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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Treaty of Peace between Russia and Germany has at last been signed. It will not affect the war situation in an appreciable manner, the only likely change being the stopping of the further progress of Germany towards the East. For some days before the signing of the peace, German armies continued their advance in Russia and occupied more Russian territory although an armistice had been agreed to and the Russian armies had been demobilised. It has since been reported that some more Russian provinces have been marked out by Germany for self-determination. Self-determination may be a good principle. But under the iron heels of Germany, self-determination can only mean self-destruction.

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MEANWHILE serious developments might be expected at any moment in the Far East. The paralysis of the Russian Power has loosened the bonds by which its various provinces had been held together. They are falling away, and perhaps falling a prey to their aggressive neighbours. It is well-known that Japan had her ambitions in regard to Siberia, and Japan is not the nation to let go this precious opportunity. There is some talk of the intervention of Japan in Siberia. Germany suggests the possibility of German help to Russia. But what about America and the Allies? Although Japan is on the side of the Allies and talks about Allied co-operation in Siberia, the occupation of any portion of Siberia may create difficulties. Japan stands for the Monroe Doctrine of the East. But what European—or American—will bear to see this doctrine carried out in the East?

To realise the remarkable educational progress of Travancore one has to compare it with the achievements of Mysore and the province of Madras which is by no means backward in education. The proportion of the total number of students under instruction at the end of the last official year to the total population was 10.1 in Travancore, or 5.5 in Mysore and 4.0 in Madras Presidency. Compared with the population of school-going age, which is generally estimated at 15 per cent. of the total, it was 78.5 in Travancore, 38.0 in Mysore and 26.6 in Madras Presidency. Taken separately for boys and girls, the corresponding proportions respectively were 117.5, 62.4 and 43.3 for boys and 39.5, 13.2 and 10.0 for girls. The State expenditure on education amounted to 15.0 per cent. of the total revenue in Travancore, 11.4 in Mysore and less than 5 per cent. in Madras Presidency, while for the whole of British India it was only 3.5 per cent. During the last six years it has risen in Travancore from less than 10 to 23 lakhs. The State is also thinking of having its own University and has appointed an influential Committee to consider the proposal.

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It is however its solicitude for backward and depressed classes that calls forth our warmest admiration. It is pursuing the policy of throwing open all public schools to them and even the Sanskrit College has had to yield to its pressure. To understand the full significance of this fact we have to remember that orthodoxy in Travancore has prescribed a graded range of pollution to different castes, extending in some cases to thirty yards and more. Within the last five years the number of panchama pupils has increased by 160 per cent. and in the case of Puliya by more than 800 per cent. A large-hearted measure adopted by the State during the last year was the permission granted to the Puliya and Paraya to occupy Government land outside forest reserves free of *tharavila*.

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THE Government of India have declared their inability to proceed further in the matter of the Government of East Africa's refusal to allow two Mahomedan barristers to land at Mombassa, though they were provided with passports from His Honour Sir Michael O'Dwyer. A time of war has its difficulties and we must possess our soul in patience till more information be available. But the people of India cannot forget that British colonies tried our patience sorely, even when there was no war.

IN his opening address to the Provincial Co-operative Conference of Bihar, His Honour Sir Edward Gait clearly pointed out the interaction of co-operation and primary education. For the success of the former, a wide extension of the latter was necessary. At the same time, co-operative societies could do a great deal towards the expansion of primary education, and one of the directions in which they could do so was in improving the quality of the teaching in the local schools by the supervision and control, which they were able to exercise over the *gurus*. It is to be wished that His Honour's robust faith in the ability of co-operative societies to look after village schools were shared by other provincial Governments.

MR. H. W. WOLFF, the great English authority on co-operation, is a sturdy opponent of financial state aid to co-operative banks. But he advocates more public money being spent on the inspection of societies in India than is done at present. As pointed out by him, the inefficiency of our societies is getting to be a danger to the movement, and better and more supervision is urgently needed all over the country. A wise policy has left supervision in almost all provinces to non-official agency, supported mainly by the societies themselves, and it is no wonder that for want of funds it is not quite satisfactory. Mr. Wolff's recommendation ought to be heeded by Government.

GOVERNMENTS, including that of the Punjab, should resist the temptation of using public money, either directly or indirectly, for encouraging particular opinions or discouraging others. They are entitled, like the ordinary advertiser, to choose the best media for their advertisements. But they have not the ordinary advertiser's liberty to choose media which merely please them by their policy towards public questions or their tone of general criticism. A slight extension of the reasoning which allows that liberty might be made to justify alarming partialities and penalties in the great commercial services. What would the world say if the G. P. O., for instance, refused to carry the correspondence of certain newspapers or the Railway Board ordered that no tickets should be sold on any of their lines to those members of the legislative council who criticised their administration with severity?

THE suggestion has been often made during the last two years, and it has again emanated recently from Karachi, that the Government of India should issue premium bonds in order to attract from the public the large quantity of money it requires for defraying war expenses during the coming year. Sir William Meyer has now definitely and finally disposed of the proposal by rejecting it. We regard his attitude in this respect as perfectly sound. The Finance Member frankly stated that he had no puritanical scruples in the matter and that he would get the premium

bonds sanctioned if he was convinced that Government would secure through them the money which otherwise they would not obtain. Premium bonds are not likely to appeal to investors. Ordinary people are not likely to be content with a low rate of interest on the remote chance of winning a prize, and those who like a flutter will prefer speculative share investments and will not go in for a Government loan which offers comparatively small sensation. For these reasons, Sir William set his face, and we think very wisely, against the premium bonds suggestion.

THE *Bombay Chronicle* has rendered a public service by drawing pointed attention to the danger of cotton speculation and by calling upon the Government to intervene to save a serious situation that is likely to develop. Speculation has its uses and is carried on on a large scale in all western countries. But when speculation goes beyond certain limits and degenerates into gambling, it becomes the duty of the State to interfere in the interests of the public. The price of Broach cotton has been raised by bullish speculators to unprecedented heights, and such action is likely to exercise a demoralising influence upon the cotton market and to prove disastrous to the credit and money market of the Presidency. As a rule, State intervention should be sought only on extraordinary and rare occasions, and generally, the bull and bear operators in the cotton markets of India are left to themselves. But the present times are such that wild speculation has to be restrained by Government for fear that freedom to speculate recklessly in cotton, might mean a shrewd blow to credit at a critical period in the history of the country and of the world. The apprehensions entertained in this connection may be a little exaggerated, as some contend. But in matters like these timely measures are calculated to save a lot of trouble that may turn out to be serious. We are, therefore, glad that the Controller of Prices has taken up the question and hope that he will do everything that the situation demands.

THE personnel of the Government of Bombay has just now undergone an important change, the Hon. Sir Mahadeo Chaubal having retired from the 1st March and been succeeded by Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla. Sir Mahadeo was by no means a *quantité négligeable* in the Government, if report speaks true, as some of the first holders of this high office in other presidencies were. But not having had experience of the public life of the country, he often unconsciously came to hold very strongly the point of view that was first placed before him on any question, and this view was very often the official view. On other matters he appears to have strongly represented the popular side. As examples, we may cite his attitude on the jury question in which he rather too zealously advocated the anti-jury side and his skilful piloting of the compulsory Education Bill. Judging of

his work, as far as it has come before the public as a whole, one may very confidently say that he has proved that the appointment of an Indian member is a great success.

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WE have not mentioned so far his work on the Public Services Commission. During the period the Commission was in active life he was not legally a member of Government, but as this work was sandwiched between the two parts of his membership it may be as well to speak of it briefly. In the first days of the Commission's work report spoke of him as being entirely on the official side. But the repeated denunciation of Indians as a class by European witnesses that was indulged in at Madras seems to have done its work and brought him to look at the question from the Indian point of view—a process in which his close association with the late Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Justice Abdur Rahim must have had a considerable share. We appreciate very highly his work on the Commission and while it is very probable that if Mr. Gokhale had been alive the three Indian members would have written a joint minority report, which would have proved a *point d'appui* for future Indian agitation for the legitimate demand for a larger employment of Indians in the administration of their own country, still the separate minutes written by Sir Mahadeo are well thought out and place the Indian point of view quite forcibly. May we hope that, in the freedom that he now regains after nearly eight years of official life, he will take his place in public life, which often lacks official administrative experience from the inside?

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SIR IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA'S appointment to the Bombay Executive Council has long been expected. More than him, we congratulate the Government of Bombay on it. To shrewd mother-wit, Sir Ibrahim adds long and varied experience of business and public affairs. He thinks clearly even in the midst of excitement and his views are marked by sobriety and caution. He has the gift of luminous and persuasive speech and the rarer gift of silence, when speech is inopportune. He is one of those patriots to whom service under the Crown is only another means of rendering service to the people.

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✓ WHAT is the exact position of the Indian member in our executive councils? A high newspaper authority of Madras asserts that he should keep his personal convictions to himself and always seek to get the popular view accepted by the Government. In an unqualified form this proposition is hardly tenable. Even an elected representative of the people sitting in a deliberative assembly cannot be bound down to suppress his conscience in all conditions. It would doubtless be intolerable if the Indian member were as ignorant of, and indifferent to, the wishes of the community as his European colleagues. His appointment would then become absolutely valueless. In all

cases he will be expected to bring the Indian view to the notice of the Government and obtain due consideration for it. Occasionally, however, he may think the Indian view wrong or perverse. In such a case, his clear duty would be to place it before his colleagues, but get them to set it aside. Nor is he under an obligation, as soon as one such case should occur, to make room for another, who may be in better agreement with popular opinion. The obligation would arise only where the member found himself frequently at variance with his community and perhaps constitutionally out of sympathy with them. The doctrine of our Madras contemporary would reduce the Indian member to the position of a mere agent. Sycophancy may be towards democracy as well as towards kings.

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THE trouble which appeared to be brewing in South Africa owing to the promulgation of certain restrictive railway regulations has, for the present, happily ended. One of these regulations sought to forbid coloured persons to travel by mail and fast passenger trains; this and two others, which had received the sanction of the Governor-General, have now been deleted in response to the representations of the Indian community. Without the regulation, Indians have found it hard to secure accommodation on these trains, and the regulation would have barred all hope. Though this has now been withdrawn, two others remain to which Indians take strong exception. Under these, the Railway Administration takes power to confine coloured persons to particular portions of a railway station and require them to carry their "passes" or registration certificates with them. These regulations, beside being humiliating in themselves, will cause much harrassment to people. We are told that the Minister of Railways has been looking into them in the light of further representations from Indians, and we hope they will go the way of other regulations.

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IT is not for a humble subaltern to pat a veteran general on the back. I hope the editor of the *Leader* of Allahabad will not take it amiss if I say I greatly admire the sincerity and thoroughness of his apology to Mrs. Annie Besant. Its value is enhanced by the fact that it appeared before Munshi Ishwar Saran's protest or Mrs. Besant's remonstrance. It takes a really big man to acknowledge an error handsomely. Editors, like certain other people in power, can always have the last word in a dispute. This position of advantage carries with it a temptation to hit without sufficient cause and refuse to admit the wrong, when it is pointed out. Mr. Chintamani has maintained the highest standard of Indian journalism.

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✓ THE *Bombay Chronicle* disapproves strongly of certain views expressed in this paper. Its arguments are not convincing, while its vehemence seems a trifle excessive. The *Servant of India* has had its first lesson—a smart rap over the knuckles. It is a wee bit stronger and wiser for the experience, and not one whit the sadder.

' POWER WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY. '

ONE of the criticisms made against the Congress-League scheme of reform is that it is calculated, and perhaps designed, to give ' power without responsibility. ' A brief antithetical statement has such an appearance of cleverness and insight that the temptation to hit off the position of one's opponent by its means is great. Not all brief and striking expressions, however, are true. Many are thrown off for effect in the heat of controversy and are scarcely just. ' Power without responsibility ' in the case of the Congress-League scheme is incorrect, and, in so far as it implies any censure of its authors, is undeserved.

The criticism generally arises in contrasting this scheme with that of which Mr. Lionel Curtis is the propounder. The latter is considered to embody, from the first stage to the last, the principle of responsible government, which the Cabinet have, in their declaration of August last, laid down as the destination of Indian polity. The scheme on which the people of India have been educated was adopted in December 1916 before the Cabinet's pronouncement, and Congressmen have been held to blame for not recasting their scheme in December 1917 in the light of the pronouncement. In refusing to provide in their scheme for an initial dose of responsible government and for periodical increases of the dose until its fulness is reached, leaders of Indian thought have kept close to the recorded experience of other peoples, to whom responsible government has come, wherever it has come, as the consummation of a progress of popular government all along the line, aided by the working of a more or less defined party system. Their plan is by no means incompatible with the adoption of responsible government as the goal of political evolution, but is the well-trodden highway to it, which the precedent-loving British nation are likely to favour, if their political instincts be not deflected, as they frequently are in Indian affairs, from their natural bent. The bifurcation of governmental functions with two executives of different types and a series of transfers of these functions from one compartment to the other at stated intervals and by means of a machinery which cannot work without friction, constitute such a novel and artificial line of advance that it appears an irony of Indian politics that it should be seriously proposed in the name of caution and circumspection. The only consideration that may reconcile us to it is the inexorable necessity of conciliating a bureaucracy which has persuaded itself that it is going to teach what it does not believe and foster what it does not approve.

Now, the expression ' power without responsibility ' may apply to the members of the legislature or to the ministers. Let us first apply it to the former. The responsibility of legislators may mean, if the word is used in the ordinary every-

day sense, financial liability, i. e., their obligation to find by taxation or other means the money that may be necessary for carrying out their policy and bearing their share of it. From such liability, none but the most stupid and most selfish legislators will seek to absolve themselves; and we may take it that the critics of the Congress-League scheme do not mean to impute to its framers any motive of the sort. Or the expression may mean the liability to be turned out of office. Legislators are generally turned out in one of two ways, by lapse of time or by dissolution. Either way the electorate may replace them by another set and so enforce their responsibility. The Congress-League scheme contemplates an electorate based on a wide and direct franchise and limits the term of the legislature to five years. Dissolution within the term is not provided for in the scheme; but its principal exponents recognise its necessity and are willing to give the head of the Government the necessary power. Or the expression may have a third meaning—that the legislators desire to occupy the comparatively easy position of critics of the executive and enunciators of policy, unwilling to assume office and carry out the decisions for which they have voted. This criticism too would be obviously wrong; for the Congress-League scheme proposes to contribute one-half of the ministry by a process of election by the legislature, and nine out of ten men called in that manner to assume the responsibility of office will be found willing to do so. The abler and more ambitious members of the legislature will naturally look forward to be placed in office when the time of electing the ministry comes round, and in this manner they will come under that sobering influence which is supposed to be exercised on the Opposition by the thought that they may be called upon to occupy the Treasury Bench in their turn. The prospect of office has no doubt to some extent the effect of keeping criticism within limits. But this beneficial effect is easily exaggerated. The propositions laid down when statesmen are in Opposition, are commonly compared to lovers' promises. The constitutional doctrine that the business of the Opposition is to oppose has tended to make their criticism unreal and indiscriminate, so much so that it is often described as insincere. The judgments passed on one another by rival statesmen and the invectives of partisan journals are taken with a heavy discount by sensible people. It is said frequently that in India the ordinary citizen is not nearly so apt to apply this discount to political criticism as the British elector, and by his unsophisticated habit of understanding things literally runs the risk of falling a victim to the arts of the demagogue.

We shall now consider the expression ' power without responsibility ' with reference to ministers. In this case the criticism would mean that under the scheme members of the executive council would enjoy the sweets of office for a fixed period without the risk of being turned out by an adverse

vote of the legislature. This, no doubt, is a prominent feature of the scheme, but it is a merit. Without a bi-party system, responsible government cannot produce the best results. To lack stability is to lack strength, and a weak executive is a curse. Besides, the scheme, by ensuring the subordination of the executive to the legislature, ensures real, though not technical, responsibility, for as under the Swiss constitution, the executive will become the trusted agents of the legislature with a definite period of office. So, on a proper view of the matter the executive will have power with real responsibility, though without technical responsibility. At present the Government of India it is that enjoys 'power without responsibility;' to the people it is not responsible in any sense; to the Secretary of State its responsibility is nominal. There is hardly a case where the Secretary of State has removed the member of any Government from office. It may be said that it is because no member has hitherto disobeyed the Secretary of State; then why should not the members of the executive council obey the legislature similarly and hold office for five years? Of course, nobody can prevent voluntary resignation of a minister, when he is unable or unwilling to carry out the will of the legislature. The objection is to the rule requiring the resignation of a ministry, when defeated in Parliament, for a defeat in the present conditions of India, without definite party organisation and party discipline, would by no means imply that the ministry had lost the confidence of the country or the electorate.

Responsible government is a comparatively recent growth in Great Britain. It was brought about by the changes consequent on the Reform Bill of 1832. In 1841, the House of Commons resolved that 'the Whig ministry, not having the confidence of the House, their continuance in office was at variance with the spirit of the constitution,' and this resolution established the principle of responsible government beyond a doubt. Though it is of such recent date, three generations of Englishmen have lived under it and come to believe that it is a law of nature, from which a departure is an attempt to do the impossible. A great American writer on 'Political Science' named J. W. Burgess has given the following opinion on this very point:—

"What, then, are the conditions which require the political responsibility of the ministry to the legislature, or the popular branch thereof, which make this relation advantageous? We have now two distinct questions which require distinct answers. I can conceive of nothing requiring this relation, except the permanent incapacity of the executive head, or irrational persistence on his part in an unpopular policy, or such evidence of a treacherous disposition as to make it impossible that he shall be trusted. On the other hand, ministerial responsibility to the legislature will be *advantageous* when the electorate and legislature are of so high character intellectually and morally as to be practically incapable of forming an erroneous opinion or of doing an unjust thing. The checks and balances of double or treble deliberation by independent bodies will then be no longer necessary, will

be rather hurtful than necessary. The natural age of compromise will have been passed. Until something like this condition shall arrive, however, the responsibility of the ministry to the legislature for Government policy tends to the production of crude measures and in general, makes government radical. I do not think that parliamentary government stands in such high favour with political scientists as it did a decade or more ago. Based upon the narrow English electorate of twenty-five years ago, its working seemed to vindicate most thoroughly its principle, but the recent great extension of that electorate has revealed dangers hardly suspected before, and has shaken the faith (once orthodox) in its perfection and in its adaptability to every condition of political society. I have no hesitation in saying that to me, England, as well as France, now appears to need a greater independence of the executive power over against the legislature."

It is possible, however, to push this argument too far. In all likelihood the working of a periodical executive as under the Congress-League scheme will result in converting it into a responsible executive; but a period of preparation and transition is necessary, during which the ministry need not resign, though defeated in Parliament. Even when responsible government begins, it may be advantageous to guard against its excesses by a few provisions like the following:—

Firstly, a ministry need not resign, unless an express vote of censure or want of confidence is carried against it; *secondly*, such a vote must be carried by something more than a bare majority; and *thirdly*, when a resolution conveying the censure or want of confidence in the ministry is defeated, it should not be brought forward again within a period of six months.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

THOSE who were looking forward with some anxiety to the exposition of the financial situation of the country in the Viceroy's Council, must have been relieved to learn that Sir William Meyer did not propose to levy additional taxation of any kind. We are passing through a very critical stage in the history of the war and the financial strain upon the belligerent nations has been steadily growing. And it would not have been a matter for quite a surprise if the tax-payers of India had been called upon to contribute more to meet the increasing expenditure of Government. To speak frankly, the burden the people have already to bear is indeed heavy enough, and the pressure is being accentuated by the ever-rising level of prices all round. If we leave aside a small class of merchants and manufacturers who have profited by war conditions, the bulk of the people have felt the pinch of the prevalent high cost of living. But even the most ignorant person now knows that his difficulties are the direct result of the terrible war in which the British Empire is engaged and that his sacrifice is the contribution he is making to the successful prosecution of the struggle.

Sir William Meyer had no surprises in store for an expectant public. In fact those who had

watched the course of the revenue and expenditure of Government, had reason to think that there would remain at the end of the year substantial surplus in the public treasury, obviating the necessity for additional taxation. The imperial revenue is better by £ 10 million and the provincial by £ 1½ million, and though the imperial expenditure exceeded the budget estimate by about £ 4½ million, the revised estimates for the current year leave a large surplus of £ 8 million. We can thus start the new year under hopeful auspices. The imperial revenue for 1918-19 has been estimated at about £ 74 million and the expenditure at £ 71¾ million, and the accounts are expected at the close of the year to show a surplus of more than £ 2 million. This happy position is entirely due to the fresh taxation imposed during the last two years and to the increased receipts from railways. The railways yielded a net profit of £ 7½ million in 1916-17 and, according to the revised estimates of this year, will contribute £ 10 million. 'No fresh burdens, and no remission of taxation: as you were,'—this is the summing up of Sir William's financial statement.

If we look back to the situation of four years ago, we find that the national expenditure of India has advanced with a jump by nearly 36 crores of rupees. About a quarter of this is absorbed by increased military outlay and another quarter by enhanced interest charges. We are afraid the level of taxation after the close of the war will remain at its present height. During the last four years, our finances have been conserved and developed with one object in view, viz., efficient and liberal co-operation in the vigorous prosecution of the war. Every other thought has been put aside, schemes of reform have been hung up, and retrenchment and economy are the order of the day, except in cases of war expenditure where funds have not been stinted. On the termination of the war, the course of progress will have to be resumed and the work of expansion and all-sided development will have to be taken up again. In the meanwhile, we must possess our souls in patience and prepare for the speedy end of the present devastating struggle and for the resumption of our activities in the direction of social and economic reform.

The financial statement which Sir William Meyer presented to the Indian Legislative Council was his last, and the review he took of the period of his stewardship of India's finances at the end of his speech will be read by the people with appreciation and sympathy. It was no light task to which Sir William was called upon to address himself when the war suddenly broke upon his carefully prepared budget for 1914-15. In Anglo-Indian quarters he was attacked for his alleged niggardliness, and when he came out to demand more from wealthy tax-payers, he was attacked for imposing heavy burdens. Through good and evil report, the Finance Member went

his way courageously and resolutely with the consciousness that he was dealing with an extremely difficult situation in the only way in which it was practicable to face it. The present financial situation is a sufficiently strong vindication of the wisdom of his policy and the country will feel grateful to him for having piloted the financial bark successfully through rocks and shoals. The urgent necessities of the war compelled him to impose restrictions and control over matters in which, in times of peace, complete freedom prevails. And Sir William has had the satisfaction of being in a position to say that the public cheerfully co-operated with him in facing a difficult and complex situation.

It is, however, in the realm of currency and finance rather than in that of the ordinary budget of income and expenditure that the difficulties and success of Sir William's work have mainly lain. India has been called upon to spend crores upon crores on behalf of His Majesty's Government for war purposes. The huge amounts thus expended are duly recovered for India by the Secretary of State in London. But this enormous outlay has put a tremendous strain upon the resources of the Indian treasuries. Fresh rupees have been issued on an unprecedented scale and the total circulation of currency notes reached 104 crores on the 1st February last as against 64 crores in 1904. The high price of silver added to the embarrassment of Government and the exchange had to be pushed above the standard rate. Big loans have been floated and funds have been raised by means of treasury bills. Under the wise guidance of Sir William Meyer, India has assisted the Empire substantially in a variety of ways, and India's currency and financial organisation has made an advance that could not have been dreamt of four years ago. The Finance Member's review of his administration is a vindication of India's substantial contribution to the war and a crushing reply to India's detractors.

THE COTTON COMMISSION.

AMONG the numerous commissions which have been touring India during the last few months, I have been rather astonished at the lack of public interest in the work of the Cotton Commission. Beyond a mere record of the evidence received, even the greatest organs of public opinion have been silent, and in the great cotton centres of the country its proceedings have been rarely referred to. Perhaps this may have been due to the technical character of the evidence presented; or again possibly, it may have been the result of a lack of interest in the improvement of Indian cotton. I can hardly believe it is the latter; if it is the former, perhaps a plain statement of the position which the Commission is investigating may be of service.

It has always been desired that India should produce high class, long staple cotton. Except for

the legendary cotton of the Dacca muslins, it has never done so on a large scale, and, instead of this, the quality of Indian cotton, relatively to that produced elsewhere has been, on the whole, declining. This has continued in spite of many efforts. American cotton has been introduced again and again during the nineteenth century, sometimes in shiploads of seed. American cotton planters have been brought to grow it and show us how to do so. And yet, less than fifty years later, it has entirely disappeared, except in a few isolated areas like Dharwar or the eastern part of the Central Provinces. Egyptian and other superior cottons have also been tried with an even greater lack of success. Moreover, the best Indian types have tended to disappear, like the *bani* of the centre of the Indian peninsula, or else have deteriorated far below their former standard, like "Broach."

There must be a reason for this. Is it a matter of climate, or of essential deterioration? Or is there an economic reason for the lowering quality of Indian cotton? And, in any case, is it a matter which can be corrected without injury to the various Indian interests concerned, chiefly the cultivators and the users, the mills? These are the questions on which the Cotton Commission is called upon to give an opinion. I will not attempt to anticipate that decision, but there are certain considerations which must be kept in mind in this connection.

Firstly, it must never be forgotten that India, in cotton growing as in most forms of agriculture, is not one whole. At present there seems decided hope that good long staple cottons will flourish under the irrigation canals of the Punjab, the United Provinces and Sind, and this simply because the presence of the canal makes early sowing possible in a region where it could not otherwise be done. Without this early sowing, there is, I believe, no known long staple cotton which can be profitably grown in these areas. Again, in South India with its well-distributed rainfall and warm cold weather, good staple cotton can be grown, and it is here that the introduction of Cambodia cotton, before it was spoilt by mixing, was such a success. Over the rest of the country, even including the Broach districts, though there is no doubt that good staple cottons can be grown, yet it is risky, and it is a question whether these pay as well as the coarser varieties. India is not one whole in cotton growing and never can be.

Again, it must also never be forgotten that there are other desirable characters in a cotton crop, from a cultivator's point of view, as well as the staple. A cultivator, for example, wants a cotton which yields well. An increase of yield may easily counterbalance a lowering of staple, unless the difference in price of the resulting lint is very considerable. More than this, a grower has to consider the proportion of cotton lint which he gets from his seed cotton,—the so-called "ginning percentage." This may vary from twenty-five to

forty per cent. of the seed cotton, and usually, though not always, the better staple cotton gives the lower "ginning percentage." And so, unless the difference in price between good staple and short staple cotton is very great, it may, and often does, pay a cultivator to grow a high-yielding, high-ginning, coarse cotton rather than a good staple crop which yields less and has a lower ginning percentage.

Thus, the factor which, over most of our districts, determines the cotton grown is generally whether the difference in price between the short and the good staple cotton is sufficient to counterbalance the effect of higher yield and higher ginning percentage with the low staple cotton. This may be a brutal way of putting it, but I believe it to be true. The price of the good staple cottons has not been in the past few years sufficiently high except where they flourish exceedingly well, relative to coarse cottons, so as to justify the increased trouble of growing the former, when combined with low yield and a low ginning percentage.

Hence the area, in spite of every effort, of the better staple cottons has been diminishing. Hence the reasons why the introduction of American cotton has failed, except under the special circumstances already pointed out, and unless *either* the difference in price increases, or unless a long staple cotton is discovered, which will combine high yield and high ginning percentage, the process will continue.

To take the second of these points first. Is it possible to get a cotton combining high yield in most of our areas with good staple and high ginning percentage? Such a cotton is not known at present. Cambodia, for instance, has failed in Khandesh and in Gujarat in comparison with those now grown. But there is no reason why such a cotton should not be bred. The past, in this direction, seems to have been a substantial failure, though some improvement has been achieved. But there is no reason why it should continue to be so, provided enough time, energy and money are spent on it. The breeding of such a cotton giving, I repeat it, high yield, high staple, high growing outturns, for Gujarat, for the Oomra districts, and for North India, is a matter worth the spending of an enormous amount of energy and money, if only an independent Indian cotton industry for the finer as well as the coarser classes of cotton goods is to be built up.

Apart from the breeding of such a type, there must be a bigger difference in price between short and long staple cottons than there is at present. The present differences would, however, probably be largely increased if the better cottons were more even in character, and not so much mixed. For mixing is rampant in the whole cotton industry. The seed a cultivator uses (which is usually obtained from a gin) is mixed. The plants in a field of cotton are mixed, until (as in Khandesh) one can hardly tell what is the prevailing

type, or (as in Broach) the prevailing type of plant in the field is often quite another from that which it is supposed to be. The cotton is liable to be mixed in the ginnery, low staple seed cotton being carted half across India to mix with good staple material before ginning. Mixing of the lint takes place after ginning and, in fact, at almost every stage. It follows, therefore, that no type can be relied upon, that there is little on the market which is even in character, and as the seed gets more and more mixed, the evil will get worse and worse.

Here is, of course, what appears at first, a preventable evil. And it is evidently the business of the Cotton Commission to find out how to prevent it. Something can be,—is being,—done by the agricultural departments in forming and maintaining a supply of pure seed which, by means of co-operative seed unions as in Berar and Khandesh, is spread all over these respective cotton areas. But more than this is needed, and it is in this direction that I personally hope for most from the present Commission. Till mixing of seed, of seed cotton, or of lint on the present large scale is a thing of the past and pure types of cotton are, hence, on the market, one cannot expect the longer staple varieties of Indian cotton to get a price which will compensate for their lower yield and lower ginning percentage in most areas.

I anticipate, therefore, and all who have in view the progress of Indian agriculture and industry must also anticipate, the report of the Cotton Commission with much interest. Any method by which the growth of a longer staple cotton can be combined with an equal or greater immediate return to the cultivators will be welcomed on every hand, and by none more than by the cultivators themselves. But any method which seeks to improve the staple without securing such an equal return to the cultivators, in whatever interest it may be applied, is foredoomed to failure. And any reasonable scheme suggested for making the better types of Indian cotton what they pretend to be, without injustice to the cultivators and without strangling trade, will be of an inconceivable advantage to the cotton industry and to the country.

HAROLD H. MANN.

SOME ECHOES FROM LORD MORLEY'S "RECOLLECTIONS."

ONE of the hardest nuts to crack—so they say—for our opponents is the demand in the Congress-League scheme for a substantial non-official majority in the Indian Legislative Council. And they quote—not unlike the other person quoting scripture for his purpose—Lord Morley who said in his despatch that there should always be an official majority in the Viceroy's Council to enable the Government of India to discharge their constitutional obligation to the Parliament and the Secretary of State. I am not concerned to point out here that this assumes a static, and ignores the dynamic, nature of constitutions and that the centre of political gravity is demanded by Indians to be transferred to Delhi from London, provided and always

provided that the responsibility of the Government to the people is adequately recognised. But it is interesting to see that, on this matter there was a sharp difference of opinion in the India Council in 1909. Lord Morley writes to Lord Minto thus: "They (members of his Council) listened with patience and even more than patience, but when the time for voting came and the question was put of accepting your views on official majority (still required on G. G.'s Council), qualifications, and Mahomedan representation, five voted against you and me, and five voted in favour of your despatch; so I threw the sword of my casting vote into the scale." We may then feel hopeful that in the year of grace, 1918, our demand for a non-official majority in the 'G. G.'s Council' will meet with a sympathetic response.

A good deal has been said and written about the responsibility for the initiation of the reforms of 1909. Whatever politicians may find it convenient to say, people will ascribe the initiation to Lord Morley; and this is now corroborated. But Lord Morley, with a fine sense of modesty, says: "As to any idle claim for priority and originality, I am well content for my part to leave it where it was put by the 'Times' after Lord Minto's death in 1914. "Viceroy and Secretary of State both seem to have come simultaneously to very much the same conclusions and both worked in a spirit of cordial co-operation to carry out their joint ideas." May we not hope that Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford will find themselves in the same enviable position? We are assured that they are already there. Amen.

Lord Morley holds very strong and very agreeable views on the kind of factitious Anglo-Indian agitation usually set up in England, whenever any justice is sought to be done to India. "In this country," he writes, "what I firmly believe to be a wholly disproportionate stir is worked up about unrest in India, whenever some wretched riot is reported. Everything is put under a microscope and a whole horde of old Anglo-Indians pounce down with alarmist letters." Even more emphatic is the following condemnation which, it is to be devoutly hoped, will attract attention in the proper quarter. "The ex-Anglo-Indian official, with plenty of time on his hands and a horrible facility of penman hip, flies to the newspapers in most lively vociferation, above the familiar signatures of 'Indicus olim,' 'one who knows,' and so forth."

Lord Morley held very decided views about the ways of the C. I. D. in India. Of one of their favourite devices, viz., the interception of suspicious correspondence, from which even our most prominent leaders are not always spared, he writes: "I have enjoyed a considerable familiarity with operations of this sort in a country nearer home than India, and came slowly but rather decidedly to the conclusion that they are mostly futile."

We are often told nowadays, with regard to persons who have been interned or otherwise dealt with under the provisions of the Defence of India Act, that their cases have been dealt with and that the Government are of opinion that the orders are right. And recently the Bengal Government have declined to allow the Bengal detenus to be represented before the Rowlatt Committee. We may yet be told that the Committee have considered the whole question and recommend the continuance of the orders of internment. On this kind of ex-parte investigation in the absence of the accused, Lord Morley writes: "We may argue as much as we like about it, and there may be no substantial injustice in it, but it has an ugly continental, Austrian, Russian look about it, which will stir a good deal of doubt or wrath here, quite besides the Radical ultras. I have considerable confidence, after much experience, in my flair on such a point."

The following was written about the then favourite device of deportation, but it applies on all fours to the internments, now so common. They embody so much wisdom, justice, and political good sense that I wish they were engraved on the writing-table of every head of a Government in India, who has to sign the orders under the Defence of India Act.

"You may take my word for it, my dear Viceroy, that if we do not use this *harsh* weapon with the utmost care and scruple, *always, where the material is dubious, giving the suspected man the benefit of the doubt*, you may depend upon it, I say, that both you and I will be called to severe account, even by the people who are now applauding us (quite rightly) for vigour." (The italics are mine.)

Vigorous protests have been made here against the lowering of the prestige of the local Governments and of the Government of India, at the bidding of a radical Secretary of State. And a demand has been made for a 'free hand' for the man on the spot. Let us hear what Lord Morley has to say about this. "This notion of the 'free hand' is really both against letter and spirit of law and constitution. It cannot be." Again: "You cannot expect people here to give a blank cheque to all the officials and magistrates in India. It is they—people here—who are responsible; it is to them, and not merely to the Government of India, to whom the destinies of India have been entrusted. They cannot delegate their imperial duty to their agents wholesale. The British public never have abdicated and I fervently trust they never will." Again: "I am not at all disposed to belittle the authority and competence of the Government of India, but they are none the worse for a few stray beams of light from men who have had as good a chance as they, and a million times better, of studying the multifarious arts of political navigation."

A great point is made of the difference of conditions in India and those in the west, and disaster is foretold if western doctrines are transplanted here. Lord Morley asks Lord Minto: "I make bold to ask you what doctrines? There is no doctrine that I know of involved in regarding, for instance, transportation for life in such a case as Tinnevely, as a monstrous outrage on commonsense."

In view of the opinion of the Calcutta and the Madras High Courts that the appeal to the High Court provided in the Press Act is a shadowy right, the following passage takes away the vestige of justification for the continuance on the statute book of the Press Act. "Neither I nor my Council would have sanctioned it (the Press Act), if there had been no appeal in some due form to a court of law, and you tell me that you would have had sharp difficulties in your own Council."

A reading of Lord Morley's Recollections relating to India reconciles one to one's original high conception of Lord Morley, the philosopher, the litterateur, the statesman, the friend of Gladstone and the disciple of Mill, for it shows what enormous obstacles he had to overcome even in doing what little he was able to do for India.

S. SATYAMURTI.

THE SUBJECTS OF NATIVE STATES.

Mr. Mansukhlal J. Mehta has submitted a memorandum to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State in which he has earnestly pleaded for the inclusion of the subjects of Native States in the schemes of political reforms that are now under consideration. The British Empire has received splendid assistance in men and money from the Native States for prosecuting the war and in the natural sympathy that it has stimulated in our rulers a place is sought to be given to the Chiefs in the councils of the Empire. Mr. Mehta points out that the term Native States includes not only the Rulers but the people also, and that the contributions of the Chiefs have really come from the people of their states. Are they going to get a direct share in the rights of imperial citizenship or will concessions be made to their Chiefs behind their backs? The goal of the British policy in India is responsible government. Does it not apply to the subjects of the Native States? They are concerned with all imperial matters—customs, posts, telegraph, mint, salt, railways, army and navy. They will have to bear in the same proportion as their brethren in British India the financial and other burdens that will result from the war. Are they to bear them like willing partners or like dumb driven cattle? Mr. Mehta's proposal is that in the enlarged Imperial Legislative Council which will really be a popular assembly with wide financial and controlling powers, representatives

from the *people* of Native States should find a place. They will vote only on matters that concern them in common with the others. But as a preliminary to this share in imperial concerns the subjects of Native States must be given an adequate share in the administration of their respective states. For securing these reforms he makes an earnest appeal to the public bodies in British India, the British Government and the rulers of the states themselves. Every liberal minded person will keenly sympathise with the democratic aspirations of the subjects of Native States. Their brothers across the border who have daily communication with them in all matters except the strictly political and who are one with them in race, language, religion and culture, will therefore need little persuasion to do so. But it is not so easy to see how best to give practical effect to that sympathy. Mr. Mehta wants the Congress to include the Native States in its programme. It is certainly not for lack of sympathy that it has not done so. With the hostility of a powerful bureaucracy which influences native administrations by pulling secret strings, on the one hand, and the autocratic intolerance of popular aspirations and criticism on the part of the Chiefs themselves on the other, the Congress has wisely decided to let the Native States alone, in its own interests and theirs. Besides it is not the resolutions of the Congress by themselves, but the strength of enlightened public opinion behind them, that influence Government policy. Will Congress resolutions in favour of introducing reforms in the States have any effect? The British Government can no doubt 'advise', and ought to induce in every possible manner the Chiefs to make their administrations responsive, if not responsible, to the popular will. But it is doubtful whether it can do so without facing serious political complications. The liberalisation of internal administration therefore rests mainly with the people and the rulers of the States. The former will have to be prepared to undergo more martyrdom for the cause of liberty than they have done hitherto and than it is necessary for their brethren who live under a reign of law as opposed to autocratic rule. The rulers themselves should need the expatriation of wealth and culture from their territory which is going on at an increasing pace, such as is borne out by the migration of the merchants and graduates of Cutch, Kathiawar and Rajaputana. They should also realise that the self-governing members of a free Empire will not respect those who in English political phraseology are known as despots, however benevolent. "Will they prefer to be Chiefs of barbarous tribes, as they would be regarded to be if they continued to be autocratic, to being the beloved sovereigns of civilized, self-respecting and self-governing populations?" Though the solution offered by Mr. Mehta cannot be considered practicable, we commend his earnest memorandum to all who are interested in the discussion of imperial politics.

V. V.

LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

BOMBAY.

THE RENT BILL.

The proposed Rent Bill about which I wrote in my last letter has created some stir among Bombay landlords. The Bill is proposed to be applied to the city of Bombay, the taluka of Salsette and the city of Karachi only for the present. Some Bombay landlords, having very large properties in the city, held a private meeting in the rooms of the Bombay Presidency Association and discussed the advisability of restricting the scope of the Bill. Fortunately they all agree with the principle of the restriction of rents. Some of them would limit the Bill to premises, the rental value of which did not exceed Rs. 50 per mensem, some would put the limit at Rs. 100, some at Rs. 150 and some wished to exclude business premises altogether. The English Act on this subject limits such operations to tenements paying £ 35 per annum in the city of London, which is equivalent to Rs. 43-12-0 per month, and excludes business premises altogether. On the analogy of the English Act some people urge for a total exclusion of business premises from the scope of the Bill, taking their stand mainly on this that while artisans and workmen, living in small tenements, need protection at the hands of the State, those who rent large buildings for business can well be left to fight out the matter with landlords and the State need not intervene their behalf. It is also said that the bringing in of the business premises within the scope of the bill will benefit mostly European merchants. The majority of landlords have taken advantage of the war boom to raise the rent and some have gone so far as to speculate in lands and buildings. The debate on this Bill in the Legislative Council

will be interesting as landlords' interest is not under-represented in the Council.

LABOUR UNREST IN AHMEDABAD.

There is a great ferment in the large labour population in the city of Ahmedabad, the second city in the Presidency. The proportion of labour population there is the largest in this Presidency and is about 50 per cent. if not more. During the last plague epidemic in that city the mill agents kept their mills running by paying the labour bonus which formed a very large proportion of their ordinary pay. When the plague ceased and the time came for stopping the bonus naturally there was a great commotion among the labourers, and they resented its complete stoppage and asked for some compensation for the high prices and the increased cost of living. On the 14th February last a *punch* was appointed consisting of three representatives of mill agents, three more including Mr. M. K. Gandhi, to represent the labourers and the Collector, Mr. Chatfield, the son of our former Director of Public Instruction, as president. The *punch* took some time to come to an agreement as regards the increment to be given and in the meantime some weavers struck work through some misunderstanding. This mistake was immediately repaired, but the three gentlemen on the *punch* representing the mill agents found in this an opportunity to stop the working of the *punch* and declared a 20 per cent. all round increase in wages. Some weavers were not satisfied with this small increment. Thereupon followed, on the 22nd February, a general lock-out of all weavers in that city, numbering several thousands. The representatives of labour forming the *punch* declared, however, before the end of February that a 35 per cent. increase was reasonable, taking all things into account, and advised the labourers accordingly. The weavers are all holding out and it is expected that all spinners too may either go out or be locked out. As Mr. Gandhi is one of the advisers of labour a very quiet and honourable struggle is preached, involving physical trouble, if any, to none but the men themselves. The men are advised especially to refrain from any violence or loot, and they are behaving excellently under the guidance of Mr. Gandhi and Sister Anasuya Sarabhai, who has devoted herself to the cause of mill-hands exclusively.

THE UNITED PROVINCES.

SIR JAMES MESTON.

SIR JAMES MESTON made over the charge of the Lieutenant Governorship of these Provinces to Sir Harcourt Butler on the 15th ultimo. His appointment, five years ago, evoked considerable enthusiasm and raised high expectations in the minds of the educated classes; for he was reputed to be a man of liberal views and broad sympathies, besides being one of the ablest members of the Indian Civil Service. Our disappointment is therefore all the keener now at the net achievement of our late Lieutenant Governor during his lustrum. No doubt we should be grateful for his maintaining a fair-minded attitude during Mrs. Besant's internment, when most of our provincial rulers gave themselves up to a policy of thorough repression. Sir James Meston during this critical period did not interfere with the liberty of speech or the press. His services on behalf of India at the Imperial Conference and the meetings of the War Cabinet have also been well-spoken of by competent judges; and the credit of taking a step forward in local self-government, in the form of the new Municipalities Act of 1916, is also his. But this is all that can be said in favour of his *regitae*; otherwise it was as bureaucratic, and empty of constructive statesmanship as that of any of his predecessors.

THE KUMBHA MELA.

The great Kumbha at Prayag on 11th February passed off smoothly. Within an area of about a square mile or so by the river side, conceive of a huge and moving mass of humanity, consisting of people of every creed, colour and race, age, sex and position, wending its way towards the *sangam*, with the object of bathing in the sacred Triveni, and you will have some idea of the Kumbha. It was a great sight. One could not help admiring the firm faith and intuitive discipline of these mostly ignorant people who in spite of restrictions put in their way by the Railway authorities, had gathered in lakhs, and though the concourse was so huge there was no disturbance whatever to cause anxiety either to the authorities or the people. The Mela throughout was free from epidemics, and the sanitary and police arrangements were satisfactory.

THE WORK OF THE SEVA SAMITI.

But the most notable feature of the Mela was the social service work, organised by the Seva Samiti of Allahabad under the auspices of the Servants of India Society. The Samiti

had enrolled about 750 volunteers, from the various districts of the United Provinces, as well as from other Provinces. Some volunteers had come from far-off places like Orissa, N. W. F. Province and Bombay. The volunteers had to work from 8th up to the 15th. Though the chief bathing day was the 11th, yet there was a great rush, a day previous and a day after. The Samiti organised its activities in many directions. First, it opened four inquiry offices in different parts of the mela grounds, through which missing women and children were traced and other infirm and helpless people were given necessary relief. At all hours of the day people were seen flocking at the doors of the inquiry offices, to register their complaints and needs. About 100 volunteers were deputed to this work, and in all about 300 missing persons were registered of whom the majority were traced and restored to their relatives or sent home. The work on the Kumbha day was so heavy that the offices had to remain open from early morning till midnight. Secondly, the Samiti opened an in-door patients hospital and several dispensaries at which medicine was distributed free. Besides, it had half a dozen ambulance squadrons and a band of trained nurses to attend to the injured and wounded. The number of those to whom medical relief was given amounted to several thousands.

REGULATION OF TRAFFIC.

The most important and arduous task undertaken by the Samiti was that of regulating the traffic and rendering assistance to the pilgrims on the Bund and the Sangam. On the Kumbha day the volunteers were on duty from 3 in the morning till 6 in the evening. Some of them had to stand in knee deep water for hours together or to patrol the river on police boats with a view to prevent people from going into deep water and saving those who were in danger of being swept away by the current. Thus about 200 lives were saved by the Samiti volunteers on the Kumbha day at considerable discomfort to themselves and sometimes even at the risk of their own lives.

Another instance of the splendid services rendered by the Seva Samiti volunteers may be quoted here. On the forenoon of the Kumbha day, when the rush of people was very great the pontoon bridge between Daruganj and Jhusi partially gave way. The European police officers and other policemen on duty did their best to cope with the situation but were overpowered. The Seva Samiti was approached for help and the volunteers were instantaneously sent to give assistance to the police. Though several volunteers received injuries during the discharge of their duties, yet by their pluck, perseverance and courage they were able to render invaluable assistance at a critical juncture which was warmly appreciated by the mela authorities.

AT RAILWAY STATIONS.

Volunteers were also posted at the different Railway Stations in Allahabad to help the pilgrims in getting tickets and securing accommodation on the trains. This part of their duty was by no means easy; for the behaviour of the subordinate police and railway staff was of a very provoking character. The E. I. R. in the beginning was reluctant to arrange special trains for carrying back the pilgrims to their destinations, and ordinary trains had scarcely any accommodation, while the pilgrims were anxious to get in somehow. Thus the subordinate police and the railway staff had sufficient opportunities of harassing the ignorant people. The volunteers of the Samiti came to their rescue on such occasions and brought a number of cases of oppression and high-handedness to the notice of the superior authorities, who were good enough to set things right. Thereafter the very presence of the volunteers of the Samiti at the railway stations exercised a healthy influence on the police and the railway staff.

UNIVERSAL APPRECIATION.

The splendid services rendered by the volunteers have met with general recognition. The name of the Samiti was on the lips of almost every pilgrim and has thus come to be known even in the most distant villages and towns. Shri Shankaracharya of the Govardhan Peeth was so deeply impressed by the activities of the Samiti that he paid it a glowing tribute in a public lecture recently delivered at Allahabad. It will not be easy to name all the workers, who by their self-sacrificing labours have laid the community under a deep debt of gratitude. Still the work of the Shahjehanpore volunteers, headed by Pt. Nriram Bajpai, and of the Lucknow volunteers under Mr. A. P. Sen and Swami Narayanswami deserves special mention. The Hon. Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, President, and Pt. Hirdaynath Kunzru, organising secretary of the Samiti, and the captain of volunteers, are to be sincerely congratulated on the splendid success achieved by the Samiti in their self-imposed and arduous task of social service at the great Kumbha.

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