

THE Servant of India

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Hereafter the Servant of India will issue on Thursdays, the next number being due on February 28, and it will ordinarily contain 8 pages.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE spring campaign appears to have been begun. It is only the preliminaries that one hears of. The main business is yet to come if it is to come at all. Both politically and militarily the Western front is important and there, they say, the decisive stroke of the war will be delivered. Notwithstanding the loud talk of German preparations, military critics are not sure that the scene of this year's greatest effort will be in the West. The Germans have developed the habit of showing off at least one brilliant victory to their credit every year. Now the Western front is not the place where an easy victory can be obtained. So long as there are theatres of war more promising from the German point of view, they will make only a feint of an attack in the West while concentrating the whole of their strength elsewhere. A great effort against Italy may put her *hors de combat*. Falkenhayn's movements are unknown. The fall of Jerusalem and the British success in Mesopotamia have been a severe blow to the prestige of Turkey and also to German ambitions in the East. Maybe the Germans will attempt to retrieve their fortunes on that side. But so far the real intentions of Germany are shrouded in mystery and there is a feeling of uncertainty all round.

THE anxiety about the general war situation is not rendered any the less by the reports arriv-

ing from Russia. The disintegration of this great monarchy appears now to be completely accomplished. Still the revolutionaries are pursuing their mad career. The latest news is that the Russian armies are demobilising, although there is no peace. As if the falling away of important provinces was not enough to bring about the discomfiture of Russia, one of the greatest of them, Ukraine, is declared to have concluded a separate peace with Germany. Here is a serious situation. The British Premier laid down three conditions of a lasting peace: "Restitution, Reparation, and Guarantees." They were emphasised by His Majesty the King-Emperor the other day at the opening of Parliament. President Wilson takes the same view. He made the situation clearer still by insisting upon an international settlement of peace terms. But the Germans had their way in the Ukraine, with which they have concluded a separate peace. That is the aim of German policy. The greater is the need, therefore, of a firm resolve of the Allied Governments to carry on the War till an international settlement is ensured.

THE United Provinces have lost in Dr. Sir Sunder Lal one of their ablest and most public-spirited men. We use the latter epithet advisedly. For though he was not in the front rank of our political workers, there are few in the whole country who worked so hard in disinterested ways. Of the most sterling integrity of character, he was trusted implicitly both by Government and by those who knew him well. He was the model of courtesy and simplicity in private life, while his habits were regular, methodical and industrious. In spite of much criticism he laboured assiduously for the Benares Hindu University, which could not have been started on its career but for his cautious and conscientious management and the great personal esteem and confidence he commanded both with the Local and Supreme Governments. His honoured and well-filled life is proof that patriotic service may be rendered outside the usual sphere, and that a man even in India may be good and useful to the public without seeking or achieving popular fame.

WHEN the recruitment of the Indian section of the Indian Defence Force began, it was feared that the existence of flogging as a punishment in the Indian army might act as a hindrance. There are no means of knowing how far it has really been so. We understand that, on representations made

to the military authorities, orders have been passed to the effect that a member of the Indian Defence Force who is accused of having committed a crime punishable by flogging should not be tried by court-martial, but should be handed over to the civil authorities. There is no risk therefore of a young man in the Indian Defence Force being flogged. This is satisfactory.

A SEPOY in the Indian Army may be flogged for theft or sleeping at his post. The only alternative to undergoing it is to be dismissed or to be shot. In peace time flogging, it would appear, is hardly known; on the field, however, in war time it is fairly frequent. Officers responsible for discipline feel that their task would be rendered exceedingly difficult if their power to inflict a prompt and sharp punishment were taken away; the wild recruit from the borders of India could not be controlled by any other means. Anyhow the authorities have decided not to pursue the matter during the continuance of the war.

THE unexpected happened the other day in the Viceroy's Legislative Council. It being known that the Secretary of State and his party would attend, the authorities had tabled a somewhat academic resolution on the rearrangement of the provinces, and notified the official nominees that for once they might speak and vote as they pleased. A few venturesome spirits *did* exercise the unwonted privilege. But they confounded the political astrologers of the Council by speaking on the same side of the question as the non-officials. Both sides fell hot on poor Mr. Sarma and gave him a ringing defeat. The non-officials rang the changes on the fear that the demand for a revision of the map might prove a lion in the path of the constitutional reforms which they saw near. The officials refused to undertake any extensive alterations in their house (the present provinces) for the entertainment of a much-talked of guest (self-governing institutions) with whom they had not the honour, and, if they could help it, would not seek the honour, of a distant acquaintance. Neither party would seriously listen to the troubles of Mr. Sarma, while they combined to give him lessons in the art of choosing one's time. Well might he complain that the long debate touched the merits of his case only now and then.

THE resolution might have had a less sad ending if it had been narrowed down to the Andhra Province question. Mr. Sarma could then have concentrated the attention of the Council on definite issues and moved their sympathies by concrete instances of opportunities denied and public needs neglected. In the case of the Telugu districts, and perhaps only in their case in all India, do so many favouring conditions unite—a fairly large population, a common vernacular, keen desire for separate provincial existence, and financial competence to bear the highest type of government, *viz.*, a Go-

vernor and an Executive Council. Mr. Sarma yielded to the temptation to universalise his ideal, and has discovered that a diffused philanthropy does not always pay.

NEWS comes from Madras of the Local Government's refusal to say how they have dealt with the Civilian Magistrate in Chicacole who, imagining an affront from a rustic, is said to have forced the cowering wretch to touch his boots with the prostrate head. One need not doubt that the Secretariat at Fort St. George have been up to using some strong words to the I. C. S. officer. But why shouldn't the public know what they are? The Indian should not be encouraged to believe that he can complain against a heaven-born and get satisfaction. That is how they guard the sacred prestige by which India is held. But the price paid is heavy. Thrice within a short time the Madras Government have shown either reluctance or inability to pull up their officers. The names of Messrs. Sykes, Vibert and Wells will be remembered for some time. A fine service, as fine as any the world can show—it can afford to tell the truth about itself. Certainly it has no need to screen an occasional bully or decorate a stray noodle.

It is only fair to allow that the service as a whole deplores these incidents. Its members, nine out of ten, are gentlemen in the best sense of the word, and they are proud of their great traditions. They hate scenes, especially such as get into the "*Vande Mataram* papers." A sympathetic observer has deduced the following code of conduct for the I. C. S. from a long acquaintance. Avoid scenes altogether. If however you should get into any, hush it up. If you fail to do so, compromise it by giving compensation. If you cannot compromise plead the Indiansun, mosquitoes, the Indian's lack of the humorous sense or the Accountant General thrusting the C. S. R. between you and the Government treasury, and so on. If all these fail, say that a local vakil worked up the case against you. This should suffice to get you off. But if your case be rather bad and you would make assurance doubly sure, say it was a Brahman vakil.

THE Indian Civil Rights Committee will have no end of work in India. Every citizen must wish them success. It is true, as they say in their prospectus, they have a better chance in England than here. But even that is a poor chance just now. Liberal papers and magazines have for some time been lamenting the evil days on which civil freedom has fallen on account of the war in the home of freedom. The prospects of the Committee will not be bright till the wretched war is over and life returns to normal conditions.

THE liberal constitution of the Patna University has stimulated the ambition of the older Uni-

universities. The Bombay Senate has adopted a resolution by which it seeks to have its elected element increased to 70, the nominated element being reduced to 30. The graduates would be allowed to elect 20 and the Faculties 10. Certain new electorates would be formed—college staffs with a representation of 25, head-masters of high schools with a representation of 5, and public bodies with a representation of 10. The change is to be welcomed. The last-named electorate was objected to; but the example of the London University, for which a new constitution has been devised by the Haldane Commission, ought to set doubts at rest as to the policy of enlisting the co-operation of public bodies in the work of higher education.

* * *

MAULVI Rafiuddin Ahmed is one of those men in public life who appear to have erected into a virtue what must rather be combated as an insidious human frailty, to wit, the contraction of their outlook to the interests of a single community. The earnest Maulvi should be the better for the kindly rebuke of Dr. Mann the other day at the Bombay Senate. Surely there are other aspects of the composition of a learned body to consider than the number of Muhammadans it is to contain, and one or two of these might be more important.

* * *

NONE too soon did the Government of India take power to themselves under the Defence of India rules to regulate prices of food and other articles and rents of the houses of labouring classes. The Bombay Government have appointed a capable officer to control profiteering, and his operations at any rate in the way of regulating the housing of artisans in Bombay promise good result. The principle embodied in the recent notification is that the rent shall be upon the pre-war basis, allowing only for a rise of ten per cent. This measure corresponds closely to the Increase of Rent Act, passed by Parliament towards the end of 1915, which fixed for the occupier a standard rent, that rent being the rent which was paid before the outbreak of the war, and rendered all excess rent irrecoverable in a court of law. This enactment was made applicable to small tenements of working classes, of which the rent or rateable value was under £35 in London, and under £26 elsewhere. The limit in this country has been put at a monthly rent of Rs. 10, and though doubtless this measure will afford relief to a large class of poor people who needed such relief sorely, the lower middle classes also stand in need of similar protection from exploitation at the hands of landlords. It is to be hoped, therefore, that Government will extend the scope of the measure in the desired direction.

* * *

THE Punjab officials have been clamouring for some time past for the aid of a special form of criminal procedure in preserving the peace in the rural tracts, where criminal tendencies are the strongest. They demanded first the abolition of the committal stage in sessions cases and next a rela-

xation of the requirement of strict legal proof in certain classes of cases. Disappointed there, they have now gained their object of exercising rigorous control over the bad characters in the province by taking power, in the Habitual Offenders Act either to restrict their movements to a specified area or to require them to report themselves, at specific times and places. The security proceedings which were the resource of the officials till now are pronounced bankrupt by them, and rural public opinion is claimed to be in favour of strengthening the magisterial authority in the suggested direction. The debate in the Punjab Council, however, effectively showed how unfounded the claim was, for the Bill provoked strong opposition from most of the popular representatives, who feared that the Act might prove an engine of oppression in the hands of the police. That the persons whose movements were restricted were to report themselves, not to the police but to the headman of the village, was not much of a safeguard, as the distinction amounted to little in practice. Non-official members asked for a clear definition of the term 'habitual offenders,' and wished to restrict its scope to those who were twice convicted of offences against property, but the Government, refusing this request on a technical plea, has only added to the apprehensions of the public, who are preparing to ask the Governor-General to withhold his assent to this obnoxious measure.

* * *

Is it mere accident or policy? At present in no province is there a Registrar of Co-operative Societies who is an Indian. Not very long ago three of the major provinces, viz. Madras, Bengal, and the U. P. had Indian Registrars at the same time, and no one has suggested that the movement suffered under them. Madras indeed was always under an Indian, who, moreover, was not of the I.C.S. until the innovation was made in June last. At present the office of Registrar of Co-operative Societies seems to have become a monopoly of the I.C.S. We should have thought, if the nature of the duties appertaining to an office were to be a guide, the Registrarship of Co-operative Societies should always go to an Indian.

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GOVERNMENT seem to grudge to carry out even the few resolutions which they occasionally accept. In the October meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council the *modi* resolution was passed; but nothing has been heard since then of Government's intention in the matter, though the people concerned are repeatedly asking about it. In the December meeting Government agreed to appoint committees to consider the *rasai* scandal in Sind as exposed by the Hon'ble Mr. Bhurgri and the beggar problem as put forward by the Hon'ble Mr. Sethna and others. But nothing has been heard of these committees though it would not take very long to settle upon their personnel. Several such instances could be cited.

THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

THE name indicates that this journal is an organ of the Servants of India Society, meant to advance the causes which it cherishes, disseminate its principles, and apply these to the interpretation of current affairs. The late Mr. Gokhale, who founded this Society and on the third anniversary of whose death this journal comes into existence, was the greatest exponent of the Ranade school of thought. His name stands for certain national aims and ideals, certain ways of thinking, and certain methods of public activity which have gained wide acceptance in the country outside the small circle of his regular followers. But they are in peril to-day of being lost to view in the vortex of popular ideas into which many streams of varying quality and colour are incessantly pouring their contents. Some use then there may be in an attempt to preserve the identity of Mr. Gokhale's teachings and draw guidance from them, in the perplexities of public life. Many of his friends and associates are still actively engaged in useful spheres of work, and their co-operation is earnestly requested in this undertaking by those on whom, utterly unworthy though they be, the task of carrying on a great tradition has fallen.

The conductors of this paper will endeavour, in their humble way, to emulate the fine poise, the dignity, and the moral earnestness that invariably distinguished all that their master said and did. They hope to remember, in the heat of debate and under the sting of abuse, that, loyal as he was to his party, he never was a partisan, that in judging his opponents he was chivalrous to a degree, and that he sternly reprobated all sweeping assertions to the prejudice of a class or community. The frenzy with which some young men in the large centres of political life denounce veteran patriots, thinking that on the ruins of the reputation of these must be built the fabric of their own service to the country, would overwhelm him with grief. Just as the reverence of his heart was paid to age, so was the loyalty of his reason yielded to Government. Though never an official in the exercise of power over men, he had a keen sense of the difficulties of the administrator and would not lightly disturb the moral foundations on which respect for and obedience to authority rested. An acute and unsparing critic of policy and measures when he disapproved of either, he never hardened into a persistent opponent of Government. He vividly realised the need of a strong Government. He once braved hostile criticism by going somewhat out of the way and declaring: "Why, my lord, even if I could defeat the Government to-day, I would not do it. I would not do it for this reason; the prestige of the Government is an important asset at the present stage of the country, and

I would not lightly disturb it." Not that this attitude paid; in many of the causes he advocated before Government he failed. In fact he used to say that his generation could serve the country only by failures. On one occasion he yielded to the vexation that continual defeat must bring to the stoutest hearts, and said to an affectionate English friend: "I wish I had been a constant and relentless opponent of the Government." The reply was: "That is the *role* of the ordinary party politician at home, it won't suit you." A profound observation: Mr. Gokhale would hardly be recognisable in such a part.

In social matters he was for bold reform. Injustice of every kind revolted him; to the man who wronged woman or oppressed the weak he would show no quarter. The inequalities between the classes in India, the exclusions and repugnances of caste found no apologist in him. He attached equal importance to social amelioration and political reform. The complaints made to the Public Services Commission against the Brahmanas in Madras by the other castes touched him deeply, while a burning sense of shame overcame him whenever he thought of the wrongs of the depressed classes. The activities of the Bombay Branch of the Servants of India Society, with emphasis placed on the social rather than on the political side, had his entire approbation. On his followers he always inculcated the maxim: "Let your face be turned to the front." "The Servant of India" desires, in these matters and in economics, education and similar aspects of national life, to turn its face to the front and further all movements that are just and clean and patriotic.

We shall judge, and we ask to be judged, in a broad spirit. When, for instance, we profess adherence to the views of Mr. Gokhale, readers must not look in our columns for a meticulous paraphrase of his utterances. Adherence can mean only adherence to the living spirit, not to dead formulae. The rapid changes taking place about us require a continuous adaptation of doctrine: not what a great man said in other conditions, but what he would say now were he alive, should be the criterion. Ranade's glowing sentiments in his prospectus of the Deccan Sabha, often quoted by Mr. Gokhale, shall be our inspiration:

"Liberalism and moderation will be the watchwords of this association. The spirit of liberalism implies a freedom from race and creed prejudices and a steady devotion to all that seeks to do justice between man and man, giving to the rulers the loyalty that is due to the law they are bound to administer, but securing at the same time to the people the equality which is their right under the law. Moderation implies the conditions of never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals, but striving each day to take the next step in the order of natural growth by doing the work that lies nearest to our hands in a spirit of compromise and fairness."

THE DEPUTATION TO ENGLAND.

THE progressive politicians of India have stood by the Congress-League scheme of reform with loyalty and unanimity. So great have been their loyalty and unanimity that their advocacy is in some critical quarters discounted as having been indiscriminating and over-tutored. The Secretary of State and his party, the Viceroy and his Council and the Local Governments are without doubt thoroughly convinced that there is a strong and widespread demand for a large measure of self-government as the first step towards responsible government, which is to be realised in a fixed number of years by fixed stages. It is now for the Secretary of State to formulate his proposals and publish them, as he has already promised, for criticism by the public. He cannot in reason be expected to do this before he has returned to London and taken the permission of the Cabinet. The publication may take place in the end of May next or the beginning of June. Steps must be taken promptly to ascertain the opinion of the country. A special joint session of the National Congress and the Moslem League has been suggested for the purpose. Possibly, however, as the time approaches, it may be found difficult to arrange in the hottest part of the year for a large assembly. In that case the executives of the two organizations, not a small body either of them, may confer together, and with such guidance as the press and the platform can give, proceed to lay down a few propositions expressing the verdict of the country on the proposals and arranging for the next campaign in furtherance of the national movement. A big effort in the campaign, perhaps the biggest, will be the despatch of a deputation of leading men to England.

When exactly the deputation should proceed and what they should do will depend on the character of the proposals of reform. They may be unsatisfactory; in this case the deputation must lose no time in starting, and their endeavour must be to get the proposals improved in the directions desired by the public opinion of India. The proposals, being satisfactory, may be opposed by the Government of India; in this case too, seeing the enormous importance attached in such matters to the views of the men on the spot, our deputies should make all possible speed in their mission and bring all the strength they can to the hands of the Secretary of State and other friends of our cause in the work of obtaining the sanction of the Cabinet and later on that of Parliament to the suggested advance in our constitution. Suppose next the proposals of the Secretary of State are backed likewise by the Viceroy and his Government. Friends who are in a position to know assure us that in that case the Cabinet will approve of them without more ado. The services of the Indian deputation will not therefore be required, and they need not proceed immediately. When the proposals come before Parliament in the shape of a Bill,

there are certain critical stages when it may be in the power of our opponents to wreck it, and when the presence of leading representatives of Indian opinion will be indispensable. We may trust our friends in England to give us warning in good time before the critical stages begin. According to one estimate, this necessity may arise in the last session of Parliament during this year; according to another, it will not arise till March next year. Busy professional men, who will form the the bulk of the deputation, should not be required to proceed as soon as the proposals are published, for it *might* involve their remaining out of India for ten months from July to April. It is enough to engage their services from the time the Bill is introduced to the time when its enactment into law is assured.

In the foregoing argument we have supposed three alternatives, the proposals being unsatisfactory, their being satisfactory but opposed by the Government of India, and their being satisfactory and supported by the Government of India as well as by the Secretary of State. From the Viceroy's recent utterance on the subject and from other indications, there is reason to believe that the third and most favourable alternative has a fair degree of probability. To sum up: the necessity for the deputation to start will not arise till July in any case, and it may not arise till late this year or early the next.

Why, then, have the Home Rule Leagues organized their deputations? To us they appear still to be under the influence of ideas that were valid some months ago, but are no longer so. Before the Cabinet declaration of last August, concurred in and accepted loyally by the Government of India, there was great need of educating English public opinion as to the political aspirations of India and the justice and good policy of gratifying them. That declaration promised us substantial measures towards responsible government, and an English delegation, headed by the Secretary of State, have made inquiries in India and are about to formulate their proposals for giving effect to that promise. Till the proposals are known and the country has pronounced its verdict on their adequacy to start with and the efficacy of the guarantees provided for future progress, there must be a pause in our original plan of work.

THE LATE SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN.

IT is sad to think of the passing away of that true and great "Servant of India," Sir William Wedderburn, who consecrated his life, while in office and after retirement, to the service of the country whose salt he had eaten and for whose welfare he unremittingly laboured and in whose interests he spent the whole of his Indian pension from year to year for the last thirty years, besides making other heavy pecuniary sacrifices to maintain the British Committee of the Congress and the Congress organ, "India." He was a tower of

strength to us in England and a guide, philosopher and friend to every Indian who visited England and desired to work for the uplift of India. To his inspiration, support and guidance was due not a little of the success which Gokhale was able to achieve in his political mission in England on behalf of India. Those who, like the writer of this humble tribute to his memory, had the singular good fortune to come into personal contact with Sir William Wedderburn in England even though for a few months and to know the inner working of his selfless mind and the anxious thought he bestowed and the quiet, steadfast work he did for promoting the political progress and national advancement of India on sound lines, cannot but feel a pang that he should have been called away by Providence at this juncture, when his friendly advice, wide influence, persuasive advocacy and gentle remonstrance would have been of the greatest use to Indian reformers and to the responsible authorities and influential public men in England in securing a genuine and substantial measure of reform towards the destined goal of "responsible government" for this country. I grieve to think that the present Secretary of State for India has been deprived of the great assistance which Sir William Wedderburn, with his deep insight into Indian conditions and requirements and broad-minded sympathy and righteous instincts, would have been able to render to him in the noble mission on which he is engaged at present and the result of which is watched by expectant India with hope and faith not unmixed with fear and anxiety.

No one, whatever his political opinions in regard to India, could fail, on coming into personal contact with Sir William Wedderburn, to respect him, as a noble and high-souled Englishman, a sincere and absolutely disinterested well-wisher of India and the Empire, and, above all a devout Christian who not only believed in, but gave effect to, and inculcated the Christian teaching in public affairs no less than in private matters. The simple and devout life he led of service and sacrifice for the cause of India could perhaps be best appreciated by those who have had the privilege of spending a few days with him under his hospitable roof at Meredith in Gloucestershire. He daily read some portions of the Bible and then, after reading the dailies and cuttings from English and Indian papers which he received, commenced writing letters to his numerous correspondents in England and India, the most regular of whom was our veteran leader and publicist, Sir Dinsha Edulji Wacha, from whom Sir William received a long and informing letter, quite a despatch, by every mail and to whom Sir William also wrote invariably by every mail, a correspondence which was carried on for over a quarter of a century till only the other day. Besides writing letters, now to the Secretary of State or to his Under-Secretary and at other times to prominent members of Parliament, Sir William busied himself with writing occasionally to newspapers

and periodicals in England on current Indian topics of great interest and importance in order to put the Indian point of view before the British public. He often read and re-read old debates on Indian questions in the Houses of Parliament, and to the present writer he observed that he wished every young Indian anxious to serve his country studied carefully those great debates on Indian affairs in which Fox, Pitt, Burke, Sheridan and Erskine and Macaulay, Cobden, Fawcett and Bright strove, with fervour and eloquence and mastery of facts, diction and political philosophy, to do justice to the people of India and to put a bit and bridle in the mouth of a migratory foreign bureaucracy by putting it under constitutional control.

For one who was brought into close personal touch with Sir William and had an opportunity to see the tremendous amount of work he daily did for India even at his advanced age, it was impossible not to be overwhelmed with feelings of profound veneration and gratitude for the good old man, the political Rishi of Meredith and India. No less profound was the respect and admiration felt for Lady Wedderburn, that amiable, sympathetic and cultured lady, whose kindness to all her guests and deep sympathy for India made every Indian value and cherish the more reverently his sacred pilgrimage to Meredith. It was a delight and an education to see her ministering to Sir William's comfort, taking great care of his health, warning him against exposure or overwork and sharing in his joys and sorrows and in his thoughts and work for India in perfectly attuned sympathy and communion of souls. I beg respectfully to offer to her on behalf of myself and of this journal, our sincerest condolences in her heavy bereavement. We mourn with her and share with her the great and irreparable loss of Sir William Wedderburn, "than whom," in the words of the late Sir Pheroze Shah M. Mehta, "India had never a warmer, truer, more devoted, more self-sacrificing, more faithful and more constant friend." Grateful India will cherish for ever the memory of one who worked for her with single-minded devotion, disinterested zeal, unswerving fidelity and great political sagacity. May his truly Christian spirit animate those who are responsible for discharging their great duty of uplifting this ancient land to the proud position of a self-governing member of the great British Empire!

N. M. SAMARTH.

LINGUISTIC PROVINCES.

THE resolution brought forward by the Hon'ble Mr. Sarma at the last meeting of the Supreme Legislative Council met with such scant sympathy from the non-official members that the proposal is not likely to be soon brought forward again. Leaving the practical difficulties of the proposal for future consideration, we wish on this occasion to enter our emphatic protest against one immediate result of the scheme, a result by no means incident

tal and one that is even considered very desirable by the Hon'ble member and his supporters among the general public, though he had few enough in all conscience in the Council itself. This is the virtual elimination of the English language in the general administration of provinces organised on the basis of language and the consequent diminution of the importance of the English language in the larger life of Indians. This is a result which would be almost a calamity to India in her march towards national regeneration. It is right enough that the concerns of the village, the taluka and perhaps even the district should be ordinarily carried on through the vernacular of the district. And it is one of the cogent arguments for the larger employment of Indians in the superior services that they alone can be sufficiently familiar with the language of the common people. All but very exceptional European officers would rather do the whole of their work in English. Naturally there is an unconscious keeping aloof from the people who do not know English; in any case there is a reluctance to read the vernacular correspondence. But while all this and a good deal more is true enough, it is absurd and almost suicidal to say that therefore practically all English work should be abolished from the affairs of the country. It is contended that if all the people in a province speak only one language, even the work in the Legislative Councils can be carried on through that language, though one wonders how the Governor who is expected to be a man fresh from English life can be at the head of affairs there.

Now, if there is one fundamental truth that should be fully grasped by everybody, it is this—that we should continue for as long as we can see in the future to be under what may be broadly called English influences. This does not mean and is not intended to mean that we should give up our old languages, religions, manners and customs and in fact cut ourselves off from our past. For one thing we cannot do it even if we would. But with all that the great problem before us is to have our old *kultur* so modified under the influences of the west that there shall arise a new civilisation to be broadly called Indian and not Maratha, Bengali, Urdu, Andhra, Panjabi or Malayali. Is it possible to make even a feeble step in the direction of this consummation if we have recourse to measures which would mean direct retrogression? Through the whole of its history India has been divided enough. The English language is the most potent unifying influence, even greater than the English Government. Perhaps one can conceive of India without a single Englishman to rule over it, but it is impossible to conceive of a great united India of the future as we wish it to be without the English language. How are the people of the various provinces to come together if they are to lose their command over English? If such a spurious language bias is to be imbibed by the men from different parts of India, there is one more chance for the fissiparousness which is such a

characteristic of India. The whole wealth of the English language is open to us in its science, history and literature. It may be an academic question whether French or German is not more valuable; but having gone so far with English it is impossible to make the change now. There is obviously no alternative now. Are we to risk all our progress for a mere academic political symmetry?

Some of our leading men are concerned about the growing neglect of the Indian vernaculars by our youths. But even if there were more basis of truth in this fear than is actually the case, the way to meet it is not that proposed by the Hon'ble Mr. Sarma. The aim of our higher education ought to be to make our educated men bilingual, so that they can be at home both in English and the vernacular. At present the tendency of education is to lay greater stress on the former at a period in a boy's education when it does not produce sufficient educational fruit. Hence it is that the present writer is an advocate of a greater use of the vernaculars in secondary education; but he would not advocate the change were he not convinced that it would not in the least reduce the boy's mastery over English and would even increase it by better educational methods and a better use of the time. It would be an arguable proposition to advocate the establishment of more universities so that they might naturally direct more attention to the vernacular with which they are respectively more immediately concerned. At present vernaculars are woefully neglected by our universities and many a graduate finds himself more at home with English than with the vernacular. Vernacular composition may be made obligatory in every examination. Vernacular authors may be encouraged by various means, and vernacular books patronised more.

We are inclined to suspect that at the back of the minds of many of the supporters of Mr. Sarma's proposal, though not of all, is a certain unconscious reaction against every thing European. Such a reaction is intelligible enough for various reasons in the case of some temperaments; in the case of some it often assumes a very beautiful aspect. But one must not be blinded by its intelligibility or beauty to the inherent danger of such a reaction influencing us to any great extent. Of this kind is Mr. Gandhi's advocacy of the Hindi language as a common national language for all India. This had been advocated before, but Mr. Gandhi has given the proposal a *kudos* which it inherently does not deserve. The reasons are obvious enough and need hardly be stated in great detail. But we wish to warn our readers against their being carried away by their narrowly Indian or provincial bias and being led to advocate measures, whether redistributing provinces on a linguistic basis or attempting to introduce Hindi as a national language, which have the aim, or which will at any rate have the result of endangering the position of English in our Indian economy. Eng-

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R. P. PARANJPYE.

THE INCOME-TAX BILL.

WHEN the Hon'ble Sir William Meyer introduced into the Supreme Legislative Council at its recent session a Bill to "consolidate and amend the law relating to Income-tax," the measure met with a howl of opposition by a large section of the house. The Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya objected to the Bill because it was in part a taxation bill and ought to be considered in connection with the budget. No one knew what the financial position of the country was and whether additional taxation was needed. This criticism was, of course, met with the reply that the Bill was not intended to raise or in any way alter taxation and that it was merely a consolidating measure designed to adjust the income-tax machinery to the changes which had already been made in the rates and assessment of the tax. It was also pointed out with a good deal of reason that the measure had been under consideration for a pretty long time, and it could not be said against it that a taxation bill was being introduced just a few days before the presentation of the financial statement. Another point of principle raised in the course of criticism related to the provision embodied in clause 4 of the Bill to the effect that "Agricultural income shall not be chargeable to income-tax, but the net amount of such income in excess of one thousand rupees which has been received by an assessee in the year of assessment shall be taken into account in determining the rate at which the tax shall be levied on any income chargeable to income-tax under this Act." There can be no doubt that this clause will enhance the rate of income-tax levied upon the incomes of some assesses and that the enhancement will be made on the ground of the assesses receiving a certain amount of agricultural income. The consolidating and amending bill thus will have the direct effect of increasing the rate of income-tax upon certain incomes and this feature of the measure gives point to the criticism of the Hon'ble Pandit. The Finance Member made no secret of his desire to raise the incidence of the income-tax upon certain assesses as he plainly stated that it was one of his avowed objects to equalise the actual rates of the incidence and to catch in his net several people who escaped lightly. It cannot also be denied that landlords will, under the fourth clause of the Bill, have to pay at a higher rate on their non-agricultural incomes because they have a large agricultural income, as incomes will no longer be separately assessed and taxed but will be considered in a lump, though the exemption enjoyed by agricultural incomes will stand unaffected.

Babu Surendranath Banerjee and representatives of the landlords' interests generally concentrated the fire of their criticism upon clause 4 of the Bill. The veteran Congressman characterised the clause as a breach of faith on the part of Government towards the zamindars of his province, whose permanent settlement of land revenue was indirectly and insidiously tampered with. This criticism was unwarranted. Compared with other provinces, the landholders of Bengal are lightly taxed and they ought to be made to contribute towards the growing expenditure of the State a larger share of revenue. This is, however, a large problem which certainly raises issues of tremendous importance—a problem which cannot be considered in connection with a consolidating Income-tax Bill. But the opposition of Babu Surendranath and others on the ground that it taxed agricultural incomes and was thus calculated to put an additional burden upon the land, which is already taxed so heavily, will not stand scrutiny. Under the Bill agricultural incomes shall not be charged to income-tax; only certain people will be called upon to pay the tax at a higher rate because their total income, including agricultural income, passes a well-defined and reasonable limit. The income-tax is intended to fall upon large incomes—all incomes below Rs. 1,000 and incomes from land being altogether exempted—and the larger the income, the higher is the rate at which it is taxed. Landlords who have large non-agricultural incomes cannot reasonably grumble if they are assessed at a higher rate. The cry therefore that the Bill constitutes a breach of faith on the part of Government with the Bengal zamindars or that it entails a heavy burden upon land, is misleading and unwise. And the wonder is that the cry proceeded from certain people who are regarded as the champions of democracy and of the interests of the masses.

The absurdity of the position taken up by the advocates of landlords' interests will be perceived if it is remembered that any other tax, even a higher import duty, will have to come from the agricultural incomes of landlords. If zamindars' income in the permanently settled parts of the country is sacrosanct and is not to be touched, it would come to this, that all additional taxation must be levied upon the poor people, and the landlords will occupy a position of special privilege. Babu Surendranath forgot for the time that tenancy laws make it extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, for the landlords to screw higher rents out of the cultivators of the soil and seriously told the Council, though it laughed, that the additional income-tax would be quietly passed on by the zamindars to their tenants' shoulders. Those members of the Viceroy's Council who opposed the Income-tax Bill on the ground that it entrenched upon the agricultural incomes of landlords gave a convenient handle to the opponents of constitutional reform in India. "This is the way", they will say, "in which the champions of democracy will pro-

mote the interests of the masses when greater powers are conferred on the legislatures. Scratch an Indian political reformer and you will find an autocrat, a defender of the rights and interests of the few against those of the many." To such criticism have the opponents of the Income-tax Bill exposed themselves by their short-sighted attitude. In days when heavier taxation must be imposed for promoting social and economic reform, wealthy people, be they landlords or manufacturers or merchants, will have to contribute a larger share. We hope our political leaders and elected members of Legislative Councils will show a better grasp of the situation and cease to defend vested interests or class privileges.

V. G. KALE.

The Editor is not to be held responsible for the views of correspondents and contributors.

LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

BIHAR.

THE PATNA UNIVERSITY.

THE province of Bihar and Orissa is now endowed with a separate University, the constitution of which, though it threatened to be completely retrograde under the original Bill, has proved in some respects to be far more liberal than that of the Universities in older provinces. The Syndicate is no doubt vested with greater powers than are enjoyed in the other Universities, but on the Senate there is an elected majority, which is not the case with any other University. Even so it remains to be seen if the popular party can assert itself in the Senate. The first Senate and Syndicate have been nominated by Government, but the nominations do not seem to be quite happy. Looking cursorily at the list of the first Fellows and Syndics, one cannot help feeling that academic distinctions and honours have more or less been systematically ignored except in a very few cases and in the case of the members of the Education Service. The popular party did not fare well at the two meetings which have been held till now. The first of them was held on the 8th of December last. It opened with a scene which has already begun to cause misgivings in the minds of those who were feeling that the Province was not yet ripe for a University. One of the very first resolutions adopted by the Senate in the teeth of the opposition of the popular members was for enhancing the fees for the University Examinations. The members were told that the Government would not give them a pice beyond the salary of the Vice-Chancellor—a salaried Vice-Chancellor being the peculiar but costly distinction of this University—and that of the Registrar and Rs. 8,000 per annum which had been allowed, and unless the University could tax its present or would-be students, it must close its portals. The modest amendments of the popular leaders asking for curtailment of expenditure by reducing the salary of the Registrar and the remuneration of examiners for a time and their proposals asking for Government grants were rejected. Even the demand to limit these enhancements to the current year and thus leave the question open for discussion next year in the light of experience gained was unceremoniously thrown out. At the same meeting the Regulations drawn up by the Vice-Chancellor were referred to a Select Committee.

The second meeting of the Senate was equally fateful. The Committee had carefully considered the Regulations and amended them in many important and essential details. Some

very damaging rules had crept in, it was frankly admitted by some of the members of the Select Committee, by mistake or oversight. These were rectified by amendments which in spite of the opposition of educational experts were adopted by a majority. An amendment was thus made in the rule which restricted post-graduate study ordinarily only to such students as had either obtained honours or distinctions at the B. A. examination. But the most important resolution from many points of view was the one recommending the recognition of the School Final examination by the Senate as an equivalent of the Matriculation examination of the University. The educational experts were divided among themselves, but evidently the Government had set its heart upon it. The Director of Public Instruction moved it, but an amendment that the matter should be referred to the Syndicate for consideration and report, was moved by the Principal of the Patna College. It is important to note that the amendment was moved on behalf of the Syndicate. But it was rejected and the original motion was ultimately carried by a large majority, only two voting against it and those who had supported the amendment withholding their vote, possibly overpowered by a sense of helplessness. What followed was still more remarkable. The D.P.I. proposed the names of three members of the Senate to represent it on the Administration Board of the School Final examination. The gentlemen proposed are highly respected public men in the Province, and all intimately connected with school education, but an amendment moved by the Principal of the Patna College substituting three members engaged in College teaching was carried by a majority. Thus the second meeting of the Senate came to an end, once more impressing on the minds of the representatives of the popular party the obvious fact that if they could not get the Government or the Educational members on their side, they could not hope to secure the passage of any amendment or resolution through the Senate. The impression is unfortunate, but it is there, and unless there is a change in "the angle of vision," one may expect lively, if ineffective, debates in the meetings of the Senate.

BOMBAY.

THE KAIRA DISTRESS INQUIRY.

THE Press Note issued by the Government of Bombay on the agricultural situation in the Kaira District has, on account of the references made in it to some public bodies in Gujarat and its controversial tone, evoked strong replies from the persons and institutions concerned in it. It is to be feared that in the heat of controversy the interests of the agriculturists, particularly the poorer section of that class, may suffer, and the relief which if given in time will go a long way in mitigating their distress may be postponed. It is time both parties recognised the need of the hour and showed a spirit of compromise and mutual forbearance instead of carrying the wordy warfare still further.

Messrs. G. K. Devadhar, A. V. Thakkar, and N. M. Joshi of the Servants of India Society were asked by the Hon. Mr. V. J. Patel to visit the affected areas and to make an independent report on the agricultural situation there. They have visited several villages that are known to be specially affected, have elicited facts from cultivators themselves, verified them by official statements supplied by the Collector, and inspected the standing rabi crops, the houses of the cultivators and the condition of their cattle. Their impartial and personal inquiry, it is hoped, will help to effect a reconciliation between the official and non-official readings of the situation.

The outstanding facts are these. *Bajri*, the staple food of the people, was admitted by the Government Press Note to be "very considerably affected" in a number of villages, owing to excessive rainfall in the latter months of the monsoon. In fact, the crop may be said to have completely failed.

Also the *bawto* and *kodra* crops, which form the foodstuffs of the poorer classes of the population, failed to a large extent. *Juwar*, which is sown in that part more for fodder than for grain, failed to some extent, and it was only the rice crop that did not suffer much. So much for the kharif crops. As for rabi crops, cotton, wheat and *tur* are doing fairly well, but they are yet to be harvested, and it is feared that these crops too may greatly disappoint the cultivator, as rats and other pests are doing much harm to them in some places. *Til* has failed to a large extent, castor plants have been affected by *poptes* disease and tobacco too has been a victim to a kind of disease.

The distress varies in its intensity in different parts of the district, and, though it cannot be said that there are regular famine conditions, it is a fact beyond question that partial failure of crops has occurred and that distress has become acute in a number of villages. The accuracy of the anna valuation made roughly on eye-inspection by village and taluka officers has been challenged and the officials are charged with minimising the distress by an over-liberal estimate of the crops. Besides, it must be remembered that the total valuation of all crops taken together is likely to be misleading when the condition of the agriculturist is to be considered. A crop like that of *juwar* which is used only for fodder is included in the anna valuations. It raises the average valuation of the crops, but will not add to the staple food of the people. The rules made by the Government for regulating the giving of suspensions lay down that when the crop is four annas or under, the collection of the whole of the assessment should be suspended; but when it is over four annas and under six annas half of the assessment should be collected and the other half suspended. The Government Press Note does not mention what the individual and total anna valuations of the crops are. Such estimates are not, on a rough scale, impossible, and when they are made they will show what sort of relief is due to the people from the Government. There is, however, a point to be considered when suspension of assessment has to be ordered: it is this, that as every cultivator does not necessarily sow all the crops in his field, there may be some people who have been hit very hard whilst others have escaped with a comparatively little loss.

When the failure of the kharif crops on a large scale became known the Government should have postponed the collection of the first instalment of the land assessment till the rabi crops were gathered. Their needless haste caused a great hardship to the poorer class of the cultivators. After the results of the rabi crops were known, the Government could have decided whether full or half suspension should be given and the poorer cultivators would not have been driven to the necessity of borrowing money from sowcars or selling their cattle, as at least some have had to do. Whatever may be the official estimate of the crops, it is undoubtedly a fact that the condition of the Dharalas, Dheds, Waghris and such other poor cultivators is quite pitiable, and therefore it behoves the Government to order full suspension of assessment in the case of those who do not pay more than Rs. 10 per year as land revenue. Nothing short of this measure will mitigate the hardships of the poorer classes. The bitterness that is at present manifest in the relations between the Government and the popular party was quite avoidable and a little tact on both sides would have solved the question satisfactorily. The treatment meted out to the Secretaries of the Gujarat Sabha by the Commissioner, N. D., at the time of the private interview, and the unhappy and unnecessary references to 'outside agitation' and such other things in the Press Note have not been to a small extent responsible for the exasperation of the public mind.

Notice to Contributors.

The Editor cannot undertake to return rejected MSS. or any other contributions sent to him.

MADRAS.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

At the meeting of the local Legislative Council which met on the 12th instant, a number of important questions were put, which as usual elicited laconic and unsatisfactory replies. Among them was the Government's refusal to publish a confidential note by Messrs. Marakkayar and Marjoribanks on the subjects of Indian emigration to Ceylon. Even a supplementary question by the Hon. Mr. Ramachandra Rao asking the Government what harm would result by its publication, elicited only the dry remark from the President that "it was a matter of opinion." The Hon. Rajah of Ramnad and the Hon. Mr. Chidambaranath Mudliar also had two questions to ask on the same subject and the Government reply does not at all go to assure the public that the authorities are vigilantly watching over the interests of the emigrant population.

At last the Brahman-non-Brahman controversy has invaded the Legislative Council. Mr. Marakkayar put three questions on communal representation in the public services. In this connection attention may be drawn to a recent G. O. appointing seven probationary Deputy Tahsildars. Of these only one is a Brahman and the Selection Committee assures us that the names are arranged in "the strict order of merit without reference to considerations of caste, class or vernacular." This is a clear indication that the non-Brahmans can hold their own in the struggle and no longer need protection from the Government.

Notice was given of no less than three resolutions on G. O. 559 prohibiting students from attending public meetings. It is well known that this G. O. became a dead letter long ago. Why should so much fuss be made about this question when it is generally understood that the Government do not mean to enforce it even in its modified form? In spite of Mr. B. V. Narasimha Iyer's eloquent pleading for its cancellation, the resolution secured only 11 votes, while 25 were against it.

THE LATE SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN.

It was a large and representative gathering of the citizens of Madras which assembled on the 12th inst. to do honour to the memory of the late Sir William Wedderburn. The chair was appropriately occupied by Mr. N. Subbarao Pantulu, one of the oldest living associates of Sir William in Congress activities. It was also fitting that the chief resolution expressing the country's grief should be in charge of Mr. G. A. Natesan who knew intimately and kept regular correspondence with Sir William. Almost all the non-official members of the local Legislative Council attended and took part in the meeting. A few of the mofussil leaders came to Madras specially for this function. The proceedings were marked by reverent solemnity and a committee was appointed to collect funds for erecting a statue.

THE ANDHRA MOVEMENT.

THE rejection of the Hon'ble Mr. B. N. Sarma's resolution in the Imperial Council on the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis has caused deep disappointment amongst the Andhras. The vernacular papers are full of angry writing on this subject. The correspondence columns show that it is not so much the defeat of the resolution that has irritated them as the attitude of some of the non-official members. Some of the Andhra leaders admit that their representative was rather hasty in introducing this topic into the Council. They feel that much propagandist work has yet to be done in the other provinces, and that the precipitate way in which he brought the resolution has perhaps damaged their cause.

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