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CONTENTS.

	Page
TOPICS OF THE WEEK	217
ARTICLES :-	
The Right to be Dismissed	220
That Cook Won't Fight !	222
The Deadlock And the States	223
The Mixed Marriage Bill	225
SHORT NOTICE	226
MISCELLANEOUS :-	
Mr. Bakhale's Speech at World Textile Conference	227

Topics of the Week.

End of Sonya Maruti Satyagraha.

THE local Sonya Maruti Satyagraha came to an end at midnight on Friday last with the expiration of the District Magistrate's order prohibiting music before the temple. As may be recalled, the ban was in force for close upon three weeks during which period as many as, roughly speaking, 1,000 persons came forward to violate the District Magistrate's order by ringing the bell. That fact by itself is sufficient to testify to the odiousness of the ban from the public point of view. Nor could it be said that the condemnation of the ban was restricted to a particular section of opinion. As a matter of fact it was shared by all sections of society without distinction either of sex or political persuasion, Congressmen, Democratic Swarajists, Liberals offering themselves for Satyagraha. It is noteworthy that the satyagrahis included also one Mahomedan. What else is needed to expose the utterly hateful nature of the order ?

It hardly needs saying that the imposition of the ban on music was a clear mistake. And it is sincerely to be hoped that the mistake would hereafter not be repeated. Indications, however, point in a contrary direction. The day after the expiration of the prohibitory order a well-known leader of the orthodox section, by name Mr. Davare, wanted to perform worship in the temple to the accompaniment of music, but instead of being allowed or enabled to do so he was bound over to keep the peace and prevented from exercising his right. This does not show as if we have heard the last of this problem of music before the Sonya Maruti temple.

THE prohibition of music before the temple is universally regarded as an encroachment on a deeply cherished and long enjoyed religious right of the Hindus. Far from preventing its exercise, it is the Government's obvious duty to secure the community concerned in its enjoyment. The ban is, however, defended on the ground of the necessity to prevent any offence being given to the religious susceptibilities of the Muslims. Nobody can question the desirability of avoiding, as far as possible, such offence, but in view of the absence of any public demand by the Mahomedans for the stoppage of music by the sister community, this argument about respecting their susceptibilities seems to us to have been rather overdone.

AND even supposing such a demand emanated from them, is that really any reason for depriving the Hindus of a right which they had been unquestionably enjoying for very long ? For the Government to succumb to such unreasonable clamour is to place a premium on goondaism. If a demand for the stoppage of music is invariably to result in the issue of an official prohibition we have little doubt that such bans will have to be fairly frequent and that communities other than the Hindu will also be the sufferers.

WE are free to admit that where religious sentiment is involved there is not much room for reason or logic. Even so for the Muslims to object to the ringing of a small bell which cannot be heard in the mosque while not objecting to harsh and loud music accompanying marriage or funeral processions is the height of absurdity and unreason. We hope they will behave reasonably in future. If, on the contrary, these anticipations prove untrue, the Government's duty is clear. They have to be prepared to enable the aggrieved community to exercise its undoubted rights without interference from any quarter.

Utterly Wooden.

WHEN the cases of 68 satyagrahis in the Sonya Maruti dispute which were due for decision last week were not so decided but were adjourned till Monday, i. e., till after the close of the satyagraha, it was generally expected that the accused would be let off with a warning, if not unconditionally discharged. The expectation was heightened by the fact that the accused included well-known leaders like Messrs. N. C. Kelkar and L. B. Bhopatkar of the Democratic Swaraj party to which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, the brain of the Bombay Government, belongs. But the expectation was cruelly disappointed by all the accused being sentenced to a fine of Rs. 25 or in default, to a week's imprisonment. 47 of them paid the fine while the rest refused to pay the fine and were sent to jail. These include, amongst others, Mr. L. B. Bhopatkar and Mr. B. M. Gupte, Congress M. L. A.,

which clearly shows that whatever other differences might divide Congressmen from Democratic Swarajists, so far as this problem of music before the Sonya Maruti temple is concerned, all stand united as one man in opposing the District Magistrate's wholly unjustifiable fiat.

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IT is not our purpose in making a reference to these sentences to plead either for their being lightened or reduced. It is only to draw attention to the utterly wooden and unimaginative nature of the administration, the introduction of so-called provincial autonomy notwithstanding. We refuse to believe that the cause of public peace or the majesty of the law would have suffered in any way if these and other bell-ringers due for trial later on are allowed to go scot-free without even a nominal punishment being inflicted upon them. If Mr. Jamnadas Mehta with all his dogged pertinacity is unable to prevent the infliction of what on the face of them are needless punishments for only a technical breach of the law, a doubt cannot but arise as to whether he is serving any useful purpose by continuing to be associated with the Cooper Ministry. In fact, such a doubt is widely expressed, and, to say the least of it, the Democratic Swaraj party has been placed by the District Magistrate's order and subsequent proceedings in a cleft stick.

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An After-Thought.

THE *Tribune* points out how in the assurance controversy what was never contemplated when the demand for assurance was first made has now come to be the crux of the demand, viz. the right of the Ministers to be turned out of office by the Governor. It says :

We venture to remind the Mahatma that this was not the specific demand of the Congress in the first instance. The Delhi resolution did not say a word about the necessity or desirability of the Governors dismissing the Ministers rather than expecting them to resign or submit to the Governors' wishes. It only asked that the Governors should not "use their special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to their constitutional activities." Mahatmaji's own explanation of this demand was that it meant exactly what was meant by Sir Samuel Hoare and other ministers when they said that "ordinarily the Governors would not use their admittedly large powers of interference." Now, can anyone deny that this demand is fully conceded by Lord Zetland in his latest statement when he says that "the responsibility for the whole government of a province will pass to the Ministry as soon as it takes office" and that "the reserve powers of the Governors will not normally be in operation?" However the word "ordinarily" may be defined, it surely does not mean anything more than "normally."

* * *

Insistence on being Sent Away.

NOT only is the demand for the Congress Ministers being shown the door by the Governor an entirely new demand, but it is also futile and undignified to make it. This is the opinion expressed by the *Tribune* in the following paragraph :

The question whether the Ministers should themselves resign or should be asked by the Governor to go is not a question of any fundamental importance, if only because it is perfectly certain that if the Ministers neither resign nor submit to the wishes of the Governor, the Governor, unless he can see his way to yield, will have no choice left except to send them away. As long as he does not assume the responsibilities for the administration himself he has no other course open to him except to carry on the administration through Ministers responsible to the Legislature.

Of what use to him, then, would be a Ministry which would neither submit to his wishes in a matter in which his special responsibilities are concerned nor resign its office? The assurance about the dismissal of the Ministry in case of a serious and irreconcilable difference of opinion between the Governor and his Ministers is, therefore, implicit in the very facts of the case. There is no such thing for the Governors as dismissing Ministers as distinguished from expecting them to resign or to submit to the Governor's wishes, because non-resignation and non-submission to the Governor's wishes would automatically lead to dismissal. Why treat that as an outstanding issue between the Government and the Congress which a Congress Ministry would have it in its own power to secure simply by refusing to take either of the two alternative courses? And why insist upon being sent away, when it is open to you to go of your own accord?

* * *

Mr. R. G. Pradhan and States' Problem.

A SUCCESSFUL session of the conference of subjects of Bhor State was held at Poona last week-end under the presidency of the well-known publicist Mr. R. G. Pradhan of Nasik, a Congress M. L. C. In his inaugural speech Mr. Pradhan subjected the "legislative monstrosity", as the federal constitution is fittingly characterised by Prof. Keith, to scathing criticism. The constitution is something in the nature of an unholy alliance between the British Government on the one hand and the Indian Princes on the other with the set purpose of stemming the tide of democracy in British India and countering any possible movement for the severance of the British connection. By way of a return for the assistance which the British Government would receive from the Princes in the task of perpetuating British rule in India the Princes would be enabled, with the whole might of the British Empire at their back, to retain their autocratic rule intact. This being the basis of the constitution it is sheer hallucination to expect that it would ever lead us on to the fruition of our political ambitions. Whatever else it might or might not do, Mr. Pradhan is emphatically of the opinion that its working is not likely to culminate in India attaining the status of a Dominion, not to speak of independence.

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NO wonder such a constitution is quite unacceptable to all sections of political opinion in British India. And there is no reason why the people in the States should be more friendly to it. The rulers of Indian States seem to be comparatively better disposed to it in the hope that it will enable them to have their finger in the pie of British Indian affairs. This might perhaps be so in the case of the bigger States, but Mr. Pradhan believes that eventually they too would find that the new constitution in no way benefits the States. So far as the smaller States like Bhor are concerned, he is positive that their accession to federation would do them no good whatever. He had, therefore, no hesitation in counselling the ruler of the State to refrain from having anything to do with federation. With the whole of political India up in arms against the Hoare constitution, Mr. Pradhan took the opportunity to sound a clear warning to the Princes against joining the federation. The only result of the warning remaining unheeded would be, he added, that the Princes would draw upon themselves the wrath of political India which still has a soft corner for them in its heart. Will it be too much to hope that the well-meant advice of such a friend of the Princes as Mr. Pradhan will not fall on deaf ears?

* * *

THOUGH Mr. Pradhan devoted a considerable part of his weighty address to a consideration of the Indian constitutional problem, he did well in not

overlooking local problems. As a matter of fact he has outlined a programme of reforms which he would like to be urgently carried into effect. He attaches, and rightly too, great value to a democratisation and enlargement of the number of local self-governing bodies in the State. The constitution of the State Legislature too needs to be liberalised, so as to place the elected element in a decisive position. Direct election is what he presses for, as also for an enlargement of the Legislature's functions and the right to pass the budget. Barring the police, relations with the suzerain power and with other States, he would like the whole field of administration transferred to popular control to be exercised through two Ministers to be selected from the elected members of the Legislative Council. Universal compulsory primary education in about seven years, an industrial survey, a reduction in the ruler's personal expenditure, the conferment of full civil rights on the subjects, an improvement in the economic condition of the agriculturists are some of the reforms he has prominently included in the programme. We believe with Mr. Pradhan that if the ruler is far-sighted enough to carry these reforms into effect without delay he will have taken considerable strides in the direction of making his State a model one.

Unemployment Statistics.

THE collection of comprehensive statistical material bearing on middle-class unemployment as a first step towards the adoption of remedial measures is urged in a circular issued to the Provincial Governments by the Government of India. We heartily welcome this move which has been overdue for a very long time. There have been frequent demands for the collection of statistical material regarding unemployment in this country. So far as we know, the question was raised as early as 1922 in the Bengal Legislative Council, when a resolution was adopted suggesting the appointment of a committee to investigate the problem of unemployment among the educated middle-class of Bengal and to suggest remedial measures. Similar resolutions were adopted in the Legislative Councils of Madras, United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa, as a result of which Unemployment Committees were appointed in these Provinces. The Punjab Government also appointed a Committee in 1927. In the same year, the Bombay Labour Office carried out an inquiry and submitted a report. It must, however, be admitted that many of these reports are out of date, especially in view of the fact that the number of unemployed persons has been increasing fast in recent years. What is more, no attempt has been made so far to collect unemployment statistics throughout British India in such a way as to ensure uniformity and avoid provincial variation in the methods of conducting the inquiry. It must be borne in mind that unemployment is a national problem, which is common to all the provinces.

THE Government circular states that the Government of India are convinced that in the absence of a scheme of unemployment insurance or some other substantial inducement to the unemployed to register, no reliable statistics can be collected. If it is so, the duty of the Government is clear. A beginning should be made in the direction of introducing a scheme of unemployment insurance without further delay. It has long been recognised that persons who cannot earn their living and their dependants must be protected from starvation. The Government of India surely knows that unemployment insurance schemes are in existence today in not less than 29 countries in the world.

WE would urge that the scope of the proposed inquiry should not be restricted only to the middle class population as intended. It is really unfortunate that we do not possess any statistics regarding unemployment among the masses of our country including the industrial population, when deaths due to starvation are being reported frequently in the newspapers. Unemployment is a social disease leading to loss in production and national wealth, deterioration in skill, physique and morale of the population. It is the duty of every civilised government to root out this evil, whether it exists among the middle-class or any other class of its citizens.

IN order to secure reliable statistics on the subject, Central legislation would be necessary. We hope that the Government of India would not be satisfied merely with collecting the necessary statistical information on the subject, but would come out with a comprehensive scheme of unemployment insurance at an early date.

Gokak Strike.

AFTER a prolonged struggle of nearly five months, the 3,000 strikers of the Gokak Mills in Belgaum District resumed work as a result of the award of the Commissioner of Labour. The main demand of the workers was that the 84 victimised persons should be reinstated. The dispute was referred to the Commissioner of Labour who, after an enquiry, recommended that 32 persons should be taken back and two more should be retired with full provident fund benefits and gratuity. It is unfortunate that the Commissioner of Labour has not stated why the dismissal of the rest should stand. It must, however, be noted that among those who are not reinstated are some of the important office-bearers of the Workers' Union. Another important demand of the strikers, that the wages for the lock-out period should be paid, was conceded by the employers. Though the strike ended in a compromise, we would like to congratulate the workers on their partial success, which we hope will strengthen their hands in the future in getting their legitimate grievances redressed in a more satisfactory measure.

THE way in which the workers carried on the struggle has evoked the admiration of one and all. There was not a single act of violence during the long period of the strike. The workers were peaceful throughout. Under these circumstances, the promulgation of an order under section 144, Cr. P. C., in Gokak Falls area was quite unnecessary and unjust, in view of the fact that no such order was necessary for the first three months of the strike for keeping the workers peaceful. The promulgation of the order is a clear indication that the Government officials are often over-enthusiastic in strengthening the hands of the employers in an industrial dispute. It is needless to add that the order is an unjustifiable encroachment on the civil liberties of the workers.

Government Patronage for Homoeopathy.

A PLEA for Government patronage to the homoeopathic system of medicine was put forward in the Legislative Assembly by means of a non-official resolution which was carried by 44 votes to 36. What the mover wanted to secure was that the system be introduced in Government hospitals, and that homoeopathic colleges be treated on a footing of equality with allopathic colleges. The advantages of the system are too well-known to need recapitulation. In a poor country like India, where facilities for

medical relief are utterly inadequate, the cheapness of the system naturally offers special attractions. The handy nature of homoeopathic remedies and the total absence of bad taste constitute unquestioned advantages.

* * *

BUT, as pointed out by the Government spokesman, the matter concerns the Central Government only to a very limited extent. It is not as if there is at present a ban on its use in Government hospitals which needs to be lifted. Its use by experts is in no way tabooed. What appears to have given rise to such an impression was a recent Government circular. What the terms of the circular were was not clearly stated in the debate. But it seems to have forbidden Government employees who had studied the system from engaging in its practice, not because there was anything inherently wrong in their so

doing but because as whole-time Government servants they could not under the rules devote their time to such a pursuit, whether for private gain or otherwise. This, however, is by the way.

* * *

WHAT is to be noted is that under the new constitution the Government at Delhi can do little to encourage the enlarged use of the system under official auspices. Medical relief is a provincial subject and it is for local Governments, so it was pointed out, to think of the measures for popularising the system. So far as recognition of homoeopathic colleges is concerned, the problem has little practical interest, in view of the existence of only one homoeopathic college at Calcutta in the whole country. If more colleges should come into being, the obvious course for the promoters would be to approach local Governments and the universities concerned for official recognition.

THE RIGHT TO BE DISMISSED.

MAHATMA GANDHI holds fast to the formula into which the assurance required of the Governors has crystallised itself in the resolution of the Congress Working Committee, viz. that the Governor should promise to dismiss his Ministers whenever he thinks he must overrule them in the discharge of his special responsibilities. There is nothing surprising in this, for the Working Committee had before it the pledge which the Under-Secretary gave in the House of Commons on 26th April and which the Secretary of State repeated in the House of Lords, using the same words. The Marquis of Zetland described at some length the normal procedure which would be followed by the Governor in his dealings with the Ministry, a description which has met with entire satisfaction everywhere; but in this he said nothing that was not implicit in his previous speeches. Indeed, all that he said is the commonplace of the practical working of responsible government. The pledge of non-interference was contained in Mr. Butler's answer to Mr. T. Williams's question:

His Majesty's Government have no intention of countenancing a use of the special powers for other than the purposes for which Parliament intended them. It is certainly not the intention that Governors by a narrow or legalistic interpretation of their own responsibilities, should trench on the wide powers which it was the purpose of Parliament to place in the hands of Ministries and which it is our desire that they should use, in furtherance of the programmes which they have advocated.

Lord Zetland, while reiterating this pledge which the Working Committee thought was "utterly inadequate", did not carry matters any farther, and therefore it is no wonder that Mahatma Gandhi considers Lord Zetland's statement also to be inadequate. The Working Committee adopted Mahatma Gandhi's conclusion that the only safeguard against the Governors' undue interference with the Ministers consisted in an undertaking that they would dismiss the Ministers when, after all attempts at reaching a mutual understanding had failed, they felt that they must set aside the Ministers' advice and interfere with their policy. Lord Zetland's speech says nothing about this safeguard, and we cannot understand how Mahatma Gandhi can regard, from his own point of view, the assurance contained in the speech

as satisfactory. Even he has no power, after the Working Committee's resolution, to vary the form of the assurance demand.

But Congress journals are very much alarmed by the Mahatma's unbending attitude. They feel that the Secretary of State has fully met the Congress demand, though he has not used the actual words employed either in the Delhi or the Allahabad resolution. The *Hindu* says: "The assurance that the Governor's reserve powers will not be used ordinarily or till after every possibility of a friendly settlement of differences had been exhausted has been conceded in terms by the Secretary of State." The *Tribune* says: "Lord Zetland has now in substance and form conceded the primary demand of the Congress both as regards freedom from irritating interference in normal day-to-day administration and as regards interference being confined to really grave cases and even in those cases taking the definite form of 'a break in a fruitful relationship.' How can anyone, then, say that Lord Zetland's speech is no contribution to the removal of the deadlock?" The *Tribune* here refers to Mahatma Gandhi's own statement that while the tone of Lord Zetland's speech is better, it is no contribution to a solution of the impasse. In fact the paper pleads that the Governors should again send for the Congress leaders immediately and repeat to them the assurances that the Secretary of State has already publicly given. Nothing more is required, the *Tribune* thinks, than this to resolve the stalemate, for, it says: "We cannot imagine any Governor giving the Congress leaders the two assurances which Lord Zetland has undoubtedly given in his speech without those leaders being satisfied, as the Delhi resolution requires them to be satisfied, that their constitutional activities as Ministers would not be interfered with by the Governors, except in the form and sense in which they are themselves prepared to have them interfered with." It further says that if such an assurance is given by the Congress, "it will be at once a point of honour and of duty for the Congress leaders in the six provinces to accept office."

Unfortunately, however, the *Tribune's* interpretation of the Delhi resolution counts for nothing; only the authority of the author of the resolution, as was

said by Mr. Butler, can decide the question, and indeed even his authority is not now final, as the Working Committee of the Congress has since taken the matter under its own cognisance. Mahatma Gandhi has made it clear that he regards it as a point of honour and duty for the Congress leaders to refuse office till the specific demand for a dismissal of the Ministry by the Governor in the event of an outstanding disagreement between them requiring, in his opinion, interference on his part is conceded. It is no use trying to belittle the force of the Working Committee's resolution, as some Congress journals have started doing. For instance, the *Hindu* says that the demand that the Governor's interference with the Ministers should always take the form of their dismissal is not "an integral part of the assurance the Congress wants". It also says: "The claim to be dismissed is not, Congress leaders argue, a demand in itself, but only a way pointed out how a demand for non-interference is consistent with the legal rights and duties of the Governor as they now stand under the Government of India Act." Whatever ground there might have been for this interpretation, there is none left now, for Mahatma Gandhi has put it beyond a shadow of doubt that to him an assurance of non-interference is synonymous with an assurance that interference will not take place till after the Ministers are dismissed. This was probably not the meaning which was attached to the demand when it was first put forward. But whatever the original intention was, the essence of the demand has now come to be that the Ministers must be dismissed before interference can be allowed. Several statements have been made recently by Mahatma Gandhi to this effect, and thus the bottom is knocked out of the optimistic anticipations of some Congress papers that the Governors have now only to call the Congress leaders again, and a reconciliation would be effected without a difficulty. The impasse will continue till the Government agrees in explicit terms to the Congress demand for dismissal.

It is very difficult to see, however, what advantages dismissal has over resignation. The *Tribune* does not see any. It observes: "Whatever the Mahatma or the Working Committee may say, there is no constitutional difference" between the Ministers sending in their resignations or the Governor dismissing them. The *Statesman's* remarks on this point are worth quoting:

Resignation and dismissal are both ordinary incidents of party government; at one time one may seem the better way, at another time the other. Many must have rubbed their eyes in amazement at reading that dismissal is preferred to resignation by one large party. Both would lead to the same result and point to the same cause, fundamental disagreement between Ministry and Governor. No Governor has the power to prevent Ministers resigning. Why should there be insistence that they must be dismissed? What is the gain to public life or personal feeling? If Ministers of a majority party resigned on a major issue dissolution and appeal to the electorate would be necessary since no alternative Ministry could last. Why then should Ministers not themselves take responsibility for asking for a dissolution? Why throw it all, responsibility and privilege, on the shoulders of a Governor? It is in our opinion a matter of minor importance whether Ministers

go out of office in this way or that, and we repeat that we can imagine a Ministry thinking it more self-respecting to offer its resignation.

It would be remembered that we emphasised in a former issue the aspect of the question touched upon by the *Statesman* in the last sentence of the above quotation. Mr. Venkatarama Sastri also gives the opinion of some of his friends who prefer resignation to dismissal on the ground that "resignation and appeal to the country do seem a more constitutional course than dismissal by Governors." This is no doubt a widely prevalent view, but it is obvious that there will be no use hereafter to reason with the Congress, since Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee have taken a contrary view. The only possible way out of the present impasse therefore is for the Government to accept the dismissal demand, which it certainly can accept without any infringement of the letter or the spirit of the constitution. As the Mahatma has said, "it is no strain upon the Constitution Act" to give such an assurance. While the *Tribune*, like ourselves, would desire the Government to agree to the demand, it does not think that the Congress would be justified in continuing the impasse in case the Government does not agree on what is a minor point of procedure and not a major issue of principle. "We cannot for the life of us see," says our contemporary, "how this can be made the principal issue in any dispute between the Government and the Congress. It may or may not be a strain upon the Constitution Act for the Governors to give the assurance (of dismissal), . . . but it is a strain upon the understanding and the constitutional sense of the average man to be told that the Congress or any other body of responsible persons can refuse to accept office merely because this assurance is not given in explicit terms." The *Tribune* is quite right, but it is idle now to hope that Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee will modify their attitude. If therefore an understanding is to be reached, the modification of policy must come from the side of Government.

There is only one other way of ending the deadlock and that is for the Congress to decide that those Congressmen who will accept office should bind themselves automatically to resign their office as soon as any interference will take place, be it in great matters or small. This is the solution that has been suggested by the *Indian Express*, and its reasoning is very cogent. The Congress prefers dismissal to resignation, because of two considerations. In the first place, in cases of interference in big matters which would justify resignation the Ministers may stick to office without any valid reason for doing so. In the second place, in cases of interference in small matters the Ministers would not think it worth while to take the drastic step of resignation and would prefer to remain in office in the hope of achieving some solid results in other directions. It is also possible that the questions on which a disagreement between the Governor and the Ministers persists may be of a complex nature, in which the Governor's interference will not appear to the electorate to be patently unjustifiable, and a voluntary resignation on the part of the

Ministers may seem to them to be unnecessary. In order that no room should be left for such situations to arise, the Congress should make it obligatory on all those Congressmen who accept office to quit it as soon as their advice is set aside by the Governor, whatever be the nature of the questions on which interference is threatened. The *Indian Express* says: "The distinction between dismissal and resignation is real only so long as the Ministers have the alternative of submitting to the Governor's interference in any particular matter. If the Working Committee can make it a constitutional principle of action and declare unilaterally that no Congress Ministry shall continue in office when its advice has been rejected on any matter, large or small, this alternative shall be cut off and there will be no option for the Governor to think that

he can overrule his Ministers and escape a deadlock." Resignation after such a binding imposed upon them will be understood as being forced and will have all the advantages that the Congress expects from dismissal. When the difference in the positions of the Government and the Congress is disclosed to be so minute and relates only to procedure, it is surely undesirable that it should be allowed to continue any longer. If the Government accepts this particular procedure, as it well may, well and good. But if the Government is obdurate, the Congress may bind the Ministers to give up office in case of the least interference by the Governor. A deadlock, if it is to be maintained, should not be on such a small issue as the right of being dismissed.

THAT COCK WON'T FIGHT !

WHENEVER anything goes awry in Indian politics, people turn instinctively to the Moderates or the Liberals and ask, sometimes appealingly and more often tauntingly, "Why don't these good but somewhat ineffective people bestir themselves a little and put things straight?" In the present constitutional impasse that question is frequently on the lips of men who never showed overmuch sympathy with Liberalism or cared excessively for the progressive principles of the Liberal Party in normal times. One Indian paper has descanted on the duty of the Moderate elements in the stalemate that has now arisen and says: "We think it is the duty of Liberal leaders in India to leave the role of sulking Achilles in their tents and to co-operate with the interim Ministers in a policy of constructive amelioration and, with this end in view, of the political education of the masses." It is very much distressed at the thought that when within some four or five months from now the interim Ministries will face the legislatures and be heavily defeated fresh elections will take place and the Congress will again be returned in an overwhelming majority and a deadlock will again be created, causing infinite confusion, chaos and waste. In order to avoid it, this journal feels that the Moderates ought to go about the country and see that this Congress game is foiled, giving a reasonable chance to constructive policy.

If this is the feeling of Indians, one can understand the feeling of Britishers. In the debate that followed Mr. Coatman's paper on "India on the Eve of Autonomy" at the East Indian Association on 9th March last, many voices were raised bemoaning the collapse, as Sir Michael O'Dwyer said, of the moderate Liberal Party in India and the emergence of the Congress on top in three-fourths of British India from the last general elections. Sir Michael had a very grave accusation to make against the Liberals. "At the Round Table Conferences and Joint Committees," he said, "English statesmen who had not had previous experience of India considered that these very able gentlemen (the Moderates) represented the views of India, and were in fact the 'Voice of India.' The scheme was very largely based on their advice

in the hope that when the scheme went through those gentlemen who had done so much in framing it would be found able and willing to work it. The warnings that they had little influence in India were ignored. Now what has happened? They have disappeared—sunk without trace." The accusation is that, having posed as representatives of India and having secured the new reforms as a result of pressure exerted by them in this capacity, they shrink back when time comes for them to do their utmost to save from sabotage the very reforms for which they were in the main responsible. It is not merely that their influence has decayed and that they are unable to withstand the force of extremist upsurge, but they do not even try to exert in the right direction what little influence they may still command, from fear that if they were to do so they would become unpopular. Their inability to deliver the goods is obvious, but their strength of will and courage to face the music are in doubt.

This is the charge that is brought against the "Moderates" or "Liberals." These words are very loosely used. In the present case they certainly cannot be used of the party which goes by the name of the Liberal Party and which was formerly called the Moderate Party. The "representatives of this party were no doubt associated in the early stages with constitutional discussions at the Round Table Conference, but all the suggestions made by them were unceremoniously turned down, and the scheme that was finally adopted bore little resemblance to what they urged would be imperatively needed to satisfy the minimum aspirations of the reasonable men in India. They warned the Government in the plainest possible terms that the Act as it had passed Parliament would only intensify the existing discontent in the country and the least that could be done was to withdraw the Act even if nothing better could immediately be put in its place. The Party was then brushed aside as wholly misrepresenting the feeling in the country, and the Government went gaily forward, forcing the Act down the throat of the people, in spite of the earnest entreaties and solemn warnings of the Liberals. What right has the Government

now to look for any assistance from the Liberal Party? Why should the Party feel even a trace of sadness at the prospect of the Act being destroyed? There may appear differences of opinion between them and the Congress over the best means of ending the Act, but as to the identity of their objective there can be no doubt. They can only be collaborators of the Congress and not its opponents in putting an end to the Act and replacing it by one establishing a really democratic regime in India. Their influence with the people may be little or great, but whatever it is, it cannot be enlisted on the side of the hateful constitution, but definitely against it. They are as hostile to the Act as is the Congress.

When an accusation is brought against the Liberals that they do not show themselves in evidence to fight the battle of the interim Ministries or to work up public opinion in support of the Act, the people that are really meant and that really lay themselves open to this accusation are those who criticised the official Liberal party as taking too pessimistic a view of the constitution and who led the British Government to believe, if not only advised them, that the constitution, though not wholly satisfactory, would be accepted by the country and worked loyally in spite of all its grave limitations. All the vested interests were of course actively for the constitution, but some other progressive politicians were passively for it. The duty of rallying round the constitution in this hour of crisis falls on them. The Liberals repudiate any such responsibility. It is not for us to say on which individuals that responsibility can be said properly to devolve. But some names inevitably come to mind. Glorney Bolton's "Peasant and Prince" describes Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru as "the architect-in-chief of the new reform." If that title fits anyone in India, it fits Sir Tej. He is said in this book to have separated from the Liberal Party because the latter stood for dominion status while he wanted them to abandon this position. On this point the author is not right, but Sir Tej is truly the architect-in-chief of federation and Mr. Jayakar may be said to be his principal assistant. Their suggestions too were on the whole unacceptable to the British Government, but notwithstanding this fact it may fairly be stated that they wanted the country to accept the constitution and did not endorse the position taken up by the Liberal Party that the constitution was not worth accepting and should not be accepted. If we are right in saying that they stood upon the whole for the new constitution the moral responsibility for creating public opinion in its favour and removing all the impediments in the way of its smooth working lies upon them and people like them. It is not the responsibility of the Liberal Party at all.

The Liberal Party occupied more or less the same position towards the Montagu constitution which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar occupy towards the Hoare constitution. The Montagu constitution fell far short of the legitimate expectations of the Liberal Party as the Hoare constitution falls far short of Sapru-Jayakar expectations. The Liberals used their best endeavours in expanding the Montagu constitution as Sir Tej and Mr. Jayakar did in expanding the Hoare constitution, but the former failed as did the latter in these attempts. The Liberal Party, however, came to the conclusion that the Montagu constitution was worth giving a fair trial as Sir Tej and Mr. Jayakar feel about the Hoare constitution. But here comes the difference in the subsequent behaviour of the Liberal Party on the one hand and Sir Tej and Mr. Jayakar on the other. The Liberal Party considered it to be their moral duty to do their very best to make the Montagu constitution a success by offering to work it themselves and by carrying on a propaganda that others may do likewise. How far they succeeded in doing it is a matter which every man may judge for himself, but that they did not shirk their duty must be admitted by all. If one carries on negotiations with another and pulls off a settlement it follows that he shall spare no efforts to make it acceptable to those in whose interest the settlement is made. The Liberal Party was fully alive to their moral duty in this respect and, in face of popular opprobrium, they performed this duty to the best of their ability. Those who stand in a similar position in respect of the Hoare constitution can hardly be said so far to have done their duty. One would have expected them to offer themselves for election, to get returned by the suffrages of the electorate and show the people that the new reforms are not so bad as they are made out to be by the Liberal Party and the Congress who are at one in this respect. But they are never to be seen mixed up any longer with such a vulgar thing as election. They keep their superior wisdom rigidly to themselves. It is not merely the case that popular frenzy against the constitution is too great for them to combat, but they have not shown the nerve to make an attempt to combat it. Has anyone ever heard of their trying to address public meetings from their point of view and the meetings being broken up? No, they will not step out in public for fear that they will receive an unkind reception. That cook won't fight.

The British Government has a right to the co-operation of these men. Let it obtain this co-operation from them in popularising the constitution and making a success of it. The Liberal Party is not bound to offer, and will not offer, co-operation in this respect. They stand on the other side of the barricade.

THE DEADLOCK AND THE STATES.

THE constitutional impasse in the Provinces has undoubtedly inspired the Princes with much fear and they have begun to have serious misgivings as to whether they should agree to come into the federation. In order to lessen their fear, it has

been suggested by some papers that the Princes should use their good offices with the British Government in order that it may be induced to give the Congress the required assurance of non-interference and for the purpose of making their mediation effec-

tive insist that federation be held up till the present deadlock in the Provinces is broken. The suggestion appears on the face of it to be very useful, but its inherent impracticability will be obvious to all who realise the pervasive nature of the Governor's special powers which the Congress desires to have put in abeyance.

If the special powers had concerned merely matters in respect of British India, the Princes would have been glad to offer their mediation. They would themselves have lost nothing by urging on the British Government the need for being more responsive to public opinion though in their own States they may not be paying the slightest heed to such public opinion as is allowed free expression. But unfortunately the special powers are meant to be used, among other things, to protect the rights of the States themselves. If the Princes pressed upon the British Government the desirability of waiving all the special powers conferred upon the Governor, they would be deprived of the safeguard which is intended in their own interest, and as they are not willing to forego the advantage of this safeguard, they cannot plead with the British Government for the elimination of the special powers. If they did, the British Government would say: "You fought hard in order to ensure that no provincial Ministry shall tamper with your rights and dignities and you got us to include in the special powers bestowed on the Governor one which would enable him to veto any action of the Ministers that might be thought unjustly to curtail those rights and dignities. Are you now willing to have the Governor give up this special power? If you are not, how can we ask the minority communities in British India to look with equanimity upon the surrender by the Governor of the special power to be brought into play in their interest? And the Congress demand is for the non-exercise, if not formal abandonment, of all the special powers of the Governor. If we are to agree to it, the safeguard devised in your behalf will disappear along with the rest. Take good care about this when you start meddling in this affair."

In fact, the Princes are being egged on to declare themselves to be unequivocally on the side of the British Government in this dispute with the Congress. The *Statesman* recently expressed a painful surprise that they had not yet raised their voice of protest against the Congress move for the extinction of the Governor's power of interference with Ministers, suggesting thereby that the Princes, like the British Indian minorities, must make clear that, apart from the British Government's objection, they would object to compliance with the Congress demand. The Princes may not yet have protested—in public, but in private they are sure to protest. They will certainly tell the British Government that, whilst they are maintaining that the safeguards already provided are insufficient, they cannot contemplate one of these safeguards being taken away. The Bhopal Committee has asked for several additional safeguards. Whatever may happen

to these, it is obvious that their accession to federation will not become a fact till at any rate the British Government gives a firm assurance that the Congress demand for an assurance involving the removal of an essential guarantee for themselves will not be entertained. While thus the Congress asks for non-interference, the Princes will ask for the retention of the power to interfere, not merely in form, but in fact—the power to be exercised not sparingly, but as often as may be necessary. Thus a sharp difference of view has already become apparent between the Congress and the Princes even in regard to the provincial constitution.

That protection of the States is one of the objects which the British Government had in view in endowing the Governor with special powers is not widely known and has not come prominently under discussion in the present controversy. But one writer from Mysore, Mr. B. S. Puttaswamy, M.L.C., at any rate has drawn attention to it. He says, writing in the *Hindu*:

The whole controversy seems to me rather very unfortunate inasmuch as it has a very undesirable influence over the Indian Princes. At least this consideration alone should have deterred the Congress from asking for an assurance. The inauguration of the provincial autonomy by itself would be useless if federation is not started. Full autonomy in the Provinces and irresponsibility at the Centre would be an unsatisfactory state of affairs to tolerate. The insistence by the Congress on a virtual wiping off of special responsibility would engender a feeling of suspicion, nay, a spirit of antagonism on the part of the States towards British Indian units. For may it be remembered that the protection of the rights of any Indian State and the rights and dignity of the Rulers thereof forms one of the items of the special responsibility of the Governor. As a matter of fact, doubts and fears were entertained by some Princes as to the due discharge of these obligations in actual practice by the Governors or the Governor-General. So long as the States do not come in federation cannot be started and the whole country stands to lose. It is essential, therefore, that the whole problem should be approached in a spirit of true statesmanship. The continuance of the present impasse would prejudice the abiding interests of our country. May we hope that a generous policy of give and take would prevail and the Congress be enabled to make its contribution to the governance of India?

The essential incompatibility between the grant of full provincial autonomy and the accession of the Princes to federation is well emphasised here. To grant full provincial autonomy is to sweep away all the existing limitations on it, and to do so is to extinguish the guarantee that has been intended for the benefit of the Princes—a guarantee to which the Princes are not indifferent but on which they insist as a condition precedent to their joining federation. Thus Mr. Puttaswamy is quite right in holding that, if full provincial autonomy is established, federation cannot be; for one militates against the other on account of the minimum demands made respectively by the Congress and the Princes. And Mr. Puttaswamy regrets that Mahatma Gandhi, in asking that provincial autonomy be made full, should have ignored the inevitable reaction such a demand must have in delaying and in fact negating federation. And

federation seems to him to be so supremely important that in his view the Congress would have done well in accepting limited autonomy in the Provinces, leaving the way open for federation. With the active help of the Princes, all the safeguards except the one relating to the States can in course of time be swept off; but without the good-will of the Princes, federation itself would become impossible, and how disastrous would be the consequences of a state of things in which the Provinces become independent, with no co-ordinating authority at the Centre? Mr. Puttaswamy, therefore, charges Mahatma Gandhi with having taken an extremely short-sighted view of this question of provincial autonomy.

In making this charge the writer assumes that Mahatma Gandhi takes the same view of federation as he does, viz. that a federation is desirable and necessary, no matter of what kind. But the assumption is entirely unfounded. There is no warrant for thinking that Mahatma Gandhi does not accept unreservedly the Congress position that federation must be prevented from coming into being. If the establishment of full provincial autonomy will frighten the Princes away from federation, the Congress will consider it an unexpected boon. For the Congress is not of the opinion at present that federation can be prevented without a long-drawn struggle, both with the British Government and with the Princes. The first move in this struggle with the latter was taken by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru when he issued a solemn warning to the Princes that they would incur the antagonism of British India if by joining federation they would make themselves the tools of British imperialism. If, even before raising the question of federation, the Princes take to their heels and put as much distance as possible between themselves and federation, even at the first skirmish that Mahatma Gandhi has with the British Government on the preliminary question of provincial autonomy, nothing would be better from the Congress point of view. The Princes would oblige the Congress by themselves doing uninvited what the Congress had thought would take a very big agitation to achieve.

Let it not be said that Mahatma Gandhi has expressed himself against only one of the safeguards in the provincial constitution, namely, the safeguard intended for the services, and that by implication he is not opposed to the other safeguards. This would be a serious misapprehension of the Mahatma's position. What the Mahatma intended to say was that the Princes and the minorities would get all reasonable protection from the Congress Ministries without any interference being required on the part of the Governor, but so far as interference is concerned, his position is the same in respect of these safeguards as it is in respect of the safeguard for the services, viz. that there must be no interference. The Princes are no more willing to trust the Congress than the minorities in British India that without the Governor's power of interference being kept alive and active they will receive the protection they are enti-

led to. The Mahatma has also made this protection to be given voluntarily by the Congress Ministries subject to one qualification. These Ministries will feel themselves justified in protecting only such interests of the rulers of States as are in consonance with the interests of the people in the States. The Princes know well that this qualification robs the protection of all its value. Thus there is an irreconcilable conflict between the kind of provincial autonomy the Congress asks for and the kind of federation the Princes can think of, and behind the impasse between the Congress and the British Government which looms so large in the public eye lies this deadlock, which is now hidden from the public gaze, between the Congress and the Princes.

THE MIXED MARRIAGE BILL.

IT may be recalled that the Parliament of the South African Union had recently before it a Bill designed to prohibit the employment of European women by Asiatics. Though the Bill purported to comprehend all Asiatics within its purview, it was really aimed at Indians, as will be made clear later on. The employment of European girls by Asiatics, it was contended, leads to marriages between Asiatics and Europeans and makes it possible for the former to buy in the names of their European wives land which under the law they are prohibited from buying in their own names. In our issue of April 8 last it was shown how these fears were mostly exaggerated. The Prime Minister's announcement to the effect that the hated Bill had been withdrawn that was subsequently cabled to India was received with a sigh of relief. In announcing that course the Prime Minister relied upon an assurance supposed to have been given by the South African Indian Congress to the effect that it would voluntarily bring about what was sought to be legislatively enforced. The Government accepted this assurance and decided to drop the Bill.

At the time the cabled news was received in this country serious doubts were entertained as to the Congress offering such an assurance. And from the South African papers to hand by last mail, these doubts prove to be justified. The only basis for the Prime Minister's belief that an assurance was given by the Congress was the following statement by its spokesman, Mr. A. I. Kaje, in his evidence before the select committee to which the Bill was remitted for consideration. "Personally," said he, "I would go so far as to say that we as Indians would consider a proposal to dismiss our European employees, but we do not want to be insulted by having this legislation inflicted upon us. We would rather do it voluntarily." What was no more than a promise of consideration on the part of Mr. Kaje was at once elevated into an assurance on the part of the Congress presumably because it suited official plans. All such assurances are as a rule the result of prolonged negotiation and discussion. Nothing like this seems to have happened in the present case. Government construed what was nothing more than

an expression of personal opinion into an assurance on behalf of the Congress and withdrew the Bill.

There were reasons for this withdrawal. By the time the select committee finished its deliberations, the King's Coronation was drawing near. This was to be attended by the Prime Minister and it was apparently felt that if awkward questions about this bill were asked in London, he would be hard put to it to answer them satisfactorily. There was nothing for it but to drop the Bill. But how could this be done without the Government exacting or at any rate seeming to exact a price for it? To do so would damage the Government's prestige beyond repair. So the make-believe of an assurance by the Indian Congress had to be staged and in that connection the expression of his personal opinion by Mr. Kajeé offering consideration of voluntary action on lines desired by Government came very handy. What was it to Government that in expressing his views he in no way committed the Congress? Was he not, they asked themselves, the spokesman of the South African Indian Congress? Nothing more was needed as a cover for the Government's retreat. Mr. Kajeé's opinion was at once pounced upon as an assurance officially offered by the Congress and the decision to drop the Bill was arrived at and flashed across the wires. Thus was the Prime Minister's way to London for the Coronation and the Imperial Conference cleared.

In point of fact the Congress never gave any assurance of the kind attributed to it nor had its spokesman any mandate to do so. This point was made clear beyond the possibility of doubt in the statement subsequently issued by its executive. The Congress has all along been opposed to the Bill and felt that the dropping of the Bill had vindicated the wisdom of its stand. After affirming its stout resistance to the Bill, the executive made it clear to all concerned that "the statement of its spokesman, which is now being termed an assurance, shall not be construed as a compromise or an acceptance in any form of the principles underlying the now rejected Bill." It explicitly added that "these objections are fundamental and unalterable." The opposition to the employment by Indians of European women the executive described as being "based on race prejudice," "wrong" and such as "cannot be upheld on grounds of reason or equity."

That the Bill sought to find a remedy for a state of things which existed only in the imagination of Europeans suffering from a surfeit of racial prejudice will be apparent from the following facts brought to public notice by the vice-president of the South African Indian Congress. In a letter to members of Parliament he stated that not a single case of immorality arising out of the employment of European girls by Indians had occurred and that not a single marriage had resulted from it. In the whole of Transvaal there are only 14 and in the whole of Natal only 2 European girls in Indian employ who are not working under the supervision of Europeans. Of some 300 women employed by Indians in the whole of the South African Union, 247 are employed by one

firm alone and are entirely under European management. These facts are a convincing reply to the allegation that, unless checked, the "evil" of Indian marriages with European girls would have grown to serious proportions. Such a contention is obviously unsustainable without a distortion of facts.

But what has shocked decent public opinion, not merely Indian opinion, was the provision in the Bill as redrafted by the select committee which allows the employment of European females by Japanese employers. The definition of Asiatic as given in the revised Bill specially excluded Japanese employers from its purview "while there is in force an agreement (between the Union and Japan) to facilitate trade." It was this provision which led the *Cape Times* to style it as "A Sordid Bill". If the bill had been proceeded with, the Union Parliament would, in its opinion, "have made itself the laughing stock of the civilised world." This is what it has to say about this particular provision: "In other words, the whole question of principle disappears from this ignoble bill as soon as any question of pecuniary advantage enters into the discussion. Hitherto it has been assumed in the Union and in the rest of the world that a Japanese national is at least as much an Asiatic as an Asiatic resident of British India." The *Cape Argus*, commenting on the measure, found it difficult to know whether "to laugh or cry at the Bill" and observed: "A social scourge is to be treated on commercial lines and one of South Africa's new commandments is to be conditional upon profit and loss. A Japanese is not an Asiatic as long as he buys South African wool." It then proceeds to ask: "Was there ever a greater travesty of moral principle or a more discreditable exposure of mercenary compromise?" The *Natal Mercury* goes so far as to describe it as "about the most ridiculous essay in tinpot law-making ever to be attempted by the Platteland jurists of this country." The Bill has been withdrawn. But it would be too much to believe that it has been scotched once for all. The Prime Minister's declaration itself precludes such a belief and all the jubilation exhibited at the unexpected burst of responsiveness shown by the Union Government on this occasion might prove to be wholly misplaced.

SHORT NOTICE.

THE FUTURE OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

(The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London.) 1936. 23cm. 188p. 3/6.

THE abandonment of sanctions against Italy and the defeat of the League in its 'First War' against an aggressor have set not only the official machinery of the League but also its friends everywhere in the world thinking hard as to how the League machinery can be strengthened in its effectiveness; how, in the words of Mr. Eden, elasticity should be combined with efficiency.

The Royal Institute of International Affairs, though not committing itself to any particular solution of the problem, organised a series of discussions by eminent thinkers on the practical aspects of the question and arranged for their publication with a

view to the awakening of international public opinion, which is perhaps the greatest sanction behind the League machinery.

The names of great publicists like Sir Norman Angell and Mr. Wells, eminent League officials like Sir A. Salter and experts like Sir J. Fischer Williams and Admiral Bellairs are a guarantee that the work is thorough and efficient, and care is taken to see that all representative points of view are given a full scope to express themselves orally or in writing.

Though it would be unfair to draw inferences from such discussions, one cannot help feeling that while there is a general accord regarding the success of the League in developing international co-opera-

tion, differences of opinion centre round the other part of the League's objective—the promotion of security and peace—particularly regarding the utility of sanctions and the neglect of Article 19 regarding the revision of outworn treaties.

No tendency is, however, discernible for a radical revision of the Covenant though numerous suggestions as to the rearrangement of certain Articles and the redrafting of others find a place. It is interesting to note that quite a number of these try to revert to the original draft of President Wilson, thus vindicating the forethought of that statesman, so misunderstood and unsupported in his own country and times.

R. H. KELKAR.

WORLD TEXTILE CONFERENCE.

MR. BAKHALE'S SPEECH.

A World Textile Conference was held at Washington last month, at which Mr. R. R. Bakhale, the Indian Workers' Delegate, spoke as follows:

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: Since yesterday I have been listening very attentively to the speeches of the representatives of the different groups which compose this Conference, and the impression they have created on my mind can be stated somewhat in these terms:

Firstly, the workers are in a state of agitation and excitement, and they are anxious to have some action. Secondly, governments, with a few exceptions, are in a state of excessive caution bordering on inaction. Thirdly, the employers—also with a few exceptions—are in an attitude of mind which reminds me of the words used in the British House of Commons by an ex-Secretary of State for India. Referring to the Indian political agitation, Sir Samuel Hoare said once in the House of Commons: "Let them bark—the caravan goes on". No doubt the language used by different delegates in this Conference contained all the niceties of expression which have gone to dress up their attitude with an abundance of sympathy and helpfulness, but when you try to understand it in plain and unvarnished language, their attitude boils down, it seems to me, to what I have just described.

Mr. President, a good deal of praise has been bestowed on the Report of the International Labour Office. I whole-heartedly join in the chorus of praise insofar as the presentation of the Report and the manner in which it has been submitted to us are concerned. I have always been an admirer of the International Labor Office Reports and Studies. I cannot, however, on this occasion help owning to a feeling of disappointment at the meagreness of information with regard to hours of work, wages and unemployment in India which we find in the Report.

In the summary tables given in Volume I of the Report, where we find comparisons made between hours of work, wages and unemployment in different countries, we find India, described as one of the great industrial countries of the world, conspicuous by her absence. A careful reader has to read the foot-notes closely to find the name of India, and the foot-notes refer him to statistical tables given in Parts II-V of Volume II of the Report; and when those tables are referred to we find that under "Unemployment and Employment", Part III, there are no figures relating to India, and that under "Average Wages and Actual Hours of Work", Part IV, the figures given relate only to the Bombay Presidency, and that too, only to cotton textiles. Well, Sir, Bombay does not constitute India. Bombay does not grow jute, which is the monopoly of Bengal. In Bombay there is no

woolen industry as there is in other parts of the country, and Bombay has no monopoly of the cotton textiles. The cotton textile industry has spread itself all over India, although Bombay is the most important centre. The cotton textile industry is to be found not only in different parts of British India; it has also made great headway in what I might call Indian India which is ruled by no less than 600 Indian princes, in a greater part of which factory legislation is as yet practically unknown, and, where it does exist, it is still far behind that in force in British India.

In pointing out what I might call the shortcomings of the Report, I do not wish it to be taken that I am criticizing the authors of the Report of the International Labour Office. Far from it. The International Labour Office is, I know, helpless in the matter. As a matter of fact, we have no all-India figures, either on a comparable basis or otherwise. The only point I want to emphasize in dealing with this matter is that the Conference may not be able to get as accurate a picture of the textile industry in India from the Report, particularly with regard to hours of work, wages and unemployment, as one would like to have for the purpose of international comparisons. I only hope that India will be able, sooner or later, to supply better and fuller figures to the International Labour Office.

It is admitted that India is one of the important industrial countries in the world and I would like in the time at my disposal to consider the position of the textile industry from two main aspects. One is the organization of industry, and the other the social condition of the workers engaged therein. With regard to the organization of the industry, I do not propose to express an opinion of my own, but I would like to read three or four sentences from a report of the Labour Office of the Bombay Government, an office whose reports compare very favourably with the reports of the Department of Labour in the United States or the Ministry of Labour in England. That report refers to the cotton textile industry in Bombay as follows: "The cotton textile industry in the Bombay Presidency is composed of different units which, so far as we can ascertain, do not act together in any particular except perhaps in their demand for protection. There is no common labour policy and therefore no wage policy. Still less is there any common sense policy, and goods produced in one centre are sold in another, although the same article is being made locally. Both men and methods differ in a striking way and each centre has its own characteristic. In fact, it is difficult to find any one matter in connection with this industry upon which it is possible to generalize, so that the consideration

of the textile industry, from whatever aspect, must be by centres, each of which must be considered separately—a circumstance which obviously involves difficulties when the needs of the industry have to be considered from the point of view of public policy." What is said here of the textile industry in the Bombay Presidency is more or less true of other centres.

Coming now to the social conditions in the textile industry, a few figures with regard to wages and very little information with regard to the conditions under which our people in India work will suffice for my purpose. I quote the figures of wages in American dollars. In Bombay City the monthly wage of a weaver is \$15.25, and that of a spinner \$13.80; in the Central Provinces the wages are \$11.00 and \$5.50; in Bengal they are \$9.90 and \$5.90 respectively. In the Punjab, the province from which my colleague who represents the Government of India comes, the wage for weavers is \$10.00 a month and of spinners \$7.27 a month, while in Madras the wages are \$10.00 and \$7.27 respectively. Wages in the Indian States are still lower and I do not propose to weary you by quoting the figures.

With regard to housing conditions, I would merely mention that in my own city of Bombay no less than 74 per cent. of the working class population live in one-room tenements. With regard to clothing, only 7.8 per cent. of the monthly expenditure is spent on clothing by working class families—a figure which is practically the lowest in the world, China excluded. With regard to education, working class families spend about five cents a month on the education of their children. You will doubtless be surprised to learn that the indebtedness of the working classes is something terrible. Seventy-five per cent. of the working classes in Bombay are in debt. The debts vary from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ times their monthly income and the rate of interest is anything from $18\frac{1}{4}$ to 150 per cent., the most common rate being 75 per cent.

This, in my opinion, gives a fair picture of the social conditions of the workers in the textile and other industries in Bombay and the same can be said to be true of other centres. India is undoubtedly a land of poverty in the midst of plenty, and yet it has tremendous potentialities for increasing her purchasing power. Almost every speaker at the Conference has harped upon the theme of increasing the purchasing power of the masses in the different parts of the world. Indeed, it seems to me that it has become a popular theme for modern-day speakers and writers. But very few people, in this Conference at any rate—there are a few exceptions of course—have suggested a practical remedy which we can adopt before it is too late. So far as the workers are concerned, we have suggested that if their purchasing power is to be increased more and more employment is the chief remedy. We also confidently feel that a reduction of working hours is another remedy. Moreover, with experience behind us, we consider that high wages are another means for increasing the purchasing power. High wages do not necessarily mean increased labour costs. In my own country, in the centre known as Ahmedabad, where wages are the highest in the whole of India, labour costs are comparatively low, while in the City of Bombay, where wages are lower than in Ahmedabad, labour costs are higher than those in Ahmedabad.

Therefore, Sir, having regard to all these considerations, social and economic, the Indian textile workers are in favour of reducing working hours

and increasing wages. We are in favour of a 40-hour week.

Since the first Washington Conference met some eighteen years ago, India and Japan have made some progress in the direction of improving the social conditions of the workers. In India, we had formerly no restriction on hours of work for adults, but we have such restriction now. We first reduced the hours of work to 60 when they were 70 and over, and now to 54. We have increased the minimum age for the admission of children; we have forbidden the employment of women at night; we have passed a Workmen's Compensation Law; and we have tightened up the Factories Act in several respects. I should like to know what advance European countries such as Great Britain have made with regard to these matters. It seems to me that as far as their law is concerned, they are today where they were some eighteen years ago, and I should like to give them a very friendly and respectful warning that if they want progress to be achieved in the East, the West must move. Unless the West moves, there is little hope of the East moving forward and no hope whatever of the purchasing power of the people of the East being increased to the extent to which they would like it to be increased.

Sir, the British Employers' Delegate said yesterday that the British employers viewed with grave concern any international action in respect of the matters which are on the agenda of the Conference. In other words, he does not want a third party to have a voice in his dealings with the workers. I was both amused and surprised at this argument—amused because of the source from which it came, and surprised because of the fact that in competitive matters, whether political, social or economic, international action has become a marked feature of world affairs today. May I ask the British Employers' Delegate whether it is not a fact that the first Indian Factories Act was passed in my country at the instance of a third party, namely, the British employers? May I also ask him whether it is not a fact that the excise duty on cotton goods produced in my country was levied at the instance of a third party, namely, the British employers? Therefore, Sir, in this twentieth century it has become absolutely necessary, particularly in the case of those countries where workers are not organised and have no bargaining power, to take international action, and the best body to take that action is the International Labour Organization.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would simply say this: A wave of pessimism is surging on the shores of the world. Poverty has made people impatient and excited. They have no time to consider arguments advanced in government auditoriums; they want action. In this state of desperation, they may adopt the method of direct action and extra-constitutional means. The method of joint deliberation, persuasion and negotiation is losing its importance in world affairs and its efficiency is being seriously challenged. The slow pace of evolution has made revolution a little too attractive. The International Labour Organization must hasten its movement if it is to maintain its position in spite of the forces which are arrayed against its ideals and methods work. Those who do not help the International Labour Organization to hasten its forward march are indirectly helping these forces. Let those who are assembled here decide which course to follow. I only hope that collective wisdom will ultimately prevail, and that the words "too late" be not written on the portals of the International Labour Organization.