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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE war offers no special news this week. There has been a good deal of aerial activity, raids and counter-raids, but no definite move has been taken on land. Both sides are waiting expectantly. The allies are waiting for a big offensive and the Germans are engaged in making preparations for striking a blow which would give them a decis ve victory. This delay on the part of the enemy, however, as the Premier pointed out in his speech at Edinburgh, is of great advantage to the Allies. Each week's delay places them in a more favourable position. It brings in more Americans into France and thus augments their man-power. It further leads to greater efficiency on the part of American troops already in France, especially as it gives them time for further equipment. On the whole, the delay operates to the disadvantage of the enemy who have more to lose by it than they stand to gain.

ADMIRAL SIMS declared a few days ago that "within two weeks the curve of shipping production would cross the curve of shipping destruction." The Premier in his speech at Edinburgh corroborated this statement. He showed, from figures supplied by the Admiralty, that the Allies were sinking submarines faster than the enemy was building them. He further stated that the progress in the construction of merchant shipping was equally satisfactory. The unqualified assurance that, as a definite factor in determining the issue of the war the submarine can be ruled out removes for ever one of the greatest menaces the

Allies had to face. The under-water peril having been fairly brought under control, the final decision will be reached on land. Although the Allies may sustain some temporary reverses here and there, their ultimate triumph cannot be doubted. They have entered this struggle for espousing a noble cause and this consciousness is sure to endow them with sufficient strength which would enable them to overcome all obstacles and achieve their main objective.

THE Madras Government owe it to the public to state the circumstances in which a passport was given to Dr. Nair and the conditions, if any, under which it was given. Justice, Dr. Nair's own paper, seems to say that his voyage is for political purposes; if so, what becomes of Mr. Fisher's dictum that no voyages will be allowed except in the national interest? The Madras Mail, which professes to know, asserts that Dr. Nair's health has been bad and that he goes to England under medical orders. Could the medical opinion be published? Will passports be issued to all who produce similar medical certificates? The Madras Government will have themselves to thank if, in the absence of authoritative information, the public make inferences against their impartiality. We make two assumptions in the foregoing remarks: that the passport to Dr. Nair is given by or on the advice of the Madras Government and that the War Cabinet's decision announced by Mr. Fisher is binding on all Indian authorities.

THE note in the last issue of the Commonweal on the correct attitude towards the coming reform proposals gave us great relief. We should take advantage of them, even if they be inadequate, we should put up our most popular candidates for the seats in the new councils, we should make the most of the situation and press for further advance. Nothing like holding aloof, nothing like sulking, nothing like passive resistance. This is unexceptionable doctrine. We endorse it, whatever our endorsement may be worth. It is true Mrs. Besant adds that this attitude is not aptly described by the word 'acceptance.' We happen to think that in practical progressive politics 'acceptance' is quite a proper word to signify the position of those who enter in the new arrangements with the object of operating them towards further improvement. But the difference is verbal and we shall leave the matter there, only hoping that the unexpected will happen in this case, and people will not start &

quarrel about words where there is essential identity of action.

MRS BESANT quotes Mr. Tilak in support of this doctrine. We remember hearing such a statement and reading it. Perhaps there will soon be confirmation of it in the accredited organs of Mr. Tilak's party. Great is the need of early lead in the matter.

SPEAKING of the procedure likely to be adopted concerning the Joint Report of the Reform proposals, signed by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India, and to be submitted to the War Cabinet, the London correspondent of the Times of India says: "The War Cabinet will be certain to refer the report to a small committee of its own members, with the addition probably of Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State himself, and one or two others. This process, and subsequent consideration and decision by the Cabinet, are bound to occupy some time, if the conclusions reached are to be mature and sound. It would seem desirable that publication should then be given to the proposals of His Majesty's Government, preferably in the form of a despatch to the Government of India, in order to fulfil the pledge given, both originally and by the Viceroy, at the opening of the Delhi sessions, of allowing ample opportunity for public discussion of the proposals, which will be submitted in due course to Parliament. ' The drafting of the Bill can meanwhile be proceeded with, and it may be hoped that when that stage has been reached we shall have arrived at a substantial measure of agreement. "

THE Madras Mail's London correspondent has sent a reassuring cablegram to that paper that although Mr. Montagu is expected shortly to make a statement in Parliament regarding his mission to India, he will not disclose his proposals just yet, as he could not have secured the Cabinet's consent to them so soon. But the Mail is still disconsolate; it demands, in the minatory fashion which it has learnt to adopt towards all the high authorities who do not bow to its behests, that the Secretary of State shall hold back his scheme during the continuance of the war. While it is waiting to see what effect its demand produces upon the authorities concerned, the limes, most injudiciously, urges upon the Ministers the necessity of treating the question of Indian reforms as a vital war question and taking in hand its solution forthwith. The Times further endorses what Indian Nationalists have been all along saying, that a satisfactory solution of this question is the most important factor in producing that response from India in the successful prosecution of the war of which she is capable, and calls upon the British Ministers to "give speedy and wise effect to our pledges." The Times' article shows the present temper of the English nation, which may well disturb the serene confidence, assumed by the

Madras Mail, that Mr. Montagu's plans will come to naught, and which may as well give satisfaction to all progressives in India.

In a speech delivered at Patna on the 24th inst. Mr. Gandhi addressed a fervent appeal to the young men to join the ranks. He said that the Government wanted five lakhs of men, and that they would get them in the ordinary course of things as they had so far been able to secure and send out of the country some eight lakhs. But if, instead of Government raising a mercenary army, people offered the necessary number of recruits to Government in this hour of need, above all their claims to sclf-government would be irresistible. Some persons would volunteer only on the Government giving an undertaking that self-government would be conceded to them, but Mr. Gandhi thought that that was not the right attitude to assume. Selfgovernment could not be conferred upon any one; it had to be won. And to produce a national army of the five lakhs of volunteers required at the moment meant by itself the winning of home rule. A golden opportunity had offered to the country, and he exhorted the younger generation to take full advantage of it.

THE report of the Medical Board appointed to enquire into the case of Babu Jyotish Chandra Ghosh has been published. The Board are unanimous in their opinion that the detenu is insane and in a condition of melancholic stupor. He does not respond to stimulus of any kind and has to be fed by a nasal tube or stomach pump. When we bear in mind the fact that his mental condition was quite normal at the time of his incarceration, the natural presumption is that it is solitary confinement which brought about the mental derangement. The theory that he had started by "malingering" and had just gone beyond the border line is rightly dismissed by Dr. Mrigendralal Mitra as being absolutely untenable. As to the future, the Board are of opinion that the patient can be safely removed to Calcutta if proper arrangements can be made as to treatment and feeding. Dr. Mitra holds that he should be placed in a condition where familiar stimuli may act. Such a change, he thinks, is likely to bring him back to consciousness through "metabolic reflexes." We hope that the Government of Bengal will have the magnanimity to act up to the suggestion of Dr. Mitra and restore him to his home associations.

Some further details than those given in the Dewan's speech at the last meeting of the Representative Assembly are now available, regarding the scheme for the separation of executive and judicial functions of district officers, which the Mysore Government have recently sanctioned. The Government have decided to provide a separate agency for the disposal of the mass of original criminal work that is now being done by magistrates of all classes in order to afford relief

to executive officers and to ensure a more efficient dispatch of criminal work. They do not however propose to divest the executive heads of districts altogether of their appellate powers and powers of revision and superintendence, but at the same time it is pointed out that these officers will not ordinarily try any original cases, and even as regards their appellate work, special magistrates of the first class to be appointed, one for each district, will be empowered to hear certain appeals. Subject to these reservations, the duty of trying criminal cases will be assigned to officers belonging to the purely judicial service. As said above, to each district will be attached one special magistrate of the first class who in addition to original cases triable by a first class magistrate will also dispose of such appeals as he may be empowered to hear. The second and third class cases will be tried by special magistrates of the second class and also by benches of magistrates, which will soon be constituted. The existing revenue officers will continue to be magistrates ex-officio, but will cease to exercise magisterial functions in practice. The total cost of the scheme is estimated at Rs. 1,62,956, and it will come into operation from the beginning of next year.

A MEMBER of the Indian Civil Service has well described in the Manchester Guardian's Indian number India's assistance to the Empire in men money and material. In the region of finance, besides her contribution of £ 100,000,000, India has defrayed, to the amount of some £ 16,000,000, the total cost of the normal garrison of the country, although a great part of the troops have been lent to the War Office and are no longer at the disposal of the Government of India. Her own military expenditure has simultaneously risen from about £ 20,000,000 a year in pre-war times to some £29,000,000 by reason of measures directly connected with the war—e. g., the further safeguarding of the north-western frontier.

INDIA'S indirect assistance also must be taken into account. She is not only undertaking a large amount of war expenditure on behalf of the Home Government in India and Mesopotamia, as well as in other theatres of war, but is also financing the export of very considerable quantities of wheat, jute, hides, and numerous other commodities, which she is supplying to Great Britain, to the Dominions, and to the Allied Governments. Though repayment is made for these services, this is made in London, and the provision of funds constitutes a serious and continuing tax on the resources of the country. Of the amounts recovered in England a large portion has been re-lent to the British Government through the purchase of their war securities. Thus, out of about £ 39,000,000 spent in 1916-17 for the Home Government, more than £27,000,000 was so re-lent. In all, India has in this way up to date put over £ 45,000,000 into British war securities.

SIR NARAYAN G. CHANDAVARKAR thus concludes his article on the vexed question of Native States in the Indian number of the Manchester Guardian:-" The British are in India to prove how far the West can beneficially influence the East. The Native States are, and ought to be, there to attest how the East can influence the West by rising to the height of their full stature under British influence. It follows that the Native States ought to be separate in their administration from the government of the British. ... The best policy, then, for the British Government is, instead of bringing the Indian princes into the scheme of British administration, to encourage them actively in safeguarding their administration by adopting the principles of constitutional and representative government. For, after all, in the ultimate resort, the British Government, as the paramount Power of India, is responsible for the well-being and progress, material and moral, not only of its own subjects but also of the subjects of Native States."

REFERRING to the case before the Natal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa, in which an appeal filed by a subject of Bhavnagar was rejected on the ground that the subject of a Native State, being an alien, was not entitled to appeal to the Supreme Court, Mr. Polak writes in India: "If the decision of the Natal Court is technically correct, it is clear that the residential rights of some thousands of Indians settled in South Africa are gravely jeopardised.... If the Natal decision is legally well-founded, it is clear that an Indian subject of Native States has no status whatever within the British Empire, and still less outside it. Outside of the Native States these Indians are to be regarded as quasi-British subjects, and are to be protected as such, and granted all ordinary rights and privileges of British subjects. But in South Africa, they are not regarded in this light, but as aliens, and they are deprived of the King's protection in the King's Courts of Justice."

AT a conference on housing, held at Leicester on March 30 and attended by delegates from cooperative societies, trade unions, Labour parties and Socialist organisations, a resolution was unanimously passed, demanding the following national. minimum standard of housing, comfort, and convenience: "The limitation of building densities to 12 houses per acre. The provision of proper spaces. That each house should have a bath. That one room on the ground floor should be at least 180 feet square. That there be three bed-rooms of a minimum area of 160, 110, and 70 square feet respectively. That the height of all ground and floor rooms be not less than 8 feet. That the height of all bedrooms be not less than 8 feet for two-thirds of the floor area, and the vertical walls not less than 5 feet high.'

UNITY.

THE idea of unity among all political progressives in India exercises a strong fascination on ardent natures. It is a noble idea. But it assumes that there is an external foe to overcome, and that the foe is universally recognised as such. To some extent the British in India, holding the monopoly of civil and military power and utilising the country's resources as seems best to them, are looked upon as a common foe; so we find the Indians in the Legislative Councils, with comparatively few exceptions, voting together in the advanced provinces on most questions. Among those that are not indifferent to politics altogether, there are no tories or reactionaries: all Indian politicians are more or less progressive, having to gain ground from those that hold against all. But we cannot be contending against the Government all the cays in the year or all the hours in the day. The administration being well-laid and susceptible of improvement along constitutional lines, there are always some questions of first class importance which admit of a variety of solutions, and on which, in a healthy state of society, the opinion of the public may be divided. In fact in the conflict, more or less sharp, of different schools of thought lies the guarantee that the current of affairs will be finally guided along the channels which for the time are the most suitable. Any tendency therefore which, in the name of unity, restrains or suppresses the free play of minds is unnatural and likely to do harm to the community. Every now and then, on a subject which deeply engages the feelings of people, the majority declares itself on one side; and the individuals composing it are under a strong temptation to carry all before them by force, abuse or intimidation. Such occasions furnish a real test of leadership, calling for the exercise by those who have influence over their fellows of the qualities of tact, restraint and chivalry. In the unorganized condition of parties which we have in India, the discipline of public life is lacking: the loudest voices and sharpest tongues get power which is not their due; and sagacious, high-minded leaders cannot hold sway unless they fall away from their own ideal and consent to give full scope to the unreason and passion of their followers. The unity which is established by such methods may be necessary in a time of war when the common enemy has to be demoralised and beaten. Plausible arguments may be advanced for driving Lords Haldane and Morley from public life, for breaking up by hooligan tactics all meetings at which peace talk may be heard, and for applying the worst words of opprobrium to those who would remember Christ's doctrines of love and forbearance and pardon. Short of this overpowering necessity,

which will not be universally admitted, few are the occasions in the life of a people when diversity of opinion and free opportunity of its expression are not blessings. In fact some of the noblest episodes in the story of humanity are connected with the final triumph of individuals and small minorities who had to contend against odds for long periods, and whom perhaps their persecutors might have destroyed altogether, but only atterrible cost to our kind.

The annals of other subject peoples working for liberation reveal splits and divisions scarcely less bitter and rancorous than those which so sadden the young patriot of India. Italy, Russia, America, Ireland—take any country where a great movement has been or is in progress. The battlecry has varied from generation to generation, parties and programmes have shifted their foundation and men have warred with one another as though the greatest enemy were within and not without the nation. Many are the ways to the temple of Freedom, and her votaries by chance or by choice, find themselves moving along them at different rates and in different conditions, but all obeying one common impulse not alas! always recognised to be such, but all destined, in the fulness of time, so let us hope, to find and rejoice in the great object of their worship. Moderates and extremists are the very names by which the great contending groups of patriots have been called in some of these cases This need not cause much surprise when it is remembered that it only answers to the natural distinction between cautious and sanguine temperaments. Now these, now those seem favoured by the event and enjoy the ascendancy. On a broad and impartial reading of history both appear to be necessary and serve the purpose of the Most High. Though each individual, by reason of his limited vision, may perceive the right to lie with his party and the wrong with the other party, it is possible for all alike to recognise the good faith and the patriotism of the opponents. Some disputants are unable, by their very constitution, to see the good points of the adversary till infirmity or death puts him out of action. How much more tolerable would public life be, if more of us habitually rendered that justice to brethren on the other side which it now takes the shock of death to evoke!

It is remarkable that quite recently two occasions have arisen for united action among the progressive politicians of India—once when the Congress-League scheme was formulated, and again when Mrs. Besant was deprived of her liberty of movement and of speech. The reactionary Anglo-Indian and the reactionary Indian, of course, kept aloof; but the moderates and the extremists, Hindus Muhammadans, Christians and Parsees stood as one man. On each occasion the stake was tremendous,

and despite the boastful claim put forth by one set of workers to the entire credit, all parties are entitled to praise for the spirit of compromise and the sense of the great issues involved which held them together in one army. Smaller causes like the home rule league or Mr. Khaparde's resolution could not exert the same unifying power, and all the attempts at dragooning, all the vituperation and imputation of motives of which a certain section of politicians were capable could not efface the lines of party division marked out by honest differences of view. The acrimony and the pain of the political disputes of the last few months will not have been borne in vain if on every hand the lesson had been fully learned that unity is worth having if it be based on a genuine unity of thought, and not worth having if it be brought about by a noisy majority silencing the minority or threatening them into submission.

When the Congress adopted a constitution after Surat and kept out the extremists or nationalists, the complaint was bitter that it was a signal to Government to persecute the latter, and many good men all over the country made passionate appeals for reunion, mingled often with execrations of the moderate party. The Bombay compromise of 1915 effected this reunion. The nationalists celebrated the event by a nearly complete expulsion from the executive of those with whom they had for years sought reconciliation, except in Madras where an exceptionally sagacious leader reined in the young bloods. Of this we make no complaint, as others may. We do not see why, except so far as it may seem expedient in their own interest, a party should be expected to forego the results of its success. We are concerned to point out here that the unity which one hears praised in such piercing strains is often only another name for the effacement of the other party. Let us admit too that it is perfectly natural for young ardent patriots who think in a few simple categories to wish that the parties that laboured in harmony to produce a scheme of reforms should also labour in harmony to realise that scheme. The repressive policy of Government for a time favoured this consummation. But under the stress of the war, the Cabinet reversed the policy and made their famous declaration of last August; and in its pursuance the Secretary of State made open inquiry in India, and we are about to know his actual proposals of constitutional advance. In the fateful days ahead, if parties in India could be genuinely united, nothing would be better. But the worst thing that can happen is that the older and more experienced men should be driven out of the field by the fear of being abused and hooted and silenced. Temper politics are out of place hereafter. They are certain to lead to irreparable mistakes. Men

with any influence on public opinion must make their voices heard on this supreme occasion of all, or they would carry a heavy load of responsibility all their lives. Sincere and manly utterance is the first duty, aiming at unity only the second. What if they be accused of selling this often-sold country? of being that most malignant type of bureaucrat, the brown bureaucrat? of cowardice, of being easily satisfied? A Tamil proverb says, you can't shut the public mouth. That is so in ordinary times. Now people have been taught by precept and by evil example that calm judgment is a sure sign of weakness, that restrained expression is a vice, that nobody is above suspicion, hat the leader who does not meekly follow must be denounced. It is thus the duty of all who wish to save public life from degradation, whatever their personal view in politics may be, to exert what influence they command in the opposite direction and to exhort young men to cultivate a spirit of tolerance and respect for honest differences of opinion.

THE RESOLUTION ON LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

THE Government of India have issued a very comprehensive resolution dealing with all aspects of local self-government. The resolution lays down a policy which constitutes a decided advance in the direction of making local bodies self-governing. The object of this resolution, it is stated, is to indicate the manner in which it is proposed to initiate the progress to be made along the road to self-government. The Government of India recognise the impossibility of a uniform application of the principles laid down by them owing to diversity of conditions to be met with within the limits of the vast continent. They have, however, drawn the attention of the various provincial Governments to the all-important fact that deviation from these injunctions is to be allowed only in specific cases and for specific reasons and they expect that in the absence of such special circumstances the local Governments will not hesitate to adopt a forward policy in strict conformity with the wishes of the Government of India. The resolution deals with the constitution, functions and finances of local bodies, the degree of official control, the creation of a central supervising agency and the formation of village punchayets.

Dealing with the question of the constitution of local bodies, the resolution accepts as a general principle the recommendations of the Decentalisation Commission in favour of a substantial elective majority. Nomination is to be resorted to only for securing a proper representation of minorities, and the limit of one-fourth of the strength of localbodies is put upon such nomination, officials, where it may be necessary to appoint them, only offering expert advice but being divested of a vote. We are glad to find that communal represen-

tation has been knocked on the head by the Government of India, but they might have given greater consideration to the device of proportional representation in order to redress any inequalities that may be found to occur in the representation of the various communities. are constrained to observe that the Government of India do not go far enough in this respect. Times have changed considerably since the publication of the report of the Decentralisation Commission, and informed public opinion in this country has expressed itself in favour of having wholly elective local bodies. Let us have done once for all with nomination, which is peculiar only to India, and the equal representation of all communities secured in other ways. It may be contended that the principle of wholly elective bodies is not capable of uniform application all over the country, but the statutory retention of the powers of nomination will interfere with the freedom of action of those provincial Governments where the people are in a condition to possess more liberal institutions. As a corollary to the acceptance of the principle of substantial elective majorities, it is essential that the franchise should be sufficiently low to obtain constituencies which would really represent the large body of rate-payers. Government of . India have fully recognised this cardinal principle. They observe: "An enlarged franchise is in any case an essential condition of an extension of the elected element on boards."

The attitude of the Government of India on the question of elective chairmen for Municipalities and Local Boards is not sufficiently liberal. Municipalities, as a general rule, are to have elected presidents, but as regards District and Taluka Boards they seem to favour the idea of the continuation of the present system of having officials as presidents. Elected non-official presidents should, as a general rule, be insisted on both in Municipalities and Local Boards. partial want of success of local self-government is due to the fact that official control is exercised from within. Even as early as 1882 Lord Ripon's Government said this quite clearly and laid down in emphatic language that district officials should usually not take part in the work of local bodies which should as a rule have an elected nonofficial president. The suggestion to adopt the Bombay system of municipal administration with its non-official chairman and a paid commissioner, invested by statute with executive powers, whose appointment and dismissal are subject to the approval of the provincial Government, will meet with a mixed reception. It is apprehended in many quarters that this system will lead to friction as the executive officer is apt to look to Government as the authority to whom he is finally responsible. The presidential addresses and the resolutions passed at the Local Self-Government Conferences held in Madras and Bombay fully testify to the fact that there is a large volume of opinion in the country which resists ! the Bombay system and favours the system of entertaining, where possible, an executive officer to be appointed by local bodies and wholly under their control.

Next comes the important question of the degree of external control. Everyone will endorse the view that "except in cases of really grave mismanagement, local bodies should be permitted to make mistakes and learn by them rather than be subjected to interference either from within of from outside." It is further gratifying to learn that the Government of India have seen the necessity of constituting a central co-ordinating body which would exercise control and provide guidance by entertaining inspecting establishments, if necessary. It is only to be regretted that the matter has been left to the decision of the provincial Governments. It would have been much better had the Government of India taken a more decisive attitude. The proposal to retain the powers of control and supervision in district and divisional officers obviously proceeds from the desire to decentralise the controlling authority. There is a certain advantage in officers who are in close touch with local conditions exercising supervision. instead of this function being performed by the central authority by deputing its officers in all directions. It is not however clear from the resolution how the local supervising authority will adjust its powers with the central authority, and the dual control thus established is apt to lead to friction and consequent delay in the despatch of public business The peculiar position held by revenue officers in this country renders such a proposal distinctly undesirable. The satisfactory feature of an alternative recommendation on this point of forming a standing committee is that the central authority controlling local bodies is not be entirely official, but it is proposed that the committee should be largely drawn from elected members of the legislative council and presided over by a member of the executive council, where such exists.

We now turn to the question of finance. When we look to the wide range of functions entrusted to the local bodies and the extremely meagre character of the funds at their disposal we cannot be surprised. if we find that the local authorities are unequal to the test of a proper and satisfactory discharge of their duties. A thorough and systematic examination of this all-important question is an imperative necessity if local self-government is to be a living reality. This aspect, however, is not given the close attention it deserves in the resolution. It gives local bodies powers of additional taxation within prescribed limits, but is silent as to the extent of financial support they may expect from provincial revenues. The Decentralisation Commission dealt with this question in a very perfunctory way. The resolution on local self-government published in the year 1915, while admitting that the funds at the disposal of local bodies were scanty, made no serious attempt to tackle the problem. It is quite clear that in spite of the additional powers

of self-taxation, without liberal assistance from provincial Governments, local bodies will not be able to make much headway. The margin for additional taxation is extremely narrow. Moveover, before extra burdens are laid on the shoulders of the poor agriculturists it is necessary to enquire whether the total incidence of taxation, imperial and local, in this country is less than in western. countries. As the Hon'ble, Mr. Patel pointed out in his presidential address in July 1917, the people of this country, relatively speaking, contribute no less in taxation than the people of western countries. The comparative poverty of the resources of local bodies is due to inequitable distribution. In order to meet their financial needs! it is necessary to supplement their revenues from local taxation by fixed assignments of a definite portion of provincial revenues or by fixed grants. in-aid. It may be that the Government of India have not touched on this aspect of the question as being outside the proper sphere of local self-government, but we hope that this aspect will not be lost sight of when the larger question of the adjustment of financial relations is taken up for solution.

The resolution finally deals with the question of the formation of village punchayets. On this question the Government of India concur in the views expressed in the resolution of 1915 with a few exceptions. Here they suggest that the area under a punchayets should normally be a village. The punchayet should be composed of principal village officers and some others informally elected by the villagers. They can choose their own president. They should look after village sanitation, village education and should have jurisdiction in petty civil and criminal cases. The Government of India are further prepared to allow to the punchayets voluntary powers of supplementary taxation. It is hoped that the various provincial Governments will imbibe the spirit of this resolution and will modify existing legislation, where necessary, without further delay.

K. M. T.

IRELAND AND LORD MORLEY. III.

IT will be remembered that in the course of the brilliant address that the late Mr. cokhale delivered as the President of the Benares Congress. he referred to Lord Curzon in the most glowing terms for the "lavish endowments" that nature had favoured him with, but at the same time condemned him for "lack of sympathetic understanding," which was the sine qua non of all successful administration. It will also be remembered that our King-Emperor, as Prince of Wales, left the watchword of "sympathy" for India's government. Lord Morley tells us in his letters to Lord Minto, which he has reprinted in his Recollections, how delighted and captivated he was with the Prince's watchword. This quality of sympathy

that is what made him a successful administrator of both Ireland and India. Lord Morley very naively describes this trait of his character in the most casual of manners, as follows: 12 14 14

"Among other things he [Lord Rosebery] wondered how it was that members of Parliament came to see me so much and to talk so freely to me. They never come to me', he said. J. M .- You are too big a man for one thing, and for another you are uncertain-not always to be found. I am always there, you see'. R.-'Oh, that's not it. When I was in every morning at Lansdowne House, 'twas just the same. No, you are sympathetic. The quality of sympathy in politics is as effective as the quality of mercy in ordinary social life and it will enable. the statesman to smooth over many a difficulty when everything else has failed."

IV.

The situation in Ireland at the time Lord Morley took the Irish Office may best be put in his own words. He vacated, in accordance with constitutional practice, his seat in Parliament on his acceptance of the office. He sought re-election and was sent back to Parliament by a large majority. Lord Morley writes on this occasion:

"In my Election Address I had appealed for confidence solely on the ground of applying to the case of Ireland the principles of self-government that are the secret of the strength and greatness of an Empire. Well might [speak of 'an arduous task.' The Irish Nationalists were divided into two bitterly antagonistic camps : one intent on their national cause, the other eager to avenge the memory of Parnell on the English ministers who had, in his own phrase thrown him to the welves. The agrarian question which Lord Spencer and I had in 1886 gone through fire and water with our party and its leader to associate with the political question, was still unsettled. The standing feud between landlord and tenant had broken out, not in all cases without provocation or design, in scenes of violence hardship, and disorder, that made the administration of law and the maintenance of a recent peace excessively difficult. To resort to the cheap and easy pressure of exceptional law was for us impossible. On the other hand, the new Irish Secretary was known to enjoy the full confidence both of the Prime Minister and of the Irish majority.'

So it is not difficult to imagine that on the very threshold of his starting his new career at Dublin Castle as the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Lord Morley should be faced with difficulties. As in India so in Ireland there was the divided counsel of the public men on the one hand and on the spot officials, on the other. How noble was the language that Mr. Gokhale used in welcoming Lord Morley to the India Office in the course of the Benares Address, and Lord Morley's Recollections shows how persistent was the pressure put upon him for the sanction of repressive measures and exceptional laws. So was it in Ireland." It was strongly pressed upon me," says Lord Morley, "by the Irish leaders that in view of the inevitable temper and tactics of the opposing Nationalist faction, I should keep in close and vigilant contact with Ireland;" and further? "There was the random expectation of a million untold blessings from a new Minister who was known to nurse an earnest care for the welfare of Lord Morley himself possessed in abundance and | Ireland." And then there were the officials and

heads of departments who thought that there was nothing wrong with the Irish administration, that all agitation was a got up show, that there was really no distress needing relief works; and who, when remonstrated with on the ground that their "reports were trifle harsh," replied that "these tales about landford and tenant are full of lying;" that the people "simply don't know what truth means: they know no difference between the truth and a lie," that the Irish were lazy and did not know how best to utilise their lands; that "they were demoralised by habits of long reliance on aid", that a murder could easily be committed in consideration of "a couple of sovereigns"-in fact that the fault all lay on the side of the Irish and that the officials were injured innocents. Lord Morley quotes for the edification not only of the Irish official but for many others as well, the description that Arthur Young gave of Ireland a hundred years back:

"The landlord of an Irish estate inhabited by Roman Catholics is a sort of despot who yields obedience in whatever concerns the poor to no law but his own will. Speaking a language that is despised, professing a religion that is abhorred, and being disarmed, the poor find themselves in many cases slaves even in the bosom of written liberty. A landlord in Ireland can scarcely invent an order which a servant, labourer or cotter dares to refuse to execute. Disrepect or anything tending to haughtiness he may punish with his cane or his horsewhip with the most perfect security. Knocking down is spoken of in a manner that makes the Englishman stare. Landlords of consequence have assured me that many of their cotters would think themselves honoured by having their · wives or daughers sent for to the bed of their masters, a mark of slavery that proves the oppression under which such people must live."

Lord Morley moralises from this:

"That is what honest Arthur Young said. As if any social system on earth, or in the darker realms under the earth could have been better devised for breeding men indifferent to questions between truth and lies. Men talk of the necessity of history and the fatality of race; but let us be quite sure in Ireland not to set down to the second what is easily explained by the first."

Very rightly does Lord Morley say in another connexion:

"Somebody once called political Ireland the home of the blockhead nation of Europe. Blockheads unhappily survive in all nations, and for that matter in their government of Ireland the blockhead's cap is no bad fit for her British rulers."

(To be continued.)

SRI PRAKASA.

VILLAGE PANCHAYATS.

SINCE the publication of the Government of India's Resolution on Local Self-Government in 1915, several Local Governments have been busy formulating schemes for the establishment of Village Punchayats. The Bengal Government has taken the lead in the matter, by introducing the Village Self-Government Bill. In the United Provinces, a committee, consisting of Mr. Phelps, I. C. S., and Sk. Mohamad Musanna, was appointed to con-

sider the possibility of introducing an elementary system of Village Panchayata; the report of that committee was published in 1916 and was submitted for opinion to distinguished officers under the U. P. Government. And now the final report of the C. P. Village Panchayat Committee, under the presidentship of Mr. K. S. Jatas has been issued, containing a practical scheme with a draft bill. A comparative survey of these documents will be interesting and instructive to all those who are interested in the progress of local self-government.

The recommendations of the Committee in the C. P. may be thus summarised:—

- (1) An elective basis for the constitution of Village Panchayts can only be allowed with special safeguards, devised to secure the inclusion of the real village elders.
- (2) The inclusion of the headman of the village ex-officio is, at least in the initial stages of the experiment, essential.
- (3) The primary functions of the Panchayats must be judicial with regard to matters of a civil nature.
- (4) Administrative functions can be delegated after a period of education and practical instruction.
- (5) The village headman should ordinarily preside our the Panchayats.
- (6) There is great need of close and immediate official control; in practice it will be absolutely essential to concentrate all control in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner.

The over-cautious and almost reactionary spirit of these recommendations is the effect of the bureacratic view that the Panchayat system is not an indigenous institution, that the headman, being the last link of the centralized system, ought to remain the pivot of the village government, and that the people are generally unfamiliar with the idea of election and hence unfit for representative institutions. The dissenting minutes of the non-official members, however, are characterised by a firm faith in democracy and are yet eminently reasonable and practicable. The important features of the scheme, round which controversy has mainly centred and on which prevails a vast range of difference of opinion may be advantageously summarised. It has been admitted on all hands that the Village Panchayat is an indigenous institution, with which the people in the country have been familiar and whose administration was carried on by them with marked success. It has been also admitted that the unit of such a system should be a single village, instead of a group of villages as was recommended by the Decentralization Commission. The advantages of such a unit are obviously greater accessibility, more convenience in meeting, less delay in disposing of the work, and more certainty of knowing the actual facts of the cases.

The first question, on which opinion is sharply divided, refers to the constitution of the Pancha-

yats. The method of informal election, suggested by the Committee is far from satisfactory. The paraphernalia of lists of electors, canvassing, ballot boxes and formal voting have an educative value of their own. The Bengal Village Self-Government Bill which provides for the election of at least two-thirds of the members is admittedly in advance of the U.P. or the C.P. scheme. Hence it will not be too much to hope that the draft bill under consideration will be so amended as to make provision for the appointment of two-thirds of the total number of Panchas by election. In course of time, the whole body of the Panchas should be elected by the voters. The system of nomination as it exists in India is peculiar to this country; it is not in vogue in any other civilized country. Instead of nominating men of Government's choice, it is better to appoint specialists and experts in the different branches of administration, so that the village communities may profit by the expert and scientific advice. The principle of decentralization cannot be effective unless and until the chairman of the Panchayat is a non-official elected member. An amendment of the C. P. draft bill, on the lines of the Bengal bill is desirable.

The position of the headman of the village in the constitution of the Panchayat is another thorny question. As R. B. Damle says:—

"For various reasons, the popular feeling is naturally estranged from him. As a Government servant, with a big roll of exacting duties, he is looked upon as their lifelong servant to watch and protect Government interests only. As between a Government servant and popular leader, there ought not to be a difference in strict theory, but in actual practice one differs from the other in many important particulars. This is the common popular belief and, so long as it exists, it is no use denying the fact that a Government representative, as such, will not be accepted by the people as their trusted leader."

The hereditary character of his office in the principal source of the prejudice existing against him. We agree with the Hon. Mr. Kelkar's remark that, "so far as judicial work is concerned it must be done by the elected members only. Nominated and ex-officio members should have a voice in administrative matters only." On the whole it is desirable that the Patel should be an ex-officio member; of the Panchayat but should not have any voice in the judicial work. The Hon. R. B. Kelkar remarks that in the interest of village harmony it is desirable that communal representation should not be encouraged. We admit this, but at the same time we would suggest that the franchise should be based on the principle of proportional representation which, while safeguarding the interests of important minorities, will do away with the necessity of communal representation.

In the matter of organization, supervision and control, it is desirable that the work should generally be conducted by the non-official agency. Strong objection is taken to the powers of control and supervision delegated to the Collector. While, of course, no internal interference could be tolerat-

ed, it has to be allowed that rather close supervision and in some cases drastic control from outside are also required to put things straight in local government institutions. This is the experience of all countries, and it is the direction in which advanced opinion tends. This is not to say however that the control should be exercised by officials and no non-officials could be associated with the machinery of control. It must, on the contray, be insisted upon that the controlling authority should be as well non-official as official: though this practice has not yet been adopted in England, it is adopted in several other countries. As regards the functions of the local bodies, advanced opinion is generally in favour of expansion as far as possible under the circumstances. In judicial civil cases, suits relating to rent and revenue, breach of contract, casements may be profitably brought under the jurisdiction of the panchayat courts. In criminal matters section 488 C. P. C. (maintenance), 506 (criminal intimidation), and s. 447 of the I. P. C. should also be added to the offences mentioned in section 12 of the draft bill. Mr. Drake-Brockman of the U. P. eivil service is strongly of opinion that the jurisdiction of the panchayats is unduly limited both on the civil and criminal sides. In one respect the C. P. draft bill has made a satisfactory improvement on the Bengal bill. It is proposed that exclusive jurisdiction should be conferred on the village courts. The failure of the village munsiff system was due to the existence of concurrent jurisdiction. Mr. Keane, I. C. S., observes: "It is absolutely essential for the self-respect and for the efficiency of the Panchayats that their jurisdiction should be exclusive. Any attempt to undermine exclusive jurisdiction would wreck the whole scheme." Messrs Joppling, Silberrad and Fremantle, whose opinions have been published in the U. P. Gazette, entirely support this view. It is hoped that the Bengal bill will be amended accordingly. The opinion of Mr. Galloway, the Superintendent of Police in U. P., indicates that the fear of conflict between the village and police authorities, is groundless. He says :-

"The introduction of the Panchayat system will lead ultimately to better relations between the police and the public as the latter comes to realize its new responsibilities and the former, that the apparent loss of power is more than compensated by increasing assistance in graver matters."

As regards administrative functions, their success ultimately depends upon the financial strength of the Village Panchayats. Funds are required for sanitation, education, public works, and other conveniences of the people. The possible sources of the funds as suggested in the report consist of (1) fees on civil and criminal cases, (2) fines, (3) Government contributions, (4) taxes under the Sanitation Act, and (5) imposition of rates on rents and taxes on houses. Self-taxation is again an important source of revenue which people must learn judiciously to develop. The Hone R. B. Kelkar says:

"The real merit of self-government or local self-government is that the people must know how to raise money and how to spend it. It is by means of this power that the people can hope to have some control over public finances. We are, however, not in favour of empowering the Panchayat with power to raise funds by means of only one form of taxation. viz., the "Haisiyat Tax", as is proposed in the bill. They may have power to levy market dues, cattle registration fees, tolls etc., which can be levied by village sanitation committees."

He further recommends that several secret exactions, generally levied in villages, may be made legally recoverable and added to the Panchayat funds according to the Mysore system, the power to raise money may be supplemented by contribution of labour for half a day in a week, by one man in every family in the village, with the liberty of substituting cash payment for labour. We believe that the people will not be so unreasonable as not to tax themselves for reasonable purposes. Their hesitation is due to poverty and ignorance rather than a desire to svoid legitimate dues. The real solution of the question of finance depends on contributions from provincial revenues. Mr. Sidney Webb, a great authority on questions of local government, says:

"The largest part of government, now in western countries, is not conducted in capital cities; but in the village or parish and it is further true that local government has become more expensive than the central government, it spends more money and it has more officials in its employment."

Full recognition should be given to this fact by Government and a suitable share of their revenue be made available to local authorities.

Lastly, we would mention two more suggestions made by the Hon. R. B. Kelkar; firstly, that the religious and charitable endowments in the villages should be entrusted to the Panchayats; and, secondly, the extension of the exemption of the Arms Act to all the villages without distinction.

K G. L.

R_VIEWS.

FEMALE EDUCATION IN THE PUNJAB.

Education of Indian Women in the Punjab, a monograph by Mr. Gholam Yaseen.

LADY UNA O'I) WYEE has written a foreword to a booklet, entitled "Education of Indian Women in the Punjab" and containing a collection of a series of letters on the subject, contributed to the "Tribune" by Mr. Cholam Yascen. One of the primary functions of the State in this country, as in all others, is the extension of elementary education, of both the sexes, and unless the education of males and females goes hand in hand. the wider questions confronting the people as well as the Government cannot be adequately solved. The system of primary education in India, as it exists at the present time, is seriously defective both on its quantitative and its qualitative sides. It is utterly inadequate to the wants and demands of the nation. Its organization is imperfect and faulty, and lastly the quality of education, which essentially depends upon the curricula, is almost disappointing. The writer of this booklet has surveyed the question in all its bearings and has made many valuable suggestions, which

will be both instructive and interesting to all the workers in the cause of education.

The effective organization of the work and collection of sufficient funds cannot be best facilitated except by a hearty cooperation between the people and the Government. The Education bills of the seventies of the last century amply illustrate how essential State aid and intervention were even in England. A fortieri, therefore, in India, we could ill afford to do without them In the Punjab the total number of female children under the age of 15 is 35 lakhs: if 1/5 of them are supposed to be married there remain 28 lakhs of unmarried girls. At present the school-going population of females of all ages is 65,500. In 1916 the Punjab possessed 918 public primary schools for girls—a fact which bears on the whole an inadequate relation to the area of the Province. In 1916 there were less than 3 such schools for every hundred towns or villages in the Punjub. If it is assumed that the school period should range from 6 to 10 years of the child's age, as in Japan, the total number of girls that will have to be taught, if primary education becomes universal, will be about a million. The aim of mass education must be for the present to make it extensive rather than intensive. Quicker progress means more money to finance it. The present position of the Government of India in respect of financing the question of primary education is as follows:—(i) In theory it is the accepted duty of the Government. (2) In practice Government is under no obligation to find money for it. The Government grants are occasional, irregular and inadequate. (3) The proportion of provincial revenues has not been settled, and the resources of local bodies are inelastic and unequal to the task. In order to get more funds it is suggested that (1) the district boards should provide at least 30 p. c. of the total cost, i. e., Rs. 31 lakhs. In Gujarat and Juliunder, the district board can afford to pay more than 40 p. c. (2) Local Governments should increase their expenditure on female education by temporarily cutting down the indirect expenditure on primary instruction like that on buildings. The direct expenditure on lower primary schools for females was only Rs. 49,000 as against 23 lakhs spent on buildings. (3) The municipalities by an increase of 5 p. c. in their expenditure on education will fetch Rs. 3½ lakhs. (4) Local co-operation and private philanthropy are urgently needed to further the cause.

Next to the diffusion comes the question of the quality of education, which depends on ampler supply of trained teachers. In 1916 only 230 Indian women students were being trained in the Punjab for the teaching profession. For the present we must depend largely upon untrained teachers, but efforts must be made to replace this stop gap arrangement by more efficient agency in the immediate future.

The quality of education suffers from another defect. Its aim is more mechanical than cultural. The cramping system of examination is mainly responsible for this. To meet this situation, two suggestions are made. Firstly, half-yearly examinations to ensure continuity of development and, secondly, examinations by compartments to save much waste of energy and time.

A real responsive curriculum, which is suited to the needs of the pupils, is the next desideratum. Subjects like Algebra and Geometry may be profitably replaced by hygiene and physical culture. Methodical preparation of girls for their future home and social duties should be the goal of female education. As regards private agencies, the Zanana classes have done valuable work, but their work has to be supplemented by other private educational institutions. It is a deplorable fact that private bodies have done comparatively less work in the cause of primary education of women than in that of secondary. In conclusion, we hope that these articles will succeed in the laudable object of stimulating public interest in a subject of vital interest to the future progress of the country.

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES MOVEMENT.

THE TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES MISSION SOCIETY OF INDIA.

This short report, recording the progress of the movement for uplift of the untouchables, makes very instructive reading. Being consulted by the local Government on the question of the elevation of the depressed classes, a phrase which includes the criminal and wandering tribes, the aboriginal tribes and the untouchables, the Mission recommended a system of free and compulsory education as an absolute necessity, and, secondly, the system of establishment of agricultural and industrial colonies for criminal tribes. The General Secretary recommended that the interests of the depressed classes would be better safeguarded by election or nomination of their representatives on municipal and local boards. He also advocatpresentatives on municipal and local boards. He also advocated the extension of primary and technical schools, the esta-blishment of hostels and scholarships for the depressed classes, blishment of hostels and scholarships for the depressed classes, and the provision of the trained teachers and an independent inspectorial staff. Coming to the work of the Mission during the year, the feature specially worthy of note is that the Bombay branch has attached to its school, a school musuem, the Boys' court, the Pupils' Mutual Help Society and the Eoys' Co-operative Union—new features which other private and public schools may profitably imitate. The fact that an increasing number of the students of the advanced classes in public schools may profitably imitate. The fact that an increasing number of the students of the advanced classes is taking advantage of these schools, started specially for children of the so-called low castes, justifies the inference that their prejudice is gradually wearing out. In other respects the Mission has maintained its normal progress and is doing very satisfactory work.

LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

MADRAS.

THE HOME RULE LEAGUE.

THE first Home Rule Leage deputation consisting of The first Home Rule Leage deputation consisting of Mesers. B. V. Narasimha Iyer, George Joseph and Manjeri Ramaiyar so far as Madras was concerned, who were turned back at Gibralter, reached Madras safely on the 24th morning, to the great relief of friends and relatives and the general public. A public meeting will be held to-morrow evening (26th) in Gokhale Hall where they are expected to give an account of their experiences since they left Madras. It must be but poor consolation for them to learn at Bo:nbay that Dr. Nair had left for England only the previous day. People are be but poor consolation for them to learn at Bombay that Dr. Nair had left for England only the previous day. People are agitated over what they rightly consider to be a flagrant case of partiality on the part of the Government as well as of total indifference to public opinion. The "Mail" and the "Justice" have said that Dr. Nair will try to influence English opinion by "private and informal talks." If people are allowed to carry on such anti-Home Rule propaganda in England, others in common fairness must be allowed to carry on a counter propaganda. What is sauce for the goose must be sauce for the gander, as the "Madras Times" says. Is Dr. Nair's visit to England at this juncture "in the national interest"? Unless the same treatment is meted out to him as was meted out to H. R. Leagne deputation, the public will be driven to form very painful conclusions and the effects of such a feeling are likely to be bad for all concerned. The Madras Mahajana Sabha held a meeting of protest in this connection on the 24th evening. connection on the 24th evening.

DACOITIES.

Reports are published in the Telugu papers that a series of decoities have been committed in viliages surrounding Masalipatam in the Kistna District; hundreds of people seem to have taken part in the wholesale looting of villages. In one town 14 shops were looted by a party of 800 men and property worth a lash pillaged. Property worth about 2 lake has already been looted in this. It is suspected that local jealousies and feuds are partly responsible for these riots, but hunger and high prices of food-stuffs and cloth seem to be at the bottom of the whole trouble. Let us hope that this at least will serve as an eye-opener to the local Government and induce them to make a searching enquiry into the question of prices and profiteering as early as possible as other provincial Governments have already done.

UNITED PROVINCES.

THE GARHWAL FAMINE.

The relief work in connection with the Garhwal famine has been enthusiatically taken up both in the Punjab and the United Provinces. Besides the local committee at Pauri

in Garhwal, the Bharat Seva Samiti, the Hindu Sabha and the Arya Samaj are energetically exerting themselves in collecting funds and securing volunteers. But if waste of energy and funds is to be avoided it is absolutely necessary that there should be co-operation between the different agencies and the work should be so co-ordinated as to avoid avoid the security. agencies and the work should be so co-ordinated as to avoid overlapping. Mahatma Munshi Ram, who has been able to collect about Rs. 15,000 for relief, work, has kindly consented to make over this sum to the Bharat Seva Samiti, whose band of trained and experienced volunteers will be of invaluable assistance in the distribution of relief in the affected area. Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, the Secretary of the Seva Samiti, after being to Debra Dun and Hardwar, has been busy during the last week in visiting Moradabad, Najibabad, Dhampur, Ramnagar and Koldwara, at some of which places he has opened centres of work; in fact, arrangements places he has opened centres of work; in fact, arrangements have already been completed for the transport of several hundred maunds of grain from these places to the affected area. It is expected that before the mousoon sets in arrangements for the transport of grain and the distribution of relief will be thoroughly well in hand.

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