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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE South African Commission presided over by Sir John Lange have commenced their inquiry. They have begun with the Cape Colony, which is the least narrow-minded amongst the South African colonies in its Indian policy. Yet, there, under the General Dealers' Act of 1906, local bodies refuse licenses to the Indians *en bloc* for no other reason than that they are Indians. Nor do the bodies give any reason for refusing licenses. In regard to this matter, the Indian demand has always been that the power of granting or refusing licenses vested in municipalities and divisional councils be revoked and conferred upon resident magistrates, for the sufficient reason that municipal councillors in the majority of cases are practically interested in trade concerns and cannot therefore be free from prejudice when dealing with licensing applications. The Solomon Commission felt themselves precluded from recommending the desired amendment in the law. We suppose the scope of the present Commission is wide enough to enable them to recommend this course if it will prove an effectual remedy against the grievance.

THE answer returned by Mr. Montagu to the several questions put to him in the House of Commons in regard to Mr. Horniman's deportation is most unsatisfactory. Mr. Montagu is clear that Mr. Horniman is guilty of a criminal offence and that the Government are in possession of evidence which will surely obtain a conviction against him in a court of law. Mr. Horniman, on his part, demands an open judicial trial. Why, then, does not the Secretary of State take up the gage? The reason which he advanced at the time the

order was issued as justifying deportation without trial does not surely avail him now. "In normal times," he said, "he (Mr. Horniman) would have been tried. There was plenty of case to put before the law courts, but you are dealing with a case in which riots were occurring where prompt and swift action for the restoration of order was necessary." Whatever measures were necessary, in the judgment of Mr. Montagu, at the time when the disturbances were taking place, cannot certainly be necessary now, a year after order has been completely restored. It is no use saying that the Governor of Bombay can institute a trial in his discretion. Does Government regard personal freedom as of so little account as to leave discretion in such a vital matter to a provincial ruler who chooses to screen himself behind an Act, whose continuance in the present circumstances has no moral justification whatever? Little wonder if the country has become impatient of such a violation, palpably unwarranted, of the elementary liberties of the individual.

THE provisional conclusion of the committee appointed to consider, on an examination of trade statistics, the advisability of adopting a system of Imperial preference is that India is neither likely to gain nor lose appreciably by this course. There would be little danger in their eyes of countries outside the Empire retaliating in respect of our export trade if we gave preference in India to Empire products; in this respect, the Committee's view differs from that of Lord Curzon's Government. "India," the committee says, "holds a practical monopoly of jute and lac, and modified monopoly with respect to teak, mica, mirabolams, short-stapled cotton and certain weights of hides, while in the case of oilseeds and rice it is highly improbable that foreign nations would be able to dispense with or even materially reduce their demands on this country." On the other hand, it appeared to the Committee that there was not much scope for our export trade benefiting by an increased market within the Empire. The committee, however, has recommended the appointment of a Commission, with power to take evidence, to examine the whole question of the future fiscal policy of India, which question was excluded from the purview of the the Industrial Commission.

IT was fondly believed by some people that, with the composition of differences between the

two schools of thought represented by Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Das on the reforms resolution in the last Congress, all controversy would cease, at any rate outside the Liberal circles. It has proved a vain hope, for the reason that the resolution which both parties eventually agreed to adopt did not, as a matter of fact, represent a genuine compromise. What the Congress did at Amritsar was not to effect a real concord between divergent opinions, but so to frame its resolution that the adherents of either party could construe it in their own way. We ventured to suggest this view at the time and are confirmed in it by recent comments in the Nationalist press. It was in view of the fact that some time before the Congress met the policy of obstruction had been openly advocated by certain prominent Nationalists, that Mr. Gandhi had proposed an amendment in the Congress calling upon the people to co-operate with the officials so as to make the reforms a success. While Mr. Gandhi, we are sure, holds to his former opinion, the would-be obstructionists hold to theirs and are energetically preaching their evangel. They are not content merely to represent the policy of obstruction as being within the scope of the Amritsar resolution, but they claim that it is the only admissible policy for those who have voted for that resolution.

MR. PAL advances such a contention in the *Independent*. He says in effect: We stand for self-determination; the Reform Act is an outcome of other-determination. We claim a full measure of self-government; the Act is a disappointingly inadequate instalment of it. We are immediately ripe for complete home rule; the Act professes to take us through a prolonged novitiate in preparation for the distant goal. To help in the successful operation of such an Act is impliedly to give our consent to all the limitations on our power which are contained in it. The supporters of the Amritsar resolution cannot submit to those limitations. They must therefore decline to take any part in the execution of the reforms; on the contrary, they must offer opposition on every conceivable occasion. Instead, then, of co-operating with the officials in bringing the reforms to fruition, they are bound, by the very fact that they have subscribed to the Congress resolution, to prevent such a consummation by every available means. It is not by making the most of what you have got that you will succeed in getting what has been withheld from you, but it is by deliberately wrecking the Act in practice and thus demonstrating its utter hollowness, that you will reach the goal of your aspirations most surely.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Mr. Tilak's declaration, made in his election manifesto, that his party would "offer co-operation or constitutional opposition, whichever may be expedient," stinks in Mr. Bipin Pal's nostrils. For it represents in all essentials the traditional Liberal

policy. The Liberals' test-word of "co-operation," too, Mr. Pal recognises, "does not mean co-operation in all things, good, bad, or indifferent," but necessarily implies opposition where the conditions require the adoption of such a policy. And, indeed, co-operation *cum* opposition is an expression that has been borrowed from the Liberals. Mr. Pal's chagrine can therefore be imagined. He characterises the statement of Mr. Tilak as proceeding "from confusion of thought." Confusion, of course, there is here in plenty, in the light of what Mr. Tilak said soon after the Congress. From "responsive co-operation" (whatever it may mean) to opposition to co-operation, from that again to sheer obstruction, and once again from that to co-operation, is not a result achieved by any clear processes of thought. We are not, however, concerned here with inconsistencies in Mr. Tilak's reasoning, however glaring they may be; but we must consider whether the policy enunciated by Mr. Pal or the contrary policy advocated by Mr. Gandhi, is the right one to pursue, for it will be evident that the two policies are mutually destructive.

"THE only consistent and honourable course for the supporters of the Amritsar resolutions will be," says Mr. Pal, "to boldly and definitely assume the natural attitude and legitimate functions of Parliamentary Opposition in the new Councils." This duty is necessarily laid upon them, he seems to think, by reason of their opposition to the limitations imposed upon popular power, which are incorporated in the Act. Mr. Pal here betrays a misconception of even the duties of the Opposition in western countries. However strong their objection may be to any measures before Parliament so long as they are under consideration, the Opposition there faithfully administer the measures when they have passed into laws. Of course if the objection is founded upon principle, they would strive to have the laws repealed; but all other acts of Parliament they accept in good faith. Again, Mr. Pal wants the Indians to act the part of the perpetual Opposition; for he would not have them accept any office. The Indians are thus reduced, if Mr. Pal's views are carried out, to a position of negative and destructive criticism at a time when they are given opportunities of responsible and independent work.

WE need not certainly stand aside from the operation of the Act, much less hamper it, because the Act does not satisfy all the popular aspirations. The Americans are credited with the best political instinct, because they can successfully work even an admittedly bad mechanism of law. So must we work our Act, though imperfect, and, by a spirit of accommodation draw from it the utmost public benefit it is capable of yielding. It is easy enough to bring the governmental machinery to a standstill, so complicated it has become with checks and safeguards. Even an

Ideally perfect constitution will break down under perpetual obstruction. The present Act can certainly be proved unworkable. But this policy will not hasten the advent of complete self-government. It will postpone it indefinitely. The question here is just that which was raised in the Congress: are Indians to work the Act or to wreck it? It needs an unequivocal answer. The Congress avoided giving it by passing a resolution which equally admits of either policy. The country cannot shirk this duty for a long time.

THE Madras Congress Committee have followed suit upon the Bombay and Bengal Provincial Conferences and, so far as in them lies, closed against the Liberal party all the avenues of public service opened out under the new régime. It is a matter of profound regret that none of the Congress leaders, to whose sense of justice this extreme form of intolerance must be utterly repugnant, have expressed their disapproval of this proceeding. We are still in hopes that they will raise their voice of protest betimes and that it will prevail. If the Congress is to be an avowed party organisation, be it so; but let the decision be arrived at after counting the cost. In passing, we may ask one question of those who are pursuing this exclusive policy. Those who favour co-operation with the Government in working the reforms must, it is said, be weeded out from the councils. How will Pandit Malaviya, Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah fare under the new dispensation, for they too advocated this very policy in the Congress and have not abandoned it by agreeing to the resolution which was eventually passed? They gave their adhesion to the resolution just because it admitted of such an interpretation of the Congress policy. In justice, then, the same measure must be meted out to those who interpret the Amritsar resolution so as to permit of co-operation as is proposed for those who favour co-operation irrespectively of that resolution. Do our Nationalist stalwarts propose to do this?

WE are told that the Congress must refuse to "co-operate in carrying out the provisions of the Montagu Act," because it "is hurtful to their national self-respect and a violation of their right of self-determination." Mr. Tilak apparently gives little weight to this objection, for, not to speak of the present Act, he seems bent upon going to Parliament even for future Acts of reform, thus accepting the decisions of outsiders, not only for the present but also for the future. He of course knows the value of using mouth-filling expressions and therefore brings in the phrase self-determination in his election manifesto. But his self-determination is, by no means, inconsistent with, but rather the same as other-determination.

IN Madras the Liberal party were sought to be excluded from the councils on the plea, which those who made the allegation were unable

to substantiate when challenged to do so, that they were representing Indians as unfit for full self-government. Among Indian publicists the only one who has, to our knowledge, committed the deadly sin of saying so is Mr. Jinnah, *vide* questions 3725-3728 before the Joint Committee; but, of course, he is not to be under the ban. Do not, however, the Liberals occasionally say that by making the present reforms a success we shall establish our claim to further measures of reform? Does not this involve an admission of our present unfitness? Here of course it is coolly ignored that the claim is spoken of in terms of the test applied by the rulers. But will the Nationalists listen to what Mr. Adamson said in the House of Commons on behalf of the Labour Party?

Notwithstanding the defects, from our point of view, of this Bill, as a party we welcome the measure as a step in the right direction. We hope it will prove a success, and so justify a further instalment of political power at no distant date. I hope the people of India themselves will accept the measure in the right spirit as a step towards the realization of their ideal of self-government, and will do their best to make it a success, and so inspire the people of this country with the necessary confidence to trust them with a much larger measure of self-government in the very near future.

WE are not a little amused at the complaint which Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar makes in the letter published in the correspondence columns, that the comments of the *Janmabhumi*, which we reproduced, were founded on an incorrect version of his views on provincial finance. Our contemporary's query was if it was true that Mr. Iyengar had said to Lord Meston that "if Madras was totally exempt from a provincial contribution, it could not digest the four hundred and odd lakhs of surplus finances that would be available." Mr. Iyengar's own words are not far different: "The Madras Government, present or prospective, will not be able to digest heavy additions to the funds at its disposal and the immediate transfer of these additional funds will lead to wasteful expenditure and formulation of ill-considered schemes." We are unable to discover any substantial difference between this and what is contained in the *Janmabhumi's* question. Mr. Iyengar has certainly an excessive fear of what he calls dumping on provincial Governments of resources in excess of their present level of expenditure. How unfounded his fear is will be evident from the fact that more than a crore and half of the surplus will be immediately absorbed by the revision of salaries of the subordinate services and that there will be no more than two crores and a half to dispose of. It is not merely of the executive councillors that he entertains misgivings that they will fritter away large sums of surplus balances on projects of comparatively little benefit to the community, but also of ministers in charge of what he calls "developmental services," that they will not be able to find immediate use for large surpluses. This view is absurd on the face of it.

## VOTE CATCHING.

IN view of the fact that the elections to the new Councils are looming large before the eyes of the people, various parties are busy making up their programmes and writing out their election addresses. And there is nothing to complain about in this. Under the new régime, democracy will begin to have a say, at least partially, in the management of the public affairs. The public therefore has a right to hear what promises and what credentials candidates for their votes offer them. We propose to consider to-day in some detail the manifesto issued by the so-called Congress Democratic Party under the signature of Mr. Tilak. Evidently it is believed by that party that it needs christening anew and that a new name would help it better to shed some of the old opinions with which its sponsors have been so long associated in the public mind. They wish to go before the world of electors under a new *alias*. There is no law for the registration of the names of political parties. Otherwise the title of these sponsors to the words *Congress* and *Democratic* would be hotly contested. The love for the first name is quite recent, in fact of only four or five years' growth, and the latter, though it may take in the British Labour party, sits rather uncomfortably on men who have been staunch advocates of *Varnashrama Dharma* and the associated class distinctions. But politics has its Nemesis also. The men who posed as champions of orthodoxy, so far are now advocating "the removal of all civic, secular, and social disabilities based on caste or custom." Those who lost no opportunity of abusing or ridiculing every kind of activity in the cause of the advancement of women are now "for extension of franchise without sex distinction" and "free and compulsory education without distinction of sex." Evidently the meeting in the Kirloskar Theatre and the Conference at Sholapur have been great eye-openers to some people.

The framers of this programme believe that public memories are short, and so they often are. But every intelligent voter must see that the men who put forward a tempting programme are really qualified by their record of public life to carry it out. The present programme appears to us like the prescription of a quack medical practitioner who has heard of only one patent remedy against each ailment and, when a patient suffering from several complaints comes up, makes up a mixture of all these remedies without considering whether they are compatible in the same mixture or without giving a thought to the root of all these complaints. Thus this programme is intended to catch the vote of several kinds of people. To appeal to the large class who suffer from various railway grievances, railway nationalisation is inserted in the programme as if this will remove them all. On the other hand, to catch the votes of the agriculturists, permanent settlement on the Rayatwari system is advocated, giving them hopes that thus their assessments will be lowered.

or at least not raised. In one item the promotion of national unity by means of a *lingua franca* is mentioned; in the next the readjustment of provinces on a linguistic basis finds a place; while in a third education through the vernaculars as high as possible is advocated. The carrying out of these three items in their entirety without loss of consistency is possible only to a casuist whose one *forte* lies in twisting the meanings of words. Curtailment of military expenditure, and the creation of a citizen-army, and the consequent resort to more or less complete conscription, may look all right on a vote-catching programme, but the experience of other nations is not favourable to the idea.

The electors in India are new to election and some of them may be taken in by all this delicious-looking stuff placed before them; but they will soon find out their mistake. Promises in plenty and exiguous performance, will be the lot of this party. In trying to please everybody they will please nobody. Thus the British Socialist party is expected to look only at the programme of the nationalisation of railways and close their eyes to the permanent settlement of land. But these bidders for popular suffrage do not know that land nationalisation is even a more important item in the Socialist platform than railway nationalisation. They shut their eyes to the fact that the permanent settlement in Bengal is apt to prove perhaps the greatest obstacle to the progress of that province in future. It is also one of the most acute grievances in England. Modern Socialistic opinion, with whom the so-called Congress Democratic party wishes to coquet, but with whom under its present sponsors it can have no permanent union, is keen on reserving all national resources in the hands of the nation itself and not permanently alienating them so as to turn them into private monopolies. Land is the greatest national asset and our self-styled democrats are going to barter away the great advantage we would have under a popular Government in the present land system which regards the State as at least a part owner of the land for a few votes at the elections in the era of reforms which they regard as unsatisfactory and which some of them at least intend to prove unworkable. Shortsightedness could go no further.

The manifesto has a good many high-sounding phrases about the League of Nations, forgetting that at this very moment it is being utterly discredited and its author will not have anything to do with it. The Congress contended itself with leaving aside questions of foreign policy and defence; the decision may be right or wrong, but those who swear by the Congress—of the last two years only—have no compunction in giving its opinion the go-by in this matter. But under its present leaders it can also change its opinions with surprising rapidity. The hand-to-mouth policy of which the whole career of Mr. Tilak is a prominent example is writ large over this pro-

gramme. At the same time it is an eloquent testimony to the solid nature of the work that has been done by the much-abused reformers. Imitation is said to be the tribute that vice indirectly pays to virtue. So the bodily incorporation of the reforms that Ranade, Gokhale and others advocated into his own programme is the most telling acknowledgment by Mr. Tilak of the futility of most of his work in the past. He will of course not acknowledge it in so many words; but he who runs may read it in this manifesto.

But the public must consider whether it can safely trust its fortunes into the hands of the man whose one policy has been to shout with the biggest crowd. When that crowd shouted Varnashrama Dharm, he wrote learnedly on it; when the non-Brahman and the depressed classes movements gathered force and could no longer be neglected, he asks for the abolition of caste disabilities; we do not altogether despair of seeing him in a few years—or even months—the leader of the Satyashodhak Samaj and taking part in their tamahas. When the crowd got exasperated with the Mahomedans at the time of the Bombay riots twenty-seven years ago, he invented the Ganapati festival and listened with gusto to rabid songs against Mahomedans; now he is one of the leaders of the Khilaphat movement and advocates better relations between followers of different religions and especially a Hindu-Moslem entente. We shall not be surprised at seeing him, who now urges the abolition of drink, soon advocating the extraction of the last farthing from the drinkers and the application of the principle of self-determination to those who wish to drink, when he is face to face with an assembly of liquor contractors. While he now includes in his platform a comprehensive programme for the betterment of the labouring classes, he may one day, especially if he wants the votes of the capitalists, be the champion of the most complete form of *laissez faire* and dub labour organisations as so many illegal conspiracies.

A statesman must have a consistent policy and must be prepared to work for it through good report and evil. One cannot always manage to swim on the crest of the wave of popular favour and still be honest. Cobden and Bright were popular idols as well as the best hated men of their country at different periods of their careers. But they had a settled policy and worked for it all their lives. Can we say the same of the sponsor of this programme? The real questions before the new Councils are more likely to be concerned with finance, with the relations between capital and labour, with the improvement of the conditions of the poor, with education and sanitation, and with the removal of monopolies and class or caste privileges. An honest leader will say that he cannot do this without imposing new taxation, though he will try to enforce economy wherever possible. But Mr. Tilak's programme, as shown above, tries to be all things to all men; it does not grapple with the fundamental problems and offers

no answers to them. It is likely either to prove impracticable or to alienate all those who build high hopes of the future under the dispensation of this new Congress Democratic Party.

### PUNJAB AFFAIRS AND CONGRESS SUB-COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

THERE can be no doubt that the announcement made a few days ago by the *Pull Mall Gazette* to the effect that the Secretary of State intends to take action before the publication of the report of Lord Hunter's Committee has set the country on the tiptoe of expectation, though of a somewhat mingled character. On the one hand, there have been some misgivings, expressed in the cablegram of the Hon'ble Mr. Jinnah to the Secretary of State, which are not unintelligible in view of the generally whitewashing nature of the conclusions of committees and commissions on great public questions, and of the fact that under the terms of reference, the Hunter Committee have had to submit their report and findings through the Government of India, an authority by no means free from bias and partisanship. On the other hand, there have not been wanting expressions of strong faith in Mr. Montagu which has found vent in the weighty utterances of Lord Sinha and of an equally strongly expressed hope that he will rise above the bureaucratic angle of vision of the Government of India and vindicate the claims of justice. But the Indian official machine toils and travaills, as Lord Morley said in his "Reminiscences," in an awfully wearisome manner, its wheels grind very slowly, and although we share the well-founded hope that they will not grind exceedingly small in this case, it may be yet some days before the action taken by Mr. Montagu is announced.

While the official world is cogitating and cogitating over the action it would take on Lord Hunter's Committee's findings, the report of the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress on the Punjab disorders has for some time past been public property. The report is the production of the Commissioners appointed by the Congress Committee—Messrs. M. K. Gandhi, C. R. Das, Abbas S. Tayabji and M. R. Jayakar—all of them being persons who are or have been eminent in the legal profession, while Mr. K. Santaram, a well-known Advocate of the Lahore High Court, acted as their whole-time Secretary. The report is a monument of patient toil and industry, extending over several months and the high standing of the Commissioners and the scrupulous care they bestowed upon the Report, particularly the saintly character, combined with legal acumen, of Mr. Gandhi are a sufficient guarantee to their countrymen of the general correctness of their findings. Over 1700 witnesses were examined by the Commission, of which about 650 find place in the report, all statements which proved no new facts or which could not be sufficiently corroborated being rigorously excluded. Every admitted statement was

verified by one of the Commissioners and was accepted only after the Commissioners were satisfied as to the *bona fides* of the witnesses. This, as the covering report is careful to explain, does not apply to a few statements from Manianwala and neighbourhood (Gujranwala district), which were taken at the Commissioners' request by Mr. Labh Singh, M. A., Bar-at-Law, one of the victims of the martial law and an accused in the Gujranwala conspiracy case. Some of these statements relate to the high-handed and erratic conduct of Mr. Bosworth Smith, Joint Deputy Commissioner of Gujranwala, and in portions, viz. those relating to the treatment of women, are almost too vulgar and too revolting for print. It may be remembered that Mr. Bosworth Smith, who was degraded to the position of an Asst. Commissioner a few years ago from his post of a permanent Deputy Commissioner on account of his violent manners and ill-temper, is again a full-fledged Deputy Commissioner on account of his services(?) in the Martial Law period. This, however, by the way. Quite a number of statements are from witnesses, who are men of position, and who are leaders in their own district or villages, and so their statements naturally find acceptance with the public. It is true that several witnesses have made very serious allegations against officials. But in each and every case, as the Commissioners tell us, the witnesses were warned of the consequences of making these allegations and their statements were admitted only when the witnesses adhered to their statements, in spite of the knowledge of the risk they personally ran and the damage that may ensue to the cause by reason of exaggeration or untruth. Further, no statement was accepted without sufficient cross-examination of the witnesses. All statements, which could not be corroborated, even if the Commissioners were inclined to believe the witnesses, were unceremoniously rejected, among them being the statements regarding ill-treatment of women. The inquiry was confined to the Martial Law area and to the districts in which it was proclaimed, the principal places being visited by the Commissioners personally and the accuracy of the statements tested in the presence of the people, who were afforded every opportunity to challenge their correctness even under pledge of confidence, if they so desired. No contradiction was, however, received by the Commissioners. In short, every right and opportunity to cross-examine the witnesses was given to the public and in this respect the weight that may attach to these statements do not compare very unfavourably to the weight attaching to evidence before the Hunter Committee. If, in spite of all this, the *Pioneer* and other Anglo-Indian newspapers seek to pour ridicule and contempt upon the report, the reason is obvious. Nothing else could be expected of these blind and unrelenting apologists of Martial Law. It may not be out of place here to mention that Nationalist politicians on the other side are not quite satisfied with the report. In his presidential address at the

Punjab Provincial Conference held recently at Jullundur, Lala Harkishen Lal characterised the report as a Satyagraha report, meaning that portions of truth had been sacrificed so that no untruth should come in. Lala Harkishen Lal made a specific mention of the omission of the trap theory of the Jallianwala tragedy in the report, and stated that the trap theory could be established beyond doubt on the evidence of some contemporary documents, which came to the knowledge of the Commissioners, but because those documents were not handed over by the holders thereof to be placed on the file of the Sub-Committee, the Commissioners would not enter upon any discussion of the theory. That there are some grounds for suspecting a pre-concerted plan, no one will care to gainsay who has gone through the part played by the approver Hansraj at the meeting at the Bagh and the story connecting the name of Lala Kanhya Lal, the oldest pleader of the Punjab Bar, with the duty of presiding at that meeting at the Bagh, which was to be held on the fateful 13th day of April last year (although that venerable gentleman was wholly unaware of it). But on the whole, the public will prefer to abide by the findings of the Commissioners and to acquit the police of such diabolically heinous design. Mr. Harkishen Lal also noted another defect in the Commissioners' report, viz., they omitted to notice the part played by the judiciary in the Martial Law drama. There can be no doubt—as the statement of Mr. Santaram, who defended several of the accused in two conspiracy cases heard by tribunals presided over by High Court Judges, clearly shows—that the Martial Law atmosphere seriously affected the judicial temperament of the Tribunals and warped their vision and occasioned flagrant failures of justice. But as some of the cases are still before His Majesty's Privy Council, and the individuals concerned have mostly been released, the Commissioners have refrained from making any comments on this aspect of Martial Law Administration.

"It is not possible for us," observe the Commissioners, "to condense into the compass of a brief review the story of persecution, corruption and disregard of human feelings that is revealed in the evidence we are presenting to the public. We have endeavoured to hold the scales evenly. We have endeavoured to make every allowance for the exceptional circumstances in which the officers suddenly found themselves placed. Yet, we have come to the conclusion that the measures taken by the authorities to suppress what has been termed disorders were far in excess of the requirements." The moderation and the restraint displayed in this 'egregious document,' as the *Pioneer* calls it, is characteristic of Mr. Gandhi and the world will surely abide by his verdict.

So with his other verdict:

"The theory of rebellion or war completely broke down before the Hunter Committee. There was no proof of

organization outside the Punjab and behind the conspiracy. On the contrary, Col. O'Brien—one of Sir Michael's trusted Lieutenants—had to admit that he had no evidence to support the theory of rebellion, that it was mere guess-work and that his arrest of the leaders of Gujranwala, too, was based on meretricious talk. . . . The fact is that Sir Michael O'Dwyer saw, and he made others see, that in every speech of the leaders there was sedition, in every *harkat* a conspiracy, and in every Hindu-Mahomedan fraternization a menace to British rule. . . . And if Martial Law was unjustified, much more so was its prolongation for nearly two months. The measures taken under it were such as to disgrace any Government, calling itself civilised. Its inauguration was heralded by the massacre of the innocents of Jallianwala Bagh. The tone of frightfulness set up by General Dyer was approved by Sir Michael O'Dwyer during the two dark months that followed. If our figures are correct, and we hold them to be so, nearly 1200 lives are lost, at least 3000 men wounded and some permanently disabled."

In another place, the Commissioners observe: "The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent and unarmed men, including children, and unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration." There can be no doubt that this will be the verdict of history, just as it is the verdict of all right-thinking persons, British or Indian, at the present moment.

The Commissioners make six specific suggestions for redressing the wrong done to the people, for the purification of the administration and for preventing a repetition in future of official lawlessness. They are: (a) repeal of the Rowlatt Act, (b) relieving Sir Michael O'Dwyer of any responsible office under the Crown, (c) relieving General Dyer, Col. Johnson, Col. O'Brien, Mr. Bosworth Smith, Rai Sahib Sri Ram Sud and Malik Sahib Khan of any position of responsibility under the Crown, (d) local enquiry into the corrupt practices of the minor officials, (e) recall of His Excellency the Viceroy, and (f) refund of all martial law fines and indemnities. There can be no doubt that, with the exception of the suggestion for the recall of the Viceroy—for His Excellency was more or less misled by his advisers and probably acted, as Mr. Gandhi himself wrote in his own paper, on the analogy of the position of a Colonial Governor, whose function is to act upon the advice preferred—all these measures are the one thing necessary to restore the equilibrium of the public mind and to vindicate the ends of justice. We have still faith in Mr. Montagu and the sense of British justice to hope that the right thing will be done.

S. K. M.

### CENTRAL CONTROL OF LOCAL BODIES.

THE report of the Committee appointed to study the working of the English system of local government treats generally of the question as to the extent to which and the manner in which the central Government exercises control over the administration of local bodies in England. This is a subject which deserves careful consideration at the hands of our publicists, for the current notion in the

public mind that in matters of local self-government there must be no interference whatever from above, and that local bodies must be perfectly free to conduct their affairs just as they choose, receives a rude shock in the report of this Committee. In England the Government Departments have diverse means of ensuring thrift and efficiency on the part of the local authority, and use all these means unsparingly as occasion requires. It is right that we should demand a complete reorganization of local bodies, so that they be wholly elective and that they be freed from the leading-strings of Government, but it is idle to expect that the autonomy of these bodies will ever be so great that they will be entirely immune from central control. Some measure of control is absolutely essential if the administration of local affairs is not to be lax and wasteful; only in place of the present internal control there will hereafter be external control, and it will be just as much as is required, but it cannot be dispensed with altogether. We can the better reconcile ourselves to this view of the matter inasmuch as, in the reforms régime, local self-government will be in the charge of an Indian minister amenable to a popular legislature, and not in that of the bureaucracy with a bias against all forms of popular government. We can, if we so choose, make local bodies independent of all outside control and go through the experience which England had for over 150 years before she developed the present form in which local autonomy is properly tempered by central control and which is now acknowledged by all competent critics to be the best. But we can profit by England's experience and at once adopt a system of checks and safeguards through which alone local self-government can yield the richest fruit.

In this connexion the remarks made by Mr. Sidney Webb in his monograph on "Grants-in-aid" deserve attention. He describes three different systems of local government: (1) the bureaucratic system, as it obtains in France and Germany, Belgium and Austria, and generally throughout the continent of Europe, in which the local administration is entrusted to salaried officials under the absolute control of the central departments of the executive Government; (2) the anarchy of local autonomy, as it obtains in the United States, where the cities and townships are autonomous corporations, not in the least subordinate to the executive departments; (3) the system, as it obtains in England, which is a judicious blend of the former two systems. Under the first all local initiative is killed and the sense local independence is allowed no play; under the second, there can be nothing like a national system in any department of local government. (This system, Mr. Webb says, has given the United States the worst local government of any country claiming to be civilised.) The third, however, secures "national inspection and audit, and the amount of national supervision and control that is required in the interest of the community as a whole, without

offending the susceptibilities of local autonomy and without losing the very real advantage of local initiative and local freedom to experiment; " it produces results, "in a remarkable combination of liberty and efficiency, on the whole preferable to the achievements of either the bureaucratic system of France and Germany or the American anarchy of local government." This result is mainly obtained through the agency of grants-in-aid. The Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission has the following on this subject: " The verdict of administrative experience is that, properly devised, they (grants-in-aid) afford a basis for the best of all relations between the national Government and the local authorities. A century of experience has demonstrated that it is undesirable for local authorities to be subject to no administrative control whatsoever from a central authority, for them to be left without independent inspection or audit, without access to centralised experience and specialist knowledge, without any enforcement of the minimum indispensably required for the common weal, and without mitigation of the stupendous inequality of local rates that complete autonomy involves. On the other hand, the grant to a Government department of arbitrary powers to sanction or disallow, or peremptorily to order this or that, is felt in this country to be derogatory to the independence, the dignity and the spontaneous activity of freely elected representatives of local ratepayers, spending their own funds."

There are, however, strict rules as to which of the services can be subsidised by exchequer grants. The services which are purely local and benefit the locality concerned, like water supply, local roads, etc. are paid for entirely from the local rates; some other services, however, which, though administered locally, are national in their character and are advantageous to the community as a whole rather than to the locality, are maintained largely out of subventions from the treasury. Since, therefore, local bodies bear practically the whole cost of the local services, no control could be exercised over them through the means of grants-in-aid. To them " the Ministry of Health acts the part of general adviser, communicates by circular the result of experiments upon new lines, supplies scientific notes and keeps the local bodies well informed and up-to-date concerning advances and improvements made in England and elsewhere in the services which they undertake. But direct inspection and intervention in local services is made only when complaints are received from individuals or from other authorities, or it becomes clear in any other way that the local bodies are failing in their duties. Public opinion can be relied upon to find expression where the local authority betrays its trust; the press is everywhere available for the ventilation of grievances of individuals or of the supposed defaults on the part of local authorities; and the Ministry of Health is informed by means of periodical reports and by vital statistics, and statistics of infectious diseases of any serious menace to

public health." In regard to matters other than public health the audit furnishes ample opportunities to the central executive to restrain extravagance. The auditors disallow all illegal and improper items and surcharge them on individuals directly responsible for waste or loss of public money. "The audit of a local authority's accounts is a public quasi-judicial proceeding at which any rate-payer may challenge any item of expenditure and require the auditor to record a decision on its propriety and legality. Thus where a local authority has become suspected of extravagance the visit of the auditor affords an opportunity for the rate-payers' association or any similar body to get a check put on the spending departments." Another method of exercising control over local bodies is that of scrutiny of loan proposals made by the local bodies. It is an axiom of local finance that all new works of permanent utility, involving capital expenditure, should be financed by loans, and loans must be sanctioned by the Ministry of Health. Before sanction is accorded to the plans and estimates, " a public enquiry is held by one of the Ministry's inspectors at which it is open to any rate-payer or association of persons interested to oppose the scheme or suggest modifications in it." Thus both the current expenditure of local bodies and new projects involving capital expenditure come under a close scrutiny of the central Government. And it must be noted that " the power to sanction or withhold sanction for a loan is occasionally used as a lever to compel a local authority to carry out its duties in connexion with matters other than that for which the loan is needed." Where a local body fails to discharge the duties committed to it, the central Government is empowered to use direct compulsion.

With respect to national services which receive subventions from the treasury, the central control is exercised through the grants in aid. The central departments withhold or reduce grants if they find that the services are not being administered with the requisite standard of efficiency or economy. Not until the inspecting officers certify as to this, is any grant paid. Another point deserves attention, the independent position enjoyed by the higher officials of local bodies and the security of their tenure of office. The officer of the Bihar and Orissa Government says in his report: " If service under a local body is dependent upon the caprice of the members of that body, there will be little attraction for the best class of officials who look for a career in the work that they undertake. This is a drawback which applies to all officers under a local body where security of tenure is not assured. For Health Officers the position is especially precarious, because their duties may require them to condemn, as insanitary, houses or areas which are the property of influential members of their council, and the conscientious performance of their obligations may render them unacceptable to the majority of their employers." The report of the Local Government



Committee adds: "Under the Local Government Act of 1888 the Clerk of the Peace in each county became the Clerk of the County Council, and though the County Council pays him it cannot appoint or dismiss him or fix his salary. The appointment and salary are determined, subject to the approval of the Home Secretary by a Standing Joint Committee composed partly of members of the County Council and partly of the County Justices, and he holds office during good behaviour. A County Medical Officer of Health cannot be removed from office without the approval of the Local Government Board; nor can the medical officer or inspector of nuisances in the employ of any other local authority if any part of his salary is paid out of money voted by Parliament; and the promotion of security of tenure is one of the objects with which in all urban and rural districts and some boroughs one half of the salary of these officers is paid from funds supplied from the exchequer to the County Council. It is hoped to obtain security of tenure for the surveyors employed by local authorities under the Ways and Communications Bill now before Parliament, and it may be said that the tendency is to secure the same privilege for all officers who have responsible duties to perform, and for the purpose of still further improving their position, the introduction of super-annuation schemes towards which the State will contribute is under discussion."

A CRITIC.

### A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, APRIL 8.

#### HAPPENINGS IN GERMANY.

WITH the rising of Parliament, public attention has been focussed upon the happenings in Germany—when it could be diverted from thoughts of the Easter holidays, and the possibilities of a period of widespread industrial unrest, not to speak of the condition of Ireland. Germany's monarchist conspiracy, culminating in the Kapp military revolt, was a complete and ridiculous failure, thanks to the proclamation of the general strike by the constitutional Government. But it showed the restlessness of Prussian military ambition and the attitude of the monarchist troops, whom the Ebert-Bauer Government had failed to disarm—possibly from fear of provoking just such an *émeute*—gave the Berlin populace a very shrewd idea of what might happen if monarchism were once more in the saddle. The general strike was a most effective weapon, for the "Kappiade," as it was derisively called, failed ignominiously, and its leaders took to flight simultaneously with the return of the Cabinet to Berlin. Nevertheless, it had been made clear to the German people that the Bauer Ministry was far too conservative for the modern needs of Germany, and that, with it in office, there was always to be feared the resuscitation of the monarchist-militarist monster. So the trades union leaders refused to call off the strike, save

upon conditions implying the democratisation of the Government, the Army, and the public services. The Government succumbed to the pressure, and, outwardly at least, altered its complexion so as to satisfy the exigencies of the moment. Meanwhile, however, the workers in the industrial region of Westphalia, especially those of the Ruhr district, had got completely out of hand, and refused to call off the strike. They armed themselves, on the contrary, and, at the behest of extremist leaders, they proclaimed affinities with Soviet Russia. They converted the district into a veritable centre of revolutionary activity and captured town after town of the greatest industrial importance, until they were checked at Wesel by the successful stand of the Government troops. At this moment, the "Red" leaders, seeing that the situation was hopeless, entered into negotiations with the Government and agreed to disarm upon condition that no further action was to be taken against them. Unfortunately it soon became evident that the Reichswehr, or Government troops, were largely under the old Prussian militarist influences, and the agreement seems to have been broken by them upon various pretexts, with the result that scenes of violence and bloodshed have been common where the authorities resumed control of the situation.

Within the last few days, a new complication has arisen. The scene of the disturbances lies just outside, as well as within, the neutral area, created under the Peace Treaty, between Republican Germany and the Occupied Territory under the control of the Allies. It is an essential and vital condition of the Treaty that not only shall Germany not move troops into the neutral zone, but that she shall evacuate all her troops from it by April 10. The last condition is obviously impossible of fulfilment. But on the plea of public security and the urgent necessity to restore and preserve order in the disaffected area, Germany has several times during the last few days sought the Allies' permission to move troops into the neutral zone, which has been refused her save upon the condition that France was permitted simultaneously to occupy certain towns in the neutral area beyond her bridge-head at Mayence, to which Germany has refused to agree. Finally, Germany sought to force the Allies' hand, by removing troops into the Ruhr district and then seeking acceptance of the *fait accompli*. France at once took independent action and occupied the towns already indicated, much to Germany's surprise and alarm. France has all along held that Germany is entirely unregenerate and that she hitherto made no real attempt to carry out any important part of the Treaty, particularly as to disarmament. These particular sections of Treaty, forbidding German armed entry into the neutral zone, she has regarded as the critical ones of the whole Treaty, and, having so much at stake, she had refused to wait for joint action by the Allies. Rightly or wrongly, France is wholly sceptical of

Germany's motives and explanations, and after half a century of waiting upon Germany's next attack and the horrors of the late war, she is taking no risks whatever as a consequence of the revival of militarism in Germany, which, she declares, dominates the present German Government. She will believe nothing good of Germany save from indubitable demonstration, hence her apparent arbitrary and independent action. It was not until late yesterday that it was made known that Britain officially approved of that action, and the French press had made stinging comments upon Britain's official silence. Italy, too, has been unresponsive, and America is believed to be hostile. It is likely that the whole episode will be settled by the withdrawal from the neutral zone of the German and the French troops. But it leaves, on both sides, a very unpleasant impression.

#### IRISH HOME RULE.

Ireland's condition seems to go from bad to worse. The Government of Ireland Bill had here, on the whole, a good press, and its second reading was adopted by a large majority. In Ireland, however, it has been rejected by all parties save Ulster, which is naturally an extremely bad recommendation to the rest of the island, whilst here Labour and the Independent Liberals have ineffectively criticised it without producing any better alternative. It was noteworthy how vague and general was the discussion of alternative projects put forward by the Opposition leaders. In Ireland itself there seems to be some sort of recognition that the Bill does give promise of better possibilities, and the violent anti-British party seems bent on trying to kill the Bill and prevent a settlement on any other conditions than those of complete independence. Murders are of almost daily occurrence. Barracks are attacked, bombed, or blown up. Income-tax records are deliberately destroyed and treasuries are burnt. Widespread violence is being preached and practised, and Ireland is an armed camp. Lord French, whilst professing abhorrence of Castle methods of administration, is alleged to have stated that there is a Sinn Fein army of 100,000 well-armed and disciplined men and that the Sinn Feiners are provided with ample funds for their activities. How the whole matter will end no one knows. True, Easter did not bring about another bloody rebellion. But during those days Dublin and Belfast were in the hands of the military, and martial law conditions prevailed.

#### LABOUR POLITICS.

Labour is for the moment quiescent. We yet do not know whether we are going to have a national miners' strike to impose upon the nation immediate "nationalisation" (or syndicalisation, as some fear) of the mines. Nor do we know that, in the absence of the necessary two-thirds majority, the leaders' authority will not be overthrown and dangerous local strikes ordered. The Independent Labour Party, acting under the in-

fluence of Mr. Snowden and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, has definitely refused to countenance anything more bloodthirsty than constitutional methods of revolution familiar to this country, and has declined to join the Moscow "International" of Sovietism, which seems to be the general feeling in the British Labour movement. There are extremists, of course, who want to employ the well-known Lenin methods, but they are, though active and noisy, few and not very influential. Only a series of unfortunate accidents can establish them in power.

### SELECTION.

#### MADRAS LIBERAL PROGRAMME.

THE following is the draft programme prepared by the Committee of the Madras Liberal League, and it will be placed before the general body on the 1st prox. for adoption:—

1. As the constitutional reforms will come into force at the end of the year, it is the duty of the Liberal Party to define its aims and ideals and to formulate its programme of work. The first and foremost duty of the Liberal Party will be to avail itself of the opportunities offered by the Act and so work the machinery of Government that the Imperial Parliament may be satisfied as to the success of the Reforms and our capacity for further advance, and our attainment of the goal of full responsible government may thus be accelerated. Believing, as we do, in orderly and all-round progress, we shall be interested in the successful working of every department of the public administration and endeavour to promote their subserviency to the public good.

2. *Economy.*—The Liberal Party will strive for the adjustment of the financial relations between the Provincial and the Imperial Governments so as to secure ample revenues and adequate borrowing powers and scope for the future expansion of our revenues. The members of the party have pleaded before Lord Meston's Committee that there is no longer any necessity on the part of the provinces to contribute to the Imperial Exchequer, and that in any case, in view of our past financial history and treatment, Madras deserves special consideration. The party does not believe that there will be any difficulty in the digestion or proper utilisation of any amount of additional revenues, and the party's programme will include the consideration of ways and means for securing the expansion of revenues needed for carrying out the numerous schemes of expenditure which will be necessary to bring up India to the same level of education, public health, material comfort, capacity for self-defence and amenities of civilised life. Efficiency and economy will be its aim in every field of Governmental activity. It will exercise a close scrutiny of every scheme of taxation and expenditure in the light of sound finance and national requirements.

3. *Land Revenue and Excise.*—Land Revenue and Excise, which are the staple items of revenue of this presidency, will claim the careful attention of the party. The principles which regulate the assessment and enhancement of the land revenue will have to be codified and placed on the statute book.

4. While keeping in view the ultimate goal of abolition, the promotion of temperance should continue to be the immediate object, and the party

will be in favour of the introduction towards that end of the principle of local option wherever it can be safely introduced without undue hardship or the danger of encouraging illicit practices.

5. *Education.*—Education will occupy a large place in the programme of the party. It will advocate free elementary education from the beginning and the introduction of compulsory education with all practicable regard to the circumstances of the parents as soon as such a step may be permitted by the supply of trained teachers and suitable, though not needlessly costly, buildings. It will support the introduction of compulsory elementary education at the option of local bodies who may be satisfied that conditions are ripe for such a course. The reorganisation of higher education so as to bring it within the reach of the very poor and make it more practical will also claim attention. In the sphere of higher education, the need for the creation of more Universities on the lines of the modern Universities of England and especially for the establishment of one in the Northern Circars will be recognised. Medical, Engineering and higher technical education will have also to be promoted.

6. *Medical Relief and Sanitation.*—Medical relief and sanitation, the improvement of water-supply, the provision of drainage, both in municipal and rural areas, must necessarily absorb a greater portion of public funds than they have hitherto done. The housing problems in municipal areas, the improvement of means of communication, the control of profiteering in house rents with just regard to the legitimate interests of landlords and the encouragement of house buildings are also matters which require attention. The extension of the co-operative system in various directions for the purposes of facilitating house building, for economic distribution, for the introduction of agricultural improvements and for various other purposes will be helped by increased facilities for irrigation and drainage, by more demonstration farms and veterinary hospitals, and by the provision of cheap credit by means of co-operative societies and other agencies.

7. *Industries.*—In the industrial development of the country and in the encouragement of mass production on a large scale which is inevitable if this country is to overtake western countries, the need for the encouragement of cottage industries will not be overlooked. The problem of the relations between capital and labour is daily assuming greater importance, and the Liberal Party realises the urgent need for the amelioration of the lot of the Indian labourer and the raising of the standard of life. It will strive for the elimination of unhealthy conditions in factories, workshops and homes, for reasonable hours of work and better wages. Efficiency and well-being of the labourer and increased production can only be attained by the harmonious co-operation of capital and labour, and this must eventually lead to some system of profit-sharing which, while increasing the remuneration of labour and the identification of the labourer with the prosperity of the business, will not deprive the capitalists of the incentives to the saving and the employment of capital in business or check the spirit of enterprise and initiative. The party will welcome all attempts on the part of Labour to organise itself for the betterment of their economic condition, but will deprecate the conversion of the associations as such into organs for direct action in the political sphere. In the case of capital and labour as in other cases, the party will work for the reconciliation of the interests of

different classes and for the elimination of class-hatred.

8. *Depressed and Backward Classes.*—The party feels the need for the promotion of the uplift and well-being of the depressed and backward classes by well-considered schemes of education, housing, assignment of waste lands and co-operation.

9. *Agency Tracts.*—The backwardness, material and intellectual, of the rich agency tracts of the Northern Circars has to be removed by the opening of railway communication and by the extension of facilities for education.

10. *Railways.*—Railway communications have to be developed and the administration of railways has to be brought more under the influence of the provincial councils, so that the Companies may pay due regard to the convenience of passengers, especially of the third class.

11. *Defensive Service.*—The Liberal Party will recognise it as one of its most important duties to promote the reforms in the organisation of the defensive force, regular and auxiliary, of the country, so that Indians may take their legitimate place in every branch and grade of the defensive services.

12. *Removal of Restrictions on Recruitment of Indians.*—The gradual improvement of the conditions of recruitment to the higher civil service so as to remove all existing restrictions upon the employment of Indians is also a matter of importance.

13. *Repressive Laws.*—The party will also strive for the removal of repressive fetters on the freedom of the press and for the modification of the power of issuing ordinances now vested in the Governor-General.

14. *Religious and Charitable Endowments.*—The party recognises the need for legislation to ensure the proper administration of religious and charitable endowments so as to carry out the wishes and advance the objects of the founder, and will support proposals to utilise for the advancement of education the surplus funds of such endowments after meeting the prescribed and customary expenditure.

15. *Codification of the Hindu Law.*—The party will also consider it its duty to work for the codification of such portions of the Hindu law as may require statutory definition by reason of a perplexing conflict of judicial decisions and in the interests of security of title and curtailment of speculative litigation.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### PROVINCIAL FINANCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

S R.—I am not surprised at your ill-natured paragraph quoting the *Janmabhumi* about a statement alleged to have been made by me. But neither the prejudices of the *Janmabhumi* nor the deeper prejudice of the SERVANT OF INDIA have permitted either to verify the statement before hanging absurd comments on them. The *Janmabhumi*, of course, may not be in touch with the *Bombay Chronicle*, but it is surprising that you should have omitted to note that my statement before Lord Meston was actually published in full in the *Bombay Chronicle* of the 6th of March. Finance is neither the forte of the *Janmabhumi* nor of the SERVANT OF INDIA, but I did not believe that even the SERVANT OF INDIA should express itself as being ready to believe anything evil or wicked of a political opponent. However, we live and learn.—Yours, etc.

A. RANGASWAMI IYENGAR.

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