

THE Servant of India

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

IT is now clear that the news about the imminent fall of Petrograd and the collapse of Bolshevism was premature, as we apprehended. The situation, it is stated, has become obscure. But evidence is available to show that Yudenitch's advance has been arrested and that Bolshevik forces have been strengthened. There is still a note of optimism in the speeches made by ministers in the House of Commons with regard to the Russian situation; but the Bolsheviks have discovered an unexpected resourcefulness and tenacity. They are making an effective use of tanks and their supplies of munitions do not seem to be inadequate. The Supreme Council has solicited the co-operation of Germany and the neutrals in the blockade of Soviet Russia. The Allied naval forces are turning back the ships sailing to the Russian Baltic ports, and we are told that these measures do not constitute a blockade in the legal sense. Whatever this may mean, there seems to be no immediate prospect of an improvement in the state of things in Russia.

THE bubble of Yudenitch's victorious march upon Petrograd has at last burst. The Bolshevik advance upon his army appears to be going on rapidly and uninterruptedly and may drive it into the swamps west and south of Datchina. Denikin has not fared better at the hands of the Bolsheviks who, if the reports are to be trusted, are sweeping everything before them. The Allies have left Russia to put her house in order without outside meddling, and the situation in that country would have been interesting if it had not been associated with the pitiful tragedy which is being enacted here.

THE financial position in Great Britain has been causing a great deal of anxiety for some time past. The British Chancellor of the Exchequer assured his countrymen a few days ago that there was no cause for hysteria and that the situation was steadily improving. Mr. Chamberlain uttered a warning against too much optimism as also against excessive pessimism. Everybody is talking about drastic economy and larger production. But it must be some time before the efforts of both these operations are visible, even if they are vigorously carried out. And the feeling is growing stronger that, to improve British finances, something must be done to take a pretty big slice out of the nation's capital or income. Though Lord Buckmaster's motion urging further taxation was rejected in the House of Lords, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to devise some means to raise funds to lighten the national burden.

AT last it has been decided to close down all indentures in Fiji by the end of this year—subject to the condition that on the plantations where the reforms suggested by Mr. Andrews have been carried out the indentures will remain in force for another two years. The Government of India has, however, asked what compensation will be needed if the indentures of those working on plantations where the reforms have been effected are to be immediately terminated. This long-standing question is thus in a fair way to be satisfactorily settled, thanks to the unwearied labours of Mr. Andrews in this behalf. The repatriation of those labourers who have gained freedom thus becomes a most urgent question, as so many more men will be wanting to go back, and must be provided a free passage immediately. But for the last four years several ex-indentured labourers had perforce to live in the midst of immorality, because the Fiji Government plead inability to redeem their definite undertaking to provide shipping. It is strange that the Government of India should still be unable to furnish information on this important question.

AN important licensing decision has been recently given in the Transvaal, which is of peculiar interest now as the trading question is much to the fore. It is notorious that the municipalities in the Transvaal are empowered to refuse licenses to undesirable persons, and that, provided it could be shown that consideration was given to the appli-

cation, the Magistrate could not inquire into the grounds of refusal. This was the received notion of the current law for a long time, but latterly the court has claimed to examine the motives underlying refusal. This position is considerably strengthened by the decision of which news has just arrived. The Municipal Council of Krugersdorp, in this case, refused to transfer the grocer's license of one Indian to another merely on the ground that the highest authorities in South Africa thought it inexpedient to grant more licenses to Asiatics. The Resident Magistrate, however, in considering an appeal from this decision, took the view that, as no evidence was produced before the Court to show that the appellant was an undesirable person, and as the application was merely for taking over an existing license, the Municipal Council was bound to grant the transfer.

Indian Opinion quotes the exact words used by Mr. Malan, the Acting Prime Minister of South Africa, in announcing the appointment of a commission—he had promised “a full inquiry into the whole Indian question in the Union.” In restricting the inquiry now to the question of trading licenses, the Union Government is departing as much from its expressed intentions as in reducing the Government of India's nominees on the Commission to the position of witnesses instead of members, as originally proposed. On this Mr. Gandhi observes:—

“It is a matter of very great regret that Mr. Montagu's message to the Viceroy so materially alters the position. I do, however, feel that any agitation insisting upon the appointment of the Commission of Indian representatives may damage our case, which is so overwhelmingly strong. If a representative like Mr. Sastri is appointed along with Sir Benjamin Robertson, to put before the South African Government and the forthcoming Commission the Indian case, it would be the next best thing in my opinion. Our effort should be concentrated on securing a proper reference to the Commission in the place of the very narrow one we are led to believe is likely to be suggested by the Union Government. . . . It is not enough that merely the trade question is reserved to the Commission; the whole of Law 3 of 1885 must come under review. Leaving aside for the time being the question of the political status, our goal must be the restoration of full trading and property rights of Indians lawfully settled in South Africa.”

WRITING in the second number of *United India*, Sir Krishna Gupta points out how, unless efforts are at once made to improve the position of Indians in the Army of their own country, the reforms at present on the anvil would prove halting and fall far short of the professed goal of Britain in India. He observes: “Whatever concessions may be made, whatever improvement may be effected, in the civil Government of the country, there will be no real autonomy, no really responsible Government in India, unless England approaches the solution of the Army question in a spirit of trust in the Indian peoples.” He draws attention to the fact that, when the English secured the

sovereignty in India, there was a national Army in all the provinces, officered by Indians who generally came from the landholding and middle classes and that, owing to the adoption of a mistaken policy of distrust of the people, they were gradually excluded from the privilege and right of being their country's defenders in times of need. The anomalous result is that at the present day, the Indian Army mainly consists of mercenary soldiers recruited from outside British India. Sir Krishna tersely says: “The Pax Britannica, of which so much is made in certain quarters, has been the greatest drawback of British rule in India, for it has effectually emasculated the whole nation and has made it incapable of doing anything in self-defence.” He thinks, therefore, that it is high time that England made up her mind to let the people gradually come into their own.

“If the British Government is really sincere,” he urges, “in educating India to become self-governing, if the goal of British rule is really to confer on India the right of self-government, it is as necessary to follow a liberal and sympathetic policy on the question of the Army as it is to improve the constitution of the civil Government. The two things must go together, otherwise the goal will never be attained. One might as well be expected to walk steadily on one leg while the other is chained and weighted as to think that responsible government is attainable only by popularising the civil administration, while the defensive forces remain wholly under alien control.” He pleads, therefore, that “the creation of a national Army in which not merely the rank and file, but the officers also should be mainly Indians is necessary alike for the defence and security of India and the maintenance of the British connection,” that “India must have the means of supplying herself with munitions and must also have her own share in the Navy and Air service of the Empire.” One easily understands how this work can only be gradual. But, surely, it is possible immediately to make a beginning which would leave no room for misconception and convince India that the attitude of humiliating and suspecting the sons of the soil has been definitely abandoned and that “England is really prepared to grant to India the measure of independence which it has already accorded so freely to the self-governing Dominions.”

DURING last week a number of conferences were held in the historic town of Surat. The most important resolutions passed in the political conference were concerning the Punjab affairs, condemning Sir Michael O'Dwyer's militarist regime and the cruel and unmerited punishments meted out to many public men in the Punjab. The grievance about the unduly heavy land assessment in Gujerat, even after allowing for comparative richness of soil, was the subject of another resolution. Another resolution asked for the redress of the grievances of Indians in East

Africa, especially those regarding German currency notes held by Indian trades in the ex-German colonies now under British sway. The Indian case was clearly and forcibly put by Mr. Antani who has resided in that part of Africa for twelve years past.

WE commend the able and thoughtful speech made by Principal Paranjpye as president of the Bombay Educational Conference to the earnest attention of all our readers. His proposal for a re-apportionment of a student's period of study, from his joining the primary school to his taking a university degree deserves serious consideration at the hands of all educationists. At this session of the Conference, as at the two previous sessions, a resolution was adopted recommending that the students be permitted to answer the question papers in all subjects except English at the school leaving examination in their own vernaculars. This resolution was supported in a telling speech by Mrs. Strong of Baroda, who has had experience of the United States of America where there is a large immigrant population speaking over a dozen European languages. Another resolution pointing out the inadequacy of the increase of salaries of primary school teachers was put in a forcible speech by an ex-teacher. A mass meeting of the depressed classes was held under the chairmanship of the Hon. Mr. Parekh, in which a demand was made by several speakers for the removal of the bar of untouchableness.

WE have received from Mr. S. K. Sarma, B. A., B. L., the well-known publicist of Southern India, a copy of a memorandum he submitted, on the invitation of the Government of India, to the Indian Currency Committee now sitting in London. Mr. Sarma has long been our advocate of 'an honest rupee,' that is, a silver standard for India,—a restoration of the currency system which prevailed in this country before the closing of the mints in 1893. It is but natural, therefore, that he should, in his memorandum, plead for an international conference which should settle the silver question once for all, especially in view of the fact that the currency systems of almost all the leading countries of the world have been thrown into disorder by the war and require reconstruction and readjustment. The memorandum, however, has made certain practical suggestions for meeting the exchange emergency which confronts Government today, and they are the free import of gold, the encashment of currency notes in gold, and a reduction of the sale of council drafts. Though an ardent advocate of bimetalism and of a silver standard, Mr. Sarma would, in no case, favour the gold exchange standard; and his memorandum presents an able and powerful exposure of the policy developed by Government during the last twenty years and sanctioned by the Chamberlain Commission. He has subjected that policy to well-deserved scathing criticism and clearly shown

the evil effects it has produced upon the country. Government ought now to realize that its currency and exchange arrangements have no friends and supporters among thinking Indians and that, the sooner it is abandoned, the better for the benefit of the people of India.

THE *Hindu* has, characteristically enough, sought (in vain) to confuse the real point at issue in its belated and laboured defence of the charge it recklessly and unwarrantably brought against the Moderates in regard to the Punjab affair. While, following the highly commendable example of our esteemed contemporary, we are quite content to leave the public to judge between us, we may point out that its accusation against the Moderates in England to the effect that they were "too busy saving the scheme to trouble Mr. Montagu with the Punjab episode" was, as we said on a former occasion and as we have abundantly shown on the authority of Nationalist papers themselves, nothing but a barefaced lie, which the *Hindu* has neither refuted, nor retracted, nor apologised for as yet. The letter of Mr. Bogra himself, over which the *Hindu* raises a cloud of dust, nails the lie to the counter, for it distinctly says that "the Moderates are doing all they can for the Punjab in England."

THIS is the sole point at issue. The question is not what the Nationalists have, or have not, done for the Punjab, and so we have nothing to do with that part of Mr. Bogra's second letter. On the question in hand, Mr. Bogra's testimony is unmistakable that the present unfortunate controversy was wantonly started by the *Hindu*, and the accusation made by it had nothing more substantial than a malignant falsehood for its basis. We did not publish Mr. Bogra's second letter for the only reason that he did not ask us to publish it, nor did it contain anything to show that it was meant for publication. We would certainly have published it if he had expressed his wish to that effect, and, as it will be clear to everyone who reads it, there was nothing damaging to us in his letter. Burking, etc. does not come in our line.—On the question of the attitude of the Mahajana Sabha towards the Viceroy, we gladly accept the correction of the *Hindu* that its editor expressed his fervent gratitude, not to His Excellency the Viceroy, but to the private secretary of the Governor of Madras.

THE *Times* writes in mail week that in asking for power in the Government of India, Indians were going beyond what Mr. Gokhale himself thought advisable. Those who have read Mr. Gokhale's scheme are aware, of course, that the interpretation put upon it by the *Times* is entirely incorrect.

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FAMINE RELIEF IN: THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY.

THE severe famine through which parts of this Presidency are just emerging, was marked by certain characteristic features, and some of them are indicated in a Press Note recently issued by the Government of Bombay. A striking contrast of the famine of this and last year, with that which occurred in 1899-1900 is brought out in the Government review by a reference to the comparatively small number of people who resorted to relief works during the past few months. It has been the experience of famines that a failure of crops drives cultivators and other people to Government relief works on account of their being thrown out of their normal employment and of their inability to maintain themselves otherwise. The minimum number of workers in relief camps any time between April and June, 1919, in Ahmednagar and Poona districts was 21,000 as against 2,33,000 in the corresponding months of 1900. The famine of the closing year of the last century was admittedly more wide-spread and severe than that through which we are passing; in fact, it was one of the most serious calamities which had ever overtaken the people of this country. No useful comparison, we are afraid, can, therefore, be instituted between the two famines, and no theories can be built on the comparative statistics relating to them. It must likewise be borne in mind that all through the war period, the mass of the population had become accustomed to extraordinarily high prices and the scarcity of a number of life's necessaries. When famine actually came, it was only a higher flight taken by the prices and a continuation, in a peculiarly intensified form, of the experience through which the country was passing. As a result of the war, wages had considerably risen and varied employment was available to the working classes. The recent famine hit the middle class with extraordinary severity and people with fixed incomes found it almost impossible to make the two ends meet in spite of the increases which had taken place in their salaries.

For, what is the position to-day, when we rejoice that the famine has disappeared? Almost every necessary of life is dear as if the community were in the grip of a famine. People seem to have resigned themselves to an era of high prices which they feel have come to stay, and whatever relief the coming harvests may bring to the middle and the lower middle classes, a restoration of pre-war conditions appears to be impossible. The heavy loss of cattle which has taken place must rouse the cost of agricultural production and keep the prices of milk and ghee at a high level. Cloth, vegetable oil, fuel and other necessaries of life will remain very dear, and even food grains are not likely to return to anything approaching the old prices. This is the legacy of the war, and its effects have been aggravated by the famine conditions of the past twelve months. The Govern-

ment Press Note summarises the famine situation thus: (1) A very complete failure of food crops in the Ahmednagar district and adjoining tracts and in the Eastern Mahals of north Gujarat, and extremely poor harvests in most districts of Gujarat and the Deccan, with a widespread fodder famine. (2) Extraordinary prices and shortage of food supplies and fodder, the aftermath of the war, preceded by a period of great agricultural prosperity owing to high prices and mitigated by a large demand for unskilled labour at high wages. These extraordinary conditions necessitated a change in the usual famine policy of Government, viz. to leave all questions of food supply and prices to the trade and normal economic forces. Food control had to be established at the very outset and a special organization had to be provided for the purpose. Preparations were also promptly made to give different kinds of relief to people in the affected areas. Test and relief works were planned, poor houses were established, gratuitous relief was provided and takavi advances were offered.

But the most serious aspect of the famine was the almost hopeless shortage of fodder. It is needless to point out that cattle are a valuable asset of the cultivators and a heavy mortality among them is inevitable, if cheap fodder is not available. As the Press Note says, the enormous shortage of fodder was due not only to the fodder failure in the affected areas, but also to the depletion of the stocks in consequence of the heavy demand made by the Army Department on the reserves which are usually carried over from year to year. This is a fact which ought to be carefully noted as it brings into relief the sacrifices which the mass of the population made for bringing the war to a successful termination. That there must ensue a huge mortality among cattle to the serious detriment of the agricultural industry and, therefore, to the general economic condition of the community, was a foregone conclusion. The problem was how to transport and distribute whatever fodder was available and save as many cattle as possible. Special measures were taken for this purpose and the Revenue, Forest and Agricultural Departments co-operated to increase the supplies and to distribute them in the areas affected. The Controller of Famine Fodder distributed about 20 crores of pounds of grass among these areas and the Agricultural Department carried out several experiments for the production of fodder by means of irrigation by pumping. Prickly pear was largely used to supplement the fodder supplies thus made available, and we are told that in the Ahmednagar district 500,000 cattle were maintained on this fodder. Suspensions and remissions of land revenue are now an invariable accompaniment of famine relief and a sum of over 1¼ crore was suspended and about 6 lakhs was remitted. Takavi advances were likewise made to the extent of about 79 lakhs in 1918-19 and of 1½ crores during the current financial year.

It is now a recognized fact that Government

machinery for famine relief, however elaborate and prompt in action it may be, is not adequate to the needs of the people, and the co-operation of a private, public-spirited and charitable agency is an urgent necessity. The Bombay Presidency Famine Relief Fund started under the able direction of the Hon'ble Mr. Purshotamdas Thakordas collected about 12¼ lakhs of rupees, and the money was very usefully spent in the transport of grass and grain, the distribution of clothes, and the conduct of cheap grain shops in several districts. Large quantities of fodder and grain were moved for the benefit of the affected areas, and the consignments of rice were dispatched to over 150 different stations and ports. The Press Note does not mention the good work done by famine relief committees at Poona and Ahmednagar and other places. They not only acted as distributive agencies, but collected funds in their own areas and rendered help in a variety of directions. The difficulty of saving cattle in times of famines is the most serious that has to be overcome and the problem of providing fodder stocks is a very important one. The growing tendency among cultivators to grow commercial crops and to neglect the storage of fodder is a factor that has to be reckoned with. Government is at present considering a scheme of fodder reserves, designed to meet requirements in the early months of a year of fodder shortage. The Press Note, however, observes that "fodder storage on an adequate scale is for the individual or the community to provide and Government can only supplement their efforts." We are afraid little is likely to be done by individuals unless the lead is taken by Government which may count upon public co-operation in the matter.

The famine undoubtedly caused serious hardship to a large number of people, but fortunately there was no marked increase in mortality or emaciation by starvation such as accompanied the calamities in the past. Public health was, on the whole, good and epidemic diseases which come in the work of the famine, did not make their appearance. There was likewise no appreciable increase in crime due to distress. The extent of cattle mortality has not been estimated, but there is ground to believe that the loss has been heavy. The effect of this, it is needless to state, is perilous to the cultivating classes. In spite of the recent favourable monsoon, it is expected that prices of agricultural produce will remain high for a long time to come, and Government hopes that as a result, the rayat "will soon recover and even improve on his former economic condition." We do not know if Government is not rather too optimistic in this view, as the recovery from famine is likely to be neither so rapid nor so easy. What is required in India to benefit the cultivator is not high prices of food grain, but agricultural production on a large scale. The rayat must be enabled to make the soil yield a better harvest and salvation lies not in high prices but in abundance of food production. We hope with Government that

the trials of the past year have added to the experience of Government and that "the lessons learnt will lead to more effective preventive measures and preparations to meet future periods of stress."

THE HOUSING PROBLEM IN ENGLAND.

III.

THE standard laid down by the Public Health Act is still lower. The Act of 1891 provides that "any house or part of a house so overcrowded as to be injurious or dangerous to the health of the inmates, whether or not members of the same family," shall be a nuisance liable to be dealt with under Section 2, Sub-section 1(e) of the Act. The definition of the term 'overcrowding' given in the by-laws made under Section 94 of the Act is as follows:

If a room used for sleeping be } A minimum of
also used as a living room } 400 c. f. per
person.

If used for sleeping only } 300 " "

The limit for a child under ten years of age is one-half of the above-mentioned air space.

Under these by-laws a room 12ft. x 12 ft. by 8 ft. 6 inches or 1224 cubic feet would *not* be overcrowded with three persons (all adults) or with four persons (two adults and two children) or with five (one adult and 4 children), using it both as a living and sleeping room.

It is obvious that the maximum number of persons allowed per room depends to a large extent on the size of the room, on the question, whether it is used only as a sleeping room or as a living room also and so forth. This legal standard, it is clear, in any case, is a much lower one than that of two per room. The existence, therefore, of overcrowding on the latter basis does not mean that there is overcrowding according to the Public Health Act, though no figures are available. The sum up, then, the estimated overcrowding on the three bases mentioned were in 1911 as follows:

	Total No. of persons.
(1) More than two per room	758,786
(2) Do., but with allowance for children	326,482
(3) According to By-laws under P. H. Act	Indefinite, but probably only a small figure.

We shall ignore the third, as it is a very low standard and is not susceptible of numerical calculation. Taking the first, we find that the 758,786 persons living in overcrowded conditions were occupying 270,352 rooms. Assuming these overcrowded rooms to have been occupied to the extent of 1½ persons per room on an average, their population would be 405,528. The population, therefore, in excess of what could be accommodated on this basis would be the difference between the two or 353,258. A similar calculation for the overcrowding based on the second test would give a population of about 111,000 to 169,783. There

was, therefore, in 1911 in London and the surrounding districts, a possible range from 118,000 to 350,000 as the excess population in overcrowded tenements.

Of the changes which have taken place since 1911, there is not much to say. Though a large number of men went out on war service, there was not a proportionate relief in the congestion, as the families of these men continued living in the same houses. On the outbreak of the war, there was a great influx in some districts of persons who were engaged on war work, and we may take it that this addition of lodgers did not improve the condition of housing in these districts. Some efforts which were being made to destroy old unsuitable dwellings and provide new housing had all perforce to stop completely on the outbreak of war. Indeed, between 1911 and 1916 a total of 28,995 rooms were demolished and in their stead only 25,388 rooms were built. Thus, if it had not been for other circumstances, there would have been a net deficit of 3607 rooms. But, when in 1915 and 1916, owing to the establishment of arsenals and ammunition works in Greenwich and Woolwich engaged on war work, there was a large importation of population, the Government felt it an imperative necessity to house these people, as upon them depended the output of materials for the war which had developed into a close life and death struggle. The Government, therefore, built 5567 cottages and 6904 hutments which were only temporary expedients. Taking these also as housing provided during the years 1911-16, we get a total of 37,859 rooms built and 28,995 demolished, leaving an increase of 8864 rooms. But as, out of this, 6904 are only huts which were an admittedly makeshift arrangement, the position as to overcrowding has remained very much where it was in 1911, if it has not actually grown worse.

(ii & iii). *Unsuitable accommodation and Insanitary areas.*

The real crux of the problem lies here. Owing to "age, defective construction, decay, dampness, dilapidated or verminous condition, etc.," there are a large number of houses and areas which are fit only for demolition as completely unfit for human occupation. This is not susceptible of numerical statement as is possible with overcrowding. No precise particulars, therefore, could be given on this head. But there is no doubt that the number of such houses and areas is very considerable.

It will be easily seen how the actual shortage of houses now existing constitutes in itself one of the most formidable obstacles in the way of bettering this condition of things. Even if the state is prepared, on grounds of public safety, to destroy at one stroke, all these unsuitable houses, the difficulty in providing an alternative accommodation to the people dwelling in them stands in the way. It would certainly not make things better to demolish the houses, because they are bad and turn out the inmates into the streets with-

out a roof over their head. The Metropolitan Board of works and the London County Council have been engaged for the last 40 years in clearing insanitary areas and building good houses in their place; and here is the result. They have cleared in all over 100 acres of insanitary housing comprising nearly 25,000 rooms occupied by over 48,000 persons, at a cost of £2,395,625. This is, no doubt, good work. Between 1911 and 1914, the London County Council has demolished 1564 houses. But, in their place, they have found it possible to build only 217 houses! The inmates of the balance of 1347 demolished houses have presumably been left to shift for themselves. The only result to be expected is that they would have crowded into some other place and created a slum where there was none before. Policy at least, would seem, therefore, to dictate that, unless provision be first made for additional accommodation, it is no gain, and may be a loss, to demolish bad houses.

As to buildings which, with renovations, alterations and other improvements, could be made quite suitable for human occupation, the great difficulty has been the unwillingness of the owners to undertake the expenses involved. The system of long leases, for example, rendered it against the interests of the house-owner to lay out any money on improving the house, especially, if the lease was nearing its term. Leases made 80 or 100 years ago are just falling in; and as the property goes to the freeholder, the house-owner shirks as much as possible putting money into it in the closing years of the lease, inasmuch as he is not likely to reap the benefits of the increased value of the houses when the lease falls in. The inevitable result is that exactly those types of buildings which stood most in need of repairs and re-building are left most uncared-for.

This was realised early and some attempts were made to indirectly bribe the owners into keeping their houses in good repair. The Housing Act of 1890 provided that, on production from the medical Health Officer of a certificate that the "house is so constructed as to afford suitable accommodation for each of the families or persons inhabiting it and that due provision is made for sanitary requirements," the owner would be entitled to an abatement on the inhabited-house-duty. Some owners whose houses perhaps required such light repairs that found they that their gains by way of abatement would be more than their expenses in providing the conveniences necessary for getting a certificate, availed themselves of the provision. But the large majority of owners were not prepared to incur the necessary additional expenditure on improvements which alone would entitle them to the abatement. The majority of old houses, therefore, were uncared-for and allowed to fall into decay and ruin.

Then the Government tried to bring pressure to bear on these apathetic landlords. The Housing and Town-Planning Bill of 1908 and the Act of 1909 contained clauses authorising local autho-

rities to issue closing orders and serve on landlords notices to do necessary repairs. It was provided: "If any dwelling house is found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation, the local authority *must* make a closing order prohibiting the use of the dwelling house for human habitation until it is rendered fit. If, after a time, the house has not been made fit and is not reasonably likely to be, or cannot be, made fit, the authority *must* make a demolition order." These read well, no doubt, on paper; but the actual working is not so smooth. So long as the medical officers and local authorities know that there is absolutely no additional accommodation available, they will naturally put up even with very bad conditions, rather than issue closing orders and turn people out of shelter they have, bad as it may be. The same applies with additional force to demolition orders. Even if the owner has been culpably negligent of his house property, it is, after all, private property; and, if the authorities feel bound to demolish it completely, they have to pay compensation. It is easy, of course, to say in an Act that "reasonable compensation" will be paid. But what is reasonable is not as easy of determination to the satisfaction of all concerned; and any arbitrary settlement might have the effect of bringing unknown forces into play. Local authorities, therefore, are very chary of interfering lightly with rights of private property.

To the foregoing difficulties in the way of any speedy reform of insanitary and unsuitable housing must be added the powerful influence of vested interests in authority which would always find some means of stultifying reforms trenching on such interests.

It is obvious also that the state cannot afford to pay the enormous prices demanded for these slums, in order simply to pull them down. Indeed, the method was given a trial and was found so prohibitively costly that it was speedily given up and various legislative provisions had to be made for the valuation of sites to be acquired for demolition. We shall speak of these in their place.

In 1909 as an experimental measure, the London County Council made elaborate enquiries to ascertain the practicability, in regard to the re-planning of some over-crowded and unsuitable houses and also from a financial standpoint, of converting middle-class houses into self-contained tenements for the working classes and of letting them at rents lower than those charged for the Council's existing working class dwellings. The net result was that the cost of the alterations was so great that the whole scheme was deemed financially impracticable and had to be abandoned.

On the whole, then, though a little good work has been done by some local authorities and housing trusts and building societies, as will be shown later on, the problem has not been, to any appreciable extent, effectually grappled with. But it must be realised also, on the other hand, that there

are so many and such varied factors and that each of them acts and reacts on every other in such an inextricable way that the solution of the problem can only be achieved slowly and by gradual steps.

In some of our future issues, we shall review the various building agencies and their work, the legislative attempts of the state at providing a constructive scheme and financial policy for bringing about better housing and present-day tendencies with reference to some of the distinctive features of the Housing and Town-Planning Act of 1919.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

BY H. N. KUNZRU.

THE scheme of reforms outlined in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report has been subjected to a great deal of criticism, friendly and otherwise. The imperfections of the Scheme are many and serious. In particular, its failure to introduce an element of responsibility into the central Government is incompatible with the spirit of the announcement of August 20, 1917. Demands have been put forward for its extension and improvement, in regard to most of which all the important political bodies in India hold identical views. But even its most unsparing critics have recognised, however grudgingly, the value of the provisions which it contained for securing future development. That the first instalment of reforms should be large and generous is undoubtedly a matter of great importance; but if machinery is provided for bringing about adjustments to changing conditions, the operation of which is not dependent on the will of the executive, the achievement of the end in view does not depend entirely on the extent of the immediate advance. Hope for the future will, within certain limits, counterbalance disappointment with the present.

The Joint Report proposes two methods of dealing with the question of future constitutional progress—periodic enquiry by a statutory Commission, and examination of the powers of the provincial legislative councils by the Government of India five years after their creation. But on account of the opposition of the Government of India, the cumulative effect of whose recommendations, if accepted, would be to reduce the Reform Scheme to a nullity, the second proposal has not been embodied in the Bill. This omission has led to serious and legitimate dissatisfaction, and the Joint Parliamentary Committee has been urged strongly to restore the provision in question. The Joint Report recommends, as a result of their enquiry, that the Government of India should have the power not merely to increase the number of transferred subjects, but also to reduce them, and to direct that the salaries of ministers should be voted annually by the legislature. As the principle of the responsibility of ministers is to be conceded from the outset and no inquiry can be instituted into the powers of a provincial council at the instance of the local Government concerned

with a view to their curtailment, Mr. Montagu argues that the abandonment of the proposal above referred to cannot be regarded as retrograde. His argument, however, has scarcely any basis in fact. It is true that the report proposed that the Government of India should be able to require that the salaries of ministers should not be regarded as reserved, but the councils, too, were given the right to demand that they should be voted annually, and it would have been incumbent on the Government of India to concede the right. It cannot be contended, therefore, that the responsibility of ministers to the legislature depended on the enquiry to be undertaken by the Government of India five years after the establishment of the reformed councils.

Again, while the provincial councils cannot be deprived of their powers after a formal enquiry at the end of a stated period, the Bill, gives ample power to the Governor to remove a subject temporarily or permanently from the transferred list. According to Sec. 3 (4) of the Bill "provision may be made by rules under the Principal Act for the temporary administration of a transferred subject when, in cases of emergency, owing to a vacancy, there is no minister in charge of the subject, but such authority and in such manner as may be presented by the rules. The language of the sub-section is so indefinite as to enable a self-willed Governor to reduce his legislative council to a position of impotence, and the despatch of the Government of India gives rise to the apprehension that it may not improbably be so used. The executive can thus remove subjects from the control of the council at any time they like, and even without affording it an opportunity of defending itself.

It is obvious, therefore, that the contention of Mr. Montagu is not supported by facts. The provincial councils gain no security by the abandonment of the proposal for holding an enquiry five years after their establishment, and while the Bill gives the executive greater control over them than the Joint Report, it takes away from them the compensating advantage of being able to press for an increase in the number of transferred subjects.

It appears from the evidence of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, that the Indian members of the Functions Committee were influenced in apportioning subjects between the official and popular halves of provincial Governments by the prospect of an enquiry at the end of five years after the beginning of the new régime. All Indian members were in favour of land revenue being transferred in Bombay, but they gave in, says Mr. Banerjea, in the hope that "after five years the whole thing will be reconsidered," and that "after that period this subject will be removed to the list of transferred subjects." Mr. Feetham, when cross-examined on this point, argued that the question was one of interpretation of the language of that section of the Functions Committee's Re-

port which dealt with land revenue, but did not deny explicitly that Mr. Banerjea correctly represented the mind of the Indian members.

The rejection of the recommendation of the Joint Report is thus a grievous injustice, and an obstacle to the early realisation of complete provincial autonomy. Sir William Meyer, who was a member of the Viceroy's Council and one of the most distinguished members of the Indian Civil Services, is in favour of not merely revising the powers of the reformed Councils five years after their coming into existence, but also of a simultaneous enquiry into the possibility of liberalising the Government of India. (From "United India.")

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, OCTOBER 9.

WHEN WILL THE BILL GO THROUGH?

THE Joint Committee is now once more in session and has been engaged this week in hearing numbers of important witnesses, the principal of whom have been Sir Thomas Holderness, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for India, Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Sir John Hewett. The Committee has a great deal of work still before it. Before it can confer, it will in all likelihood have before it Sir James Brunyate, Sir William Duke, Mr. B. N. Basu and possibly other members of the India Council, besides Sir Sankaran Nair and Mr. Lionel Curtis. There is just the possibility that Mr. Hassan Imam may also tender evidence, though this is by no means certain. What is certain, however, is that in any case it may be very difficult for the Committee to submit its amendments to Parliament before the middle of November. There is, however, likely to be some delay before the Bill is taken up in the House of Commons, because the Government are committed to the introduction of Irish Legislation to replace the Home Rule Act, which is now on the Statute Book, which nobody wants, and which automatically comes into effect upon the ratification of the Peace Treaty with Turkey that is expected within the next six weeks or so. Thus even in most favourable circumstances, it will be touch and go if the Bill can be enacted before the Christmas recess. What is more likely is that it will be carried over and become law somewhere about March next. There is, however, this on the other side of the balance, that the Labour situation which threatened to disturb all possibilities of other legislation in the near future is now far less tense than it has recently been. The great National railway strike, which among its other results brought about a postponement of the Joint Committee, held up Pundit Hirday Nath Kunzru in the North of England, and delayed Dr. Sapru's departure for India by nearly a week, has cleared the industrial atmosphere. It is generally felt that, thanks to Mr. Lloyd George's able and tactful handling of a difficult and dangerous crisis, the Government have received, upon condition that they use their opportunity well, a

new lease of life, and the possibility of the early advent of a Labour administration to office, which recently began to loom increasingly large, has now receded into the background, and at the same time it is unlikely that industrial legislation, though its need is as great as ever, will interfere to prevent the progress of such measures of capital importance as the Government of India Bill. There is thus a renewed prospect of Mr. Montagu's remaining Secretary of State for India, and Col. Wedgwood, who in some quarters had been mentioned as his successor in a Labour administration, must now possess his soul in patience. It ought here to be said that in the circles of the wise, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was regarded as altogether too big a figure to be relegated to the India office, and its relative obscurity.

SIR T. HOLDERNESS AS WITNESS.

On the whole, Sir Thomas Holderness's evidence has been better than one might have expected, and unlike Sir John Hewett and Sir Michael O'Dwyer, he has shown a remarkable capacity to move with the times. He was, he said, of the clear opinion that the time had come for associating the people in a much greater degree than at present with the Government, and that this could best be attained by starting from the representative institutions, which were found at present in the provincial legislative councils, giving the reconstituted legislature a measure of control over the executive Government, and thereby placing upon them direct responsibility, within a definite sphere, for political acts and decisions and the consequences thereof. Since his time he saw a very noticeable increase of political activity among the educated classes, a strong disposition to question the policy and contest the decisions of the Government, and impatience at exclusion from the Government machine, and a rapidly growing power of combination for political ends, and of concerted movement through the press and the platform. The population of India, though still uneducated and inexperienced in politics, was no longer indifferent to world events. It was awakening to a sense of national consciousness, was no longer content to render a passive and unquestioning obedience to its rulers, and readily came under the influence of the active politician. The confidence that formerly subsisted between the autocratic Government and the people seemed to be disappearing. The Government found itself confronted in the legislative councils and in the press with a permanent opposition of growing strength and expertness, and was conscious that its powers for good were being undermined and its activities frustrated. A position had been reached which made it imperative to elect new forces on the side of the executive and to place a share of the leaders' responsibilities upon its critics. A large and generous measure of reform was called for, and without ignoring the difficulties and possible risks attending a great experiment he was generally in favour of the policy embodied in the bill. The provincial legislatures

should, as a necessary step in the direction of responsible government, give a certain degree of control over the action and policy of the executive. He accepted the position adopted in the Bill that the time had not yet come to give the Legislative Assembly a similar measure of control over the Central Government to that given to provincial Legislative Council over provincial Governments. He thought the Government of India for the present time must be made a unitary government and that the dualism which was proposed to be established in the provinces of executive council responsibility to Parliament, and Ministers responsible to the Legislature, could find no place in the Central Government. He agreed that it was advisable to provide for a substantial elective majority in the Indian Legislature.

SIR MICHAEL O'DWYER'S EVIDENCE.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, of course, gave evidence in support of the scheme of the majority of the Local Governments. Bland, smiling, and rarely at a loss, he made the best of his case. It is somewhat difficult, however, to understand the *Morning Post* when it says that "his statement was considered he most important and strongest which has yet been put forward for the Indian advocates." Who the "Indian advocates" are, is not easy to guess. As was only natural, it was somewhat difficult to steer clear of the controversial ground of the Punjab disturbances. They kept cropping up in the course of cross-examination, like King Charles' head. I imagine, however, that when Mr. Montagu and Lord Sinha had finished with Sir Michael, he left the Committee Room in a state of mental discomfort. There is no doubt that these two members of the Committee are far and away the ablest, most thorough, and most remorseless. Sir John Hewett found it rather difficult to explain why he accepted the pronouncement of 1917, or the reasons that had led him to change his views from those originally expressed by himself in association with Lord Sydenham, with whom he admitted he was in general agreement and the friendly support he now gave the scheme of the Local Governments. But Sir John is not the man he was, he is ageing, and his day is done. Lord Sinha's compliment to him upon his bold stand against a reactionary Secretary of State in the matter of industrial policy of India was generally appreciated.

INDIA'S FISCAL POLICY AND THE LABOUR PARTY.

Mrs. Besant's new paper, *United India*, has made its appearance, and amongst those who have contributed or promised to contribute to it are Sir Sankaran Nair, Sir Krishna Gupta, Messrs. Surendranath Banerjea, Sastri, Chintamani, Ramachandra Rao, C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Chakkarai, B. P. Wadia, Subedar, Telang, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Pradhan, Sapru, Wedgwood, Polak, Swinny, Edward Carpenter, Nevinson, Lansbury and Scurr. The paper is essentially run on Moderate lines, that is to say, so far, the balance has been well kept. It is, however, to be hoped that Mrs. Besant's intimate relations with the Labour Party

will not tend to convert the paper into a Party organ. I see that Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, upon his return to India, has issued a warning against too close an attachment to any of the British political parties. This, I think, is very wise, for India wants the utmost help that she can get from the best representatives of all parties alike. There are two errors that this loose alliance of Mrs. Besant with the Labour Party is causing her or her colleagues to commit. In the first issue of *United India* she attacks the Viceroy for his selection of a labour representative to the International Labour Conference to be held shortly at Washington. In the first place, I wish to guard myself against making undesirable comparisons, but I think that it will be admitted by all reasonable persons that Mr. N. M. Joshi, who has been selected, is at least as qualified to represent the views and interests and explain the condition of Indian Labour as Mr. B. P. Wadia. It is true that Mr. Wadia has obtained the nomination of the Madras Labour Unions but it is equally true that that are the only ones in the country, and that for all practical purposes, Indian Labour is at present unorganised. Consequently there is at the moment no real means of ascertaining directly its views on the subject of representation at this Conference. For Mrs. Besant or her paper to suggest that it is most unfortunate that the Viceroy should thus throw himself into conflict with the Labour Department of the League of Nations, that western Labour is not likely to recognise a nominee of the Viceroy, that no resolutions of the Conference can be binding on Indian workmen unless their chosen representative accepts them, and that the Viceroy has enough trouble on his hands without challenging a conflict with the world of Labour, is seriously to exaggerate the real situation. These are matters for Indians alone to decide in the long run, and not for western Labour, which also has quite enough trouble on its hands without challenging a conflict with large bodies of Indian Nationalists who do not admit the claim to dominate and dictate policy. In one other respect, Labour must be warned off, and Mrs. Besant ought to do it. It is immaterial whether free trade or protection is a good and proper fiscal policy for India, for the purpose of this argument. But whichever policy is eventually adopted, is undoubtedly a matter for India to settle for herself, without outside interference. Mr. Sastri made this point quite clear last Saturday at the Indian Conference held under the auspices of "Britain and India," and compelled Mr. Wadia's assent after the latter had, in attempting to reply to Mr. Sastri's argument that India should be free to change her fiscal policy from one of free trade to one of protection of Indian industries, by suggesting that such a change would not be welcome to Labour views here. At whatever cost, it must be made perfectly clear to the Labour Party that when India asks for responsible government and self-determination, it will no more tolerate the interference of Labour in

India's domestic affairs than it will that of any other political party in this country.

INDIA WANTS FREEDOM TO GROW. ;

At the Indian Conference, Mr. Sastri delivered a brief but powerful address on "What India Wants." He declared that she wanted to be an equal partner and not a dependent in the Empire. Her capacities, he declared, were always there, but of late years the opportunity had been lacking for their development. Indians wished to have the Government of the country in their own hands, and unhampered by alien interference. The present condition of things was unstable and unsafe. Their ambition was to rise to the status of a fully self-governing Dominion within the British Empire. They had no objection, but were rather glad, to remain within the Empire, and they felt that it was in their interest to do so; but it was a very low ideal of Empire to try to keep India within it by force and inconsistently with her own interest. The heart of India now yearned for complete freedom within the Empire, and she could not be put off with anything less. Much had been done for them, but much was left for India to do alone. It would be to her benefit to remain in the Empire, for the war had shown the necessity of confederation; India could not hold her own, weak as she was, unless she was attached to some great power, than which there was none with greater claims than Great Britain. Indians recognised that they still had a great deal to learn from the West in the realm of material things. When they had political power in their own country, however, Indians could turn the Nation back into the channel of its own genius. They could take the best from others, and yet develop the nation to its fullest capacity. He was confident that the obscurantist forces would be defeated. They were content to reach their goal by instalments, but considerable improvements, which he proceeded to enumerate, were necessary before the Bill now before Parliament could be made satisfactory to a majority of thoughtful Indians. It was in the interests of Britain as well as of India to allow Indians to bear arms, and raise a citizen army for the defence of their own country and of the Empire as a whole. Mr. Sastri's brief and pointed speech was well received.

REVIEWS.

CO-OPERATION IN INDIA.

MR. HENRY WOLFF'S recent volume on co-operation in India is a welcome addition to the steadily growing literature on the subject. In his "People's Banks," Mr. Wolff had devoted a special chapter to the initiation and the progress of the co-operative movement in this country, and the book under review takes a comprehensive view of the subject and brings the account up-to-date. It is superfluous to introduce the author to readers who take any interest in co-operation. Mr. Wolff has been associated, more or less directly, with the co-operative movement in all parts of the world for years

together, and his advice was sought even by those who started the experiment in this country. As the author himself tells us, he has been constantly consulted by Indian Registrars and the Indian Government, and he has kept himself in remarkably intimate touch with the development of the Indian co-operative movement. His opinions and even his strictures on the policies and methods adopted in this country must, therefore, be welcome to all those who wish that Indian co-operation should advance along the right path. Mr. Wolff has no first hand knowledge of Indian conditions which he has studied from a distance. He therefore offers his criticism with some hesitation [and hopes that his offering of views 'will not be considered an unwarranted intrusion.' We may assure him that however much Indian co-operators may differ from him, they will receive his criticisms with the respect they deserve. He remarks, "Co-operation opens brilliant prospects. But there are, at the same time, also dangerous pitfalls contained in its practice which it will be well to avoid." We entirely agree.

Mr. Wolff has a wonderfully rich store-house of information on which to draw in writing his book. In examining the Indian co-operative movement, he piles illustration upon illustration and quotation upon quotation to lend strength to his admonitions and conclusions. His treatment of the subject leaves much to be desired and this is a drawback common to almost all his books. There is so much repetition and so much overlapping that the reader is always in danger of missing the real point which the author is anxious to make. The quotations are often neither necessary nor impressive, and several of them may be dispensed with without affecting the quality of the book. The latter will, on the other hand, gain a good deal if a number of quotations are omitted. Mr. Wolff scatters his illustrations from the history of co-operation in different countries with a lavish hand, and some of them are very telling.

In his new book the author has given the history of Indian co-operation from the very beginning and traced the growth of the movement through all its stages, noticing, in the postscript, even the proceedings of the last conference of Registrars at Simla. Mr. Wolff is a co-operative Puritan and is extremely anxious to hold the movement in India, as in other countries, to the strictly correct lines. He knows that there are peculiar difficulties in India to contend with, but will not compromise his true principle for the attainment of easy success. The ignorance which prevails among the masses in this country he realizes to be a serious handicap and he has, therefore, urged a suitable system of rural education. He is also anxious that the movement should shake off its dependence upon the Government and that it should grow from within rather than be fostered from without. Mr. Wolff would tolerate nothing which detracts from the spontaneity, self-reliance and self-respect of the movement. All outside help beyond a certain limit, he thinks and thinks rightly, is mischievous,

and everything that reduces the co-operators' sense of responsibility he deprecates. It is from this point of view that he has criticised some of the practices of Indian co-operation. Take the guaranteeing unions, for example. Mr. Wolff is opposed to the establishment of these unions on the ground that they have the effect of making supervision and control of the working of primary societies lax, which is an undesirable thing. He has paid a well-merited tribute of praise to the enthusiastic and active Registrars who have thrown themselves heart and soul into their work. But he does not approve of some of their methods which are designed to reduce many things to an easily manageable routine. However sympathetic and active the Registrars may be, their bureaucratic methods must prove fatal to true co-operation. The movement is advancing with great rapidity at present in India, and the warnings given by Mr. Wolff have to be carefully noted by all those who have anything to do with co-operation. Our defects are, indeed, perceived by the leaders of the movement and efforts are being made to remove them. "If the co-operative movement is to prosper," says the author, "people will need to be taught to do things for themselves and to supervise their own officers. As things stand, that can be no easy process. However, such aim should be consistently kept in view."

CORRESPONDENCE.

RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIANS AND EUROPEANS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—The letter of Lajpat Rai to the SERVANT OF INDIA in your issue of October 16, came to my mind as I read the following. Should this not be our standard of friendship with others even though they be not of the same nationality?

"When two people with honest hearts free from prejudice meet each other with nothing to divide them, each generally respects and soon likes the other. But it is the crude and the official point of view that comes in to break the natural kindness of our relations with one another. One of the most difficult situations that we have to manage is the keeping of ourselves free from the prejudices which arise because we are really not our individual selves in our dealings with others; we are ourselves plus some official responsibility or vested interest or traditional pre-judgment. Why cannot we, as simple and friendly human beings, deal with each other according to the elementary principles of good-will and justice and mercy? As a matter of fact we do not; and so much are we a part of the past, so much do we receive from training and our immediate surroundings, that we seldom if ever meet one another in this way. Above all, let us try to rid ourselves of the shackles of custom and bondage to external standards, and do our best to deal with one another according to the fundamental principles of mutual respect and kindness." Dr. Ozora S. Davis.—Yours etc.

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