

# The Servant of India

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## CONTENTS.

	Page
TOPICS OF THE WEEK ... ..	221
ARTICLES:	
The Bombay Goondas' Bill ... ..	223
" Liberalise the Federation " ... ..	225
Pledge to the Taluqdars of Oudh ... ..	226
Reconstruction of Local Self-Government.—III by D. R. Gadgil ... ..	228
SHORT NOTICES ... ..	231
MISCELLANEOUS	
" Liberalise the Federation " : an article in the <i>Manchester Guardian</i> . ... ..	232

## Topics of the Week.

### Repression in Mysore.

THE firing by the Mysore police on an unarmed crowd which has resulted in such a terrific loss of life and limb that it has been described as a Jallian-wala Bagh in an Indian State has produced a wave of horror throughout India. From the accounts received one gets the impression that both the firing and the lathi charge that preceded it were unprovoked and without justification. But it is so difficult to appreciate from a distance the facts that are reported—and one cannot be sure that all are reported—that a possibility of one's judgment being in error cannot be excluded. And one may well suspend one's judgment since the Mysore Government is instituting an inquiry, which it is hoped will be searching and impartial. Whatever external factors there may have been, if there were any such, which made resort to firing necessary, one thing may be taken to have been clearly established, viz. that the Mysore Congress leaders or volunteers were not guilty of violence or any other kind of provocation, which might be alleged to have been the cause of firing. They at any rate present a clean bill.

SHOCKING as the Mysore tragedy is, it would be well, if this is possible when one's feelings are so profoundly outraged, to draw aside from the firing incident and take a broad view of the situation in Mysore. Two facts stand out: relentless persecution by the Mysore Government of the political workers on the one hand and a grim determination of the latter to face it squarely on the other. The flag hoisting movement, which has only given a fillip to repression, is adversely criticised in several quarters. "The flag does not stand for independence in Mysore," it is said; "the whole movement is for responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja. While it is true

that the Mysore Government should not have fought shy of it, why do the Mysore people on their part unnecessarily give a handle for further repression?" To this objection an answer is to be found in the circumstances in which Congressmen in Mysore are carrying on their agitation and the psychology which such circumstances necessarily create. Normal political agitation for constitutional reform was suppressed; a democratic regime to which the people aspire was derided by no less a person than the Dewan; attempts at reconciliation were repulsed; repression grew more and more severe. When things come to such a pass, the men who suffer repression are sorely tempted to say: "If you won't give an inch, we will take an ell. You feel embarrassed by the Congress flag; that is just the flag we will flourish in your face. You will be provoked into more repression? Well, we will bear it all and prove to you that we are prepared for the worst."

THE Congress in British India also put the Mysore people on their mettle. They had expected no active help from this parent organisation to which they had affiliated themselves, but only keen moral sympathy. The All-India Congress Committee gave it, but Mahatma Gandhi retracted it. The Congress said: "The States' people must fight their own battles. Often they start agitations without sufficient moral grit in them and when a critical situation arises look helplessly to the Congress. Stand on your own bottom and then carry on even civil disobedience if you dare." The Mysore people were stung to the quick. They decided on civil disobedience in their own name and under their own auspices. The Congress flag gave them an opportunity which they wanted. The Government looks askance at it and insists on prohibiting it. That then is just the thing to concentrate on. The people were determined to push matters to a head, seeing that ordinary means would not avail with the authorities. This appears to us to be the true inwardness of the developments that are taking place in Mysore, and Mysore firing is only a pointer.

MAHATMA GANDHI is in a special sense involved in this. He in effect erased the A.I.C.C. resolution of sympathy by an article in the *Harijan*, and the Mysore Government broadcast this indirect defence of themselves in English and Kannada throughout the villages. To all intents and purposes his influence was cast on the side of repression, and it is no wonder that when the repression led to such a terrific sequel Mahatma Gandhi deemed it necessary before going to Peshawar to issue a message to cut off his own association with repression. The message is characteristic of him, and it is to be hoped that Sir Mirza Ismail, whom he knows to be "anxious to liberalise the administration of Mysore" (how clever he is in concealing this anxiety from others!), will ponder it deeply:

I must confess that I was not aware of a popular awakening in Mysore on a wide scale, as there undoubtedly is. It gladdens me, as I hope it gladdens the Mysore authorities. I suggest, therefore, that the best and only remedy for the Maharaja and his adviser, Sir Mirza Ismail, is to divest the Government of its autocracy and to make popular representatives responsible for the administration of Mysore. The responsibility must be on the broadest scale possible if it is to ensure peace in Mysore. It has been suggested that, the State being backward, responsibility can only be a plant of slow growth. I have never subscribed to that doctrine. It is not a compliment to the State. One would expect them, with all the natural advantages in their favour, to show much greater progress than in unwieldy British India.

ONE thing at least the Mysore people have succeeded in doing: they have convinced the Mahatma of an awakening of which he had little suspected. Let us see if similarly the Mysore Dewan succeeds in convincing the people of his large-heartedness and progressive outlook of which they little suspect. Sir Mirza Ismail is often heard to say: "Democracy as a general principle has been tried and found wanting. Democracy in Mysore is yet to be tried, but there are not people with enough intelligence and public spirit in the State to give it even a trial." To this Mahatma Gandhi has given an effective answer. But we may ask Sir Mirza: "Is autocracy found to stand the test in the world as a whole? And is autocracy in Mysore successful? Are there enough capable administrators to make it successful?" Recent events demand an emphatically negative answer.

#### The Orissa Governorship.

IT appears fairly certain that the appointment of Mr. Dain as Acting Governor of Orissa will not be cancelled and a new appointment made. The Government of India seems prepared to meet the Congress objection, surely a valid objection, to the extent that, after he serves his term of four months as Governor, Mr. Dain will not revert to the service. As Mahatma Gandhi points out, this is really no mitigation of the false step proposed. The chief objection to the appointment is that one who was a subordinate to the Ministry is now to fill an office from which he will be enabled to flourish a bludgeon against the Ministry. That, after wielding for a season an authority to override the Ministry, he will not again place himself in a position of subordination to it, only enhances the force of the objection. If he knew that he would have to go back to his proper place after a spell of Governorship which does not properly belong to him, he might at least be expected to use his authority with restraint. As it is, he would be exposed to the temptation of giving free rein to his short-lived but autocratic powers. The proposed solution is thus no solution.

APART from the ground of principle, on which objection is mainly rested as it should be, we cannot leave out of account the aggravating factor in this question, viz. that Mr. Dain is known to be a notorious reactionary. He gave an adverse opinion on the Orissa Tenancy Bill and the Madras Estates Land Act (Orissa Amendment) Bill. We have no desire to find any fault with this. He was asked to give an opinion on the Bills, and he did right in expressing his honest opinion, contrary though it was to the Ministry's policy. But it shows what his mental make-up is. And the Madras Estate Bill will go to him for his assent. In fact, there is bitter complaint in the province that though it is months

since the Bill was passed by the Assembly—and heavens be thanked that there is no second chamber in Orissa—the permanent Governor's assent is not forthcoming, and if Mr. Dain succeeds Sir John Hubback there is grave reason to fear that he will consider it his duty to withhold his assent. In other ways too the freedom of the Ministry may be restricted. This is a practical consideration which it would be well to take into reckoning.

IN fairness we should say at the same time that Mr. Dain's appointment was not actuated—such an imputation has not been made—by the desire deliberately to clip the wings of the Ministry. The appointing authority somehow failed to see the impropriety of a subordinate of the Ministry being placed over its head. If it be granted that the appointment was to go to the seniormost official of the province, it went in the natural course of things to Mr. Dain. How the impropriety of the step proposed was not observed passes understanding. But the mistake committed is now admitted since a promise is forthcoming that no such appointment would be made in future in any province. This is a really extenuating circumstance. If the Government of India pleads that the mistake should be condoned for this once because it was an act of bungling on its part without a realisation of the consequences and that no offence was intended to the Ministry, it would be a different matter, but to contend that the arrangement to withdraw Mr. Dain from Orissa after his Governorship is over is an even partial rectification of the mistake is to say something that will not convince anyone.

WE cannot understand why the blunder should not be put right after it is once admitted. What can come in the way of revoking the appointment and giving the Governorship to a civilian from another province, which would not be open to the objection to which this appointment is open, except the fear that the British Government's prestige will suffer? As a matter of fact, its prestige will not suffer but it will be enhanced, because the people will thereby be convinced that justice will be done to them even if it involves reversal of the steps actually taken in the name of the King. But it is to be feared that the vain pursuit of a false sense of prestige will bring a crisis to Orissa. For the Congress appears to have decided upon asking the Ministry to tender its resignation if Mr. Dain's appointment is persisted in. It would be a very heavy price for the British Government to pay for face-saving if the Congress Ministry resigns and Mr. Dain has to carry on with a landlord Ministry which would be in a hopeless minority. Perhaps the Congress Ministry would be asked to take a holiday for four months while Sir John Hubback is on leave. Even if the crisis in Orissa is not prolonged and even if it does not spread to other provinces, would the British Government's prestige emerge in any better condition from these happenings than if it retracted Mr. Dain's appointment? Surely not.

AS we go to press, the news has come that Sir John Hubback has cancelled his leave, thus cutting the Gordian knot.

#### The Bombay Liberal Conference.

LAST week end was held in Satara the Bombay Provincial Liberal Conference, of which Mr. G. S. Mahajani was the Chairman of the Reception Committee, and Mr. V. N. Chandavarkar, the President. The addresses of both these leaders were characterised

by a general disapproval of the Congress Government in Bombay—an attitude generally taken up by the Opposition in any system of responsible government. They, however, gave the Government credit for good intentions and zeal for the welfare of the people under them, but severely questioned the wisdom of their measures and the procedure adopted in promoting them. Incidentally, Mr. Chandavarkar laid down, rather recalled, many excellent principles of democratic parliamentary government which everybody, particularly those in the Opposition, acclaim, but alas! few in office observe. Further, it is also true that all the principles which claim our allegiance are not themselves wholly reconcilable, as, for instance, individual opinion and party loyalty. As Mr. Mahajani well put it, in practical politics it is not a case of capitalism vs. socialism but of how much of each, not of free trade vs. protection but of how much of each, in any particular instance.

WHETHER a provincial conference should confine itself to strictly provincial matters and leave national problems to the all-India organization is a matter of opinion. Given a limited time, more thorough consideration is possible if the field is restricted. Whatever that may be, the Satara Conference considered the present constitution, and reiterated the resolution passed at the last National Liberal Federation in Calcutta, while doing so but improved on it in some particulars. The Conference laid down certain irreducible minimum changes to be introduced in the constitution before its federal part was brought into operation. Among them was the one that demanded that the sanction for the representatives of the States should come from the subjects of the States and not merely from the Princes. The Conference also asked the Princes to introduce representative institutions in their States as a prelude to the establishment of responsible government. By so doing, the theory that British Indians, and in particular the Liberals, should take no active interest in the internal administration of the States, has rightly been discarded. In view of the federation to be, the internal administration in the States can no longer be a matter of unconcern to British Indians: they should actively intercede in levelling up the administrations in the States.

IN discussing the Bombay Money-lenders Bill and the prospect of tenancy legislation, the Conference represented the view solely of money-lenders and landlords, and not the general interests of the people of the province. It would have been better if separate conferences of money-lenders and landlords had been held to focus their viewpoint rather than utilise a Liberal platform for advocating such an illiberal policy. We regret and deplore the unqualified defence of these interests by Mr. Mahajani and Mr. Chandavarkar. The Conference admitted the evil of indebtedness, objected to the Government's proposals but made no constructive suggestions. In the case of tenancy legislation, even before the Government published a bill, the Conference began to protest. Mr. Mahajani went so far as to declare that no tenancy legislation was needed! Who can then be surprised at his protest, whatever the Bill may turn out to be?

THE Conference was justified in asking that even in cases where Government had a definite policy of its own clearly formulated, it should give the public ample time to consider its proposals before proceeding to enact them. In cases where existing rights of person or property are to be adversely affected, the Government would do well to appoint committees of investigation and then frame proposals and give the people

affected ample opportunity to put in their objections before legislation is adopted. Even when the Government correctly anticipates public opinion, it would do well to give ample time for consideration of their proposals, and not rush legislation.

#### Agricultural Income-Tax.

IT is no matter for surprise that zamindars and Muslims in the Bihar Legislative Assembly presented a solid front in opposing the Bill to levy a tax on agricultural incomes. The Bill as amended by the Select Committee, while seeking to exempt Muslim religious and charitable trusts (wakfs) of a public character, did not exempt the Hindu religious and charitable trusts, or private wakfs. When the Bill was under discussion, an amendment was moved by Mr. Jagat Narain Lal to exempt all public charitable trusts, including Hindu trusts, from the operation of the Act. This did not meet with the approval of the Muslim members who would not be satisfied with anything except a total exemption of wakfs of every description. They adopted a reactionary attitude, inasmuch as they insisted upon the exemption of private as well as public wakfs (though in fairness it must be said that they were willing to extend the benefit of this exemption to Hindu charitable and religious trusts also) and threatened satyagraha if this exemption was not granted, in spite of the advice of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad that private wakfs are not entitled to any exemption from taxation on their incomes. The Prime Minister, realising the tense atmosphere in which the Bill was being discussed, saw the futility of continuing the discussion of the Bill, and agreed to the postponement of it *sine die*. We trust, however, that the Ministry will find it possible soon to bring the Bill again before the Assembly and have it passed, and that the Muslims will give up their insistence on exemption of private wakfs. Indeed, it appears that the Muslims have agreed to some kind of compromise.

## Articles.

### THE BOMBAY GOONDAS BILL.

IF ever there was a bill the rushing of which through the legislature was most unjustified, it was the bill to amend the City of Bombay Police Act of 1902, which passed its third reading in the Legislative Assembly on Saturday last. It was introduced the previous Monday, and the Home Member admitted that the Bill was drafted in great haste in order to meet an existing emergency. The Government wished to get the Bill through almost in a day, and complained that the Opposition did not co-operate with the Government in the matter. The Bill, as it passed the Legislative Assembly, is as different from the original Bill as it can be, and the purpose which the Government had in view in proposing the Bill has not in the event been served. The Government have succeeded only in creating a sense of bitter grievance against themselves and lowering their own reputation. They would have done well if they had asked for special powers to deal with the emergency that had arisen, and had considered at leisure, when normalcy had returned, the enactment of a permanent measure to cope with similar crises in future. We must protest

most emphatically against the rushing of permanent measures which so fundamentally infringe civil liberties as the Bill under consideration does.

The Bill, as introduced by the Government, proposed to amend the existing permanent law because of the interpretation put on it by the High Court in a recent appeal. Subsection (1) of sec. 27 of the City of Bombay Police Act of 1902 gave power to the Police Commissioner to extern from Bombay any member of a "gang or body of persons in the City of Bombay" whose "movements or encampment" in Bombay was considered by the Police Commissioner as dangerous to public peace. The deported person had the right of appeal to the High Court against the order of deportation. Although the Government knew of the limitations of the section, the Police Commissioner had in the past not hesitated to extern individuals, as distinct from members of a gang. He had also interpreted "movements" as activities or actions. In a recent appeal (No. 492 of 1937) the Bombay High Court held that the Police Commissioner had no power to deport an individual who was not proved to be a member of a gang or body of persons, and that "movements" meant "physical movements" and not activities. The Government proposed that the express limitation regarding membership of a gang and the interpretative limitation regarding movements should be eliminated, and that the Police Commissioner should be given *de jure* the powers he had exercised *de facto* before the High Court rendered its judgment. It was thus an amendment of the permanent law of the province to be operative in normal times.

The recent communal disturbances timed the amendment. The Government had rounded up a large number of suspects and controlled the situation. The suspects could not be tried under the law as no effective evidence against them could be secured; they could not be detained in police custody indefinitely; their release might lead to renewed trouble; and, as the law stood, they could not be deported from Bombay. The Government proposed to amend the law immediately and in hot haste in order to secure power to deport the suspects now in custody. But the Bill, as passed, gives them no help to do that.

For, the Bill as it emerged from the Assembly is fundamentally different from the Bill as it entered it. The Government accepted the amendment of Dr. Ambedkar, which provided that, before the Police Commissioner could deport any individual, the Government should have declared a state of emergency. The state of emergency was to last a month, unless renewed by the Government. The externment was to be operative only during the period of emergency, so that the deportee could return to Bombay soon after the expiry of the emergency period, which is normally a month, and may sometimes be more. The Bill thus inserts a permanent amendment in the normal Police Act, to be evoked only in an emergency.

The Bill, as passed, does not thus empower the Police Commissioner to deport the suspects now in custody, for he can deport only during an emergency

and the emergency has passed and cannot be declared retrospectively. Thus the main and immediate purpose of the Government has been frustrated. Only the Province is saddled with permanent legislation which is unprecedented in its Draconian character.

## II

The chief and positive provision of the Bill is to empower the Police Commissioner to deport any individual whose presence or actions he considers a public changer. The rest of the provisions are checks on this absolute power. Some of these are operative before the deportation and some after. As has been already pointed out, before the Police Commissioner can exercise the power, the Government should have declared a state of emergency. To do so, the Government should be satisfied that the threat to public peace proceeded from "a conflict between different communities or sections thereof, or gangs or factions." The state of emergency, once declared, will last a month, unless renewed by the Government. These provisions were not in the original Bill.

Another safeguard operative before deportation is the amendment which says that the Police Commissioner should be satisfied that witnesses were not willing to come forward and give evidence against the accused because of apprehensions regarding the safety of their person or property. This also was not in the original Bill.

A safeguard to come into operation after the order of deportation is passed but before it becomes effective is the right of the accused to appear before the Police Commissioner by an advocate for the purpose of explaining the allegations against him and examining witnesses produced by him. The original Bill gave the accused the right to be informed of the charges against him and to make representations, but was silent on the question whether an advocate could appear for the accused.

The safeguard after the deportation is carried out is an appeal to the Government. An appeal to a court of law is open only on the ground that the procedure laid down in the Bill has not been adopted. The original Bill had similar provisions.

The Government resisted an amendment that an appeal against the Police Commissioner's action should be to the Chief Presidency Magistrate and not to the Government. They were, however, prepared to accept an amendment to the effect that before the Government passed an order on an appeal, they should refer the relevant papers to a judicial officer not below the rank of an Assistant Sessions Judge or a Presidency Magistrate. But no amendment of the kind was moved. The Government, however, were willing to provide for this procedure by rules under the Act.

It is not clear if the present Bill is in addition to, or in substitution of subsection (i) of sec. 27. Government proposed substitution, but in accepting the amendment of Dr. Ambedkar, the Home Member is reported to have said that the existing subsection would remain, and that Dr. Ambedkar's amendment was an addition to it.

From the point of view of the civil liberties of the individual the Bill as passed is decidedly a great improvement on the original Bill. It has already been stated that it does not help the Government to tide over their present difficulty, unless they release

the people in custody, at once declare an emergency and then proceed to deport the people set at liberty! It remains to be seen whether the Bill can help to prevent disturbances in future or if the net result will be only to harass innocent individuals.

## “LIBERALISE THE FEDERATION.”

**A**T long last the Britishers have come to realise the supreme need of “liberalising the federation” if federation is to bring peace and harmony instead of conflict and contention. The fierce denunciation of the constitution by Indian politicians of all parties was ignored so long, and the hope was entertained that, denunciation notwithstanding, all parties would settle down to work the constitution and make a success of it. Disillusionment has now come, though it is very belated. And those organs of the British press which were vociferous all this time in demanding immediate execution of the federal part of the constitution are now all in favour of delay. “It would be worth any delay,” says the *Manchester Guardian*, if the delay is to be utilised for carrying on negotiations with a view to an agreed settlement. This change in the Britishers’ frame of mind is entirely desirable. We only wish that the easy optimism of the *Guardian* and other papers that merely a few changes, not in the Constitution Act, but in the way in which it is to be worked are needed to bring British Indians to give up their hostility in favour of a friendly attitude to the Act were justified. We are afraid that another disillusionment is in store for these good friends of India. What is required is not just a tinkering but fundamental changes, some of which can be introduced without amending the Act, but for some of which an amendment of the Act is imperatively required. Anyhow, let it be remembered that these are basic changes which cannot be brought about until after protracted negotiations with a large number of representative people.

To a considerable extent the smooth working of provincial autonomy in the Congress provinces is responsible for engendering in British politicians a feeling that some kind of vague assurances are all that is required to induce in Indians a reasonable frame of mind. It is believed that the assurances which the Viceroy gave about the reserved powers of the provincial Governors effected a radical change in the provincial part of the constitution. They did nothing of the kind. The assurances have not enlarged by a jot or tittle the constitutional freedom of the provincial Ministries. If the Congress had without any bargaining accepted office on 1st April last year it would not have found itself in a weaker position vis a vis the Governors; only it would have saved a few months which it unnecessarily lost in fruitless negotiations. That provincial autonomy is working without friction is not due to the fact that the assurances received from the Viceroy have purged the constitution of most of its defects; it is due to the fact that the Congress does not consider it expedient, until it has strengthened itself by solid constructive and ameliorative work, to bring the

question of the defects, which remain now as before, to a head. But the federal part of the constitution is infinitely worse than the provincial part. Even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who of all men might be expected to be indiscriminately hostile to the whole constitution, freely admits that the provincial part, bad as it is, is much better than the federal part. It is, therefore, too much to expect that the Congress would be willing, as in the case of provincial autonomy, to let the graver defects of the federal constitution remain in the background and to work it honestly and quietly for what it is worth. And assurances of the kind that were given about provincial autonomy—and they amounted to nothing more than that the Governors’ reserve powers would not be used in circumstances in which they were not intended to be used—would not serve to remove or relax Congress hostility.

Without an express change in the Act a Gentlemen’s Agreement would go some way in modifying the provisions of the Act, but any such understandings must be of a binding character. And there are some glaring defects which cannot be removed in this way. Indirect election to the Federal Assembly is one such. Nothing less than an amendment of the Act would serve in this respect, and it is a defect which, if allowed to remain, would reduce central responsibility to a nullity. Then the Princes, whose adhesion is necessary to an all-India federation, must be brought to introduce democracy in their States to a certain extent and to follow democratic practices in their dealings with federation. For neither need the Act be altered, but this is not to say that any commitments which they may make outside the Act can be allowed to be less binding than if they were embodied in the Act itself. The requirements in this connexion appear perhaps to British journals to be slight. Some States are liberalising their constitution; some are talking about it. It is thought that this gesture would be sufficient to British Indians. But it cannot be. British India can legitimately be asked to be satisfied with a small advance in the direction of democracy if it can reasonably look forward to, and ask for, a completion of the democratic process within a short space of time. How can British India agree to federate with autocratic States, merely because at the present time they show themselves to be somewhat favourably disposed to democracy, if, after federation has been brought about, it cannot exert any constitutional pressure upon the States to quicken their pace so as to reach the goal within a measurable distance in the future? In such case it will have federated with a static autocracy and not with an autocracy whose transformation into a democracy has been guaran-

teed. Before federation is actually formed, British India will have to be satisfied not only that the States are democratic to a certain extent but have pledged themselves by guarantees which can be put into force to become fully democratic within a stated interval. The same kind of undertakings, not only about the present but about the future, in respect of popular election of the States' representatives in the federal legislature must be entered into if British India is to consider the States to be worthy members of a union with itself. It would not like to be trapped into a federation which it will have no power to alter afterwards.

One hopeful feature in the *Manchester Guardian's* article is the possibility it indicates of the British Government exerting its influence and power upon the Princes to democratise their Government. "The British Government," it says, "is understood to be encouraging reforms" in the States. The Government can go a long way in "encouraging" such reforms, if it has a mind to. In fact, a speedy solution of this problem can come only through the British Government. Juridically, the position of course is quite different. Mr. F. E. James, speaking the other day in Madras, said with an air of finality: "We cannot change the Act so soon after passing it in the present international situation; nor can we coerce the States." The conclusion he arrived at was that nothing very much could now be done to improve the constitution. That way madness lies. Both amendment of the constitution and coercion of the Princes are possible; at any rate no solution to the political problem can be found without them. It is unnecessary to give the irritating name of "coercion" to the advice which the British Government can tender to the Princes; let us agree, if that will mend matters, to call it a "request." The point is that the British Government must request the Princes to democratise their constitutions and the Princes must graciously comply with the request if British India is to be persuaded to go into the federation and stay there.

The real position is often very different from the juridical position. This is best seen in the case of Ireland to-day. The sorest need of Southern Ireland at present is union with Northern Ireland. Eire in fact includes the six counties of the North as well as the twenty-six of the South, though its writ runs only in the latter at present. The justice of the proposed union cannot be questioned by anyone. In 1920 the dismemberment of Ireland was effected by the British Parliament without the support of a single Irish vote, whether Nationalist or Unionist, Catholic or Protestant—without the vote even of Carson—to put the Nationalists in a minority in at least six counties. In fact, Nationalist opinion prevails in thirty counties and only in two it is in a minority. Of the whole population of 4,244,000 no less than 3,408,000 desire one Ireland under one Parliament, and the partition must be abolished. Who can abolish it? "Britain started partition, she should undo it," say the Irish. But the British people throw up their hands in horror and

ask: "Are we to coerce Ulster into joining the Southern States?" The Irish say the same on this question as we in British India on the question of the States. "Don't coerce, but persuade; you have immense powers of persuasion. You have done the wrong; you should undo it." The *Round Table* said recently: "The real truth is that the road to Irish unity lies through London and not through Belfast", and the value of the recent Anglo-Irish treaty cannot be understood fully unless we assume that Great Britain has pledged her word to facilitate Irish unity. Similarly we can say that the road to the democratisation of the States lies through the British Government and not through the States. This road can be taken only if the States cease to be regarded as "a useful counterpoise" to a radical British India, just as the road to Irish unity can be taken only if Ulster ceases to be regarded as a counterpoise to Nationalist Ireland. If Britain changes her whole outlook, she can take the road dictated by expediency as well as principle both in India and Ireland and save both countries. She appears to have made up her mind about Ireland; she must make it up about India. Only if she does so, will there be enduring peace in this country.

#### PLEDGE TO THE TALUQDARS OF OUDH.

THE United Provinces Tenancy Bill has been referred by the Legislative Assembly without a dissentient vote to a Select Committee. The landlord and taluqdar representatives protested that the sending of the Bill to the Select Committee must not be interpreted as committing them to acceptance of the principles underlying the Bill, and such of the representatives as have been included in the Committee tried to stipulate that they could consent to serve on the Committee on the distinct understanding that they would be free subsequently to oppose even the basic principles of the Bill. The Prime Minister, however, made it clear that the passing of a motion for reference to the Select Committee carried with it the implication that the Bill's principles could no longer be brought into question, and the speaker pointed out that no member could bargain special terms for himself before agreeing to go on the Select Committee. It is remarkable that even when the position was placed beyond doubt in this way, the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee was passed *nem con*, and the Committee that has been appointed is representative of all interests including landlords and taluqdars. The passage of the Bill without any serious opposition may thus be safely predicted.

The Bill proposes *inter alia* to confer hereditary rights upon statutory tenants in Oudh, and Raja Jagannathbux Singh put forward the legal objection on behalf of the taluqdars that to do so was to break faith with the feudal barons of Oudh to whom the British Government had given a solemn pledge in the matter. He also pointed out that the previous Tenancy Acts had been passed with the consent of the taluqdars, while in the case of the present Bill the Congress Government had not even consulted them. The force

of these objections can be understood only if we cast a glance at the previous history of the tenancy question in Oudh. After the Mutiny, Lord Canning, by his Proclamation of March, 1858, confiscated to the British Crown the proprietary right in the soil of all landed magnates except a few loyalists, promising, however, to restore the right to such of them as would submit and throw themselves upon the mercy of the British Government. By the end of the year most of them had tendered their allegiance, and the Government thereupon reinstated them in their rights as they existed at the time of annexation. Those whose rights had been found before to be questionable or even invalid got back all their old rights. Thus they were placed in a privileged position, which all had not enjoyed before. They were given sanads or title-deeds to their estates which conferred upon them a permanent and hereditary proprietary right in the lands which had been restored to them. "This right is, however, conceded," their sanads said, "subject to any measure which the Government may think proper to take for the purpose of protecting the inferior zamindars and village occupants from extortion and of upholding their rights in the soil in subordination to the taluqdars." Further: "It is also a condition of this grant that you will, so far as is in your power, promote the agricultural prosperity of your estate," and "as long as the above conditions are observed by you and your heirs in good faith, so long will the British Government maintain you and your heirs as proprietors of the above-mentioned estate." Thus not only were some taluqdars confirmed in their proprietary title which the Government itself had previously brought into question and even denied, but the subordinate rights in the land also were disregarded. The then Chief Commissioner of Oudh, Sir Charles Wingfield, proceeded on the assumption that all such subordinate rights had ceased to exist, that the rights of the village communities had already been destroyed and that there was no intermediary between the taluqdars on the one hand and the tenants-at-will on the other. Lord Lawrence, however, as Viceroy instituted an inquiry into the matter through Mr. Henry Davies of the Punjab. But the result of the investigation was unfavourable to the masses. For Mr. Davies came to the conclusion that the intermediate rights had all been swept away by the Nabobs. Lord Lawrence appointed Sir John Stratchey to succeed Sir Charles Wingfield as Chief Commissioner in 1866 and had hoped that he would be able to render justice to agriculturists. Sir John Stratchey too, however, found himself embarrassed by what had been done before and, instead of doing what was right, sought to do what might then be considered expedient. He, therefore, arrived at a compromise with the taluqdars, whereby the taluqdars agreed to recognise the rights of those sub-proprietors who had lost these rights within twelve years preceding annexation and to recognise occupancy rights, at privileged rents, of those cultivators who, within thirty years before annexation had been proprietors and the Government on its part agreed to create no new occupancy rights. The

language of the Oudh Compromise on this subject is as follows:

Considering that by the inquiry which has recently been made into the subject of rights of occupancy in Oudh it has been shown that at the time of the annexation of the province there was vested in the ryot no right of occupancy which could be successfully maintained against the will of the landlord, the Government, in accordance with the engagements entered into by the Secretary of State and the Government of India, when the late inquiry was undertaken, now declare that no rights of occupancy will be created by the Government.

The occupancy rights here referred to are hereditary tenant-rights, and it would seem that the Government was under a solemn obligation, whatever measure of protection it proposed to afford to the cultivators, not to confer hereditary occupancy rights upon those to whom they had not already been given under the compromise.

The sanctity of the promise given at this time, however, loses much of its validity if one bears in mind the circumstances in which the promise was given. The Government felt at the time that the landed magnates had somehow to be placated and held to their allegiance, even if in doing so the tenants' rights and interests had to be sacrificed. No doubt a sort of inquiry was undertaken, but it was by no means a judicial inquiry. The measures taken were obviously dictated by political motives and not by the motive of doing strict justice. When Sir John Stratchey took the matter in hand, he felt compelled, in spite of his sympathies with the tenants, to base his conclusions on what the Government had already done. They were avowedly of the nature of a compromise, not based upon equity, but upon a practical consideration of what was possible after the Government had taken certain steps which he thought were irrevocable. Let Sir John Stratchey himself speak of his handiwork:

Lord Lawrence (felt that he) was bound to respect arrangements which had been declared by Lord Canning to be final. . . . Little more was possible than to secure for the occupying classes and for the ousted proprietors of the land the best terms that the taluqdars could be persuaded to give, or that the Government could require, without setting aside the conditions of the settlement made under the orders of Lord Canning.

The result?

The condition of Oudh is still *highly unsatisfactory*. (Italics in the original.) The existing system has within itself elements which must destroy it. The ultimate recovery of the province will, we may trust, be brought about by the gradual and persistent application of the principles which Lord Lawrence maintained and, as far as possible, carried out. The elaborate attempt to create in Oudh a great landed aristocracy is doomed to inevitable failure.

A pledge given under these conditions cannot endure for long; being given, not to meet a just claim but for the purpose of satisfying the requirements of a temporary expediency, it was bound to be thrown over sooner or later. The pledge remained in force for a long time, some seventy years, only because the landlord interest was predominant in the United Provinces so far. With a complete transformation in the composition of the legislature the pledge cannot stand. The Government themselves gave but a limited adherence to it. When, after the inauguration of the Montagu-

Chelmsford reforms, the popular section of the legislature had a chance of championing the cause of the tenants, a demand was put forward in the Legislative Council for the conferment of hereditary occupancy rights on the tenants. In 1921, when the Oudh Rent Act came up for amendment, a vigorous plea was made for the grant of these rights. The Government opposed it, but in what sense? All that they said was that they would not themselves propose, contrary to their pledge, the creation of new occupancy rights; they would also feel constrained to oppose by official votes such a proposal if it came from the non-official side. But if the legislature by a majority carried the proposal, they would accept it, contrary as it would be to their pledge. In the Legislative Council in 1921 Babu Vikramajit Singh said (and several other members joined with him): "No legislature could ever be considered bound by the pledges given by an executive Government." This contention was accepted by the Government without demur. The Finance Member, Sir Ludovic Porter, replied: "The hon. Member for the Indian Chamber of Commerce (Babu Vikramajit Singh) has said that no pledge given by an executive Government can be binding on the legislature. I entirely agree with him, and if this Legislative Council had voted that occupancy rights should be given to the tenants of Oudh we would have bowed to their decision." He also indicated that the Government did not propose conferment of occupancy rights because the landlord element in the Council was too strong for the other non-official elements and the official element combined. He said: "It is perfectly true that we (Government) might have tried to force through this House a Bill conferring the right of occupancy. I have very little doubt that we should have been outvoted. . . . I ask you to recognise the facts and to recognise that, under the new form of government, Government must bow to the decision of the majority of the Council. . . . If the Legislative Council

had passed this provision we should have willingly bowed to their wishes." The Governor, Sir Harcourt Butler, said the same thing:

The conditions of the problem are affected by pledges given to the taluqdars some fifty years ago. Those pledges were judicially upheld at the time and were respected by Government in connection with the existing Rent (Act of 1886). On this occasion also the Government will respect them, by its vote on the question of hereditary right in this Council. I recognise that different views are taken as to the continuing validity of those pledges. *I will not question the powers of this Council in regard to them.*

It is difficult to understand a pledge by which only the Government that gave it is bound but by which that Government does not even contend that its successor is bound. If the new Government had come into power by revolution, it would have been a different matter; but the new Government is but a new *avatar* of the old, it has come into its heritage by the process of evolutionary change and as such must be held to be under an obligation to fulfil the commitments which its predecessor had made. But the old Government, even before it withdrew from the scene, had thrown up its hands. Why? Because it knew that the pledge was not a pledge to be understood in a strict sense. It almost looked as if the bureaucratic Government wished it were strong enough politically to set aside the pretensions of the landlords, as indeed the Board of Revenue had actually proposed in 1921. In any case it is obvious that no breach of faith is involved in the new Government conferring upon the tenants the rights that are due to them. The bureaucracy or the Governor is not in a position to bring this charge against the new Government, having accepted the right of the legislature to do so and the taluqdars cannot take their stand upon a pledge which, apart from its being liable to violation like all other pledges in accordance with changing conditions, was not seriously treated even by those who gave it under the stress of circumstances.

## RECONSTRUCTION OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

### III.\*

THE councils in our local self-governing authorities are constituted on lines similar to those in most other countries. Apart from the somewhat narrow franchise and the complication of special electorates there is nothing unusual in the way our councillors are elected. The element of nomination, even where present, is extremely restricted. There arise no special problems concerning the relation between the councils and their executive. The position of the paid official has been a matter of some concern, and it has been very generally suggested that the superior staff should be given some security of tenure. It is, however, difficult to provide for restrictions on the powers of local bodies to appoint or dismiss officials without giving rise to other evils. The provision of a special majority before the dis-

missal of an official can take place has often led to a situation where an obviously incompetent official has been able to hold on to his position with the manipulated support of a strong minority. Apart, therefore, from providing special safeguards for enquiries and appeals and perhaps, in special cases, for the sanction of the provincial Government before dismissals, no special safeguards for the officials can be definitely suggested. We do not really believe that the present trouble with our local bodies lies in any special defect in constitutional structure or even that it is due to any cramping effect of a limited number of functions. As it is, with their limited financial resources our local bodies find it extremely difficult to carry out adequately even such compulsory functions as are entrusted to them, and even within the present legislative structure our local bodies could usefully extend their activities considerably if they were in a position to do so. Our opinion that the reasons of our ill-success to-day are not mainly constitutional is

\* The two previous articles appeared in the issues of 7th and 21st April.



borne out by an able analysis of the working of Local Boards in the Madras Presidency published recently by the Local Self-Government Institute, Bombay. The learned author of this publication finds that the main directions in which changes are desired to-day are the relaxation to a certain extent of detailed control from the centre and making available to the local bodies much larger financial resources than they possess at present. For the rest the ineffectiveness of our local bodies is due not to constitutional defects but mostly to a personnel that is inexperienced, the lack of proper conventions, the absence of a more vigilant public opinion; in short, our inexperience and the want of a sufficient body of capable and public-spirited men in public life. These are fundamental defects which, we can only hope, experience and education may correct, but which nothing in the way of further decentralization can remedy.

This is not to say that everything is as well as could be with our local self-government structure. Though we do not think that any radical constitutional transformation is called for, we recognise that a large number of administrative adjustments and changes are essential. And we highly commend the publication of the Central Provinces Minister because it draws attention to a number of aspects of the present working of our local bodies, in which improvement is called for and could be effected.

It is indeed a pity that so much attention was paid in this pamphlet to the detailed working out of a radical scheme of transformation. We feel sure that if the author had, instead of developing an entirely new scheme, confined his attention to less ambitious minor reforms, the result would have been very important in a practical manner. There is, for example, the question of the areas of local self-government. We believe that most people will to-day agree that the structure of local self-government in rural India, as everywhere else, must be based on a self-governing authority—a panchayet—in every village. The proper attitude to adopt towards this question is not to look upon panchayets as bodies that may voluntarily come into existence like co-operative societies, but to hold that they are bodies to be statutorily established like any other organ of government. We are glad to find that this is the attitude adopted towards panchayets by the Minister for Local Self-Government of the Central Provinces.

A very illuminating suggestion in this brochure regarding the question of areas which should be considered with great care, is the establishment of a local self-governing authority for each Revenue Inspector's circle. The problem of fixing appropriate areas is indeed most important in local self-government. Hitherto, so far as rural self-government is concerned, the only important area has been the District. It is seldom realised how in many ways the district is really too big a unit for local self-government. The area it covers, its large population and the diversity of economic regions and resources it often contains, make it really unsuitable as a unit looking primarily to needs of a local character. This is especially so in the absence of any

smaller units of local self-government. It may be urged that the failure of the Taluka Boards shows the inutility of smaller units. But the failure of the Taluka Boards was really due to the extremely restricted scope given to their activities and their very limited financial resources. And the Taluka even was too big. With panchayets established in every village, a unit corresponding to the Revenue Inspector's circle would, we believe, prove of great utility. If we examine the size of the population and the diversity of regions in districts like Poona, Satara, Nagpur or Chanda it would be realised that they are bigger than even the average English county or the German Government District. We cannot expect, and we do not therefore find, in the District Board councils that intimate acquaintance with details of local conditions and that comity of interests which is necessary if a primary local body is to work successfully. The abolition of the Taluka Boards has left the problem where it was. The creation of a panchayet in every village will only partially remedy the situation. For, the resources of a panchayet will always be small, and for a large number of purposes the co-operation of a number of neighbouring villages will always be found necessary. This can be achieved only by a type of area which corresponds to the rural district in England or to the "circle" in Germany. The Revenue Inspector's circle seems the most appropriate corresponding area in India. It is big enough for effective co-operative action and it is small enough to ensure homogeneity of conditions and interests. We, therefore, welcome this suggestion of the C. P. Minister and hope that it will obtain wide and detailed consideration.

The point that in a number of respects the activities of the local authorities are wasteful and that enough is not made of the staffs maintained by the provincial Government is well made by the author of this brochure. It is to remedy this state of affairs that it is suggested that the expert advice of the district officials should be made available to the local bodies. We agree that the defect exists; to the particular solution proposed we have already put forward a number of objections. It should further be noted that the district officials are hardly "experts". They are mostly routine administrators. The chief district officers such as those of the Revenue, Police or Judicial Departments can neither be called experts nor can they be of any help to local bodies in their particular functions. What we should like to advocate is, therefore, closer co-operation of the local bodies not so much with the district staff as with the "expert" staff maintained at the Provincial centre. The utility of this staff is clear especially in three functions of the local bodies—Education, Sanitation and Public Health, and Public Works. The co-operation we visualise is the sort of constant guidance and advice that the local bodies receive from the staffs of the central government in the United Kingdom such as of the Board of Education or the Ministry of Health. These central officers, who are in touch with what is going on in the whole Province, and who have the time to exper-

tise will really be in a much better position to advise the local bodies than the district officials. A certain amount of co-operation no doubt does take place even to-day between this provincial staff and the local bodies and a certain amount of advice is given. But this needs to be regularised and expanded to a much greater extent. Periodic visits to local bodies and the issue regularly of memoranda and circulars for their guidance must become a main feature of the work of the central departments. Indeed, in so far as the main work of such departments as Public Health will be entrusted to local bodies, the Provincial staff should make the guidance of local body activities its chief concern.

While in Public Health matters the most suitable course to be followed is evident, it is not equally so in Public Works and Education. Waste consequent upon a series of decentralized administrative units is perhaps greater in public works than elsewhere. Immediately after the introduction of the reformed local self-government administration a number of public works were perhaps too hastily transferred to local authorities, especially the District Local Boards. There is an obvious advantage in transferring such small works as can be carried out locally with ease, to local authorities. Even in India it has been the experience that most small village works can in the majority of cases be more economically constructed if left to authorities like village panchyets. With approved plans and given a certain amount of supervision, this system works well. The District Local Board public works, however, do not enjoy this advantage. Their scale is larger, they require the permanent maintenance of at least some superior staff, and except in adjusting works to local needs no particular advantage accrues, in this case, in leaving the execution to the local authorities. On the contrary it may result in inefficiency and waste. In these circumstances it would be worth while considering whether we cannot accept in respect of the District Local Board public works a system that obtains in some other countries like France. This is that of retaining the control and planning of the appropriate public works in the hands of a local body but entrusting the actual work of construction, etc., to the agency of the provincial Government. The local body will thus not maintain any separate public works staff itself, except perhaps a very small staff for maintenance purposes, and the central Government will carry out for the local body all constructional, etc., work which the body desires on certain fixed terms. The smallest village works may, of course, continue to be entrusted to the authority of the village or the circle.

The problem presented by education is entirely of a different character. So far as making available expert knowledge is concerned, this could be done on the same lines as in Public Health. But in the Bombay Province at least, it has been felt from the beginning of the new regime in local self-government that the local authorities as constituted were not quite suitable for the conduct of schools in the area. Hence the responsibility for the conduct of schools was

placed on quasi-independent School Boards. This arrangement has, however, never functioned satisfactorily. The constitution of School Boards, the manner in which they managed schools in a number of areas and the relation between the local authority proper and the School Board have all caused considerable dissatisfaction. The result has been that Government has recently felt it necessary to introduce a measure for radically altering the present arrangements. There is, of course, no one absolutely right way of constituting local educational authorities. It is quite possible to hold to-day that the transition effected in Bombay from a completely centralized educational system to one very much decentralized was too sudden. It has to be noted that primary education is organised and managed by the national Government itself in most countries of continental Europe. In France the educational system of each Department is strictly under the Prefect (an official corresponding to our Collector). In Germany also the system of primary education is national. In both these countries the local bodies are associated with the schools merely through representation on local advisory committees. It is arguable that the present position with regard to primary education in India is such that national control and guidance of this activity is both desirable and necessary. If an intensive nation-wide drive towards literacy is in contemplation it would be best that it is planned and undertaken by the Provincial Governments. It may, however, be thought desirable to leave this function to a local agency. In that case the present problem is that of improving the administration. It seems that the present trouble largely flows out of entrusting the running of schools to a body which is mainly composed—necessarily due to the standards of educational attainments in our country—of persons not highly educated. An ignorance of educational standards and methods such as prevails in our local bodies leads inevitably to conditions like the present. The setting up of a separate School Board afforded no solution mainly because the School Board was not selected on a basis formed with a view to the work it had to do and secondly because the double control created inevitable friction. In the circumstances it is worth consideration whether a similar system to that in U. S. A. could not be adopted in India. In U. S. A. education, primary and secondary, is a local function, but the local education authority is entirely distinct from the general local self-governing authority. In a number of cases even the areas for the educational board are different from the ordinary self-government areas. Special city and county Boards of Education are set up and usually the School Board is popularly elected. It may, however, be also nominated by the state or city authority; it is usually a small body. A large variety of constitutional arrangements are no doubt possible and are found to work well under different circumstances. The two alternative systems for education in India seem to be on the one hand a completely nationalised system or on the other control by *ad hoc* School Boards elected by the local people.

Finally, there are a set of problems of adjustment connected with functions which are essentially central but in the administration of which local circumstances carry considerable weight. Such are the problems presented by the management of certain types of forests and irrigation works. These can be dealt with, according to circumstances, in one of two ways: either isolating a part of the function most closely connected with local conditions and handing it over to a local authority, as for example by the creation of forest panchayats; or associating local advisory committees with the local agents of the central administration. A considerable amount of experimentation requires to be undertaken in both directions in order to make the administration of our various departments more efficient and adaptable. It is a great merit of the O. P. publication that it brings these problems also to the fore.

Needless to say, what we have attempted above is merely in the nature of notes on some problems of local administrative reform that deserve consideration. The Central Provinces Minister feels that a uniform system of "administrative decentralization" will meet all of them adequately. We do not share this view and feel that without a radical constitutional transformation a number of ways could be devised to solve each particular problem. In making our objections to the scheme clear we have inevitably stressed the differences of opinion. We would, therefore, end with again congratulating the Minister on his method of approach to the problem, on the thoughtful study that the publication clearly evinces and on his having published his reasoned views for criticism instead of presenting the public with a hastily drafted bill.

D. R. GADGIL.

(Concluded.)

#### SHORT NOTICES.

**HORIZONS.** By V. N. BHUSHAN. (Author, Wadia College, Poona.) 1937. 25cm. 31p. Re. 1.

"HORIZONS" by V. N. Bhushan is a collection of seventeen poems, fortified with a display of international recognition through appreciations and press opinions at the end. The poet shows a genuine professor's command of English, but does not seem to possess the lightness and ease of the ascent of a Master to the plains of heaven. He is too often reminiscent of other poets' works rather than of his own experience. His wealth of words and ideas is not always supported by strength of inspiration or feeling. The title "So-Ham" is marred by the insertion of juggernaut, a jarring substitute for Jagannath in the concluding line of an otherwise good poem. The mixture of a pure Sanskrit expression like So-Ham and an English hybrid like 'Juggernaut' introduces a painful element of discord of sound as well as association of ideas. The same objection may be raised to the use of the word "Sreemathi," in the sense of the Goddess of the Rainy Season.

'The Song of the Tree', 'The White Bird', and 'Creation' are proof positive of the poet's spiritual urge and consummate art. 'A Sylvan Symphony' is a love-song which strikes me as a brilliant failure on account of its overworked theme.

In full view of the 'Horizons' one may express the hope that the poet has a good future and would do much better if he abstained from that perpetual straining after literary effect, which is rather too much in evidence in this collection.

This book is illustrated in the approved mystic manner and is on the whole attractive enough to be welcomed or presented.

A. H. PADHYE.

**ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY ABROAD.** (BY KALIDAS NAG. (University of Calcutta, Calcutta.) 1937. 23 cm. 125 p.

DR. KALIDAS NAG is the Head of the History Department in the Calcutta University. In 1930, he had invitations from certain cultural centres in Europe and America to deliver addresses before those bodies. His University generously granted him the Ghose Travelling Fellowship for that year. He utilized the opportunity, not alone to fulfil his engagements but also to study the provisions made for the collection and co-ordination of the data of arts and archaeology as well as the methods of teaching these subjects adopted in the different places he visited. His peregrinations covered France, Germany, Italy, the United States of America, South America, Austria, Hungary, Belgium and countries in the Near East. The book is in the form of a Report intended to help Indian students who desire to specialize in the aforesaid subjects. This document will be useful to research scholars and also to the Provincial Governments and the States in India that maintain museums. It makes prominent mention of the enormous sums sunk by American and European Orientalists in the works of exploration and excavation. Savants in those countries are so convinced of the educative value of art collections and of museums that they leave no effort untried to make these popular. Another point which is worthy of notice is the importance attached to Indian culture by scholars in Europe and America. It is now practically admitted that Oriental art and culture supply, in many fields, "the archetypes and primary urges of Occidental norms and evolutions." Prof. G. M. Sinclair, the learned Director of the Oriental Institute at Hawaii, recently said:—"Some of us feel that western civilization is in dire need of Cross-fertilization with the East." But how does India guard her treasures? Our priceless articles, the Report remarks, are "aimlessly exposed to foreign exploitation." As in Egypt and Japan, in India too there should be a law to enforce the safe custody of valuable and historical relics in the national sites and museums. "When will the museums and universities of India," asks Dr. Nag, "awaken to the urgent need of co-operation, with other countries in the grand work of reconstructing the history of the Orient? ... And now that the discovery of the Indus valley Civilization has brought India in the very forefront of the attention of the archaeologists, should we not take the initiative in co-operating with and seeking co-operation of the international group of archaeologists working so admirably in the domains of our next-door neighbours?" With these significant questions, the review of this useful work shall be closed.

F. E. K.

**TELLING YOUR CHILDREN, PARTS I & II.**

BY ENID M. SMITH. (The Alliance of Honour, London.) 7 cm. 11 & 12 pp. 1d. each.

THE Alliance of Honour has issued these two small pamphlets which mothers, faced with such inconvenient questions from their children as "Mother from where does the baby come?" will find useful. In the short compass of twelve pages each we are told how to impart clear sex knowledge to the little children. It is written in simple language and mothers will find them of great value in bringing up a generation of clean and healthy-minded children.

S. R. V.

## Miscellaneous.

### "LIBERALISE THE FEDERATION."

*The possibility of changes being made in the federal part of the Government of India Act is envisaged in a leader in the Manchester Guardian. It says:*

When, last year, Congress dug in its heels over the reserved powers of Governors, provincial autonomy underwent a considerable change, even if it was not the sort of change that is registered and sanctified by the British Parliament.

Federation could be changed in the same way by frank discussions. This might mean months more of negotiations, but it would be worth any delay.

The Viceroy has, it is true, recently seen Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Satyamurti, and other British Indian leaders, but on neither side has there been complete authority to come to an agreement. That is not to say that another full-blown conference is wanted—Indian history is cluttered up with round tables as it is—but there must be frequent and authoritative contacts between the Viceroy (or his representatives) and representatives of British India.

The result of those contacts should be to make federation, by means of guarantees (one of non-interference similar to that obtained for the working of provincial autonomy, for example) and working con-

ventions (regarding the degree of Indian participation in the Viceroy's reserved subjects), a much more liberal scheme than it is according to its text.

Then there are the Princes. They are certainly despotic (or should they be called "authoritarian"?), and they certainly have greater strength in the Central Legislature than their numbers warrant. From the orthodox British point of view, they are useful counterpoise to a possibly extreme national control at the Centre (already made fairly unlikely by indirect election and reserved seats for special communities and religions).

On the other hand, the States must be brought into any federation by some means or other; they can be denounced, but they cannot be ignored, and unless one is a believer in violent revolution (which would probably be unsuccessful), the only way to deal with the States is through the Princes.

All except the extreme Socialist wing of Congress realise this, and would be satisfied with some sign that the Princes were prepared to encourage democratic and social reforms and less willing to rule as best they can, balancing between their own inefficiency and the support of British troops.

There are definite signs that the Princes have realised how changed India already is and how likely it is to change with increasing rapidity in the future.

Indore has followed Travancore in throwing open State temples to untouchables; Cochin is feeling its way towards democratic government; and Mysore is increasing the share taken by its people in the government of the State.

What is even more important is that the British Government is understood to be encouraging reforms, and if important States such as these give the lead the rest will find themselves obliged to follow.

Already the working of provincial autonomy has made a noticeable impression in the States. If the Princes are wise, they will accept the undefined change in their status, and if the British Government is wise, it will realise that the last year has made the rigid letter of the original federation impossible.

—The Hindu.

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