

THE Servant of India

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Office: KIBE WADA, BUDHWAR PETH, POONA CITY.

Vol. III., No. 18.]

POONA—THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1920.

[ANNUAL SUBSN. : RS. 6

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE President of the Deccan Sabha, Sir Hormasji A. Wadya, has sent the following cable to the right hon. the Speaker of the House of Commons in view of the debate on the Hunter Report on the 10th instant: "Council, Deccan Sabha, Poona, beseech Parliament when considering Hunter Committee's Report Punjab Disturbances to determine momentous issues therein raised in strictest conformity with British traditions for fair dealing and impartial justice. Indian public has submitted its case and looks to Parliament to discharge sacred duty as Indian's trustee Empire's highest tribunal. As true friends of British Rule, Council earnestly submit that, while other gravest questions agitate public mind, prudence and justice alike demand that iniquities and indignities unquestionably inflicted on pretext of rebellion should not only be censured and condemned, but should receive the fullest punishment they merit. No regard for persons, however highly placed, can justify weak and unwise resolve or should prevent strictest and sternest justice to all concerned from highest to lowest." Copies of the cablegram have also been sent to the editor of the *Westminster Gazette* and to Mr. Polak.

The reversion of Mr. Thompson to the Chief Secretaryship cannot help the work of conciliation into which Sir Edward and Lady Mac-lagan have thrown themselves and which has, by general testimony, been attended with much success. Mr. Thompson was not the unwilling tool of the policy which he did not approve. In his official capacity he was the main participant with the ruler of evil name in an administration which inflicted untold indignities and sufferings on the people and ended in bloodshed of a kind which has shocked the moral sense of the better part of the

English people. He started criminal proceedings against the principal leaders of the Indian community and from his place in the Imperial Legislative Council defended the actions of his Government with such callousness and even virulence that it is impossible for him to regain, if ever he possessed it, the respect or confidence of the people. The least that a Government which means to open a new page should do is to transfer from the service of the Punjab an official who, next only to Sir Michael O'Dwyer on the civil side, sums up in his person a whole history of wrongs and misdeeds.

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THE English Indemnity Bill, to which a second reading was given by the House of Commons on May 3, has an application to India. Clause 7 gives power, by Order-in-Council, to extend the Act to this country. The main object of this proposed extension is to prevent any possible action being brought against the Secretary of State for India in respect of the action taken by Government under the Defence of India Act, viz. the taking over of the output of factories, the restriction of imports and the making of regulations for public safety. Section 32 of the Government of India Act, 1915, preserves to the individuals the power of suing the Secretary of State, and although all these matters are provided for by legislation, the Indemnity Bill is made applicable to India with a view to filling up any possible lacuna. The Government have also another object in bringing India within the ambit of the provisions of this Bill. The necessary indemnification in regard to the measures taken for the purpose of quelling the disturbances of April of last year is already afforded by the Indian Indemnity Act. Still the powers taken under this Bill are made applicable to India, as the Solicitor-General explained, "in order that the same defence may be open to persons who could be sued over here in respect of actions for which there would be an indemnity under the legislation of India."

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THE Bill was opposed from all parts of the House, and in fact only one private member supported it by speech, while several steady supporters of Government denounced the measure in vehement language. The opposition, however, was largely directed to the provisions relating to claims in regard to property; the larger question of individual freedom did not attract much attention.

Still the latter found strong champions in some members. Major Barnes, in a closely-reasoned speech, showed how the measure would very largely abrogate the rights and liberties secured for the people of England by the Petition of Rights. The criticism in respect of this matter mainly turned upon the question of the burden of proof, which also loomed so large in the discussions on the Indemnity Bill in this country. The English Bill also throws the burden upon the person making the application of proving the *mala fides* of the officer against whom a proceeding is instituted. Mr. Maddocks observed in this connection: "You see the dilemma in which a person is placed who has a cause of complaint of a Government Department. He has to prove that the act of which he complained was not done in good faith, a thing that is almost impossible to do in law. The burden of proof, if it were shifted and put in this way, that a person should be excused for doing an illegal act against another if he proved that he did it in good faith, is quite another matter, but the Bill, as drawn, puts the onus of proof upon the person bringing the complaint."

* * *

THE argument was well put by Sir Ryland Adkins. "The whole point is," he said, "on whom the burden of proof is to lie of proving that wrongful acts were done in good faith. If you put that burden upon the person who has done wrongful acts the courts of our country can be trusted to see that when any individual in a moment of crisis is proved to have acted honestly, he shall not be punished as if he had been guilty of a wilful and wrongful act. As put forward in this Bill, that is entirely impossible of defence, and I ask the Government to see whether this necessary part of an Indemnity Bill could not be drafted, constructed and framed so as to avoid that to which I have referred." From the way in which the Government members defended a similar provision of the Indian Act as being at the very basis of the criminal law of the country, one would imagine that a request for amending the Imperial Bill so as to throw the burden of proof on the officer charged with doing a wrongful act would be summarily dismissed in England. It was not so dismissed, however. The Attorney-General, on the contrary, promised to consider the point carefully in Committee. The final decision will be awaited with keen interest in this country.

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THE *interim* report issued by the South African Asiatic Commission recommends that with a view to encourage the return to India of those Indians who are desirous of doing so, the Union Government should afford all facilities, such as shipping and the suspension of restrictions on the export of gold in the form of savings and jewellery. It is conjectured that this recommendation has been made to allay the racial feeling which is now finding expression in very undesirable directions. Whatever may be the reasons that prompted the

Commission to take this step, there is no denying the fact that there is much from our view-point to be said in favour of this course. Mr. C. F. Andrews has favoured this step in his evidence tendered before the Commission and has also written time and again in the press in its support. Mr. West suggests that further inducements should be offered to indigent Indians to return voluntarily to India by giving a grant of £10 per head, free of exchange charges, payable through the District Magistrate in India. Excepting the European farmers, there appears to be little or no opposition to this proposal either from the European or Indian side. There is a considerable body of opinion that favours voluntary repatriation as providing a happy and peaceful solution of the highly complicated problem.

* * *

ACCEPTANCE of this recommendation by the Union Government does not in any way weaken India's demand for the just solution of the problems referred to the Commission. After all the class of South African Indians who will avail themselves of the facilities to be offered by the Government is not the class which, from the view-point of the European settler, constitutes the 'economic menace.' The white settler is afraid of the shrewd and enterprising Indian trader with whom he is not able to compete, and he will not seek voluntary repatriation. He and the South African born Indian demand their natural rights. Any attempt to interfere with those rights will be deeply resented. It is not too much to hope that the Asiatic Commission and the Colonial Office will not barter away the rights of Indians for placating the European settlers. If India's position as an original member of the League of Nations and her admission into the partnership of the Empire are to be real, her children should receive proper treatment everywhere in the Empire. Fulfilment of these righteous demands will be the test of the professions made in high quarters times without number.

* * *

WE were in error in regard to our comment on the Bombay Council rules governing the disallowance of questions and resolutions. The draft rules for Bombay are identical with those for other provinces, and hence the power of disallowance in respect of questions and resolutions is vested, in Bombay as elsewhere, in the Governor and not in the President. We were misled into making the comment we made by the fact that we mistook standing orders for rules. Standing orders have an inferior authority to the rules and merely detail the procedure governing the Council business subject to the operation of the rules. We have, therefore no reason to except the Bombay rule from the general criticism we have made, viz. that the power of disallowance should be subject to definite rules and that it should be vested in the President and not in the Governor.

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THE HUNTER COMMITTEE REPORTS.—II.

BY V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

AS I was entering the Council Hall in Delhi this February, a European colleague greeted me and observed that my awful prognostication at the enactment of the Rowlatt Act had come true. I still wonder whether the Government in India and in England realise how much that odious and unnecessary measure lay at the bottom of the Punjab tragedy. Here is my prognostication on the 18th March last year :

In a few moments more this Bill will be law. When the Bill is law, it does not remain there. We have still the aftermath, the consequences of the law to the Government of India no less than to us. For as a poet has said in a tragic connection: 'If it were done when it is done, then it were well it were done quickly.' I will not go further with this awesome passage; but the darkened page is there, and unfortunately, although some of us have tried to dissuade him from the course, Mr. Gandhi has taken it up. Well, I know how he will play his part; his character will be bold, blameless, perfectly white. I could only wish, Your Excellency, although I trust but faintly, that those of us who also have to write on this darkened page, his followers, the Government and Government employes, we political agitators and detenus, that we could all say at the end of the business that we also wrote perfectly white.

After a perusal of the Reports I am unable to say that Government, not to speak of their employes, have come well out of the affair. They began with bad statesmanship, then they showed lack of presence, caught the panic of the European community and dropped the reins altogether. Now the whole tale of suffering is unfolded, they do not perform the only reparation they can. They do not own up. They will not punish their guilty servants. They leave a sense of deep wrong, deepened further by a sense of humiliation and helplessness.

I summon all my philosophy to my aid and just save myself from being upset. I remember that of the great imperial nations of the world the British are the least oppressive and cruel by nature. I believe that Mr. Har Dayal's testimony to their superior virtues is both genuine and correct. If even they fail in justice and humanity, it is a sad reminder how far mankind is from conquest of primitive passion or realisation of moral purity. Till angels come down to rule over us, it is folly to let our hearts be turned from loyalty. As to the alternative of self-rule, I am convinced that the quickest way to it lies through the British Empire.

How much alike men are at bottom! The Reports allude to the wild stories about the Rowlatt Act that gained currency among the ignorant people. But one feels in reading them a deep undercurrent of unfounded fears prevalent among European men and women of all Indian leaders and our popular movements. It would make strange reading if one were to collect all the stories current in certain sections of the European and Eurasian communities about Gandhi, Malaviya and Banerjee. It is certainly not creditable to a race who lay claim to courage and commonsense to have be-

lieved in accounts of widespread rebellion in the Punjab. I have no patience with the seriousness with which Government set down General Dyer's exploits and the movements of aeroplanes and appraise their military value as in a campaign of warfare. In the ancient chivalry of this country there was a certain weapon of invincible power (the *astra* of Brahma) which the warrior was not in honour to use till the last extremity. Is there no code to restrain the use of deadly weapons of modern make against unarmed mobs which include boys and even children? One does not know whether to laugh or weep as one reads of regulations and instructions to be issued in future for this purpose after all these years of Hague Convention, Red Cross, amenities of civilised warfare, and so on. Are we asked to believe that monsters of racial pride and racial hate can be restrained by any regulations and instructions, however minute and stringent? The only thing that can do so is the certainty that public opinion will execrate and Government sternly punish. Unfortunately Government has proved impotent to do right, and the public opinion which the monsters care for is that of the unmentionable farewell address at Jullunder station or the unabashed sentiments of the Bihar European planters.

The chapters of the Minority Report proving that there was no need either for the proclamation or for the continuance of martial law, because there was nothing like rebellion, are unanswerable. The Government of India had some qualms of conscience, but the strong man of the Punjab silenced them. It is a revelation in the art of how not to wield authority in a crisis to see the Viceroy and his colleagues earnestly and respectfully pleading with Sir Michael O'Dwyer to close the régime of martial law. I cannot but feel that the Indian Commissioners, in judging with extraordinary leniency of the action of the Government of India, were swayed by the thought that it was to them they were reporting and from them they expected appropriate action.

Indian opinion has been hard on Mr. Montagu. It is quite natural, considering that the Secretary of State cannot be dissociated from the decision of His Majesty's Government. Nor is it my desire to shield him from responsibility for the despatch, "full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing." I know, however, how unhappy he was over the happenings in the Punjab. He had great difficulty in finding an Englishman of any reputation to come out to India for the tough job of this Commission. I know the anxiety he felt in fixing on its personnel, how he tried, above all things, to avoid a racial split and took care to select men on the European and Indian side who might be trusted by their antecedent reputation to reconcile the differing interests of Government and the people and produce a report which, if not unanimous would be at least non-racial and non-political. I fancy he has now learnt how impossible it is to get a body of Englishmen to condemn a brother

Englishman for admitted crimes committed in the interests of their country, and I like to believe that his despatch to the Government of India does not convey his personal judgment. It may be my ingenuity which suggests it, but I read such a meaning into this passage in the opening paragraph: "They (His Majesty's Government) have desired me to communicate to you in my reply to your letter their considered statement of these decisions. Paragraphs numbered 2 to 8 of this despatch contain accordingly this statement." The eulogy pronounced on Sir Michael O'Dwyer is contained in the eighth paragraph and, on my interpretation, would not be his. It is not improbable that the delay in publishing the Report which caused much surprise in India was due to the protracted struggle that he had in the Cabinet as to the rights and wrongs of the grave issues involved. His liberalism has the qualities of wide range and high courage. His sense of wrong is keen, and his love of India and Indians amounts to a passion. I cannot conceive of his letting off General Dyer lightly, or praising a man who misgoverned the Punjab, persecuted its leaders, and let slip the dogs of martial law on its people.

Lord Chelmsford, I make no doubt, is sufficiently punished by his own thoughts. It is a matter for speculation how far the action of the Government of India was influenced by the exercise of his individual judgment, and how far he allowed himself to be overborne by the judgment of his official advisers. Unlike some other Viceroys, he is reputed to be constitutional in practice. Considering on the whole the sort of colleagues he has had, this could not redound to the happiness of the people. In a grave crisis such as that of the Punjab, the chivalry of his nature ought to have been brought into play not for the support of a local tyrant through thick and thin, but for the protection of the honour, lives and property of the millions entrusted to his care; and his loyalty would have been better manifested towards the fairness of the British name than towards his councillors whose narrow official obsession unfitted them to be its custodians. His Lordship seems to have been overwhelmed by the magnitude and suddenness of the events and sought the martyrdom of official responsibility for the actions of his Government from which his private judgment, if it had been brought into exercise, might have dissented. A sense of official propriety carried to a faulty length prevented prompt expression of sympathy for the sufferers which one would have expected from so fine a gentleman and Christian. That he felt acutely for them is clear from the fact which I had from a trustworthy source that he remitted a considerable sum for their relief to the Punjab authorities. Some hasty critics have blamed him for not coming down from the cool heights of Simla to see things for himself on the spot. If he had done so, my fear is he would have afforded Sir Michael O'Dwyer, headstrong and foolhardy as he was, a pretext to throw

down the reins and ask the Viceroy who had in effect superseded him to pick them up, and in this course he would have been upheld by the almost unanimous judgment of the Indian Civil Service, and the forces of disorder might have received encouragement which in its turn would have led to grave consequences. The Secretary of State has justly said to him. "World-wide circumstances have combined to lay upon you a degree of anxiety such as has only at long intervals fallen upon any of your illustrious predecessors." Intense political agitation, an unparalleled war, severe pestilence, economic and financial troubles, and grave internal disorder have come in quick succession one upon another, and given no opportunity for the qualities of candour, chivalry, hospitality, courtesy and unwearied industry which are calculated to shine to advantage in a time of comparative quiet.

To Mr. Shafi I am glad to pay my tribute of praise for the trenchant manner in which he has given expression to his dissent in the two most vital issues from his colleagues in the Government. I expected nothing less, having known the way in which he acted with us throughout the discussion of the Rowlatt Bill. Unfriendly critics must take a lesson from the instance of Mr. Shafi and be cheered by the reflection that when the supreme test comes our men, clothed with responsibility, from whatever ranks drawn, will be found fully alive to the call of duty. Sufficient notice has not been taken by the public of a somewhat fresh point that Mr. Shafi makes in his note. As it is most important, I will transcribe the sentence containing the point: "In his opinion, the disturbances on and after the 14th of April in the districts of Gujranwala, Gujrat and Lyallpur were the results of the commotion caused by the Jallianwala Bagh affair." If this was the case, so far from crushing a rebellion, General Dyer very nearly provoked one, and his punishment should be proportionate.

Of the Indian Commissioners who have signed the Minority Report, it is difficult to speak too highly. So far as one can remember, the Hon. Pandit Jagat Narain was the only one of the three whose appointment received the general approbation of the public. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad was no favourite amongst the Nationalists, while Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan was comparatively unknown, and his nomination evoked general disapproval. As in the case of Mr. Shafi, so in these two cases the event has shown how wide of the mark the public estimation of individuals can be. That four persons enjoying the full measure of confidence from Government agree in momentous findings, gives the utmost moral authority to the views embodied in the Minority Report. Although the Government may uphold the Majority Report, the public of India of all shades of opinion will be guided in its judgment without the slightest hesitation by the judgment of the Indians whom Government have themselves chosen and whom nothing, but a strict regard for truth and a stern sense of

duty would have compelled to record conclusions so damaging to Government and its servants.

THE MADRAS PROTEST.

THE recommendations of the Meston Committee regarding Provincial contributions to the Imperial exchequer have evoked an angry chorus of disapprobation in the Southern Presidency. It is very rarely that all shades of opinion in the community agree on a question of public interest and can be expressed on a common platform. But in the present case, Government and people, Indians and Europeans, Brahmans and non-Brahmans, Liberals and Extremists, have all joined in indignant protest against what they believe to be an act of sheer injustice fraught with the gravest consequences to the progress of the Madras Presidency. The Government of Madras has made a strong representation to the Government of India against the large contribution proposed by the Meston Committee as the Madras share of the Imperial deficit, and at the suggestion of a number of members of the Legislative Council, a special session of that body was recently held to consider the question and to pass resolutions expressing disapproval and to ask for justice. The unanimity and strength of feeling thus exhibited by responsible opinion in Madras, is by itself *prima facie* proof of the unreasonable and unjust nature of the proposals made by the Meston Committee. We must frankly avow that Madras had a right to expect a more liberal treatment in the distribution of revenues under the Reforms Act, having suffered from financial stringency for years together. The resources of the Madras Government have been too restricted for the urgent needs of the Province and for the revenues contributed to the common purse of the country by the people of that Presidency. Madras has always complained against the financial arrangements under which the Province has been prevented from receiving its due share of revenue, and the Meston Committee's report coming on the eve of the inauguration of Provincial autonomy and of a new era in constitutional development, has caused a natural feeling of resentment among all classes.

A complete separation between Imperial and Provincial heads of revenue, a *sine qua non* of Provincial autonomy, left the Imperial exchequer with a deficit, originally calculated at over 13 crores of rupees. An improvement in the financial position of the Government of India, the result of a high rate of exchange, reduced this deficit to 6 crores. But the Meston Committee thought it necessary to provincialize revenue from general stamps to ease the position of some of the financially weaker Provinces and the Imperial shortage of revenue was increased to about 10 crores. This amount of deficit had to be distributed over the Provinces in certain proportions, and the basis of the Provincial contributions adopted by the Committee was the additional spending power obtained by each Province as a result of the new distribution of revenues.

Out of a total increase of 18½ crores in the Provincial revenues, the share of Madras is about 5¾ crores, and its proposed contribution is 3½ crores or 35½ per cent. of the total deficit. It is proposed that this contribution should go on steadily diminishing till it declines to 17 per cent. in seven years. Now the grievance of Madras is that while Bombay starts with 5½ per cent. and Bengal with 6½ per cent., she is made to begin with 35½ per cent. and is robbed of a large portion of her revenues at the very start. It is felt that the Madras contribution has been put at a high level because the contributions of the other Provinces are taken at small percentages. And the sharp contrast between the restricted resources of the Madras Government and the liberal scale on which Bombay, for instance, spends with a smaller population, is cited to point a moral. The explanation of the anomalous position is, however, simple. In any scheme of financial redistribution, you will not be writing upon a clean slate; but the proposed arrangements will be coloured by past history. The Provinces have developed their resources in a particular manner and their expenditure has grown in proportion to the growth of revenue. It is impossible to ask the Provinces to cut down their expenditure or impose additional taxation on the inauguration of the reforms. To ask them to do so will be perpetuating a more serious injustice than what Madras is protesting against. With half the population of Madras, Bombay spends as much as the Southern Presidency. But Bombay's contribution to the Imperial revenues in an indirect way, through the Income tax, railway revenue and so forth, is much larger than what appears on the surface. And Bombay cannot be expected to pay more for making up the Imperial deficit, by additional taxation if necessary, for easing the financial position of Madras. The increase in the spending power of Madras due to the redistribution of revenues is 5 crores 76 lakhs against only 93 lakhs in the case of Bombay, and it is forgotten that the balance of spending power left with Madras even after making a contribution of the Imperial exchequer to the extent of 35½ per cent. of its total deficit, is 2 crores 28 lakhs, while Bombay contributes 56 lakhs and retains only 37 lakhs. If, therefore, the Madras contribution is large, its gain from the new arrangements is also large.

The mover of the resolutions in the Madras Council proposed that 17 per cent. of the Imperial deficit only should be taken from Madras and corresponding standard contributions from the Punjab and the U. P., and that the balance of the deficit should be taken from the Provincial balances with the Government of India. He here proved the fact that in seeking justice for Madras he was doing serious injustice to the Provinces concerned. The latter will be perfectly justified in resenting and resisting the proposed raid upon their balances which have been built out of their hard-earned revenues which they were prevented by the Gov

ernment of India from spending owing to the exigencies of the war. The resolution passed by the Madras Council that "in any case if any amount is levied in excess of the due proportion from the Province of Madras, it should be recovered from the Provinces contributing less than their due proportion in such instalments and at such times as the Government of India may determine" is bound to provoke strong opposition from the Provinces which it is proposed to victimise.

The only satisfactory solution of the problem would lie in the Government of India putting an end to its deficit or at least reducing it to such an extent that the strain of contributions upon the Provinces would be small. The Meston Committee based its recommendations upon the prospect of an Imperial deficit which it increased by the provincialization of general stamps. It was not its duty to suggest means to improve the finances of the Central Government, and additional taxation it has deprecated on the ground that it would be indefensible in view of the increased spending powers secured by the Provinces. But if injustice to the Provinces is to be avoided, the Imperial deficit must be done away with or be substantially reduced. Madras protestants have fought shy of additional Imperial taxation as a remedy to wipe off the deficit of the Government of India and have discovered an easy solution in the transference of the burden of Provinces like Bombay and Bengal. But it is to be presumed that they will face additional Imperial taxation which will fall with equal incidence upon all Provinces if the heavy contribution which is sought to be imposed upon Madras is abolished or reduced. In fact, it was suggested in the Madras Legislative Council that it was not impracticable to wipe out the deficit in the Imperial exchequer, and increased customs duties, growing railway receipts and improvement in the income tax proceeds were pointed out as sources of additional revenue required for the purpose. We feel that it is necessary to meet the situation in some such way if the Provinces are expected to promote their material and moral development in the near future. There are so many schemes of development awaiting adequate funds to finance, and the work of the reformed Councils ought not to be made difficult by withholding from them the resources to which they are entitled. The Madras protest has our strong support. It has thrown a powerful searchlight upon some of the weakest points in the financial position of the country and has raised important issues regarding the financial relations between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments.

K:

RETIRING THE CURRENCY.

It is superfluous to discuss the serious situation, from the point of view of social well-being, created by the high prices of commodities in general. The strikes and industrial disturbances consequent on the high prices, the starvation of

the poorer sections of the the people, anxiety of the middle class to make two ends meet are themes of every-day discourse. Remedies are being suggested for the evil; but many people so far have not realized the part played in it by currency. It is my intention to draw attention to this aspect of the problem.

Before the war the average circulation of the paper currency was in the vicinity of 35 to 40 crores; during the war the currency notes circulation went up to about 150 crores. Side by side we see that the index number of high prices which was 100 during 1914 became 200 in 1918, and came to about 220 in 1919, the closing year of the war. The inflation of paper currency is thus seen to be at least a part cause of the general rising of the price level. Although the old quantity theory is exploded, the researches of Prof. Fisher and others in recent times have conclusively shown that the relation between the quantity of money and the prices is very close. We need not therefore take the trouble to prove *a priori* that the Indian inflation of paper money is bound to act on prices. We might take that as proven and proceed to suggest remedies based on this causality.

It might be said that shortage of supply in many cases would explain the high level of the prices, and it is therefore unnecessary to search for other causes. But although shortage would explain the rise in the cause of some commodities like milk or sugar, it would not adequately explain the rise of almost all the commodities. In fact it is a truism in the theory of money that a *general* rise of prices must be attributed to the standard of value. The rupee as a standard has depreciated woefully, the cause of this depreciation being the increase in the quantity of money.

It would be clear that one remedy, and probably a very efficient remedy, for the rise of prices would be a retirement of the currency. The number of tickets must be reduced in order to raise the value of a single ticket. The inflation, therefore, must be the point on which we must hit for the cure of the evil. Before answering the possible objections to this remedy it is necessary to show the *modus operandi* of this retirement.

According to the present statute there are three ways in which paper money can be retired—selling gold for notes; selling reverse councils and paying them in England out of the paper currency reserve; thirdly, to pass an Act by means of which the fiduciary portion of the currency reserve is lessened. Let us see the working of each of these methods in order.

Selling gold out of the paper currency reserve has the effect of inducing the people to part with so many notes for buying the gold while the gold cannot function as money, India having neither a gold standard nor a free mint for gold. This has been done by Government for the last few months, although not with the object which we are referring to in this connection. To that extent the remedy is already being put into effect. But it is capable

of an extended operation. Even if it depletes the gold portion of the currency reserve it is not a matter for anxiety as the gold in the reserve is not an accession of strength to the currency system in any way. As for the second method, it will be thought to be the height of impudence to recommend the sale of reverse councils at this time when a storm of invectives is poured on the reverse councils for various reasons. It will therefore be necessary to point out that we do not recommend the sale of reverse councils at the falling rate of exchange, but at the statutory rate of exchange (1£ = 15 Rs.). Reverse councils sold at this rate would obviate all the dangers of the waste of India's gold resources, inherent in the present mode of selling them. As the gold would be paid out of the paper currency reserve in London the notes in the hands of the Government of India in India cannot be issued again as the law would be violated in that case. There would thus be an automatic retirement of the paper currency in India.

It would appear as if we are here championing the sale of reverse councils, which has latterly been the object of severe criticism at the hands of Indian financiers and banking interests. Far from it. We are simply referring to it as one method *inter alia* of retiring the paper currency in India. We do not want to discuss the pros and cons of the question of the sale of reverse councils here; all that we want to emphasize is that it is a suitable method under requisite safeguards of retiring the currency. We have already referred to one such restriction, viz. that the rate should be 1 Re. = 16d., so that half the objections to that sale are obviated at a stroke. Another restriction we would suggest, and that is that the sale should be for units which are sufficiently small to be within the reach of small buyers. The smallest unit for instance would suitably be fixed at a £1000 so that even small banks and private merchants could easily get hold of the required number of currency notes to effect the purchase.

The third method, viz. that of passing a new law reducing the statutory limit for the fiduciary portion of the paper currency, is in our opinion the most effective as well as the one least fraught with mischief. At present there are 86 crores worth of securities in the paper currency reserve mostly consisting of English treasury bills against which an equal number of notes are issued in India. Suppose now that a law is passed to the effect that the fiduciary portion of the currency reserve should only be 60 crores instead of 86 crores. It would mean first that the treasury notes to the extent of 26 crores must be converted into gold or silver bullion if the new law is to be saved from violation. As nobody contemplates such a sale at this time when the gold resources of the Empire still require to be anxiously conserved, the only thing that would prevent the violation of the law is the cancellation or retirement of 26 crores worth of notes in the currency reserve lying in the hands

of Government. This is simply retracing the steps which we had been obliged to take during the war on account of emergencies exigent to the war. In response to the trade demand for certain necessary things we increased the currency; now that the demand which was temporary is no longer existing we ought to put it back.

There ought to be no demurring to the passage of a new Act through the council in order to lessen the fiduciary securities placed in the currency reserve. The present position of the gold and silver portion of the reserve is very precarious, and already comments are being heard that the security portion of the paper currency reserve is unduly swollen and the metallic portion is dangerously low. Even from the standpoint, therefore, of a reasonable metallic reserve a case can be made out for a new Act of this description.

After having explained the methods of retirement it is time to turn to the objections which we can easily anticipate against any proposal for a reduction of the currency. The trading section of the community, when it once becomes intoxicated with the wine of new currency, is unwilling to part with this stimulus. The first objection, therefore, would come from them. How can the amount of currency when it is reduced be adequate to meet the needs of trade at the present scale of prices? The answer is that it is a vicious circle. At present prices we want the increased currency, no doubt; but reduce the currency and the prices will be reduced proportionately so that the new amount of currency can do the work at the new price level. We are paying three or four times the old amount of money for practically everything. Reduce the currency by about 40 or 50 crores and a new scale of prices would be established.

Of course this rarefaction of currency must be gradual and must be spread over a long period, so that the effects of a sudden fall of prices which would cause a transfer of wealth to new hands might be avoided. But there is nothing sinful or iniquitous in this rarefaction. On the contrary, the present scale has been responsible for an inequitable distribution of riches during the last few years. The scaling down of prices, therefore, instead of causing an injustice, will only correct a wrong that has been already inflicted on a large portion of the community, especially the poor consumers. What we would propose, therefore, is that about 40 crores should be retired within a year or two at a uniform pace.

It might be urged that the retiring of about 40 crores of notes might cause a stringent money-market and might thus cause injury to the new commercial enterprises started under the auspices of the war. The answer is that if the retiring of the currency produces the effect we anticipate then the low level of prices would cause a welcome relief to new enterprises instead of acting as an extinguisher. Would cheap cotton and cheap wages mean the ruination of the cotton industry? Rather the reverse. The same is true all round. A

general fall of prices is not fatal to sound enterprises. It is a source of apprehension only to those who profiteer and those who indulge in wild speculation.

There is a school of thought which regards high prices as an index of prosperity and welcomes every addition to the currency. There is some truth in this mode of thought, but in economics as in other sciences there is a limit to everything, and the best way of meeting such an argument is to show its *reductio ad absurdum*. If 150 crores are good for trade why not 200 crores or 400 crores? If high prices are good why not have tea at 10 rupees a pound or sugar at 2 rupees a seer? No one would have the hardihood to say that these latter would spell prosperity. In fact, however ridiculous Ricardo's position might appear ordinarily, in such reasoning one is reminded of Ricardo's contention that an increase in the quantity of currency would only mean a lessening of its value, and the proper way of giving a high purchasing power to the unit of money is to limit the number of tickets representing the standard units, whether metallic or paper.

Another objection that might be raised is based on past history. The general teaching of history is that when prices once go further they do not retrace their steps backwards. This is generally true, but it is because statesmen have not the courage to use the right remedies in time. The present instance is a case in point. If stringent remedies are used the restitution of prices is not a superhuman task. It is because the State does not assert its powers to the utmost that economic evils are allowed to aggravate themselves.

V. N. GODBOLE.

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, MAY 20.

HOUSING IN BOMBAY.

THE Worker's Welfare League of India is an organization established here for some time. It has had under consideration a number of labour and industrial problems affecting the Indian workers. A great deal of its work has been of a purely theoretical and general character, but the fact that it is constituted of Indian and British members gives it a somewhat unique character, and its latest effort is of an eminently practical character. Under the signatures of Dr. K. S. Bhat, the President, Mr. Shapurji Saklatwala, Secretary of the Indian Section, and J. E. Potter Wilson, General Secretary, and with the support of Alderman J. Chaplin, Mayor of Leicester and Secretary of the Leicester Hosiery Union, Arthur Pugh, Secretary of the Iron and Steel Confederation, E. L. Poulton, Secretary of the National Union Boot and Shoe Operatives, W. J. Riley, Secretary of the Yorkshire Managers and Overlookers Union, T. E. Naylor, Secretary of the London Society of Compositors, D. Carmichael, Secretary of the London Trades Council, J. H. Baum, Secretary of

the Leicester Trades Council, C. E. Wilder, Secretary of the United Vehicle Workers, and James H. Hardie, of the Barnet Independent Labour Party, a moderately worded memorial has been addressed to the Secretary of State for India, strongly protesting against the proposed scheme for working-class houses in the city of Bombay as expounded and supported at the meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council on September 18 last by Sir George Lloyd, portions of whose speech are quoted in the memorial. The League welcome the Governor's recognition of the duty of the State to provide the necessary housing accommodation for the working-classes out of public funds, and maintains that to house working-class families in Bombay, the second city of the Empire, in one-roomed tenements, as is proposed, is, in this century, just as indiscreet and unhealthy as a similar proposal would be for a city in this country. The memorialists draw attention to the unprecedented prosperity of the industries of Bombay, to the immense profits of industrial and commercial houses and of land and property owners in the city, and the fact that, compared with other large cities, like London, Paris, New York, Berlin, and Buenos Ayres, Bombay has far more acreage available per thousand of the population for the erection of proper dwellings. The erection of the one-roomed dwellings now proposed, in a city whose merchant princes, deriving their wealth from the toil of the workers, vie with one another in the erection of luxurious and palatial dwellings for themselves, would, they say, be a very poor expression of Indo-British public spirit, especially as to-day the attitude of Great Britain in regard to the welfare of its Indian subjects, is being closely observed by other countries throughout the world. The memorialists would like to see a scheme inaugurated that could be regarded as an example for other Indian authorities to follow and one that would reflect credit upon the British authorities and would not be held condemned by existing Acts of Parliament in this country. They then make concrete suggestions by submitting plans of houses for workers in India prepared by their advisory architects, who also submit a report, to the effect that their plans represent what they believe to be the absolute minimum which should be provided for human occupation. Plans 1 and 2 represent usual types where one hundred families, for example, should be grouped in one village with a community building in the centre. Whilst submitting plans 3 and 4 as being superior to the prevailing chawl system, they draw attention to the desirability of establishing industry under conditions where there is ample space for factory extension and for the provision of housing accommodation in open surroundings. Provision is made in each house to include some simple furniture, such as cupboards, tables, seats, and shelves, and attention is drawn to the fact that provision of the community house gives facilities for many things which circumstances prevent from supplying individually. Alto-

gether, the proposals are a valuable contribution to a very difficult problem, and it is to be hoped that the Secretary of State will forward them to the Government of Bombay, with his own strong support.

THE HUNTER REPORT.

The *Times* wants to know where the Hunter Report is. It was generally expected that it would be issued yesterday, but there appears to have been a hitch at the last moment, and it is now believed that it will not be published until the recess, so that members will have it for study during the brief holiday that the exigencies of their Parliamentary duties allow them. The Report is known to have reached this country at the end of March, and appears to have been withheld in order that it might appear simultaneously with the resolution of the Government of India on the subject, which has been under the consideration of the Home Government. It is believed that it will be much broader in its spirit than might at one time have been expected, a fact for which the existence of a strong minority report and the division of opinion among the members along racial lines, as is suggested, may account. However that may be, the paper urges that, in view of the strong feeling, aroused not only in India but in this country, the issue of the Report will not be delayed further while the phraseology of the resolution is being considered. Immediate publication, accompanied by an announcement that the conclusions the Government have reached will be issued very soon is, the *Times* declares, essential to public confidence in British justice and good faith. The paper cannot, however, forbear to have a fling at Mr. Montagu, whom it has never forgiven for having accepted the Secretaryship for India. Referring to the Rowlatt Report and the details of the Amritsar shootings, it declares that the delays in publicity in those cases do not stand alone in creating the impression that Mr. Montagu has been inclined to withhold facts and papers from the knowledge of Parliament, and even to manipulate the dates of issue to suit political exigencies. Quite in the approved Indo-British style. The *Times* cannot depart very far from long-established custom.

THE TURKISH TREATY.

The Turkish Treaty has brought forth some interesting criticism from French journals of repute. The *Liberté*, for example, remarks:

As a matter of fact, under the appearance of international equality, the Treaty establishes in Turkey the material and moral preponderance of England. She it is that increases her power to a formidable extent by putting her hand on all the routes to India. As to France, she finds herself dispossessed, for the benefit of the League of Nations, of the protection of Christians which she has assured for centuries.

A peace such as has been made is, in the opinion of the *Temps*, "a drumhead peace." Presented after this lapse of time, it ought to have constituted an independent Turkey capable of existence; it does not do so, and the Turkish Government,

which is expected to put its signature to it, possesses no effective authority. The whole thing, therefore, gives the impression of having no relation to realities. The paper concludes by interpreting the Treaty as establishing one fact of capital importance. Inasmuch as France, Italy, and England will have to act conjointly in order to utilise for military purposes the zone of the Dardanelles, "it can be said that the draft of the Turkish Treaty establishes a permanent alliance between these three Powers for the protection of the Straits." One of the acutest comments that I have heard has come from an eminent Mussulman friend. He remarks that to have placed Turkey under the mandate of one of the Great Powers would on all grounds be preferable to handing her over, for all practical purposes, to a number of international commissions, which would rule without any popular authority or any responsibility to the Turkish people. Those who realise how necessary has been the transfer of the German colonies to some individual mandatory, in view of past experience of the multiple disadvantages that have been discovered in a condominium, where the jointly governing Powers have legal authority and responsibility, will recognise the validity of this critic's preference.

The publication of the draft Treaty has naturally affected the Indian Khilafat deputation in an extraordinary degree, as one might have anticipated from a knowledge of Mr. Mahomed Ali's temperament and that of his friends. The delegation has sent a lengthy telegram to the Sultan, expressing deep shame that Mussulmans should have allowed the Khilafat to have sunk to its present distressing condition, veneration for his high office, and the assurance that in all conceivable circumstances and at all costs, he will uphold the dignity of Islam and will remain steadfast in the defence of the Khilafat and of the sanctity of the Jazirat-ul-Islam in its entirety. After setting forth the many details of the mission with which they were charged, the delegation proceed to state that they have done their best to explain their threefold claim to the Allies, and "in spite of the appalling ignorance and tragic indifference" even of some of those who have been making themselves responsible for a new settlement of the world's affairs, they have made it sufficiently clear that the reduction of the Moslem claim by a half will not only be a violation of the deepest religious feelings of Mussulmans, but will also be a flagrant violation of the solemn pledges given by responsible statesmen representing the Allied and Associated Powers at the time when they were desirous of enlisting the support of the Moslem people and soldiery. They add that they have not hesitated to warn the British Government that if the pledges were not redeemed and effect was not given to the declaration that brought about the Armistice, it would be futile to expect peace in India, and that an affront put upon the Mussulmans, and, indeed, upon the entire Indian nation, would be incompatible with

the expectation of a blind loyalty. Having done everything demanded of them by their duty as Mussulmans, as loyal subjects of the King-Emperor, and as men deeply anxious to secure a just and lasting peace, and charged with a mission of reconciliation and concord, the senders of the telegram now await the response of the Allied Powers to their appeals and warnings. But of far greater importance to the Moslem world, they add will be the Sultan's response. They declare that Islam to-day stands solidly by his side as it has never stood since the last of the Khulafai-Mashideen passed away. Every Moslem, they aver, is now determined to do all that Allah demands from him, without flinching and without fear, even to the extent of offering his life as the price of his faith. It is a powerful and ardent appeal, and one awaits the publication of the reply.

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT.

This week the annual general meeting of the Indian Temperance Association has been held, under the chairmanship of Lord Clwyd, supported by that splendid veteran in all good causes, Dr. Clifford, Mr. Leif Jones, to whom the temperance movement in this country owes so much, Mr. Arthur, a junior member of the Government and himself an ardent temperance man, Sir Mancherji Bhownagree and others, before a well-attended gathering of Indians, Ceylonese and Europeans. The gathering was a great success. Dr. Clifford and Lord Clwyd laid great emphasis upon the opportunities afforded for the advancement of the temperance cause in India by the transfer of control of the liquor traffic to the popular side of the provincial Governments, and the responsibility this threw on the popular leaders for the proper education of public opinion. Foreign Affairs.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

The Irish situation has become increasingly dangerous. Murder and arson have become commonplaces and the Government of Ireland Bill seems to promise little hope in the direction of a settlement since the majority of Irishmen entirely disapprove of the splitting up of Ireland into two sections. It is rumoured that the Government intend to introduce bold amendments, but this seems improbable in view of Ulster opposition. Sir Edward Carson has already rejected proposals for bringing the whole of Ulster under one jurisdiction as this would mean bringing in a population of which four-fifths would be Catholic, and if Ulster is not prepared to take a risk of that kind now, with a view to unity, it is very difficult indeed to see how the Province can be coerced into something much bigger involving the whole of Ireland.

The Polish War against the Bolsheviks has created much feeling in this country where wide circles express the view that Poland is not acting without the moral and even the material support of the Allies, and that, even if Poland succeeds in her present adventure, it will simply be to prolong and extend the present chaotic conditions in Russia and, eventually, to consolidate the Russian

people in preparation for a war of revenge, which will have its repercussions over the whole of Europe and Asia. The news that the Bolsheviks have invaded Persia come as an unwelcome reminder that Soviet Russia is not without its means of aggressive defence against the Allies, of whom the most get-at-able is Britain.

The great French strike has ignominiously collapsed as everybody imagined it would do. The C. G. T., which has been dragged at the heels of the extremists, who now accuse it of half-heartedness, if not treachery, now has publicly to admit defeat. It is significant that the special correspondent of the *Daily Herald* in Paris explains the reason for the collapse on the ground that the strike had not the support of the workers as a whole, and he points out that the net effect of this foolish movement, which has riven the whole Labour Party asunder, has been to encourage the reactionary forces. It will be a long time before French Labour will recover from the blow. Meanwhile, as the *Daily Herald* correspondent remarks, the National Federal Committee of the C. G. T. is faced with the painful task of registering a situation, which it is beyond its power to remedy, and ascertaining who is to blame.

SELECTION.

THE COCHIN GOVERNMENT AND THE DEPRESSED CLASSES.

RAO BAHADUR T. VIJAYARAGHAVA CHARIAR, Diwan of Cochin, who presided over a big Ezhuva meeting at the Ernakulam College Hall on Thursday the 13th May, said in the course of his speech:—

Whether in education or in other matters, the policy of the Government has been the policy upon which has been built the British Empire in India and which more and more is becoming the policy of every country in the civilised world. This policy is, in a few words, that of equality of treatment, equality of opportunity. I am repeatedly told that Cochin is a country of peculiar customs and practices, and I must be careful not to apply to it the same rule as in British India. I must confess, however, that I fail to see what there is in the conditions of Cochin that call for a different treatment. On the other hand, the enlightened policy of successive rulers of Cochin has laid down equality of treatment as the basis of their rule. This is not only in accordance with the spirit of toleration which has always characterised the Hindu rulers, but is in strictest accordance with the basic principles of Hinduism itself. The lives and careers of a series of great Hindu religious reformers, both Vaishnavite and Saivite, in Southern, Western and Northern India have illustrated the great principle that in the eyes of God no caste is to be despised as low or unholy and that a Hindu can be degraded not by birth but only by his actions. They have proclaimed in imperishable accents of truth and beauty the eternal verity that all Hindus are equal. It is, therefore, impossible to assert that there is anything in the constitution of the State or its history to preclude the application of these great principles of human liberty and freedom which have been proved in the long process of history to be the only principles on which a stable Government can be founded.

And, coming to matters of detail, the principles which are being applied by the present Government are not new principles enunciated for the first time. It has long been an accepted maxim of the Cochin courts that in the eye of the law all men are equal. The Educational Code made twelve years

ago lays down that all classes of His Highness's subjects are entitled to admission to schools maintained or aided from public funds, and the Standing Orders of the Cochin Government recognise that members of every caste are eligible for public service. There is nothing new, therefore, or startling in the principles asserted by the Government; only the Government have been steadily insisting on the practical observance of these principles.

It has been freely asserted that the policy of the Government has been leading to trouble between the different communities. I have been at some pains to verify this statement, and I find the so-called trouble is not new, but has been in existence now for over forty years when Ezhivas in this State, Travancore and South Malabar began to shake off their ancient bonds. The trouble is neither of recent nor of administrative origin as alleged. With the spread of education and civilisation and the ideas of freedom which they engender, it is impossible, even if we wish it, to keep castes in their ancient habit of unquestioning obedience to the dictates of a superior social body or community, since social justice is sweeping throughout the country, and it is madness to expect that Cochin alone can be kept as a sheltered backwater, safe from these revolutionary ideas. I have been asked why I should not take a strong line and have been assured that it would prevent all trouble. I do not think this argument is worth answering. The Government exists for the benefit not of any particular castes or classes, but of the community as a whole. If any party breaks the law swift and sure punishment will follow. The law is bound to protect everybody in the enjoyment of his rights.

I have been asked, what is the motive of Government in pursuing this policy? My only motive is to make Cochin really great in the eyes of the civilised world. I wish to be able to tell a visitor to Cochin, like Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, for instance, that in Cochin there is a "fair field and no favour." I do not wish to be obliged to conceal from him things which I feel cannot redound to our credit. If my object was only that of self-gratification, I could find it sooner by letting the depressed classes alone. No administrator who values his peace of mind or a quiet life will take up the question of the depressed classes here. I know very well that if I left it alone, everybody—that is, everybody who is articulate—will be happy, and I shall be happy too. But I feel that is not the way to serve Cochin. I feel what is to be sought is not the passing interests of the hour, but the permanent prosperity and greatness of the State. And that can be done only by letting every class and community rise to the full stature of its manhood.

To the higher classes, the Brahmans and Nairs, I say: "Look to the real interests of the country and not to those of particular castes or classes. Look ahead and see to the interests not of to-day or to-morrow but the permanent interests of the country, 20, 50 or a hundred years hence. I admit it is not pleasant to give up old time-honoured privileges and to treat on equal terms a man who yesterday was below you. But will you not make that sacrifice for the sake of the larger interests of the country?" To the educated men the higher classes, I say: "Do you not think it your duty in view of the education you have received to go farther than a mere theoretical subscription to the doctrine of equality leaving things to adjust themselves? Doubtless, things will adjust themselves, but don't you think it is your duty to take an active part in the process and spare the pain and the trouble which a slow process of adjustment unhelped by you produces? Do you think your duty is sufficiently done by saying: 'These caste grievances will gradually be removed; without action on my part things will right themselves in the course of years?' Don't you think that from your own point of view it is a great loss of moral and personal power that you should be untrue to the light that is within you? With the new feeling of patriotism produced in the last ten years in the rest of the country a great change has taken place in social matters. Don't you think that people in Cochin should also show that they are a part of India and that you are not

unaffected by the great tide of thought that is sweeping over the rest of India?"

You say that public opinion is against me in this matter. Remember however that you yourselves stand at the bar of the much larger public opinion of India. I am afraid we have too long been accustomed to judge things from the narrow point of view of Cochin. Remember that there is a very much larger public opinion which will look at matters from a much broader point of view, and from the larger national point of view than from a small parochial standpoint.

Remember that, even if you wish it, things will not stop where you like them to stop. The rising sense of self-respect of the depressed classes resents many of the practices and customs which their ancestors and their elders submitted to without question. Please use your imagination and realise what and how you yourself will feel and act, if you were in the position of the depressed classes. When you express annoyance at the modern Ezhiva young man finding offence in hoary practices which his fathers quietly submitted to, are you quite sure that you have tried to look at the question from the other man's point of view? How would you like it, is when you went to Madras for your University studies you were ordered off particular roads on the ground that your presence was a pollution? Very often in these matters we are guilty of injustice more unconsciously than consciously. It is so difficult for a man who has been in the privileged position to realise the feelings of a man who is in a position of inferiority. Try to get inside his skin, use your imagination; you will probably find that you begin to understand and finally sympathise with the other man's point of view."

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Indian public are greatly indebted to Mr. Andrews and a correspondent of the *Leader* for the details of the recent happenings in Fiji. When one reads these communications which give a graphic description of the sufferings and indignities inflicted on helpless Indians in that colony, one cannot help coming to the conclusion that in far-off Fiji, the Punjab tragedy has been repeated on a smaller scale. The circumstances under which firing on an unarmed crowd took place, and the events leading to the arrest of men and women deserve careful investigation by an independent commission. It is also doubtful if there was need for the promulgation of Regulations under sec. 2 (e) of the Public Safety in Times of Civil Commotion Ordinance, 1920, which practically amounted to a declaration of martial law. This fact also needs consideration. We earnestly hope that the Government of India will take immediate steps to press on the attention of the Fiji Government the need for such an enquiry

* * *

THE circumstances of the case are so similar to those of the Punjab that we are tempted to draw some lessons which are applicable to both happenings. It is a notorious fact that the Punjab Government in a state of panic, with the avowed approval of the Government of India, treated the British Indian subjects of His Majesty in a cruel manner, and that as a recognition of this cruel service the satrap received eulogiums for saving the *izzat* of the British Raj. Who would wonder if the Government of Fiji treated with no consideration the Indians in Fiji, for most of them are after all 'coolies.' We hope it is not too much to expect the Indian Government to move in the matter and demand an open enquiry.

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