

# THE Servant of India

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

WHEN we wrote last week about the operations of the Austrians on the Italian frontier, we expressed our doubt about the fate of Montello, and looking to the habit of the Army Headquarters and Reuter of keeping back important news or of leaving those points vague which ought to be made very clear, we had ample grounds to do so. Since then it has been officially published that the Austrians have been driven completely across the Piave with considerable losses and the right bank of that river has become absolutely clear of them. There is, however, a version of these events which has been given by the Austrians and which has since been confirmed by the review of the military onlooker published at Simla. It is that the Austrians began to withdraw their forces on their own initiative on account of the flooded condition of the river and the difficulty of maintaining their positions beyond it, and that when the Italians began to press hard upon them, they did not allow their retreat to degenerate into disorderly flight. Although this account seeks to detract from the credit due to the Italians, they deserve warm congratulations upon their great achievement. This view is borne out by the further news that some important positions that were in the hands of the Austrians for nearly six months have been retaken by the Italians. But even more than these material gains, the moral effects of the Italian victory are bound to prove noteworthy. This will create new enthusiasm in the Italian armies and restore among the Allies full confidence in their capacity

and sincerity which was rudely shaken by their retreat on the occasion of the last Austrian offensive.

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WE had thought that the effacement of Russia from the political map of Europe had been completely accomplished for the time. But it would appear that the cup of the miseries of that unfortunate country is not yet full. Reports have been cabled to all parts of the world about the internal situation which are of a contradictory character. Some say that the Czar has been executed, others that he is safe. Then there is another which says that an anti-revolutionary centre has been established at Harbin. What matters is not the distance of Harbin from Moscow or Petrograd, but the frequency with which false reports have been spread abroad. Meanwhile, the grim fact is being brought out more and more clearly that the resources of that vast country are being exploited by the enemy for his own purposes. The latest news is about the justification of the seizure the Black Sea fleet by the Germans. As usual it will be used by the Germans. We wonder what other unforeseen advantages are to fall to the share of the Central Powers in this war. All the greater reason, therefore, why every one should do his bit and all their best for the successful prosecution of the war.

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R. C. P. RAMASWAMI Aiyar, in his thoughtful address in Bombay on Sunday last, reiterated what he had said at a recent meeting in Madras on the Congress-League scheme. While it was necessary to stand fast by the fundamentals of the scheme, he regretted that some persons could pay homage to it only by repeating parrot-wise the words "Congress-League scheme" without a proper apprehension of its basic principles. It was certain, he said, that an alternative scheme, conceived on different lines from the nation's demand, would be placed before the country, but it would be folly summarily to reject it, for the reason that it was not identical with the one they had formulated. Any such alternative proposal that might be put forward, they must be prepared to consider, and consider with the aid of their intellect and not emotion. He had been misunderstood for making that distinction, but it was necessary, even at the risk of further misunderstanding, to emphasise the distinction. They ought to discuss the Government proposals in a spirit of discriminative and unflinching criticism, ap-

plying to them, with great care and thought, the test of the Congress-League scheme. "Let us bear in mind," he said, "that a single false step now made, whether in the way of a facile surrender or in the way of clamant unreasonableness, would profoundly affect the destinies of the country for years to come."

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REUTER has cabled a meagre summary of Mr. Montagu's reply to the deputation of the British Medical Association regarding the Indian Medical Services. There is some reason to fear that the question will be viewed too much from the service point of view. This is the ever-growing danger from the powerful and organised services, against which the people's representatives have to be on the alert. The Civil Medical Service should be entirely independent and no longer an appanage of a military service recruited in England and bolstered up by artificial helps dictated by narrow professional and service considerations. Competent Indian talent has been iniquitously excluded. The millions of the population have been allowed to suffer from the absence of a large and independent medical profession, because the prizes of the service and the opportunities of hospital practice are monopolised by officers lent from the military, who thus enjoy illegitimate advantages in the competition for private work and scientific research. It would be a miracle if an old and protected service did not throw up a few men of merit. Their past services deserve handsome recognition. But this ought not to be allowed to perpetuate a worn-out and inherently vicious system. The interests of medical science and of the people cry out for the inauguration of an open system. Of course, in the medical as in all other services there is to be no exclusion of expert skill and experience from abroad, whenever necessary.

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✓ DR. SUBRAHMANYA AIYAR'S surrender of his knighthood and title has caused a flutter of astonishment and a suspicion of grave impropriety in certain circles. The uneasiness will be somewhat allayed by the resolution of the Canadian Parliament to request His Majesty the King not to confer any more titles and decorations on Canadians. Sir Wilfrid Laurier went the extraordinary length of declaring that, if it would not mean disrespect to His Majesty, he would burn his certificates in a public bonfire. One would like to be sure that the people of Canada detest all titles and decorations and not merely those that proceed from outside authority. Such a feeling is anyway unimaginable in India. Even in the limited circles, where the dislike is strong, we find it accompanied by a decided partiality for titles proceeding from the people. If this developed into a craze, as it might conceivably do, the resulting corruption would be no less a public calamity. In highly cultured societies in India, there is a gratifying reaction from the idolatrous respect once paid to the recipients of Government marks of recognition;

and men are beginning here and there to decline honours. Only one has an uncomfortable feeling that the honour of having declined an honour may be a greater object of quest than the honour itself and then the merit of the thing is gone. The whole subject deserves elaborate treatment from all sides. But we think Government will do well in the future to consult the wishes of those that they would select for such recognition; for to many a refusal before the announcement may appear more proper from many aspects than a refusal after it.

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DR. M. E. SADLER, writing in the *Mysore Economic Journal*, pleads for greater freedom to the teacher in elementary schools in England. This, he seems to contend, is the natural consequence of the freedom already accorded to the teacher engaged in secondary education and presumably to the college professor. We may look with confidence, then, in his forthcoming report on the Calcutta University, for some strong advocacy of the freedom of universities and of the professors and lecturers in the affiliated colleges. Minute regulations as to fees, holidays, hours of work and curricula, coupled with espionage of a degrading character as to the political proclivities of teacher and taught, destroy all initiative and independence of thought. And yet, as Dr. Sadler says in respect of the elementary teacher, you cannot have the desiderated change in the *spirit* of college education, till the professor is set at liberty, and by the wise and public-spirited exercise of his own freedom, can show his pupils as well as teach them the value of freedom to the community. Doubtless there are risks; some professors and students, unaccustomed to freedom, will abuse it. Others, however, and these will become more numerous with time, will afford admirable examples of high culture and noble citizenship, thus conferring incalculable benefit on the nation. Nor does the eminent educationalist forget the material condition involved, the raising of the teacher's salary. If it is a necessity in Great Britain we do not know what to call it in India. It is an old story though not the less sad because it is old.

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THE cause of "P.R.," with which the late Lord Courtney had so prominently identified himself for the last thirty years, suffered a severe reverse in the House of Commons in May last. For the tentative and restricted scheme, drawn up by a commission, for the application of proportional representation to 99 constituencies at a General Election, was rejected on May 13 by a majority of 3 to 2. The House of Lords was known to be in favour of it, and it was expected that the lower House would agree to the scheme by way of an experiment, especially as it was the outcome of a compromise between the two Houses in the shape of the appointment of a commission. Even Mr. Asquith, who has been very sceptical of "P.R.," gave in his adhesion to the scheme, thinking that the time had come for the House of Commons to

permit an experiment, which was not irrevocable. The motion was, however, lost by a large majority, and the defeat has for the present sealed the fate of this movement. In India, too "P. R." does not find favour with Government, in spite of its strong and cogent advocacy by men, among whom the most prominent is the Hon'ble Mr. Paranjpye. Now the Government of India has definitely discountenanced the method of communal representation on local bodies, and the surmise that it will be ruled out in the reform proposals as regards legislative councils, it is not easy to see how a fair representation of important minorities can be secured except by a recourse to a form of "P. R."

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DR. MOONJE'S version of his interview with the Chief Secretary to the C. P. Government and his attitude to the forthcoming reform proposals does not differ from the press note in any essential particular, the doctor's protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. It does not make a single alteration of substance, though it suggests many verbal changes, and these, when made, do not improve his position a whit, if his purpose is to make out that he still retains an uncompromising adherence to the Congress-League scheme. For even in this amended version, he expresses his willingness to accept Mr. Montagu's scheme, even if it does not come up to the standard of the Congress-League scheme, provided responsible government is granted within a certain period. If, Dr. Moonje's attitude is—and it is the only construction of which it is susceptible—that in view of a statutory provision for our future progress towards full responsible government being completed within a reasonable limit of time, we may well be prepared to lower our demands in certain particulars not so essential, we may at once concede that there is a good deal in that view, though we do not understand how one can in reason pledge oneself to support any scheme, of the nature of which one has no conception. But we have no doubt that, whatever Dr. Moonje may have expressed, the idea at the back of his mind is entirely sound, and we do not see why he should feel unhappy about it.

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THE argument of His Highness the Aga Khan's new work, *India in Transition*, sent by Reuter, does not afford sufficient material to judge of the exact line of reforms he has shadowed forth in it. It is, however, reassuring to find that the Aga Khan makes a powerful plea for making provincial Governments completely autonomous. But it is difficult to understand how the process of liberalisation can stop with provincial Governments alone, and how the central Government can be left untouched, when it has under its sole control such large departments as the customs and railways, posts and telegraphs. Our belief is firm that no proposal of reform can be regarded as wholly satisfactory, which leaves the Government of India intact, in its present non-popular form.

ADVERTING to the feeling of distrust being generated and propagated against Mr. Surendranath Banerjea and Mrs. Besant, the *Modern Review* says: "It has become the fashion for some people to speak sneeringly or slightly of back numbers and Yesterdays. While we cannot indiscriminately swear by or quote the authority of either back or current numbers, we must recognise that many back numbers are valuable and many better than current numbers. The fact of one being a current number is not in itself a claim to respect. Let him or it stand the test of time as many back numbers have done. As for Yesterdays, why, they are not only the predecessors of To-days, but often their progenitors, too... We confess we have not followed the charges levelled against Mr. Banerjea or against Mrs. Annie Besant either, and to that extent we are ourselves a back number."

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THE Defence of India Act has been applied to a Moslem bi-weekly newspaper of Lahore, the *Observer*, conducted by Mr. Barkat Ali. He has been ordered to show in proof all the matter, intended for publication, to a censor and to insert only such as is passed by that officer. This is an extreme instance of official surveillance, and we do not wonder that Mr. Barkat Ali's present impulse is to cease publication of the journal. We have not seen issues of the *Observer* latterly, and cannot judge of their contents. Nor is any indication given by the local Government of the nature of the articles and news appearing in that journal, which in their view are 'prejudicial to the public safety.' But we cannot refrain from making an earnest appeal to the Government not to resort to this extreme precautionary measure in any case, unless continued and grave provocation makes it indispensably necessary. In the present temper of the people, in particular, an unnecessary and unjustifiable use of the emergency powers vested in the Government, will have a most undesirable effect.

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AN ANONYMOUS European donor has offered to give away ten lakhs of rupees for being devoted to the promotion of education in Bengal, and, what is more, he has made Indians as well as Europeans and Anglo-Indians the beneficiaries of his munificent gift. Instances of such cosmopolitan charity are not so rare among Europeans residing in this country, as is likely to be imagined, nor is love of India to be found only among those who make such bequests. A pleasing feature of our public life is that many a European is inspired by a genuine love of this country and does within limits his best to promote its interests.

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Servant of India, Poona City.

THE COMING PROPOSALS:  
OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM.  
BY V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

I  
PERSONAL.

I AM one of those who have been held up to the odium of the public as a small knot of politicians pledged to support and recommend to the country any reforms, however slight, that the Secretary of State may offer. I am not so pledged. I do not know that any one is so pledged. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State did me the honour to invite me to some conversations on the proposals before them. I tried, so far as I could, to interpret to them the best mind of India. But they told me only of parts of the scheme of reforms, and to this day I have no knowledge of it in its entirety, and am free, like any fellow-citizen of mine, to judge it when published on its merits and act according to my judgment. With this personal explanation I write these lines to my countrymen as one who loves and would serve them if he may. My words will of course have weight only with those who have not made up their minds that I have sold my country for office, title or other personal gain.

PRINCIPLES OF C.-L. SCHEME THE TRUE TEST.

Just as some persons are believed to be ready to accept any reforms, however slight, so on the other side many are supposed to be determined to reject any reforms, however good, and to be preparing an atmosphere of distrust in the country and impressing into their service such incidents as a blundering Government creates, for instance, the cancellation of passports to the Home Rule deputation, the *contretemps* at the Bombay war conference, and the letter of Dr. Subrahmanya Aiyar to President Wilson. Probably, so far as set purpose is concerned, the suspicions on either side are unjust, though it may be presumed that the sanguine dispositions of some and the melancholy dispositions of others will incline them naturally one way or the other. Anyway, the allegiance of all progressive parties to the Congress-League scheme remains unshaken. A proposition has been advanced that the scheme is binding on the president and the executive of the Congress in a sense in which it is not binding on the rank and file of Congressmen. This is open to dispute. Politics is not altogether shifting and incoherent; but at the same time it is not absolutely rigid and should not, except in the rarest of conditions, be made a matter of vows and oaths. The government of men in these times is by the clash of opinion with opinion and is therefore a matter of compromise and continual adjustment. Those who seek to guide human affairs ought never to swear away their freedom and become bound to inflexible programmes. So far as the public know, no Congressman has committed himself irrevocably to stand or fall by the Congress-League scheme.

This is entirely to the good. Some may be more open than others to compromise, and in some particulars more than in others. But upon the whole the claim of the scheme to adherence is of the same kind in the case of all Congressmen, while its degree in individual cases depends on temperament and strength of conviction.

I took a share from the very beginning in the shaping of the Congress-League scheme, I have expounded it with pride and zeal in writing and by speech, and a humble part of the work of educating the country on it fell to my lot. I believe it is on the whole superior to the scheme which is on the eve of publication, being laid on existing foundations and requiring no scrapping of existing administrative machinery. Nevertheless I realise that it cannot be the last word on the subject, that others besides Congressmen have a right to be heard in the matter, and that it is necessary to listen with patience and consideration to alternative proposals purporting to carry out the promise of His Majesty's Government that responsible government is to be the political goal of India. Of course, care must be taken that our most essential demands are met, that the principles dear to us are preserved in the new arrangements. To secure this end, a clear disengagement must be made of the essentials from the details of the Congress-League scheme. I was among the first, if not the first, to draw the attention of the public to this necessity and it is some satisfaction to me that, though I was then abused for my pains, most leaders have now come to talk of the basic principles of the scheme as distinguished from the scheme as a whole, inclusive of all its minutiae. No unanimity, however, is possible as to the identity of these basic principles. They have been variously stated. Let us take the enumeration made by Mr. Tilak in the tour he made preparatory to his departure on the abortive deputation; it seemed to receive general assent. Three master ideas, according to him, gave the scheme its character. First, a substantial elective majority in the legislature; second, the subordination of the executive to the legislature; and third, the control of the nation's finance by the legislature. Of these, the first may, for present purposes, be put aside as the *conditio sine qua non* of the other two. We have, then, to be satisfied that these two ideas are embodied in Mr. Montagu's proposals. If they are, we entertain and consider the proposals; if not, we reject them. This is the position, stated simply, at which we have arrived. We are not to go on crying 'Congress-League scheme and nothing else,' but to insist on the people's representatives being empowered to call the executive to account and controlling the financial dispositions.

II

THE TEST REQUIRES MATURE JUDGMENT.

Now the application of a specific test to a scheme of government is not so simple a matter as

it looks. The subordination of the executive, for example, is most strikingly secured by its "responsibility" to the legislature, i. e., by its liability to be turned out of office at the pleasure of the popular representatives. For this culminating sign of subordination, the Congress scheme makes no provision. Even the resolution of the Calcutta Congress on the subject, while enunciating responsible government as an aim, does not incorporate it with the scheme. In my exposition I have mentioned eight different provisions as operating in favour of the legislature in its contest with the executive, without taking into account the elective majority and the financial control, which are also required under the scheme. To avoid a cumbersome quotation, I will merely give a brief mention of the eight provisions: (1) the five-year term of the executive; (2) power of interpellation; (3) power to have a meeting summoned on the requisition of one-eighth of the members; (4) power of calling attention to and raising a debate on a definite matter of urgent public importance; (5) power of making its own rules of business; (6) power of electing its own president; (7) power of passing resolutions and the binding nature of twice-passed resolutions; (8) power of electing one half of the executive. Of these eight, shall we insist upon each and every one? or shall we rest content with the more important? If the latter, which are the more important? Again, we must give credit for any other ways in which the new scheme may seek to strengthen the legislature as against the executive. Nor must we forget that the veto, vested in the head of the executive and not to be dispensed with in any scheme, may be exercised either directly or through a second House or other machinery that may be devised for the purpose. The institution of such a body is not contemplated by the authors of the Congress scheme; but it is not inherently incompatible with it, and, if decided upon, will introduce a complication and involve changes and safeguards to which it will be difficult to object. Thus a substantial compliance with the principle is that all that we can in reason demand. Similarly with regard to financial control. The Congress scheme, taking away all matters relating to internal and external defence and all political relations from the purview of the legislature, makes a great deduction from this principle which will make itself felt beyond its proper sphere. Some critics of the Congress scheme have noticed that it proceeds upon the assumption of harmonious relations for ever between the legislature and the executive as it makes no provision whatever to enable the executive to carry on, if supplies be not voted in time. In so far as this is a defect, it must be remedied by the insertion of new features, which in their turn will necessitate further changes and adjustments. Moreover, budgetary regulations are a difficult problem for the expert, and will be rendered more difficult by the existence of two Houses of legislature, which is a possibility in the new regime.

These considerations go to show that the application to the Secretary of State's proposals of the test mentioned above, viz., a substantial compliance with the two great principles of the Congress scheme, is a matter calling for the exercise of a clear and dispassionate judgment from those who have enough experience of public affairs to estimate the various factors which will determine the precise working of an institution among the communities that make up our population. I hope I shall not be understood as underrating the value of public meetings or the voice of the people when it duly declares itself. Their authority I need not dispute here. I dwell rather on the hard thinking and the anxious consultation on the part of men of mature judgment which must precede the resolutions of public meetings and make up the final verdict of the community on these momentous issues. I do not pretend for one moment that all men above forty are wise, or that they will all think alike on a given problem. But I must plead with the young, if I have not lost caste altogether, for a little trust in the judgment of those elders to whom they are accustomed to look for guidance, and not act on the new-fangled theory, which has found unabashed expression in Madras, that the young are to formulate policies and the old are to execute them. With the same end in view I would urge the older Congressmen not to keep their thoughts to themselves, but to declare their views early enough for them to exercise their due influence. When the wise restrain themselves other people take possession of the field, and mere iteration gives the first views a vogue and popularity which they may not deserve by their intrinsic merit. If leaders will not lead, they will have to follow and cannot complain.

The rigidity of our test by Congress principles will also require to be abated by another circumstance. Allusion has been made to responsible government, which the proposals of the Secretary of State may seek to embody. Personally, I have argued against it even as an ideal. I believe that the examples of America, Japan, and Switzerland have more application to the case of India than those of Great Britain, France and Italy. The canonical doctrine, however, is entirely in favour of the cabinet system. In Bengal, in particular, it has many adherents among Indian politicians, some of whom would seem to think that, if they could get responsible government in the provinces, they might even pay for it, if necessary, by surrender of power in the case of the Government of India. The price exacted will not, however, be limited to that. By universal consent a system of ins and outs, unless it is evolved naturally out of a long practice of representative institutions, attended with so many risks that, at least such inception, limitations may be considered necessary as to its scope. At any rate those who send that it cannot be accused of unpatriotic or but 10 lacs conduct, merely because they intr

caution and under limitations. It will be difficult to compare the Congress-League scheme with a scheme of which responsible government is a feature; and if a second House and other new constitutional expedients are added, a comparison is hardly proper. I draw attention to this increased difficulty in order to show how our judgment as to the value of Mr. Montagu's proposals must be marked by diffidence and hesitation, especially if it is to be so unfavourable as to lead to rejection.

### III

#### IF WE APPROVE, WE MUST SUPPORT.

Of the many minds that will be exercised on the proposals, there are certain classes which we may at once dismiss as unworthy of attention. Some, whose political ambitions are torpid, will be satisfied with anything without reasoning. Others are so constituted that they will grumble in heaven. There are also the reactionaries, both European and Indian, who oppose all constitutional advance as uncalled for and dangerous. A large class of people will apply their minds earnestly to the examination of the proposals and endeavour honestly to answer the questions: 'Do these proposals constitute a substantial instalment of reforms? and do they set the people of India on the high road to responsible government?' Considerations will sway strongly one way and the other; few pessimists but will see elements of good, and few optimists but will discern risks and pitfalls. A good many will remain to the end somewhere about the borderland, unable to return an unhesitating yea or nay. Two categories must anyhow separate themselves, and day by day, as the discussion proceeds, they will receive fresh accretions of strength. To one of these the proposals would appear upon the whole to be so unsatisfactory in relation to their expectation that they will feel it their duty to reject them. The other, weighing the pros and cons, will incline finally in favour of the proposals and accept them. The first class are bound logically to fight the proposals and not become responsible in any measure for their eventual enactment into law. The second must feel a contrary obligation to assist the authors of the proposals in getting them passed into law. Of course they will at the same time endeavour all they can to improve the proposals, to remove what is objectionable in them and add any new features that may seem necessary.

An opinion is gaining currency that it is to our disadvantage that the proposals about to be published have not received the approval of the War Cabinet. On the contrary, I think in the circumstances it is an advantage. I strongly urged this view on the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. ~~awar~~ criticisms and suggestions have a better progæ now than they will have when the proposals become a Government measure and to stand oeadiness to be laid before Parliament.

that vote with Government have at no great temptation to improve

its provisions, while their energies will be fully occupied in resisting the amendments of the opposition, which in this case will be particularly virulent. This course is also in accordance with the policy pursued by our representatives in the legislative councils, who have demanded from time to time that the proposals of the Government of India should be published for general criticism. It is to our interest to multiply the opportunities of putting in our say. Nothing would prevent us from making our suggestions in future stages as well.

Our counsel is now darkened by a subtle question of strategy. It is widely believed that, if we are to secure the improvements we desiderate in the proposals, those who may be satisfied should hide their satisfaction, even if they do not see their way to swell the threat of complete rejection. The idea is that, if the War Cabinet and Parliament found all parties in India united in opposition to their proposals, they would see no alternative but to liberalise them. Let us for the moment put aside the moral consideration involved and reconcile ourselves to the apparent insincerity of the course. I see a very real danger ahead. The Government in England is a government by opinion. Parliament enacts laws only under the compelling force of public opinion. This public opinion must demand not only a law, but the law under discussion. The necessity of some legislation may be obvious, but if there is no clear preponderance of opinion that the particular bill proposed by Government will meet the needs of the case, Parliament will not pass it. Let those politicians in India who may be actually in favour of Mr. Montagu's proposals ponder these questions. How could Mr. Montagu carry them unless a powerful body of Parliamentary opinion supported them? How could a powerful body of Parliamentary opinion be formed in their favour except in response to a well-reasoned and influential body of opinion in India? If the only people who thought well of the proposals kept their thoughts to themselves, how could a favourable opinion gather force and volume? Only the other day the Irish Home Rule Bill had to be withdrawn, not because the Government party in England thought that Ireland felt no need of Home Rule, but because the particular bill, by reason of its association with conscription and other things, was not welcomed by any party in that country. Withdrawal of that kind is by no means a rare thing in the history of the English Parliament. The acuteness of the political conditions in Ireland is certainly not less than that in India, and Home Rule in Ireland is more generally recognised as a war measure than Home Rule in India. The British cabinet, therefore, if they decided to withdraw the bill for reforming the Indian constitution, would not offend any section in Parliament, while they would conciliate the noisy section inimical to this country. Mr. Montagu and his friends would doubtless weep over the tragic end of all their labours. Bu,

would they not be just if they blamed those who, being no less interested than they in the fortunes of the bill, adopted false tactics and played the enemy's game by withholding the support due to them? Moderation has no doubt fallen on evil times. But why should it hang down its head and go about with an apology always on its lips, like a pariah of old in the neighbourhood of an agrahara? Men of the moderate school have no need to be ashamed either of their name or of their policy. It is no crime to be in the minority. It cannot be unpatriotic to say yes when they feel yes. To be rallied by an English politician is not wrong when they are rallied to the standard of peaceful and substantial progress. On the lips of a sneering majority, expressions of noble import are often degraded. Rallying the moderates, sobriety, statesmanship are not despicable, because they are now generally despised. Let us be true to our convictions and remember that a single turn of events may prove us right. History honours Cavour as well as Mazzini, and Emmanuel has a niche in the hall of fame by the side of Garibaldi.

## IV

## EVIL OF WITHHOLDING SUPPORT.

Once the proposals are wrecked through our laches, a heavy responsibility will descend on us. The young and ardent spirits in India will pronounce British statesmanship bankrupt. "India betrayed once more" will be the bitter comment on events of these years. "Put no faith in the Englishman" will become the common political maxim. The discontent in India will assume graver forms than it did in the troubles of 1906-7, for to-day we are playing for higher stakes than at the earlier period, and the results will be decisive both for us and for Anglo-Indians. The disorderly agitation, to which the frustration of a generation's hopes will give rise, will evoke strong measures on the part of the Government, strengthening the hands of bureaucratic tyranny. Unrest and repression, acting and reacting on each other, will reduce the country to a sad plight. The only remedy to be thought of, namely, liberal measures of self-government, will be bitterly opposed by interested parties as unsuitable in a condition of political disorder, while Mr. Montagu's experience will tend to deter other politicians from essaying the task of healing. To an abnormal type of mind, political disorder may appear a necessary preliminary to the establishment of a happier polity than India has ever known. If we throw everything into chaos, God will know how to bring cosmos out of it! That is it. The forces that will be unloosed we cannot hope to control or regulate, and we shall hopelessly thicken the problems of our children, because we choose to neglect a comparatively easy solution in our time. But I will not pursue this sombre vein of thought any more. There is every hope that our people will act according to the dictates of reason. I have said before and will say again that we are far from having ex-

hausted the possibilities of constitutional agitation in India. It is not impossible for us to attain by methods of peace what elsewhere and at other times has cost the shedding of much blood and the misery of many generations. Mr. Gokhale worked in that faith to the end. I have that faith too and would fain communicate it to others. Anyhow the time for despair and dark counsel is yet happily far off. There is no need to think of it now, for to think of it is a sure way to hasten it.

## RURAL SANITATION.

WHENEVER Government publishes a resolution on some important question of the day, it raises expectations in the minds of the public, which, experience shows, are to often doomed to meet with disappointment. The Government of India issued a very sympathetic resolution on sanitation on the 23rd of May, 1914. This led people to expect that the much-neglected question of village sanitation would soon receive careful consideration at the hands of Government. About 22 crores of people live in Indian villages, and it was felt some of their sanitary defects would be remedied at no distant date. Four years have passed since then, and our villages to-day are exactly what they were then. Last week the Government of India addressed a letter on rural sanitation to the various provincial Governments, enclosing recommendations made by the Sanitary Commissioners' conference held in Delhi in the month of January last, and a note by Dr. F. Norman White, Sanitary Commissioner to the Government of India. At the outset the letter says that Government takes no responsibility for the opinions expressed in the enclosures. The Government then mention the various resolutions that they have issued from the year 1879 on the subject and remark that "the Government of India have always recognised the special difficulties connected with rural public health, which is due to the intimate connection of sanitary measures with the domestic habits of the villagers, the ignorance and prejudices of the people, the want of funds for the organization of public health and the competing claims of education and medical relief on local resources, etc., etc." They then admit that so far improvements have been in the main confined to municipal areas and that villages continue to be neglected as before. Government further on say that the difficulties in the way of undertaking village sanitation are getting less and less every year as the educated classes in India now evince a growing desire for measures conducive to the improvement of public health. Finally, they recommend that the local Governments should, if possible, appoint health officers in some important districts, with a strong staff under them such as circumstances would permit.

The Sanitary Commissioners recommend that each district with a population of about 10 lacs

should have the following staff to look after the village sanitation :—

- (a) One District Health Officer and office establishment.
- (b) Two Deputy Health Officers.
- (c) Four Sub-Deputy Health Officers.
- (d) Fifty Health Inspectors and Sub-inspectors.

This is expected to cost about a lac a year. Now, as the population in Indian villages is 22 crores, the cost of the scheme for the whole of India would come to about Rs. 2,20,00,000. The various Governments and the local bodies together spend now for rural sanitation about Rs. 35,00,000. If the scheme now recommended is to be brought into force, these bodies must, among themselves, find about Rs. 1,85,00,000. So far as the local bodies are concerned, with the famine prices now prevailing in India, it is beyond their power to attempt any such thing. The Government of India recognise that "the financial circumstances set up by the war and the need for economy which has lately been impressed upon local Governments will militate against any material increase of expenditure on sanitation while the war lasts." It is therefore clear that the money wanted for the purpose cannot be secured from any source for the present. The result of all this is that Government have expressed a pious wish and leave the solution of the question to time and circumstances. In the meanwhile, the unpardonable waste of human material goes on in our villages. They have no facilities for medical relief, they drink very impure water, their conservancy arrangements are most primitive, and they pass their lives in most unhealthy surroundings. This is no exaggeration, and the Government themselves are prepared to admit its truth.

The Sanitary Commissioner indirectly hints that the local boards can, if they so choose, transfer part of the money they now spend on education to sanitation. The principal seven major administrations in India spend about Rs. 1,50,00,000 on education of villages, while they spend only Rs. 32,50,000 on sanitation. This suggestion, however, fails to give its proper importance to education. No amount of sanitary measures can be of any avail if the villagers continue to be ignorant. Those that move about among villagers know this very well. If we can educate the masses still more, without any additional expenditure on sanitation, the health of the villages will certainly improve. I have no doubt it is primarily the duty of Government to come forward to remedy this evil. It is clear, however, that for some years to come Government will not be in a position to do much in the matter. Is it not then the duty of the educated among us to come forward with real missionary spirit and try to lessen the frightful waste of human material that is going on around us. Let the educated show the villagers the way and the latter will certainly follow them. Without Government assistance, the private volunteer effort

will not of course go a long way, and financial assistance will therefore be needed to a large extent. But it is fundamentally a question which the State alone can solve satisfactorily. Let us sincerely hope that normal times are soon restored and that Government are enabled to hand over to local bodies new sources of revenue from which to meet this additional expenditure.

H. S. D.

### MR. MONTAGU'S REFORMS AND PASSIVE RESISTANCE.

CATCHWORDS may be the most effective battle-cries of a party, but they are the most subtle foes of a nation. "Passive Resistance" has become just such a catchword. It has become a fashion—for politics, too, has its fashions—for people to speak of Passive Resistance at each and every step, for every reason and for no reason. And now some people have proposed passive resistance against Mr. Montagu's reform scheme, if it is not satisfactory to them.

All this shows that some people have come to look upon Passive Resistance as the panacea for all our political ills. I am not disposed to quarrel with those who have honestly come to this conclusion. But does it ever occur to them that the disease indeed must be in a very sad way that requires such a terrible remedy? Does it ever occur to them that this remedy is worse than the disease which it is intended to cure? Do they ever pause to consider what an amount of suffering is involved in putting into action these two words, passive resistance—suffering that can be rendered needless by the timely adoption of a more prudent and sensible course?

In my opinion passive resistance is like a highly dangerous surgical operation, which only the last extreme phase of a disease can call for and justify. It is a radical treatment which one should try only after having tried all other remedies. The disease must be hopelessly incurable otherwise that can justify the resort to the surgeon's knife. So also, that tyranny must be intolerable and incurable by other means that evokes passive resistance on the part of those on whom it presses. Passive resistance against such positive downright oppression is perfectly understandable; it is justifiable; nay, it is inevitable—it will swell forth spontaneously out of the deepest well-springs of life and action of the people and overwhelm and sweep away all tyrannies like so many cob-webs. But passive resistance against a reform scheme!

I do not understand what that means. I do not know whether anybody does. There is many a bad law on the statute book against which nobody has dreamt of applying passive resistance. But passive resistance against the reform scheme! That passes my comprehension!

In the name of reason, I appeal to all those whose tongues have learnt to utter these two words.



so merrily to try to understand what it exactly means. I make bold to appeal to them to be practical for once and not to allow their enthusiasm altogether to outrun their judgment. I assure them it is not an unpatriotic offence to be practical—not at all. Is passive resistance practicable in this case? Is it desirable?

There can be only one answer to these questions and that a most emphatic "No." It is ridiculous to talk of passive resistance against an idea, a scheme—much more so against a scheme of reforms. It is impossible, inconceivable. All elements of agony and suffering that alone can call it forth from the heart of the people—where are they in this case? Therefore, so far as the masses of our people are concerned, all talk of passive resistance is absurd and futile in the present instance. Nor is it to be inferred that the educated classes are more favourably disposed towards any such campaign. On the contrary, the vast majority of them will set their face dead against any such thing. Can a passive resistance movement hope to achieve anything in these circumstances—even granting for the sake of argument that it is within the limits of possibility to start it?

Let us not be carried away by mere shibboleths. For goodness sake, let us have some clear notions. In what way is it proposed that we should carry on the crusade against Mr. Montagu's reform scheme? Shall we go about like the women-suffragists of England, breaking window panes just to mark our profound displeasure with his scheme? Or shall we waylay unwary I. C. S. wallahs and belabour them with dog-whips? Or shall we smuggle ourselves into war loan meetings and war celebrations and shout: "The Congress-League scheme, the whole scheme and nothing but the scheme," at the pitch of our voices? I trust we shall not be asked to do any of these things. Then, what is it exactly that we are wanted to do?

So far as I can make out, there is only one thing that we can reasonably be expected to do and that is to have nothing to do with reformed legislative councils—boycott of the councils with a vengeance. But we shall be the losers in that case, not the legislative councils, one may be sure. It is patent to all but the purblind that for every one man among us who may refuse to sit in the reformed legislative councils, hundreds will be forthcoming to take his place. We have it on the authority of the *A. B. Patrika* that the Nationalists "boycotted" the reformed councils of 1907. As all India knows by now, the boycott proved a fiasco. Well; let that serve us as a warning.

But even were it possible that such a course could succeed, it is not at all desirable that it should do so, as I have already remarked. Plainly speaking, it is desirable that it should fail and for this reason: if the right sort of men among us, the men who are fired with a holy ambition to serve their motherland, if such men held aloof from the

reformed legislatures, the inevitable result will be that the wrong sort of men will get into them. I ask, is that desirable? So far as Madras Presidency is concerned, I know what sort of men will get into them. They will be mostly men whom we find in alliance with Anglo-Indians to-day. If such men should capture our councils and dominate them by any fault of our own, all I can say is, woe betide our poor country! And may the blame of this be on the heads of those who brought about such a pass!

Many who admit the force of these arguments still persist in saying, "That is not our concern; let us have passive resistance at all costs". I pity this frame of mind. If it is in any perverse, revengeful spirit that they say this, let them beware lest their revenge should recoil on their own heads. They will be cutting off their noses to spite their faces. It is India that will suffer. And nothing will delight our opponents so much as seeing us hoist with our own petard.

I am glad, therefore, as I have said in my previous article, that Mr. Tilak and Mrs. Besant, the two foremost leaders of the extreme party, have set their faces definitely against all such rodomontade. Their organs, the *Mahratta* and *New India* have already rejected definitely all such suicidal ideas. That other uncompromising exponent of Indian nationalism, Babu Motilal Ghose, has also taken up a similar position in his influential *A. B. Patrika*. Now Dr. Subramania Iyer and Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer have followed suit and I cannot do better than close my article with their words. Says Subramania Iyer: "There is some misconception as to passive resistance. Some people prefer to stay away from the new legislatures if the Montagu scheme falls short of the Congress-League scheme. *That is an absurd idea.* When something perfectly lawful and just, which every subject of His Majesty can demand to do without violating any provision of the law, is objected to by a show of authority or any other way, than passive resistance would come into existence". Says C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer: "The one thing which I would implore as *essential* is to conduct our scrutiny with the aid of the *brain* and not of the *emotions* . . . Let us exact and demand those ideals which are of the *essence* of our scheme; but let us not *too facily* talk of keeping away altogether from discussion by rejection of the scheme *in toto*. *Let us not also talk too easily of passive resistance* . . . To a crisis directed immediately, yes, I can conceive of passive resistance; but the emotions in these matters ought to be disciplined and kept in the back-ground till the crisis is reached. *But let not the emotions intrude into the region of the intellect, when we calmly and with a sense of responsibility discuss measures which inevitably will, whether we like it or not, affect the country momentarily.*" (Italics mine.)

S. M. M.

## REVIEWS.

## FORESTS IN BOMBAY.

## ADMINISTRATION OF FORESTS IN BOMBAY IN 1916-17.

In the year under review, the total forest area of the Presidency decreased by 29 square miles from 15,018 to 14,989 square miles. If we compare the figures in this report with those in the recent report of the Mysore Forest Department, which was reviewed by us in a former issue, the comparison will not be creditable to the Bombay Government. In Mysore the forest area increased from 2946 to 3103 sq. miles during one year. This fact is a clear proof that in this respect our Government is not as serious as it ought to be. The Mysore Government has taken a lesson from the situation created by the war, and we are quite confident that they will take full advantage of it in days to come. In the resolution on the report, special mention is made of the effective progress made in clearing off arrears in connection with settlement work, and of a considerable advance made in respect of the demarcation, of forest boundaries, both internal as well as external. But no forest surveys were carried out except in Sind, where too they were confined to river frontages and marking of coupes. The resolution observes silence about this vital question, which is the first important step in the practical programme of scientific forestry.

The question of management of forests has been dealt with at length in the second chapter. Forest management has become almost a science on account of a variety of causes, among which the study of natural science and of economics are the foremost. Modern forestry, in order adequately to work it out, requires specially trained officers, the preparation of regular working plans, easy communications, watchful protection of forest area and lastly scientific silviculture and systematic exploitation. As regards scientific and expert advice, the Inspector General of Forests made an important tour through the principal forest areas, and made some valuable suggestions, which led to the revision of the working plans of the Thana, Satpura and Khandesh forests as at the Central Circle also. We hope that the working plans will be submitted to experts more often than is done at present.

As regards the working plan of the Thana Forest it is remarked in the report. "It is satisfactory to note that in each of the above cases, the result has been more conservative exploitation, together with more intense management, greater economy in working and a higher revenue, through this last has been due to continued rise in prices of all materials." But we are sorry to find that the same remark cannot be made applicable to the other circles than the Northern, and Government appears to be extremely slow with regard to the "control" of the few plans before it.

On communications and buildings, a total expenditure of Rs., 136,264 was incurred; it shews an increase of Rs. 30,000 on that of the previous year. The capital invested on this score, though not of immediate interest, will certainly be found to be quite necessary, because it facilitates the removal of timber from the forests. In Sind, the repairing of protective embankments against the inundations of the Indus causes great expenditure.

The next troublesome question in forest management, is their protection from fire, or cattle or against injuries or natural causes. During the year under report, the number of forest offences of all kinds was 22,200, being less than the previous year's total by 244. As regards compounded cases, we find for instances in the Central Division that out of 5606, the total number of offences, 4441 were compounded.

It may indicate clemency on the part of the Government, but it is also likely to cause much laxity in the conduct of the officers. Two kinds of indirect punishments for forest offences, deserve to be particularly noted. First of these is

the communal punishment in the shape of enhancement of grazing fees or suspensions of some forest privileges, to be inflicted on the whole village. In Poona and Kolaba the punishment was seen to have resulted in improvement and hence the grazing fees were again reduced to the normal rate.

There was a slight increase, from 1930 to 2053, in the total number of fires, but the area burnt shows a remarkable reduction from 4,14,437 to 2,83,113 acres. Rainy weather, which continued for a long time during the last year, doubtless reduced the area burnt in many instances. Offences of illicit grazing have declined from 9074 to 8550.

Climatic conditions were favourable for natural reproduction from seed during the greater part of the year. Seedling from teak and coppice reproduction showed highly satisfactory results. We are of opinion that there is great scope for extension, and considerable expenditure must be incurred to bring substantial profits.

The quantity of timber and fuel extracted amounted to 43,538 cubic feet, as against 41,829 in the previous year. Greater part of the produce was utilized for war purposes and for the railways. As a notable feature, the extraction of Bamboos worth Rs. 11,712, for the military department, may be mentioned. The outturn from sandalwood increased slightly, but the revenue amounted to Rs. 46,482 owing to a rise in prices.

As regards financial results of the year, the gross revenue realized amounted to Rs. 58,15,578, while the expenditure was Rs. 25,67,500. This shows an advance of nearly ten lakhs on the results of the previous year.

It is remarked that considerable progress was made in the direction of experiment and research. The experiments on the Sabai tree deserve to be particularly noted, as resin and turpentine can be extracted from it. There is abundant wealth in Indian forests; without the necessary requisites of energy and resources on the part of the national Government, it is sure to lie dormant and unutilized for ever.

K. G. L.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE BOMBAY IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT AND SUGARCANE CULTIVATORS.

SIR,—The sugarcane cultivators of the Mutha Valley are smarting under a grievance this year on account of the enforcement of Bunds round sugarcane fields. The Bunds are to be of the size of 2' in height and 2½' broad at the top with an incline of 1' in 1' round one acre plot while the one acre was to be divided again into quarter acre plots having Bunds of the size of 11' high and 1½' broad at the top. These rules were passed by a Committee appointed by Government in 1914. Since then, the irrigation authorities have been trying to enforce these Bunds on the cultivators of the Mutha Valley, but the cultivators are resisting them year after year. This year the Bunds were to be strictly enforced on the cultivators. Hence the cultivators organised a meeting at Mundhva near Poona in January 1918 under the presidency of Dr. Harold H. Mann, Principal, Agriculture College, Poona, and passed resolutions protesting against the Bunds. Since then a regular agitation was set up in the press; applications were also sent to the Chief Engineer and the Revenue Member of the Governor's Council. As the cultivators would not send in applications for planting new cane, the Irrigation Authorities called them in a Conference in February 1918, wherein the Superintending Engineer, Deccan Irrigation, and the Executive Engineer, Poona, met the leading cultivators and a compromise was agreed upon. But to the surprise of the cultivators, though the slackening of the rules was agreed upon in the meeting, the Executive Engineer, Poona, insisted on the full measurements of the Bunds round 3 acre plots, though the

quarter acre Bunds were to be dispensed with. This concession of putting Bunds round 3 acre plots, however, had no bearing on small cultivators some of whom had even less than one acre under cane. The result was that the plantation was considerably delayed and the total acreage under cane was reduced by nearly 1000 acres. The Government is thus put to a loss of nearly half a lac of rupees. The agitation set up by the cultivators had its effect on the authorities and the Government has appointed a Committee to reconsider these Bund rules.

The contentions of the cultivators may be summed up as follows:—

- (1) Most of the lands on the Mutha Canal are shallow and are in long narrow strips hence it is most inconvenient and expensive to bund them according to the regulation size.
- (2) The expenses of these Bunds come to more than Rs. 30, with no compensating advantage.
- (3) The construction of these Bunds means a loss of the valuable surface soil. The area lost to the cultivator is more than 5 gunthas, i. e., 1/4 of an acre.
- (4) The Bunds are likely to be inoperative in saving irrigation water, which was the chief purpose, and, on the contrary, are likely to do damage to sugarcane by causing water-logging.
- (5) As the Bunds have to be passed by subordinate officers of the Irrigation Department, these officers are likely to misuse their power by extorting money from the cultivators.

The Committee appointed by Government consists of the following 10 members. Five members from the Irrigation Department, of whom three are the authors of the rules framed in 1914. Four members from the Revenue Department and the Director of Agriculture.

None of the experts of the Agricultural Department are on the Committee, while there is an excessive number of members from the Irrigation Department, who may unduly influence the members of the Revenue Department who form the rest of the Committee and who may be presumed ordinarily not to have any personal knowledge of the difficulties of the cultivators affected by the rules.

Under these circumstances we venture to suggest that it may still be possible to add to the Committee already appointed co-opted members representing the opinion of experts of the Agricultural Department in touch with sugarcane cultivation and also non-official members representing the interests of the cultivators concerned. Amongst the experts of the Agricultural Department we would suggest the names of Dr. Harold Mann, Prof. J. B. Knight, Mr. G. N. Sahasrabudhe, sugarcane expert, Kopergaon, Mr. G. R. Mahajan of the Belapur Syndicate, Mr. R. G. Padhye of the Manjri Farm, and amongst the representatives of the cultivators we would suggest the names of the Hon'ble Mr. B. S. Kamat, the Secretary of the Deccan Agricultural Association, and two members from each of the three canal tracts namely Mutha, Neera and Godavari.

It is needless to add that this Committee has in its power to make or mar the future of sugarcane cultivation; hence we would like the Committee to be as representative as possible. We hope our suggestion will have some effect on the Government.—Yours, etc.

SUGARCANE CULTIVATOR.

Loni Kalbhor, Dist. Poona.  
June 29.

**THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS REFORMS.**

SIR,—I am very much surprised to find most progressive Indians still talking of the Congress-League scheme as the only scheme which we can entertain. They want the scheme, the whole scheme and nothing but the scheme. Even the more reasonable section among them, speak of the essen-

tials of the scheme. Can they not imagine that the reform proposals could be as liberal as any statesman could make them, and still be conceived on a plan altogether different from the Congress-League scheme. For my own part, I have been feeling that the most essential part of the Congress-League scheme has been already promised and it has only to be given a statutory effect. The announcement of the 20th August last has laid down authoritatively the goal of Self-Government to be the aim of British policy in India, thus embodying the vital part of the Congress-League scheme. Now it only remains for the Government to take the first step towards its realisation. Under the circumstances, what all reasonable people are expected to do is to examine the Government scheme of reforms with a view to see if it will take us satisfactorily nearer to our goal and if at that rate, our goal could be reached in a reasonable time, say a generation or two. That is the spirit which evidently animated Pandit Motilal Nehru when he agreed to accept Mr. Montagu's scheme, whatever it may be, if a statutory provision is made that the goal should be reached in 50 years. Instead of that, it is no use to go on comparing it with the Congress-League scheme. Further, one cannot understand minimums and maximums in politics. It is essentially made up of compromises. If every party—and there is no lack of parties in this country—demands its own scheme in toto, which is Mr. Montagu to accept? I believe it is only a fear that any scheme other than their own might leave cunningly concealed loopholes, imperceptible now, but capable of mischief hereafter, that makes each party so anxious for its own scheme. But I am sure, when the scheme is before the country all parties will look at it, not from any narrow standpoint, but will treat it as it deserves, according to its deserts. Let it be welcomed or rejected, not because it contains so much of the Congress-League scheme or any other scheme, but simply because it covers a reasonable distance to our goal or not. It is a childish obstinacy that has been the curse of Ireland. Shall we repeat it?

K. PANTHABATHY AIENGAR,  
Lecturer in History,  
Wesley College.

Madras, June 30.

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