements by the then Backward Class Officer, stating that Government had decided to pursue a more liberal policy in the matter of discharges, and that recommendation should be made for the discharge of persons after they put in a *reasonable* period in the settlement. The word 'reasonable' was significant and it was generally believed that it did not mean the 'statutory' period, but a period less by a year or two. The circular was, however, never acted upon and it is curious that there should neither be a mention in the report of that proposed change in the policy nor even a reflection of it. It was confidently expected that the Committee would recommend some curtailment of the period, but it has belied those expectations. Perhaps the official view-point held ground in the matter. The Committee's recommendation in this respect has certainly not much to commend itself.

Out of the fourteen C. T. Settlements, Government themselves manage nine, and five were handed over to voluntary agencies for management. Of these five, three at Sholapur, Hubli and Baramati were under the management of Christian Missionary Societies, one at Belgaum under the Social Service League, Bombay, and one at Jalgaon, till recently, under the management of the Servants of India Society. The Committee has decided to recommend to the Government that all these should be taken over by Government for management, as it is found that they are less expensive under Government management.

As all the settlements would be taken over by Government, it would be easy for them to tackle the question of organisation of industries within the settlements. The Committee has recommended that the rigor of

administration be softened and all unnecessary restrictions removed. It is hoped that the new spirit envisaged by the Committee will be imbibed by the officers of Government and if the recommendations of the Committee are put into effect, the future of the Criminal Tribes will certainly be assured. This a first step which will lead eventually to a state of things in which there will be no 'Criminal' Tribes as such.

A very important matter, however, seems to have escaped the attention of the Committee. Sometimes, whole tribes or groups were placed in settlements, although some or many of them had not committed any crimes. Innocent persons have thus been interned in settlements and have been placed under severe restrictions for no fault of theirs. A question asked in the Bombay Legislative Assembly last year elicited the reply that there were 1,462 persons interned in settlements, who had not fulfilled the condition, mentioned in Rule 80, making persons liable to be interned in a settlement. Most of these persons have been interned in that way and it is high time that Government makes an inquiry into their cases and orders their immediate release. Government must see that the liberties of these poor men are no longer encroached upon. It is really surprising that the Committee, which has made certain desirable recommendations, should have justified and recommended the practice of interning a whole tribe in settlement. It is the most reactionary recommendation the Committee has made and pressure must be brought to bear on Government not to accept this recommendation; for it will perpetuate all the evils which the Committee has tried to eradicate.

## THOSE XB ENGINES

### V

IN their survey of the financial conditions, 1924-37, the Pacific Locomotive Committee say in paragraph 17 of their report: "During the... six years, 1924-25 to 1929-30, the Railways earned a surplus of Rs. 52½ crores. ... In 1930-31, however, ... there was a deficit. ... During each of the five years 1931-32 to 1935-36 deficits continued. ... In 1936-37 a small surplus of Rs. 1¼ crores was repaid to the Depreciation Fund. ... Naturally, as the result of the depression, which made itself felt in 1930, steps were taken to economise. ... These facts are related because we think that, if the matters on which we have been asked to report are to be viewed in their proper perspective, it should be borne in mind that the planning of the X class Pacific engines, and their operation and maintenance, belong in effect to two different periods of financial outlook." For this desideratum of 'proper perspective' a clear division is thus made

between the period of prosperity from 1924-25 to 1929-30 and the period of depression from 1930-31 to 1936-37. The Committee proved to their own satisfaction that the engines were designed, and the Railway Board were "committed" to obtain them in large numbers at a time when the spirit of optimism was abroad and greatly increased traffic was anticipated. What slender basis there was for all this ebullient optimism has already been made clear in our issue of August 3, 1939. We shall now concern ourselves with the period of depression which, it is subtly hinted, was at the root of all the trouble with these XB class engines. Logic (as common, i. e., non-technical, people understand it) and consistency and the same ardent desire for 'proper perspective' should have dictated to the Committee adherence to the same straightforward division of period, i. e., the one previously adopted by them. But this evidently would not suit their book, and for the osten-



able purpose of illustrating the change in the financial situation during the same period, 1924-37, they deliberately discard the previous division of two and instead manipulate it in three portions, viz., the first from 1924-25 to 1927-28 covering the period of pure undiluted comparative prosperity; the second from 1928-29 to 1931-32 which mixes together into a hybrid the end of the period of comparative prosperity and the beginning of the depression; and the third from 1932-33 to 1936-37 marked almost entirely by depression. Along these unnatural divisions, evidently adopted of set purpose, certain statistics are produced. A more woolly paragraph than paragraph 18 which deals with the question is difficult to find even in this elaborate mass of apologetics and innuendoes called 'Report.' No clear conclusion could of course be shown to emerge, any attempt to draw a definite conclusion being at once frustrated by vitiating factors which quickly spring to the mind. What a very sandy foundation these statistics are can be gleaned from the following sample extract from the same paragraph: "With regard to the very general nature of the maintenance figures, it is hardly necessary to say that care should be exercised in drawing conclusions therefrom; for instance, changing methods of accounting may affect comparisons. Besides covering ordinary fluctuations in the cost of materials, and unforeseen expenditure on account of breaches, we also understand that scales of pay and numbers of staff have varied materially, in respect of both track and engine upkeep. Examination of the former figures (item 6) shows an increase in the second period, followed by a proportionately greater decrease in the third, in spite of the increase in route mileage."

The figures for maintenance of track referred to in the extract as item 6 are Rs. 370 lakhs average per year in 1924-25 to 1927-28 and Rs. 427 lakhs in 1928-29 to 1931-32 and Rs. 352 lakhs in 1932-33 to 1936-37. The words "in spite of the increase in route mileage" are used to suggest that increase in route mileage necessarily means immediate increase in the cost of maintenance. This is a bold suggestion to make even for the experts of the P. L. Committee. Increase in route mileage means new lines built, and every mile of line newly built does not necessarily mean that the cost of maintenance is as high as on the older lines.

The first XB engines were brought into use in January 1928, that is, full two years before the depression made itself felt in 1930 and a still longer period before any retrenchment measures in connection with track maintenance could have had time to influence the behaviour of the engines so as to start the hunting reported in May 1928 and the disturbance of the track in June 1928. The whole foundation is so sandy that the Committee has been unable to show clearly and definitely that maintenance of track was at fault. All that the Committee has succeeded in doing

by adopting the unnatural division of the period is only to create a faint doubt in the mind of the reader that after all maintenance may be at fault, and this faint doubt of deliberate creation is the slender peg on which the Committee has dared to hang, 216 paragraphs later, in tones of comic (as it appears to us in the circumstances) solemnity a sermon on the necessity of adequate maintenance of track. The beauty of the sermon cannot be appreciated except by reading the exact words of the Committee. We quote from paragraph 233:

From what we saw of track, we were, on the whole... favourably impressed by the standards of maintenance; but the fall in expenditure is significant of the efforts being made towards retrenchment... We do not suggest that, up to the present, this policy (i.e. Government's financial policy) has impaired the efficiency of the Railways. But we feel that steps should be taken to guard against the conceivable development of a position whereby the allocation of adequate moneys to the Railways may be jeopardised. Indeed, it seems that already there may be some tendency towards too easily carrying economy beyond the limit, as based perhaps on theoretical, rather than on practical, considerations... Adequate maintenance of... track is of great importance. We feel, therefore, that it is our duty to draw the attention of the Government of India to the comparative ease with which false economy can be effected with perhaps misleading creditable results, and to the serious economic and psychological consequences of persistent financial pressure in this respect.

The Government of India is only too easily provoked to such expenditure by anything that comes from a Committee of railway experts. As an instance, we cull the following from the (now defunct) *Week* of June 14, 1928:

It will be recalled that the report of the Indian Railway Committee of 1920-21 was first published in England and weeks later in India; probably because it was particularly important at the time that the British people should be in possession of the report without delay and also because, although the report related to Indian railways, its recommendations were of more immediate interest to the British companies managing railways in India and also to those supplying material for Indian railways. The report is dated August 23, 1921, and was officially published in England on September 23, 1921. Meanwhile, probably by pre-arrangement, the Secretary of State for India had cabled out a summary of the recommendations of the Committee which was published in India on September 21, 1921. This summary itself was not quite intelligible except to those people who were actually in the know.

Within about two weeks of the publication of the summary, that is, on September 30, 1921, the Government of India, in hot haste, brought forward and got accepted by the Legislative Assembly a resolution recommending the appointment of a committee to consider the separation of railway from general finance and the requirements of railways in regard to capital expenditure for the next ten years. This committee, called the Railway Finance Committee, sat for five days in Calcutta in December 1921, and its report was published on December 17, 1921. While the Committee found itself unable to recommend separation of railway finance at the time, it felt so overwhelmed with evidence of the urgency of the immediate capital requirements of open lines, that it recommended that funds to the

extent of Rs. 150 crores should be provided for railway capital expenditure during the next five years, and that this sum should be devoted to rehabilitation and improvement of existing lines, to the completion of lines then already under construction and to such new lines as were urgently required for opening up new coal-fields. The Government of India placed these recommendations before the Assembly on March 27, 1922, and the Assembly confirmed them. During the quinquennium ending March 31, 1927, covered by the Rs. 150 crore programme, no less than Rs. 80 crores was spent on railway material imported from abroad, much to the benefit of foreign manufacturers and to the relief of foreign unemployment.

The whole fact of the matter is that the design of the engines was so faulty on its mechanical side that the mildest language could only describe it as border line design, while their capacity was determined by the designers without any the least regard to the known nature of the track on which they were destined to run, or as the Committee, with a soft corner for the designers, would say the capacity of the engines is materially ahead of the characteristics of the track. A judicial mind does not indulge in such mincing of words, especially where tragic consequences are involved, and Sir John Thom in paragraph 124 of his report plainly stated :

The attempt of the Mechanical Engineers to attribute the accident to weakness in the track has completely failed. The contention that the track distortion of which there have been many instances on the East Indian Railway since the introduction of XB engines is due to the track weakness alone cannot be sustained. It was the duty, of those who were responsible, to design an engine suitable for the track as it was in 1926. On the East Indian Railway in that year there were well over 1,000 miles of track laid with 88½ lb. rails. Prior to 1928 when XB engines began to arrive little or no trouble had been experienced in the shape of track distortions. After the XB engines were put on the line many cases of distortions were reported. There was an accident due to track distortion at Talandoo in 1929. Thereafter for two years the XB engines were removed from fast passenger services. During these two years there does not appear to have been any trouble with the track. After the introduction of the XB engines to fast passenger services in 1931 cases of track distortion again began to occur. From 1928 until 1937 the engines were blamed for this trouble. For 10 years the Railway Administrations have regarded XB engines responsible for track distortions. They have not regarded the track as weak and unsatisfactory. No doubt the track is not perfect nor uniformly strong, but it has proved satisfactory for all other classes of engines at speeds up to 60 miles an hour and for all ordinary traffic. In these circumstances, it is quite unreasonable to hold, on the basis of certain experiments carried out since the accident, the results of which are inconclusive, that track distortion must be attributed to track weakness and not to the oscillatory movements of XB engines which have been proved by the most definite and conclusive evidence to have a tendency to hunt oftener and more violently than any other class of engine.

Nothing that the P. L. Committee has since discovered has in the least affected the force of the indictment contained in that paragraph.

A still more striking contrast is between paragraph 235 of the Committee's report and paragraph 175 of Sir John Thom's report. They are

worth reproducing here for ready comparison, but space forbids. Language in such cases does matter, and that immensely, since it shows clearly and directly from what angle was approached an inquiry which was, by the very necessities of the case, required to be "thorough, searching and independent."

One of the terms of reference was to advise on the suitability of the designs, as originally framed and as subsequently modified, for the type of work for which the engines were intended. The Committee's conclusion is that the engines, even if modified in the manner described, would not appear to be suitable for unrestricted running in the type of work for which they were designed and over the tracks of the country in which they must travel. The substitution of the word 'designed' for 'intended' deserves to be noted. The engines were undoubtedly intended for high speed, but, in view of the disgraceful revelations, the Committee have tucked away in the corner of a later paragraph (No. 181) the cryptic remark, of course without comment, that "We were informed that higher maximum speeds were not the object in view" in ordering these high-powered engines. It need hardly be stated that the information must have been volunteered by sour-graspers. The Committee did not "consider that it is within our remit to prescribe the maximum appropriate speeds for the various sections of Indian Railways" (page 156), but they have not hesitated to level a sweeping fling at India in paragraph 100 in the following statement: "So far as such speeds are concerned, India, in our opinion, is a 55-65 m. p. h. country, and it is doubtful whether the majority of the travelling public, who provide the revenue, expect higher maxima. Moreover, financial limitations generally govern the standard of maintenance, and it is unreasonable and economically impracticable to permit of operation at working maxima of 65-75 m. p. h."

Before we leave this subject for the time being, we desire to invite attention to paragraphs 220 and 221 relating to the attractive proposal for installing a mechanical laboratory as an adjunct to the expanded departments of Research and Standardisation. This flattering proposal for a locomotive factory is evidently an earnest of the Committee's confidence in the abilities of our technicians. The first reaction in India to this compensatory proposal is likely to be one of ecstasy. But 'once bitten, twice shy.' Remembering the circumstances out of which this influential proposal has its birth, great caution must be exercised in accepting designs and estimates in connection with this form "of encouraging industrial development", in order to avoid adding more white elephants to the stock we already have on hand in the shape, for instance, of these X class engines, unremunerative railway lines built on estimates which proved to be wrong both in cost and traffic, and probably railway collieries. We note from a Simla message of a week or so ago that the

Railway Board propose to have a thorough investigation carried out by two of their officers into the economic or remunerative aspect of constructing broad gauge locomotives in one of the existing railway workshops in India.

### EDUCATION IN BIHAR

THE quinquennial period from 1932 to 1937 was a catastrophic one for Bihar. The earthquake shook the Province to its roots, and rendered a Province, always poor in spite of its rich resources, poorer still. It is a matter of satisfaction that the Report discloses that on the whole there has been steady though slow progress in education in all its varied aspects.

Considering Primary Education first as being the fundamental basis of mass education, it is gratifying to note that the number of pupils rose from 654,747 to 701,090. The question of 'wastage' is still very serious, though several measures of prevention were adopted during the period under report according to the recommendations of the Hartog Committee. There are as many as 14,052 one-teacher schools, which are extremely inefficient. On the whole, the conclusion has been reached, as in several other Provinces, that administration of primary education by Local Bodies is and must be very unsatisfactory. Some of the defects familiar to the student of this problem are evident in Bihar also. Unsystematic and haphazard location of schools, preference given in the matter of appointments to political and other considerations, irregular attendance of both pupils and teachers, etc., seem to be the main reasons for 'wastage.' The line of reform would seem to consist in the mitigation of these defects which make these schools somewhat disreputable in the eyes of the public rather than in mere tinkering with methods of teaching.

It is surprising to note that very few attempts have been made in Bihar in the experiment of compulsory education. Nowhere a complete success, such experiments are evidence of keen desire for popular education on the part of Governments and local bodies. The expenditure on maintaining 19 High Schools, the utility of all of which is admittedly doubtful, might well have been diverted in part towards this urgent purpose. The Ranchi Municipality is almost a solitary example in Bihar, which tried to attempt compulsory education on a big scale. The Special Officer's Report speaks of many cases of wastage and stagnation. As to Night Schools, the number of students—not all adults—fell from 4,178 to 3,150. According to the Report, "their general reputation is poor, and, for want of popular support, they die out."

Another aspect of mass education is the education of girls. Because of the close prevalence of

Purdah system and traditional prejudices rooted in the popular mind regarding the position of woman in general in the social structure, women's condition is pitiable in Bihar. The smug satisfaction expressed in the Report about the "slow and steady progress" in women's education is a good example of the prevailing tendency.

The proportion of girls under instruction to the total number of girls of school-going age has risen from 3.8 in 1931-32 to 4.8 in 1936-37. The Bankipore Girls' High School, Patna, the premier institution in Bihar, has 227 Bengali-reading, 139 Hindi-reading and 27 Urdu-reading girls. (The last two sections can be approximately classified as being comparatively more indigenous to the Province and needing encouragement.) The number of girls attending colleges throughout the Province was 32, the proportion of the indigenous secluded class being less than half-a-dozen. The majority of the girls' primary schools, to quote the Report, are inefficient and useless with teachers "old, lazy, uncertificated men who have proved unfit for boys' schools".

There are no doubt great difficulties in the promotion of girls' education in Bihar. There is the necessity of importing teachers from other Provinces. The per capita cost of girls' education exceeds that of boys because qualified women teachers are expensive, provision of conveyance and escort to girls has to be provided for, and smaller fees can be charged to girl pupils. But this does not absolve Government from its fundamental obligation of doing its duty by its womenfolk, which has been culpably neglected in Bihar. Special women's colleges are admitted to be a necessity in Northern India, and every Province has its colleges for women, excepting Bihar. Mrs. Hansa Mehta quoted figures recently in an article on women's education to show how Governments have been guilty of harbouring 'a double standard,' judging by the way they spent money on the education of their girls as compared to that of boys. The expenditure on girls' education in Bihar was 1.84 p. c. of total expenses on secondary education, 0.35 for primary education and 0.66 for special. (The expenses of co-education during the primary and middle English stages are not included here.) Parents are admittedly less willing to spend their resources on a girl because to them she is only a liability and not a financial asset. To the State, the woman citizen is as much an asset as a man citizen, and from the educational point of view more of an asset if we are to believe the Hartog Committee which says that an educated boy means an educated individual while an educated girl means an educated family. A fundamental change of view needs to be adopted in this respect even by the present Government in Bihar which has inherited a disastrous attitude of *laissez faire* prevalent all along in Bihar. Ignorance and seclusion among women

have paralysed every movement for social reform in Bihar.

A praiseworthy attempt was made by Government during the period under report to encourage co-education in primary schools by giving capitation grants to these schools on the number of girls they admitted. The increase in co-education, says the Report, has been phenomenal as parents have realised that boys' schools are more efficient.

Proceeding onwards to secondary education, the Report points to a phenomenal increase in High Schools and Middle English Schools. "New High Schools continue to come into being at the rate of 10 a year, and new Middle English Schools at the rate of 28 a year." As rightly commented in the Report, of the two systems of education in existence over the greater part of India, the Anglo-Vernacular and the Vernacular, the latter system is more efficient and better adapted to the practical needs of the pupils. "Because of unhealthy rivalry among petty zamindars, high schools are reported to be springing up like mushrooms at all odd corners of the Province. Unemployed educated men swarm up in these schools as teachers and help to produce further patterns in their own line of pupils disinclined to take up any practical training or occupation." It is mentioned in the Report that "the present type of High and Middle English School has established itself so strongly in the affections of the pupils that other forms of education are opposed or mistrusted." The well-known defects in this type of school have been evident in Bihar also—of teachers being paid minimum salaries and being used for other work than that of education, constant changes in the staff, and boys attracted from other schools by promise or grant of easy promotion.

The Report mentions the commendable work done by vocational schools in Bihar. There are twenty-five such institutions, ten owned by Government itself and ten aided; and those run by the Government Cottage Industries' Institute are a model to other Provinces.

Education of the children of the aborigines is a special problem in Bihar. Missions have specialised in this field and have done much up-hill work. Christian boys under instruction in proportion to the male population of the group were 16.3 p. c. and Christian girls under instruction in proportion to the total female population were 8.4 p. c. The corresponding figures for the non-Christian group of aborigines for girls and boys is 2.4 p. c. and 1 p. c. It is a commentary on the leeway that has to be made up by social reformers and social workers in India.

Education of the Depressed classes requires much greater fostering in spite of the special concessions shown. In 1936-37, the proportion of boys of the depressed classes at school to their

total male population was 1.7 p. c. and the corresponding proportion of girls to women 0.08 p. c.

## Review

**THE EMPIRE OF VIJAYANAGARAM**  
**FOUNDERS OF VIJAYANAGARA.** By S. SRI-KANTYA. (The Mythic Society, Bangalore.) 1938. 21cm. 174p. Rs. 5.

It was Sewell who first threw a flood of light on the Forgotten Empire of Vijayanagar and since the publication of his monumental work, many distinguished scholars have written on that fascinating subject, the most important being Rev. Father Heras. But in estimating the part played by Vidyanaya in the foundation of Vijayanagar, Rev. Heras has not been fair to the Sringeri Matha which he accuses of having got up a false tradition and fabricating documents embodying that false tradition. Rev. Heras, reputation as a scholar and his standing in the field of historical research are so great that no one dared to dispute his conclusions. Professor Srikantaya, however, has boldly come forward and in this book has successfully refuted the sweeping statement of Rev. Heras regarding the Sringeri Math.

Professor Srikantaya is a great scholar and his knowledge of the sources of Vijayanagar history is as profound as that of Rev. Heras. The book before us is an expanded form of the lectures delivered by him under the auspices of the Annamalai University. He discusses the origin and foundation of Vijayanagar and in so doing he carefully explains the part played by the scholar statesman Madhavacarya, known to the world as Vidyanaya Sripada of the Advaita Matha at Sringeri in the building of the city. With the help of tradition, chronicles, and inscriptions, he shows that Rev. Heras' sweeping statement regarding the Jagadgurus of Sringeri is entirely unmerited. Prof. Srikantaya says that the Gurus of Sringeri Matha held an important place in the esteem and affection of the first or Sangama dynasty and that Vidyanaya was an important factor in the solidification of Hinduisim. Vidyanaya was not a stranger to Harihara who was himself a Hoysala feudatory. His contribution in the foundation was aptly recognised by naming the capital after him.

The learned Professor also throws considerable light on when Madhavacarya took Sanyasa and became Vidyanaya, and on the identity between Madhavacarya and Madhavamantri with reference to literary and other evidence available.

This book is in a sense a fragment, but already one can see the authors' grasp of detail and skill in presentation. Any one reading the book will be struck by the power which Prof. Srikantaya shows of sifting the evidence and estimating its value. The whole method and character of the Professors' work raises a strong presumption in favour of its soundness, its careful research and impartial judgement. We heartily recommend the book to all who wish to deepen their knowledge of Vijayanagar.

M. V. SUBRAHMANYAM