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## Topics of the Week.

### The Congress Situation.

BABU SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE appears determined to take up the challenge of the Old Guard in the Congress. All the members of the Working Committee, including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and excepting only Mr. Sarat Bose, tendered their resignations, ostensibly for the purpose of removing any possible obstacle in the way of Subhas Babu framing a programme for the ensuing session as he would like it, but perhaps with the unavowed object of intimidating the President into compliance with Mahatma Gandhi and themselves. Subhas Babu has, however, without much ado, accepted these resignations and is willing to form a new Cabinet of his own. The nominations need not be made till after the Congress session is over and will be determined probably by the decisions on the major policy that the Congress will take. The immediate effect of the resignations will be that there will be no officially sponsored resolutions before the Congress, the President himself being too ill to undertake the task. But this is no insuperable difficulty. Subhas Babu's friends will prepare drafts for the initiation of the discussion. It remains to be seen whether in the Congress itself the Working Committee's ex-members will adopt a policy of non-co-operation benevolent neutrality or active participation.

### "Kenya Lost—All Lost."

YEARS ago the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri made this exclamation, which epitomised the status of Indians in the British Empire. It is truer to-day than ever before, for India is even more sensitive to racial discrimination and insult now than previously. For years the Indians in Kenya, backed solidly by the Indians in India and by the Government of India, have been struggling for the faithful observance of the British prin-

ciple of no racial discrimination in the British Empire. They hoped that as days went by and the British people understood better the principles which some British statesmen laid down and on which alone the British Empire could endure, race prejudice and racial discrimination would gradually disappear. Instead, the Kenya (Highlands) Order in Council, which was published last week and which came into operation on 1st March, has only confirmed the worst fears of the pessimists and once again reiterated the un-British principle of racial discrimination in Kenya. It is true that the Order in Council abandons the suggestion that the discrimination should be incorporated in the statute. It affirms, however, that racial discrimination by administrative action shall remain as hitherto. Indians protest against racial discrimination as such, whether it is inflicted by statute or by administrative action. In a sense, statutory discrimination is more honest than administrative one.

THE matter cannot be allowed to rest at this stage. There can be no permanent peace until race discrimination is eliminated altogether. The Government of India have done all they possibly could to persuade the British Government, and have reserved liberty of action in the future. It is reported that the Indian National Congress in East Africa has already decided to observe a *hartal* on the 1st March and is contemplating other measures of protest. The success of the Indian cause in the recent Zanzibar struggle has nerved the Indians in East Africa also to resort to more drastic and arresting steps to enforce their demands. They are in the best position to know their strength. In any righteous steps that they may take they can depend on the sympathy of India, deep and burning, and we trust, also of the Government of India.

### Indians in South Africa.

IT is very ominous that the British Government's decision to maintain racial discrimination in Kenya was timed just when a further measure of racial segregation was being contemplated in South Africa. Nothing could handicap the Government of India in their efforts to ameliorate the conditions of Indians in South Africa more than the action of the British Government itself in Kenya. It is the most unkindest cut of all.

ON the 7th December last, the Minister of the Interior in South Africa received a deputation of the Federated Ratepayers Association of Pretoria and informed the deputationists that he was contemplating a measure by which Indians would be excluded from an area if 60

per cent. (or was it 75 per cent.?) of the Europeans in the area desired that Indians should be excluded. It was a kind of local option, the option being given only to the Europeans. The South African Indian Congress promptly pointed out that such a measure would fan the flames of racial prejudice and animosity as nothing else would and very strongly protested against any such step. Even the merest suggestion of such a step by a responsible member of the South African Cabinet is enough to create in the racial atmosphere of South Africa mischief which may admit of no bounds. It is a matter for some satisfaction that there is the Agent-General of the Government of India on the spot. The Government of India have done well to reiterate their view that Indians in South Africa should be free to own and occupy land for residence and trade without hindrance or segregation. We fear, however, that another crisis is approaching in the relations between India and South Africa, which may necessitate another round table conference to seek a solution for it.

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#### The Madras Budget.

IN presenting the Budget Estimates for 1939-40 to the Madras legislature, the Hon'ble Mr. Rajagopalachari, the Premier and the Finance Minister of the Madras Government, made a bold claim on behalf of his budget. He said:

In former days the revenue expected from the existing sources and the expenditure on standing sanctions based on existing orders and commitments were first estimated and then the difference, invariably a surplus, was utilised for undertaking new commitments or Part II schemes. This method of approach was both natural and convenient as conditions were static and the general system of taxation and its incidence continued with but little change from year to year. Circumstances have, however, now altered and the Government of the Province has to suit itself to new and very different conditions. It has to follow a policy of easing the burden of taxation on the poorer sections of the community transferring it to shoulders better able to bear it. It becomes, therefore, necessary to abandon the old approach and follow the alternative plan of determining the expenditure which is to be incurred and then devising the means of raising revenue sufficient to meet it.

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ONE would expect that a Finance Minister who waxed so eloquent on such an obvious point would take steps to see that he lived up to his ideals. But there is little trace of a new orientation of policy in the Madras Budget, the estimated figures for 1939-40, being nearly the same as the revised estimate for 1938-39, with slight modifications here and there. The only notable change that the Madras Ministry has effected in the old budget, during its tenure of office of nearly two years, is a sacrifice of revenue on the excise head, due to its prohibition programme, about which we have written elsewhere. Except for this only change, the Congress budget of Madras is nearly an exact replica of the budgets of the previous Governments, and we do not think Mr. Rajagopalachari is justified in claiming for his budget the virtues he associates with his new budget procedure. The total revenue of the Madras Presidency during 1937-38 was 16,00.62 lakhs, the total expenditure 15,82.96 lakhs, leaving a surplus of 17.66 lakhs. The revised estimates for 1938-39 show an increase of revenue of nearly 20 lakhs over the previous year. During 1939-40, the revenues

of the province stand at the same figure, whereas expenditure goes up by 17 lakhs more, leaving a deficit of the same amount. Thus, it will be seen that the revenue and expenditure accounts of Madras show no marked change to justify the bold claim put forward by the Finance Minister.

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THE estimated education expenditure of the Madras Government during 1939-40 has been placed at 265.56 lakhs whereas during 1937-38, the expenditure stood at 258.84 lakhs. Thus there has been, roughly speaking, an increase of 7 lakhs under this head. But such increase in expenditure has occurred even in departments not connected directly with social welfare services. On General Administration the estimates for 1939-40 show an increase of nearly 8 lakhs over the figures for 1937-38. Thus since the Congress accepted office in Madras, both revenue and expenditure have increased steadily; the increase in revenue due mostly to the share of income-tax proceeds which the Centre pays to the provincial governments and the increase in expenditure due to the natural expansion of work under the various departments. It has become evident now to every one versed with the subject that the Congress Ministries, in spite of their extravagant promises, cannot reduce at all the burden of taxation. On the other hand attempts are being made in every Congress-governed province to raise the level of taxation both on the Rich and Poor.

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IF the Madras Ministry were not content merely to lay down high-sounding principles but were eager to give effect to them, it would have taken up the programme which has been enjoined upon it in the Election Manifesto of the Congress but which every Congress Government has laid aside as utterly impracticable, viz. that of exempting uneconomic holdings from payment of land revenue. Or it would have taken up in right earnest the question of universal primary education. The former would cost 3½ crores and the latter an additional sum of about 3 crores. If the Ministry were ready to raise by additional taxation the monies required for such necessary social services, it would at least have made a beginning in this direction; but its devotion to these principles shows itself at present only in asserting them but not in acting upon them to any appreciable degree. Nor is the taxation policy of this Government, which professes to cater for the poor by taxing the rich, even as good as that of some others. Agricultural income-tax and death duties are not after all very revolutionary measures, but it does not contemplate the imposition of these, but on the contrary the imposition of such extremely regressive taxes as a general sales tax. It need hardly be said that this tax will throw a heavy burden on the poor people like the salt tax. It would be best to defer further comment on it till we have the Ministry's detailed proposals before us, but what has been said above is enough to show how extravagant Rajaji's claim is.

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#### The Sind Budget.

THE Sind Budget Estimates for 1939-40, presented last week to the Sind Legislature, disclose a small surplus of 6.88 lakhs. The total revenue of the province including the Central subvention of 105 lakhs has been estimated at 383.23 lakhs and the total expenditure at 376.35 lakhs. Thus,

to all outward appearances, Sind seems to be a solvent province. But the real position of Sind is full of much more anxiety than what appears on the surface. Due to its irrigation projects, Sind has contracted a debt of nearly 29 crores from the Central Government, whose interest charges alone come to 140 lakhs a year. It is expected that, with the development of the irrigated areas, Sind will have to pay not only the interest charges on the whole debt, but from the first of April 1942 a sum of 75 lakhs every year till 1957 towards part payment of the principal. From 1957-58 to 1966-67 this instalment payment towards the principal will be reduced to 60 lakhs a year, which will be reduced further from that year to 50 lakhs a year till the whole principal is fully repaid.

ON the other hand, the subvention given by the Central Government will undergo a continuous reduction. It will remain at 105 lakhs for a period of ten years (i. e. till 1946-47 inclusive); and will then be diminished by 25 lakhs a year for 20 years, by 40 lakhs a year for the next five years, by 45 lakhs a year for the next succeeding five years and thereafter until the whole Barrage debt is repaid by 50 lakhs a year. Thus it will be seen that the financial solvency of Sind depends entirely on an improvement of land revenue in the Barrage area, and unless this materialises, all financial plans with regard to the Barrage debt payment and Central subvention reduction may go entirely wrong. It is observed that the Barrage revenues show no signs of being

able to cope with the Barrage debt, and here lies the danger of the whole position. The Miles-Irving Committee, which went into the whole question of the Barrage scheme, had anticipated that by 1939-40 Barrage revenue would amount to 143 lakhs and income from land sales to 82 lakhs. But, according to the budget estimates, the revenue falls below the anticipated revenue by 28 lakhs and proceeds from land sales by 20 lakhs. This clearly makes the future of the Barrage area full of grave anxiety, and unless strenuous attempts are made to better the position Sind may verge on financial bankruptcy.

It is creditable on the part of the Ministry that even under such difficulties it has budgeted for a new expenditure of 2 lakhs recurring and 187 lakhs non-recurring on nation-building departments. The Congress members of the Sind Assembly are furious because the Ministry has not accepted the ideal of prohibition. But in such a critical stage of Sind's financial position, the Ministry is unwilling to part with a substantial portion of its revenue. It would be hard to blame the Sind Ministry if, till 1942-43, it goes on conserving and improving the revenues of the province. After 1942-43, the financial position of Sind will be fully reviewed, and if after that the Government fails to improve the nation-building services, then certainly it will be liable to criticism. The position of Sind being peculiar, we hope that the Ministry and the Opposition in Sind will co-operate with each other to improve the financial position of the province.

## PROHIBITION AT WORK.

IN a brief moment, the Bombay Government is trying to fulfil a long time, in the matter of prohibition. One can understand the haste that it is making, after a long purgatory, to pass into the Kingdom of Heaven. We are ourselves no less eager to remove the curse of drunkenness; but our misgivings arise from the fact that the Bombay Government's haste renders it powerless, on its own showing, to increase the supply of social services and to improve the standard of living of the masses and to brighten their daily lives, on which in the long run the eradication of this evil really depends. One thought at first after reading Mr. Lathe's budget that this policy was dictated by a desire to produce a political crisis next year by demanding from the Government of India the full half share of income-tax, and what would appeal forcibly to everyone as a moral issue was put forward for that purpose. But this motive must be ruled out as no other Congress Government is taking the same line. Even Rajaji's Government, which is perhaps the keenest on prohibition among Congress Governments and which therefore might have been expected to be the first to faint away in its attempt to scale the mountain peak of virtue, seems to be jogging along quietly on the road to prohibition and Rajaji expressly disapproves of a crisis on this issue. The pity of it, how-

ever, is that if the Madras Government's pace of prohibition is slow, its pace in improving the general social conditions of the people is not quicker on that account either. What we would like to see is a high type of idealism harnessed to realism, so that we may achieve solid and lasting results in the shortest space of time. The following account of the further instalments of prohibition which other Congress Governments are planning for the coming year will show that none of them is contemplating anything so spectacular as the Bombay Government.

### BIHAR.

Prohibition was first introduced in Bihar in the district of Saran and is estimated to cause a total loss of excise revenue in that district of 7½ lakhs. Next year it is proposed to extend the prohibition and temperance programme "in so far as this is possible without losing more than an additional 10 lakhs of revenue." It would be possible, it is anticipated, to introduce prohibition in parts of Ranchi and Hazaribagh districts in Chota Nagpur (aboriginal areas where the need for prohibition is more urgent) and in Hazipur subdivision. If prohibition in Saran district has been successful, the success of the experiment in the new areas does not seem to be assured. Government says, in connexion with the proposed extension of prohibition, "We cannot

anticipate what would be the result of prohibition in this area." As a measure of temperance, the outstills will be closed and the distillery system introduced in Dhanbad sub-division. Similar other measures will also be taken like reducing the limits of possession of excisable articles and increasing their price.

The excise revenue in 1936-37 was 116.10 lakhs; in 1937-38 121.99 lakhs; in 1938-39 116.00 lakhs (revised) and in 1939-40 it is estimated at 103.50 lakhs. Thus it will be seen that in the current year yield from excise will be very nearly what it was in 1936-37 and next year it is proposed to give up 13 lakhs. As excise revenue forms very nearly one-fifth of the total provincial revenue, the pace of prohibition will have to be considerably accelerated if, as the Finance Minister says, the Government, being committed to a policy of prohibition, is to complete the programme "within a definite time-limit, say, three years from now", i. e., we suppose, by April 1942.

#### ORISSA.

In Orissa the first step in prohibition will be taken in the next financial year. There the more urgent problem relates to opium than to drink. The Government made only preliminary arrangements during the current year for starting opium prohibition in Balasore, and next year prohibition will be actually inaugurated both of opium and drink. The actual yield of revenue from excise in 1936-37 was 32.78 lakhs; the Government budgeted for a revenue of 32.46 lakhs in the current year, but on account of certain measures it took for reducing the consumption of opium, the total loss of revenue in the current year is expected to be 2 lakhs. Next year, when prohibition will be introduced, it is expected that there will be a further loss of 7.50 lakhs, or of 9.50 lakhs in all. Thus the total loss in revenue will be about 30 per cent. For a province with an income of less than two crores a sacrifice of of some ten lakhs of rupees is of no mean order.

#### UNITED PROVINCES.

The Premier, in introducing his budget last year, said on the Government's prohibition policy:

It is intended to introduce absolute prohibition so as to forbid the sale of all excisable articles, liquor or drugs, except for medicinal purposes, in Mainpuri and Etah districts. Along with this the number of excise shops, whether for the sale of liquor, drugs or opium, is to be cut down by approximately 25 per cent.; that is 500 shops for liquor and the same number for drugs and 250 for opium or 1,250 in all will be closed. It is expected that by this latter means there will be a decrease in consumption of liquor by 20 to 25 per cent. and in the matter of drugs from 15 to 20 per cent. The experiment of State management will also be tried in some towns, and the system of on and off licences will be replaced by one of off-licences alone, so far as practicable. Instead of the present system, which allows the reduction of prices at the discretion of the licensees, there will be fixed retail prices for every place. These measures, which constitute our step towards the ultimate goal of total prohibition, are likely to cost us 25 lakhs in this year.

That is to say, the U. P. Government was prepared to reduce its excise revenue from 150.50 lakhs to 136.25 lakhs, or roughly by one-sixth. The total ordinary revenue of the province is about 13 crores, and 25 lakhs sacrificed in excise revenue is about 2 per cent. of the total revenue.

This year the Premier made the following announcement about the next step to be taken by the Government next year:

For the next year Government have decided to extend the 'dry' area to four more districts, namely, Budaun, Farrukhabad, Bijnor and Jaunpur. The first two have been selected primarily because they adjoin the districts of Etah and Mainpuri selected last year and the last two because ground has already been prepared there by the introduction of the State-managed agency which has greatly reduced the consumption of intoxicants. In the remaining districts the number of shops will be further reduced by about 20 per cent., and this reduction coupled with that effected last year and the total abolition brought about by the introduction of prohibition in six districts will bring the total number of shops in the rest of the province to 60 per cent. of the number existing when the present Government assumed office.

The system of State-management, which has proved effective in lowering the consumption of intoxicants, is to be extended to certain industrial centres such as Hathras, Jhansi, Agra, Gorakhpur, and Cawnpore and to the towns of Muzaffarnagar, Bulandshahr, Basti, Anupshahr, Chandausi and Kotdwara. As a further restrictive measure the retail sale price of *charas* is being raised by four annas per tola. The various restrictive measures which Government adopted last year brought about a reduction in provincial consumption of more than 30 per cent. in liquor, about 25 per cent. in *charas*, about 45 per cent. in *ganja* and about 25 per cent. in opium. The further measures which Government are adopting for the next year will, I fervently hope, reduce the general consumption of intoxicants to a still greater degree and prepare the ground for the extension of prohibition to a much larger area.

Provision has been made for an expenditure of Rs. 2,00,000 in connection with State-managed agency and Rs. 28,000 more have been provided for extra preventive staff to be entertained to enforce prohibition. Our income under excise has come down from Rs. 152 lakhs in 1936-37 to Rs. 115 lakhs, which is the estimate for the next year. The corresponding figures for expenditure under excise show an increase of Rs. 1,50,000. There has thus been a loss of about Rs. 40,00,000 under this head since our acceptance of office.

#### MADRAS.

Madras was the first province in India to pass a prohibition law and to bring it into force. Prohibition was first introduced in the Salem district on 1st October 1937 and it was extended a year later to Chittoor and Cuddapah districts; and it is proposed to be extended on 1st October this year to the North Arcot district. The annual loss of revenue in a full year on account of prohibition in Salem district will be 26 lakhs, in Chittoor district 9 lakhs, in Cuddapah district 7 lakhs, and in North Arcot district 23 lakhs; or the total loss on this account in a full year will be 65 lakhs. In 1937-38 the total excise revenue of Madras was 403 lakhs; thus the Madras Government is prepared so far to give up 16 per cent.

of its excise revenue permanently. Side by side with this loss of revenue, the Government proposes to enhance the duty on country spirits in non-prohibition districts by Rs. 1-8-0 per gallon next year. This will reduce the loss by 10 lakhs.

Probably Rajaji had got wind of what Mr. Latthe was going to do in Bombay, and he anticipates criticism by saying:

It may seem to be but small-pace advance to go only as far as one district this coming year. My only explanation is the need to preserve financial stability and for the necessary time that is required to build up alternative taxation. To go forward irrespective altogether of financial considerations, however attractive it may be in enunciation, would be to impair the credit of the Government and cause a setback to the movement of prohibition itself. We have to secure the financial adjustments necessary and we have to consolidate the position at every stage. We have to combine the crusader's spirit with the wisdom of sound management of large responsibilities, unless indeed we

would make prohibition only an excuse for a crisis and an escape from responsibility.

On the question of creating an all-India crisis on the issue of prohibition, Mr. Rajagopalachari has expressed himself in a forthright manner. He says:

The Provinces are asked to govern themselves with slender taxation resources, and even these are hedged in by many restrictions. So that the proper solution of this financial problem on which prohibition hangs is finally the reduction of Central expenditure and the transfer of more revenue to the provinces. This is true, but it is not right to proceed from it to the logical corollary that prohibition must recede from the constructive plane of provincial administration to the status of a mere slogan and focus for the development of a political crisis against the Centre. We cannot be content with this translation from the region of tangible, though partial, realization to the region of mere political battle, until we reach the time and circumstance favourable for a victory over such a political crisis. Such an attitude does not at any rate content me.

## "PARAMOUNTCY'S DUTY."

THE policy of non-intervention in State affairs is being followed both by the Congress and the Paramount Power. It is widely believed that Mahatma Gandhi's attitude to this question has undergone a complete change, and that even if the Congress continues to be under his dictatorship, the official policy of the Congress will be radically altered in the ensuing session at Tripuri. It is true that the theoretical position which the Mahatma had taken up earlier he has now abandoned. He no longer maintains, as he used to do before, that the States are, like Afghanistan or Goa, foreign territory to British Indians and that, therefore, even if they had the power of effective intervention in the States so as to compel the rulers to accord civil liberties to the people and introduce popular government in the States, they must not use such power; and that all that they were entitled to do was to exercise their moral influence on them. Now he contends that if they have the power they must use it, and that if the Congress did not interfere it was only because it felt that it lacked power. But, though the Mahatma's attitude has changed in theory, we doubt how far the change will show itself in practice. The interest that he is taking in Rajkot and Jaipur does not prove that he is definitely in favour of intervention. In the former State his avowed purpose is to free the ruler from the Paramount Power's intervention which, according to him, is being exercised in the wrong direction, and he has repeatedly asserted that the movement is directed, not against the State, but against the British Government. In the latter State also the satyagraha is aimed at the British official in the State and thus at the British Government. The emphasis laid in both these cases of non-violent coercion on the fact that the persons

to be coerced are Britishers cannot but leave a suspicion on one's mind that if misrule in a State could not be traced, either conclusively or plausibly, to British influences he would leave the indigenous misruler alone.

The Paramount Power, too, agrees in theory that it has a right and a duty to interfere with the internal administration of the States in cases of gross misgovernment, but rarely does it exercise this right and discharge this duty. If the British Government on the one hand and British Indians on the other recognised that it was incumbent upon them, to the extent of their ability which is unlimited in the former case and limited in the latter, to change the character of the islands of autocracy which surround them, it would not take long for the States to adapt themselves to democracy. The Congress, however, being pledged to independence of the British Government cannot logically ask for the latter's interference in the States, and the All-India States' People's Conference, which works under the guidance of leading Congressmen, modified the draft resolution of its own Working Committee asking for closer interference of the British Government for the purpose of introducing responsible government in the States, and eventually passed a resolution in which it asked only for withdrawal of active support on the part of the British Government to a State which wished to retain its autocracy but in which people were carrying on a struggle for democracy. If the British Government exerts no pressure on the States for the establishment of responsible government and if the people in British India too follow the same policy, then the condition of the States' people would be pitiable indeed. The Congress is showing some signs of a slow change in its former policy of

rigid non-interference, and this is all to the good. But what is even more satisfactory is that the progressive States themselves appear to be urging the Paramount Power to interfere in the backward States in order that the misrule obtaining in these States may be sternly put down and the rulers adhering to autocracy may be made to introduce democracy.

Yes, the States themselves are asking for interference, hard as it is to believe it. We have no inside knowledge of these matters, but we rely for this statement upon what has appeared in *United India and Indian States*, whose credentials as a spokesman of the more important States cannot be disputed. It says in its recent issue :

"In our note elsewhere we have touched on the need, urgent need we would add, of a gesture from paramountcy that is, after all, paramount. It is to tell in no uncertain terms to the States that they must bring up their administration to the level in British India—not to the letter but in the spirit. There are States and States; and the States that require such a definite ultimatum from paramountcy most certainly preponderate.

"We go farther than that; we think that the time has come for advanced States like Mysore and Travancore and Baroda to appeal directly to paramountcy to interfere, for they have to pay dearly for the sins of their backward brethren. When Jawaharlal thunders against the States, he does not make any difference between well-administered and maladministered States. To him all are tarred with the same brush. He can, for instance, write without a qualm of conscience of another struggle looming ahead of Mysore in the same breath in which he writes about Dhenkanal or Talcher!

"Again, the kind of organised goondaism that Congressmen are threatening Mysore or Travancore with is born out of the stimulus from the need of similar display in other less organised States. Because Congressmen find it necessary to go against Idar, Congressmen in Mysore begin to think that they also must go against their Government. If the Mysore Congress species have no grievance, they can manufacture one. . . .

The sins of the maladministered States are thus visited on the best governed States. The diseased limbs must be amputated. And paramountcy alone can do that operation. And it must do it. To delay is to endanger the very safety of India. For paramountcy's indifference is directly inciting the people against the better governed States. This indifference signifies that they tolerate the diseased spots in Indian India.

"Take Rajkot for instance. The State has been misgoverned. On that point there is no question at all. Sir Patrick Cadell had said it; Gandhiji also has said it. The Congress claims to dictate to the Ruler. Paramountcy's right to dictate is unquestioned. Why, then, does it not do it? Why is it that we hear only of the Residency police beating Rajkot subjects in distant forests, or Mrs. Gandhi being kept in a village without water and medical relief? Why do we not hear that the Government have sent an experienced Indian administrator to take over and look into things, entrusted with a definite programme of constitutional government. We deliberately refer to an "Indian" administrator, for it would be a red rag to the bull to send a "white" dewan in the face of such agitation. Experienced Indians, fit to tackle the situation, are not wanting. Paramountcy has a duty to perform in this matter. And it must perform it."

It will be observed that this paper calls peremptorily for an ultimatum from the Paramount Power to the misgoverned States not only that the misgovernment shall cease, but that autocratic government shall be replaced by constitutional government, and such States, it says, are in an overwhelming majority. There is some copious work here for the British Government to do in cleaning the Augean stables! And *United India* also thinks that the more advanced States must themselves demand such interference in sheer self-protection. We suppose it is because some of these States are willing to make this demand that our contemporary has put forward the suggestion. In face of the imperative need of the situation, all the theories about internal sovereignty to which the States had tenaciously clung have now gone by the board!

## PROHIBITION.

IT is obvious that the Bombay Government mean business with their prohibition programme. No apology is, therefore, needed for discussing its various aspects. To some prohibition is essentially a moral question. Perhaps it is. But who shall undertake to evaluate alcoholism in terms of the ethical values of life? Common sense has long declared in favour of abstinence. "Why, Sir", said Dr. Johnson, "there is no doubt that not to drink wine is a great deduction from life; but it may be necessary." We have nothing more to say on this aspect of the question. Our aim is a more modest one: to suggest some considerations bearing upon the economic and budgetary aspects of prohibition.

It is well that these two aspects should be kept distinct. The economic aspect relates to the effects of prohibition on national income and welfare. The budgetary aspect is narrower in range. It relates to the problem of finding out alternative modes of taxation to make good the loss of excise revenue and to meet the cost of preventive establishment.

### I.—THE ECONOMIC ASPECT.

The economic aspect relates to the effects of prohibition on national wealth through its effects on consumption, employment and production. On this question some American studies (like those of Herman Feldman and T. N. Carver) are available. Sir Josiah Stamp has also subjected the matter to a

close statistical analysis in a paper called "Alcohol as an Economic Factor." Stamp's statistical analysis is particularly valuable; and one feels that if statistical material is collected here to suit his methods, it would be a valuable aid in evaluating the prohibition experiment in Bombay. Stamp classifies the economic effects of prohibition as under:

(1) First-line effects; i. e. those relating to transfer of consumption and employment caused by prohibition.

(2) Second-line effects; i. e. the physiological and psychological effects on the producer. These effects bear on general efficiency.

(3) Third-line effects; i. e. those relating to such social costs as are involved in prevention of crime, treatment of disease, average duration of life, etc.:

(4) Fourth-line effects; i. e. "those influences on character, morals and happiness etc., which, though not primarily economic, have some economic reactions that cannot possibly be measured."

It will suffice for the present purpose to examine the first two categories of effects.

(1) *The First-Line Effects.*—It is obvious that prohibition will set free some persons and materials which will have to be absorbed in alternative occupations. As regard materials, I do not know what alternative uses can be found. But in regard to persons, general considerations point to the conclusion that, in the long run, they will be easily absorbed elsewhere. In fact, there is some reason to believe that the volume of employment will increase as a result of prohibition. This effect will be produced by the shift of consumption and demand from alcohol to other commodities. This shift can be shown to be economically profitable. On this matter Feldman observes:

The economic disadvantage of satisfactions secured in saloons is that such consumption did not lead to ever-expanding desires for other things. Satisfactions found in liquor began and ended in the saloon; often they stultified the desire for other things. They took people out of the ranks of consumers of goods in general and confined their demand to a specialised and deceptive satisfaction which often led them further and further away from their wants.... There is some foundation, therefore, for the assertion often met that some of the exceptional prosperity of this country is due to the diversion of purchasing power from the self-satisfying utility of alcohol to the goods and services demanded by the ever-expanding desire for other things.

The shift of consumption should be studied under the following heads:

(a) Effect on the consumption of commodities like milk, tea, coffee and other foods for the family. On this matter Feldman's findings are stated thus: "that a part of the desire for the saloon's beverages has been diverted to milk, ginger ale, etc. Some benefit may have been reaped by the coffee trade...."

(b) Effect on the consumption of harmful drugs. On this question, Feldman found the evidence inconclusive; but he refers to the conclusion of an inquiry by Miss Stoddard on "Prohibition and Drug Addiction", which is stated thus: "There are absolutely no statistics and almost no experience cited to afford any ground for the claim that prohibition has increased drug addiction". In the Bombay Presidency consumption of cocaine, opium, ganja and denatured spirit will have to be watched. In the Salem district of Madras, the Collector in his report notes some increase of the consumption of denatured spirit, but finds that "there are no signs of drinkers taking to ganja as a substitute", and that the figures of opium consumption are steady.

(c) Effects on the alternative uses of leisure: the cinema, the home, sports and recreations, and, perhaps, the brothel.

(d) Effect on saving. Here, Feldman points out that "the statistics of thrift show great increase in the number of individual saving bank depositors and in the average amount per deposit, a striking expansion in industrial insurance paid in weekly and monthly premiums and an enormous expansion in the assets of building and loan associations". In India it is difficult to obtain thrift figures, but rough indications might be available if they are properly sought.

All these are first-line effects upon consumption and through it on employment. They will obviously produce derivative effects on the worker's efficiency. These can be separately examined.

(2) *The Second-Line Effects.*—These effects relate to those on production of wealth derived from the first-line effects. It is obvious that the transfer of purchasing power from alcohol to other commodities will, in general, produce healthy effects of a physiological and psychological character. Many American students have maintained that prohibition has increased efficiency. The statistical material on this subject, however, is very slippery; investigators of the eminence of Irving Fisher have been accused of "unscientific work" in the field. But it appears to be a well-established fact that alcohol reduces both physical and mental efficiency. Hence, on general considerations, it could be said that prohibition will favourably affect efficiency, though the effect will not easily lend itself to quantitative measurement. Stamp concludes, "Summing up the effect upon... ultimate economic efficiency through improved health and physique, we cannot quantify it, but can only assume that it would be of a really measurable magnitude". We can apply other tests also, for example:

(a) Absenteeism. Feldman's inquiries show a diminution of absenteeism especially on Saturdays and Mondays. Dr. Vernon's figures also point to the same conclusion. Mr. Dixon, Collector of Salem, also gives some figures showing better attendance at the Rajendra Mills.

(b) Industrial accidents. Feldman observes: "The most definite fact is . . . that over a fourth of all industrial executives and practically all official authorities credit prohibition with reducing accidents."

(c) Loss due to convictions, sickness and mortality as a direct result of drunkenness. Here it is very difficult to eliminate the influence of other factors, but rough indications can be obtained if suitable methods are used.

I have here set forth considerations bearing on the effects of prohibition on consumption, employment and production. If during the course of the prohibition experiment, the Government collects and supplies statistical material along the above lines the work of evaluating the experiment in terms of economic welfare will be facilitated.

#### II.—THE BUDGETARY ASPECT.

Let us now turn to the budgetary aspect of prohibition. Undoubtedly, the huge loss on prohibition account raises a first-class problem in public finance. It can be discussed under two heads: (1) Is it not wrong policy to sacrifice the revenue which could be usefully employed alternatively? and (2) Granting that prohibition is a desirable end, is the problem of finding out alternative sources of revenue properly tackled?

Many critics of prohibition have laid stress upon the argument that the revenue lost by it could have been usefully employed on education, public health, slum clearance, and rural reconstruction. Such critics have charged the Government with a loss of sense of proportion and values in having, subordinated all other considerations of social welfare to that of prohibition. There is considerable force in this contention. It would not do to argue, however, that the social benefit of prohibition would be confined to a small class, and that the benefit of other activities referred to above would be more widely diffused. If there is any truth in what we have said about the effect of prohibition on national welfare, then it stands to reason that the benefit of prohibition would by no means be confined to a small class. There is, however, another consideration which limits and circumscribes the social benefit of prohibition. It is obvious that this benefit will be limited to the degree to which prohibition really and effectively prohibits. If illicit production and consumption are resorted to on a large scale, then the sacrifice of alternative modes of expenditure will be really great. On the whole, however, the comparative social benefits of the two types of expenditure do not seem to lend themselves to quantitative measurement. We, therefore, turn to the second question, viz. that of finding out alternative modes of taxation to make good the loss on prohibition.

In this matter the Government have relied mainly on two sources—the property tax and the sales taxes. The former has been described as a "war measure" by the Finance Minister. We understand that the essence of a "war-measure"

is that it is temporary, and that its justification lies solely in its ability to meet a critical situation. Perhaps, it also serves as a plea for softening the rigour of the strict canons of taxation which are normally applied to "peace measures". If it is so, we strongly protest against the description. It is obvious that the loss on prohibition is a permanent one; and that, therefore, it calls for permanent readjustments in the financial structure. Viewed in this light, the two principal measures appear to be highly objectionable. It is not that we deny the social justice of taxing property. We feel, rather, that the Government should have thought of some more permanent method of taxing high incomes in general. There is also considerable force in the argument that it is an encroachment upon the Bombay municipal source; and the fears expressed that, in spite of the proposed legislation, its incidence will be shifted on to the tenants are not altogether groundless. Again, the sales taxes are not capable of great extension without becoming highly objectionable. As long as they are confined to a few commodities, they are tolerable; but if an attempt is made to convert them into a general sales tax out of revenue considerations, it will be liable to all the objections raised against it by Professor Seligman. We, therefore, feel it a duty to protest against the extension of this tax as recommended by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta.

All this means that the Government ought to find out better methods of taxing the people. It is accepted on all hands that the Bombay tax system is highly regressive in its incidence. The Government, therefore, should straightforwardly proceed to make permanent readjustments with a view to shifting the burden on to the richer classes by means of direct taxation. In this connexion the Government's plans for taxing agricultural incomes and for making good the loss on account of alienated lands are welcome. Further, there is the suggestion of a surcharge on the income-tax for provincial proposes which Professor Vakil is reported to have made. Again, what about inheritance taxation? Duties in respect of succession to agricultural land are included in the provincial legislative list; while "wills, intestacy and succession save as regards agricultural land" are in the concurrent legislative list. We do not know what the Government propose to do about these; but we feel that the Government should take advantage of these provisions in the Government of India Act.

All these readjustments of taxation will obviously take time to work out. Perhaps on account of this, a plea for proceeding more slowly in prohibition can be made out. But those to whom the cause of prohibition is very dear might argue that budgetary considerations should be subordinated to those of social welfare. Perhaps they would be right in this. Indian economists have long blamed



the Central Government for having subordinated the larger interest of industry and commerce to that of budgetary stability in connexion with its ratio policy. These economists thus supply an argument to the prohibition-enthusiasts.

T. M. JOSHI.

### THE KISAN MOVEMENT.

In Bihar and Orissa the number of agricultural labourers is 38·7 lakhs; these increased by 19 per cent. between 1921 and 1931, and now form 19 per cent. of the total agricultural population. If unspecified labourers be included, the total agricultural labour population would be not less than fifty lakhs out of 133 lakhs of agriculturists. In Bihar there is a class cleavage between the tenants who would not till the land because of social prejudice or superiority and the agricultural labourers whom they treat sometimes even more harshly than big landlords. One-fifth of the agricultural population are destitute of land, semi-slave and land-hungry, and a tripartite division of economic interests in the land has taken a more serious agrarian crisis in the province than has developed elsewhere in India.

THIS extract from the speech of Professor Radhakamal Mukherji at the Provincial Co-operative Training Institute, Pusa, will indicate that the kisan movement cannot be built up by a heterogenous membership of all classes of occupiers on the land, absentees as well as cultivating, on the basis of common grievances against the zamindars. There are smaller zamindars who are no better than cultivating tenants, and there are rentier tenants whose interests are inimical to the progress of agriculture. Under existing conditions, security of tenure and fair rents should be demanded for every tenant-at-will including produce-sharing tenants. To prevent sub-ifeudation, rights of hereditary occupancy and fair rents should be assured for the tenants as against a habitual lessor, be he a tenant or a zamindar. As regards agricultural labourers, Prof. Mukherji proposes minimum wage legislation, settlements on land, and co-operative farming.

The inclusion of these measures in the forefront of the kisan programme will gain for the Kisan Sabha a fresh accession of strength from the classes which stand aloof, and consolidate its membership by weeding out rent-receiving tenants from its rolls. The purpose of the kisan movement will become clearer by the adoption of these methods, and will enable it to stand for a land policy of eliminating the class of rent-receivers from the land, and ensuring minimum living conditions for the agricultural labourer. While there are conflicting interests between the cultivating agriculturists and labourers, there is yet common ground between them as against the rentier tenant or zamindar. The kisan movement should not allow itself to be swamped by rentier tenants whose only interest is to take the place of the existing zamindars in the agricultural economy.

We have received two publications called the Kisan Handbook and the Kisan Movement, issued

by the Madras Branch of the Kisan Sabha. The minimum demands of the Kisan movement are given in the handbook. Swami Sahajananda has emphasised three points regarding the cultivators in his instructions to kisan workers. The one is that kisan comrades should see that sub-tenants are not rack-rented by rich peasants or intermediaries. The second is that "tenants should be advised to refuse to cultivate the soil or to pay the rent wherever they do not have permanency of tenure or right of alienation until all disputes are settled between the landlord or the intermediary and his tenants." The third is that the workers "should negotiate with the peasants for wages and conditions of work of the farm labourer while they should assist their organised strike against zamindars and planters. The Handbook has given in its forefront the minimum demands of peasants as passed at Lucknow. It is only in two places that they refer to tenants-at-will and labourers. Minimum demand No. 3 says "that in regard to the tenants of proprietary ryots suitable tenancy legislation must be passed for their relief." Minimum demand No. 23 says that "a minimum wage shall be assured and the Workmen's Compensation Act extended to all agricultural workers." The instructions to workers by Swami Sahajananda are clearer in this respect than the minimum demands.

The justification for kisan movement lies in securing to the cultivator security of tenure and fair rents, and in preventing sub-letting. Minimum wage and better living conditions should be secured for the labourer. It is hoped that these principles will be embodied in the forefront of the programme of the Kisan Sabha.

The resolutions passed by the All-India Kisan Committee better indicate the ideology behind the kisan movement than the minimum demands. The character of the struggle, the need for vesting ownership of land in the tiller of the soil, and a programme for the uplift of agricultural workers are all emphasised in them. One also finds a lack of uniformity of policy in the programmes of the Kisan Sabhas of the several provinces. The Madras Branch of the Kisan Sabha passed a resolution reviewing the report of the Prakasam Committee. But it avoided any reference to the position of the tenants under big intermediary rayats, and the settled sub-tenants under rent-receiving rayats, who have obtained the same legal recognition in the Tenancy Acts of other provinces. Even the Bihar Congress Ministry, which is considered by the Kisan Sabha as not going far enough, has given some protection to the under-rayats. While we should expect the kisan movement to urge for occupancy rights at fair rents in the case of even tenants-at-will and produce-sharing tenants which the U. P. Tenancy Bill of 1939 grants in the case of the same class of tenants, while we should expect the kisan movement to fight for the protection of the interests of agricultural labour, it is very

unfortunate that the Madras Branch of the Kisan Sabha does not even press the claims of settled and customary sub-tenants. We hope that the activities of the Madras Branch of the Sangh would be brought into line with the activities of the Kisan Sanghs elsewhere.

### BARODA ADMINISTRATION.

IN Europe and America window-dressing has been reduced to a fine art and similarly the white and brown bureaucracy of India have reduced report-writing to a fine art. The Baroda Administration Report for 1937-38 is a fine sample of this art. Right in the beginning there is a very convenient "summary of important features in the administration," which is meant to save the reviewer the time and trouble of wading through the whole report. One finds therein that every Department is making much headway and that everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. The people are happy, contented, quiet, and very grateful. But one has read in the newspapers, that there is a Prajamandal which is keenly dissatisfied with the maladministration of Baroda and perpetually airs a thousand grievances. In the Index the very word "Prajamandal" does not appear, but in para. 187 you find a sanctimonious remark: "The general tone of the press was on the whole loyal to the Baroda Government." Naturally, there is not a word about the police zoolum which is rampant throughout the State, not a word about corruption, although some Prajamandal workers were dragged into court for making remarks against an officer and the officer had to be dismissed eventually.

On opening a newspaper one comes across the report of the Mangrol Taluka Prajamandal Conference which was held just a few days ago. This taluka is situated between the prosperous and progressive talukas of Surat and Broach of the Bombay Presidency. The chairman of the reception committee, a responsible zamindar, Ahmad Mehomad Patil, says:

Our taluka has got one shop for alcoholic drinks in every four and half square miles, one school for every 15 miles, and one library for more than 18 square miles. There is not a single Government School for English education, there is not a single pucca road in the whole taluka, and the fair-weather roads are in disgraceful irreparable. Under conditions like these how can the people live? How can they get educated? How can they earn?

This taluka with a population of about 50,000 pays to the Government Rs. 3,71,512 in land revenue, and Rs. 1,50,000 in abkari taxes. These are very unpleasant and inconvenient facts, and you would not find an inkling of them in the Administration Report. The Baroda Government broadcasts the fact to the world that there are libraries or reading rooms in the State. On the other hand, Government complains that the people are politically backward in comparison with their next-door neighbours (in Gujarat). In

that case the question arises as to what is the value of those libraries and the free education given to the people. One could never know from this report, but it is possible to learn from the census report, that out of 1,50,258 Thakardas there are only 244 'women' who are literate. In all likelihood most of these are girls studying in the schools in urban areas. The total revenue of the State amounted in 1937-38 to 267 lakhs of rupees and the expenditure was 222. In spite of persistent criticism, this pernicious system of over-taxation and of having surplus budgets continues. Land revenue is marked as 127 lakhs, to recover which there is an expenditure of 21.5 lakhs (para. 239). Excise yields 24.5 lakhs. There are as many as 922 drink shops in all, and 244 toddy-tree booths (para 332). The provision of alcoholic drinks is extremely liberal. There is no attempt in this "Indian India" to curtail the drink evil when at the very next door, in Surat and Broach districts and in the city of Ahmedabad bold steps are being taken to reduce drunkenness.

The army costs 21.5 and the police nearly 15 lakhs. For external protection the army is nearly useless; therefore, this expenditure of 36.3 lakhs for internal safety and protection is unpardonably heavy. I do not want Baroda to lose its right of keeping an army, but I do suggest that as in post-War Germany the army should be mostly recruited, trained and employed for policing. That would cut down the expenditure by about 10 lakhs. The khangi expenditure, that is to say, the expenditure of the Maharaja's family was 27.68 lakhs, which is unjustified in view of the fact that there are tens of thousands of people who are actually starving. The poverty of the people is getting worse from day to day, and in the backward villages one really wonders how it is possible to live on a diet which has extremely low nutrition value. There are thousands of people who merely keep body and soul together simply because the soul refuses to depart; physically, these people are wrecks with no stamina at all. The expenditure of 38.65 lakhs for education is a misleading figure because the income from fees and other sources amounts to seven lakhs.

Leaving aside details of this character, one might say that the administration is extremely top-heavy. Ask the people of Baroda if it is efficient. There are so many rules and bye-rules and circulars that almost all the officers are ruled by their clerks or shirestedars. It is veritably a "Karkoon Raj."

There are certain features in the Baroda administration for which the State acquired a reputation for being progressive, for example, the Act for the prevention of child marriage. This Act has been in force for over 35 years. Practically no attempt, or very little attempt, was made to educate public opinion. The result is obvious.

The Act is in force and yet the marriages continued to take place and yielded every year a fat sum of money as fines. Since the officiating priest was made liable to punishment as an abettor there is a perceptible decrease in the number of such marriages. The conditions in Baroda are in no way better than in British Gujarat. Similarly, another stunt was the introduction of free and compulsory education throughout the State. The result has been that the parents of those children who could afford to pay for education do not pay any fees, whereas the poor parents do not send the children, especially the girls, to school. They are fined. Either these fines cannot be recovered because the parents are extremely poor or the fine is recovered by severe measures causing much suffering. Compared with the next-door neighbour, viz. Gujarat, Baroda shows a little larger percentage in literates, but the quality of education imparted is definitely inferior. I have shown above that the libraries have not done much good in developing either the political, social or civic sense of the people. It pains one to note that in all these activities the form is there, but the spirit is lacking. The administration does not show continued enthusiasm; there is very little persistence of effort; and it has never made any sincere attempt to secure the co-operation of the people. The Government cannot stand any criticism. It wants plastic, almost servile people; but self-respecting men of character and integrity are not tolerated. That is why all its work has fallen flat. It is enough to earn cheap kudos by enacting social legislation. It costs nothing to the Government. Almost no attempt of any sort is made to educate public opinion on these matters, except the appointment of committees to formulate proposals.

The Legislative Council was started in 1910. It is not only that its constitution has not been reformed during the last 28 years, but some of its too small powers have been curtailed. Out of 31 members there are only 10 elected members and they too are elected by the District Boards. The Dewan is the President. The budget is not placed before it. It is almost unbelievable that a State which maintains a farcical council like this can ever be regarded as progressive. Since writing the above, some minor reforms have been announced by the new Maharaja but that does not change materially the trend of this criticism. We have yet to see how the reforms are worked, and it must be remembered that the Dewan still remains the President of the Council.

The officialdom is responsible for the arrested growth of the municipalities and the Panchayats. These institutions for self-government have been kept securely tied to the leading-strings of the narrow-minded bureaucracy with the result that their progress has been hindered whereas Ahmedabad, Surat and Broach have gone ahead. People

living in Gujarat, whether in the Northern Division of the Bombay Presidency or in the Baroda State, are one. They are interconnected, inter-related, interchanging. Those living in the State are suppressed, repressed and backward, while those in Gujarat are politically conscious, considered fit for self-government, self-assertive and progressive.

Out of nearly 2,920 villages 2,103 villages have got a village panchayat (para 384). After having worked for over 30 years, I doubt if there are even one per cent. of Panchayats which work well. This sort of obvious failure would have called for emergent inquiries elsewhere. No such thing happens in Baroda administration. The old caravan marches on to futility! Upto the end of the year all the District Boards were presided over, ex-officio, by the Suba (or Collector); a few municipalities had an elected President; the rest were bossed over by the officials. Even the Baroda City Municipality has an appointed President and a Chief Officer who is not a servant but a master.

After the new Factory Act was passed in the Bombay Presidency a committee was appointed to bring the antiquated Act of Baroda up-to-date. The committee suggested that the factories should work for 9 hours instead of 10 per day. It was announced that the change would be put into operation from a particular date. In the meanwhile the influential capitalists stepped in and the expected reform was cancelled. That is how at the expense of poor people mill industry of a sort has been built up. Capitalists get some concessions in Baroda which are not available in the neighbouring British territories. This report proudly points to the growth of the industry, ignoring the fact that it is not the indigenous but foreign capitalists from Ahmedabad, Bombay and elsewhere who are exploiting the Baroda people. The concessions they receive are at the expense of the people; the present Factory Act is an injustice to the Baroda workers.

The Rent Regulation Act was passed in 1934 (para. 276) to safeguard "the interests of the landlords and the tenants" of the hilly tracts of Navsari district. These people who have lived in the jungles for centuries are ignorant and have been exploited by all communities—Brahmins, Banias, Parsees, Anavils—and by the petty Government servants. The Act was well meant, but in practice it has done the Raniparaj little good and much harm. They are very much disillusioned and dissatisfied. Their number is over two lakhs.

But there is a still lower stratum of these hill-tribes which is known as Dublas. On the last Independence Day (26th January) it is reported that about 40,000 Dublas were made free from their serfdom in the Bardoli taluka. These Dublas borrow a sum of money (Rs. 100 to 200) from some one whom they serve for the whole of their lives. They are fed by their masters and work for them the whole day. This contract is not legal, but in practice these serfs can even be transferred from one to another master. It is pure and simple slavery. It prevails in the

Surat and Navsari districts. There is not a word about this in the Report under review. There must be quite a few thousands of such slaves but even the census report does not give their number.

It is true that more attention is now being paid to rural problems than before, and that more money is spent on the agricultural department than formerly. The Jubilee Trust provides more funds at the disposal of the Minister and his Committee. The old machinery of the Government, though not properly oiled, nor efficiently engineered, goes on. There is very poor co-ordination between the officials and the Baroda State, which 25 years ago was looked upon almost as a model state, one which had the reputation of being progressive, but one which is now in a pitiable condition. Every year nearly 250 lakhs of rupees are being spent on administration, and naturally therefore the machinery must move but moves very creakily.

Small pettifogging reforms in the Legislative Council, some little retrenchment in the expenditure will not do any good. The new Maharaja must have the imagination to grasp the desperateness of the situation, and he will have to show the boldness to mend the whole machinery. He will have to replace it by a new more up-to-date machinery. There will have to be, not pruning of expenditure, but amputation of things which the State cannot afford to retain. The State is overstocked with departments and with men. Some departments will have to be closed. Relief will have to be given to farmers; work will have to be found for the rural and urban workers and labourers; and more money will have to be made available for development departments. The new Maharaja inherits a very hard task.

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