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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

A Palestinian
Mulshi Peta.

THE House of Lords on March 15th discussed Palestinian matters and—strangely enough—we find there one item which is very much *à propos* on account of the frantic efforts which are being made just now in certain quarters to prevent the Mulshi Peta bother from dying down naturally. On another page we reprint the reply given by the Duke of Sutherland to a question put by Lord Raglan—not that we are optimistic enough to think that it will convince anyone who refuses to be convinced!—but it certainly puts the case for expropriation very well. In Palestine also the scheme is for damming a river with a view to employing the water power for the generation of electricity, and the Government, being convinced that it was a public utility concern, did not consult the owners of land—for “it would obviously be contrary to public interest to allow (them) to impose an absolute veto on the whole project”—but only set about devising means whereby reasonable compensation would be given to the owners of land who should be compulsorily expropriated. “Vested interests, however, were not (to be) allowed to stand in the way of the common good” as they were not allowed when railways were being built in England, and “it will be the duty of the Government, just as it is the duty of every constituted Government, to maintain public order and to protect these and all other important public works from raiders and other irresponsible opponents of law, order and progress.” It is only necessary to add that there was no question there of the Government being partial to the Jewish community who have

undertaken the scheme, for there is the greatest prejudice against increasing the volume of Jewish immigration into Palestine—and of course it is only Jewish settlers who would care to undertake the cultivation of the areas to be brought under irrigation. It is in fact only due to this ill-will against them that the irrigation part of this hydro-electric scheme is not being put through as well.

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WE adverted in our issue of April 13 to the fact that the Bombay Government has, by Notification, extended the definition, of sedition in so far as the territories included in the Political Agency of Kathiawar are concerned, so as to bring within its scope criticism of Native States. We see now that similar Notifications have been issued in the case of the Political Agencies of Rewa Kantha, Mahi Kantha, Palanpur and Kolhapur also (see the March 9 *Bombay Government Gazette*, part I, pp. 428-9). That is to say, practically all the Native States area in the Bombay Presidency has now been brought under this enlarged definition of sedition. We are aware that civil stations, etc., under the jurisdiction of the Political Agents are in an anomalous position, and that the Government has the power by an executive order to apply to them what laws it thinks best. But certainly the British Government owes it to the many persons who have repaired to these tracts as a safe asylum that it should not yield to the importunities of Native States and effectually prevent all criticism of the latter. The evil which exists at present in these States is not that there is excessive criticism of the acts of Indian Princes, but that there is far too little criticism of them, and if the British Government felt for the subjects of the Native States a tinge of the solicitude which they profess for their rulers, they would, far from stifling what little criticism is now allowed, encourage publicists to bring the acts of Princes under review. It is of course impossible for an independent press to grow in Native States, and if civil stations are also closed to such a press, it means virtually that Indian Princes are deliberately placed by the British Government above the reach of criticism. For it cannot be expected that in British India there will be many people sufficiently conversant with the affairs of Native States to be able to pass intelligent criticism on them, and even if there are any such people their criticism is not likely to

have effect as that made in the Native States themselves or on the borders is likely to have.

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The Thin End of the Wedge?

WE recognise that the persons accused of spreading disaffection against the Native States, will be tried, not in Native States, but in the Agency tract. But it is a mistake to suppose that the justice administered in a Political Agent's court is anything like that administered in British India proper. In the first place, the Political Agents are almost invariably military officers unversed in law and more often than not steeped in prejudice against "agitators." In the second place, there is no regular appeal from the decision of these officers. There is very little hope therefore for any one residing in the Political Agency area who has the misfortune to be charged with sedition to be able to show that his criticism fell within the explanations attached to Section 124 A. And these Notifications have naturally given rise to a widespread apprehension that the Government will not stop here but proceed to widen the definition of sedition in British India as well in the same sense. The public feels that, now the areas included within the Political Agencies have been dealt with by executive order, the Government will also take in hand British India itself and seek to do the same there by legislation. It is quite another matter if it is found eventually that the Legislature will not allow such a modification to be made in the law of sedition but it seems evident that the British Government has entirely capitulated to the Native States in regard to their demand that even after the Press Act is repealed they must continue to have the advantages which the Act secured to them. British Indian publicists must therefore beware and protest against this thin end of the wedge as the Hitawardhak Sabhas of Kathiawar and the Deccan States have done.

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An Anti-N.-C.-O. Nationalist.

OPINION in favour of a modification, that is to say, a reversal of the policy of non-co-operation has been growing in volume. Mr. Satyamurti, whose appearances on the public platform have not of late been as frequent as before, has come out with a statement of his views: he wants all the boycotts abolished—the boycott of schools because it is "undesirable," the boycott of law courts because it is "impracticable," and the boycott of councils because it is "suicidal." He would place entry into the councils in the forefront of the revised programme, and would have the non-co-operators busy themselves with the elections from now. There being but eighteen months for the elections to come off, he has no patience with those "lotus-eaters" who would postpone the Congress decision on such a vital matter to a later date. But his principal objection to the present Congress programme is that it has killed normal political activity, for the non-co-operator as often as a public grievance arises counsels inaction and patient suffering in the hope

that "every winter will change to spring" in God's own good time. The so-called constructive programme of non-co-operation contains of course some useful items, but, to Mr. Satyamurti, it "has no direct political value" and he thinks it positively harmful to fritter away the limited energy at the disposal of the country on collateral objects, however desirable they may appear. He would therefore like the country to concentrate—not on khaddar or temperance—but on Council work.

* * *

Lip Service.

WHILE no doubt there is a large body of public opinion clamouring for a return to the normal methods of political agitation, it must be remembered that at present it is being voiced exclusively by those who have always been avowed or unavowed opponents of non-co-operation. The present deadset made by them only means that the feeling which they cherished for the last two years or so now finds a suitable opportunity for public expression. But there have been no converts—no one who was a sincere advocate of non-co-operation before has now changed his mind and expressed himself in favour of, e. g. entering the councils. And the only question therefore is whether those who have succeeded Mr. Gandhi in the leadership of the Congress will be able to override their opinions as Mr. Gandhi did—or rather whether the opponents of non-co-operation in the Congress camp will be ready to efface themselves now as they did in Mr. Gandhi's presence. It goes without saying that Mr. Gandhi's personal influence no one else can claim, but it is still doubtful whether those who are really hostile to non-co-operation will be able to assert themselves. Anyhow it is clear that few adhere to the fundamental principle of non-co-operation. No better testimony to it could be found than in the fact that, in the midst of all these disputations about non-co-operation, no one says: "We took to non-co-operation because we considered it sinful to have any dealing with a Government which has inflicted such terrible wrongs on the country; the wrongs still remain, and therefore it must still be sinful as before to co-operate with Government; therefore we can have none of it. Our very religion forbids it." Even those who are for keeping the Congress programme unmodified, argue as if it was only a matter of expediency, whether co-operation would be more profitable or non-co-operation. It means that few believe in Mr. Gandhi's non-co-operation.

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The Danger.

THE danger is that if the Nationalists are shut out from work in which they have faith and called upon to do work in which they have no faith, they will naturally feel impelled to embark on more aggressive forms of non-co-operation, such as civil disobedience, as we find to be the case in the U. P. The best way to restrain them from dangerous activities is to allow them to enter councils and to do the political work they love to do.

ECONOMICS AND GEORGICS.—II.

WE tried last week to disentangle the principles underlying the present economic condition of Europe (and of the world). As a first fact we discovered that the War had increased the general productivity all round: if it is usually calculated that the machine age has increased that production by two hundred times, the War itself has increased it to be to-day ten times of what it was less than a decade ago. As a consequence of the machine age and its tremendous productivity as compared with pre-machine ages, we discovered further a progressive specialization in production, a division of labour which went on becoming more and more specialized, in the very ratio as productivity increased. It is obvious, that if for example one man was to build a motor car by himself, he would not merely take ten times as long, as if ten, specialized, workers were constructing it. On the contrary, the more each worker is restricted to do only one little part of the whole process, the greater the total output of the whole process, and therefore the greater each worker's own proportionate share. The whole reason why the American automobile industry has so largely superseded the European, is that Henry Ford introduced a complexity of specialization in the manufacture of motor cars, which enabled him to produce a thousand cars, where his European competitor produced a dozen: and he could do that because such division of labour enabled each American employee to turn out two cars per annum, where the European, more all-round, employee could produce but half a car in the same period.

It needs no labouring that such division of labour means greater interdependence of the various trades on each other. It needs no labouring that a purely agricultural Commonwealth is by nature individualistic; each man (or rather each family or small group of families) being self-contained for all practical purposes. The moment the machine is introduced, that individualistic self-sufficiency is destroyed: and if the machine increases man's productivity two hundred times, it also makes each individual man 200 times more dependent on his fellows. Hence the rise of democracy, the principle of which is that every single citizen must take interest and have a say in the affairs of every other citizen. The machine has made nonsense of the old maxim of "That's my business!" Your business has become my own and mine yours.

But this ever-increasing interdependence of individual on individual did not stop there: it soon became interdependence of nation on nation. For if production was first directed towards satisfying domestic consumption, it could not rest when that had been achieved. If, say, an American factory turns out ploughs, it originally did so, because Americans needed them. And when all Americans, who needed ploughs, had ploughs, was the factory to be abandoned? The plant was there,

ready to turn out ploughs; the owner was there, eager—for ploughs? No, of course not, he is eager for profits. Hence his function is not to supply the needs of the consumer; but his own. Capitalism, which is both the parent and the off-spring of the machine age, engages in production not for the sake of serving the community, but of enriching the capitalist. If ploughs are no longer wanted in America, let us try to make Russians, Chinese and Hottentots use our ploughs. Thus was created the modern Export Trade. But trade is exchange: if ploughs were sent to China, China had to send something in exchange back to America—say, tea. Thus Americans, specializing in plough-making, and Chinese, specializing in tea-planting, came to exchange each other's products; and the more they exchanged, the more they specialized, the more they became dependent on each other.

This process has gone on increasingly during the whole century of this machine age of ours: with the result that to-day no nation can do without any other nation—in one way or another all nations hang together and really form one international economic unit. Hence, if production and consumption are to be made to balance, it is no longer possible for each single nation to tinker away at the problem. The problem is no longer a sectional, but a world problem. The machine has increased man's potential productivity two hundred-fold: but here as elsewhere, the condition for enhanced efficiency is enhanced specialization. If all nations produce haphazard, much overlapping of production is inevitable: too many goods of one kind may be produced and too little of another. To specialize means to differentiate originally uniform units; and such specialized parts to behave as if they were a self-contained whole, is to ask for trouble. That trouble has been brewing for the last 100 years, ever since the first steam engine was invented; it has however assumed the proportions of a world cataclysm since the end of the War. The solid fact is that the machine has rendered national frontiers impossible. But, however solid, the fact has never come home to people so far. And that such is the case is due to the fact that people went on adjusting themselves to conditions which changed imperceptibly, though inexorably, from year to year. Hence with the conservatism innate in man people clung to their ancient sectional outlooks. The War changed all that, by demanding the absolute maximum of production everywhere. As a result man's productivity was enhanced tenfold in the years of this war effort. (We see that in a recent speech of his the Chairman of the Birmingham Small Arms Co. reckons that one man to-day can do the work a dozen men did 25 years ago.) The suddenness of so great a change naturally produced psychological results which the previous gradual change would not have effected. Quite naturally, the men in charge of the life and death struggle in which the world found itself, recognised that neither this enhanced productivity nor consumption could be treated as

a national affair. As the War went on, the "Entente" (i. e. 13 out of the 17 millions inhabiting the world) pooled, not merely their powers of destruction (armies, navies, munitions, &c.), but their industries and their purchasing powers as well. Inter-allied commissions bought and controlled raw materials: wool, cotton, wheat, sugar, &c. &c. An Inter-allied Shipping Board took charge of all the ships available and regulated their voyages; an Inter-allied Finance Commission conducted all finance operations. Thus under the stimulus of a war *à outrance*, were the logical consequences of the machine age applied; thus did the logic of facts force a recognition of at least 75 p.c. of the world as one unitary economic system.

That $\frac{1}{4}$ was still excluded was merely a practical consequence of the accident of War; the theory itself had been demonstrated as applicable to the whole world. Therefore when peace came and the problem arose, how to make good the ravages of war, the experience just gained pointed of course to one solution: viz. the extension of the "Inter-Allied" Control Boards to the inclusion of all former "enemy" countries. The rational organisation of all mankind, of their needs and capacities, seemed imminent. At a long last, sense seemed to have been hammered into these dull human brains, who had been taught for at least 20 centuries that they were all members of each other, but who had never looked upon such teaching as anything but a copy-book maxim. Now, however, sectionalism seemed at last about to be eliminated, and with it there seemed to dawn the morn of a new earth, made safe for a new democracy, and fit for heroes to dwell on.

How was it that unreason once more in the end prevailed over reason, and nonsense over plain commonsense?

The first false step was made when the Fourteen Points of Mr. Wilson's on the strength of which Germany had agreed to an armistice, were declared inapplicable to "the enemy." From that betrayal have followed all calamities. "The Enemy" was to be kept without the pale of humanity; sub-human beings, who were to work, whilst the victors would enjoy the fruits of their toil. If Germany had suffered during the War, had not the Entente suffered too? So let the Hun suffer some more now. So ran the selfish argument, the stupid argument which had not learnt yet, that, all humanity being one, the more you make one part smart, even if it is the Hunnish part, the more will the rest be hurt.

And so things of course got worse. The shutting off of raw materials from Germany, first by the blockade, now by the low exchange, upset the international equilibrium completely. The "Reparations" finished, what the blockade had begun. But still the people refused to be reasonable. "Something is wrong"—they said, "it must be that State control, to be sure!" And this reasoning, instead of qualifying these people for the mad house, was acclaimed by the cupidity of the capi-

talistic classes. Bureaucratic control must go; it stifles the free play of nature: thus did they cry; thus did control go, inter-allied control first, national control after. And as control went out, private monopoly came back, the private capitalist's profits were again installed as the one main-spring of production. With it came the rigid self-centred partitioning off of every nation from its neighbour; with it more hatred, more jealousies.

OPIUM:

A STUDY IN INDO-CHINESE RELATIONS.

IF I would be the last to deny the fruitfulness of India's connection with Britain, I yet cannot but regret that the forging of those new links, which since a couple of centuries have ever more closely connected India and the Far West, should have led to the snapping of those others, which for as many millenia had kept India and the Far East intimately united in a common culture. One is all the more inclined to say that the one should have been done without the other being left undone, as knowledge of the one has not been simply substituted for knowledge of the other. The lamentable fact to me seems to be, not that India knows England and does not know China at all, but rather that India with its knowledge of England should have acquired an *English* knowledge of China.

Even with the best will in the world, a translation cannot give all that the original is: how much less, then, the translation of a translation! And Indians to-day no longer see China for themselves, but merely see what England sees. If such reliance on second and third hand knowledge is dangerous even when the transmitter has no incentive for misrepresentation: it surely becomes sheer folly to depend on the eyes of another, when we happen to know that this other has to gain considerably, both in wealth and in prestige, by not letting us see all, which he himself sees.

And England is just in that position as regards China. For unfortunately the history of England's relations with China is one of unexampled sordidness. It originated in the traffic in a deleterious drug and that beginning has darkened all further developments. I am not unmindful of the magnificent contributions which individual Britons have made to the spiritual evolution of China; contributions which in cultural value and far-reaching importance I believe to exceed far and away all those of other nations; for if to-day it is the United States and not England which moulds Chinese thought most, it is merely because present-day China sees in its American friends better interpreters of that spirit which Englishmen were first to infuse by their very language and institutions.

Nor do I deny that the British Government for a long time stood between China and the other powers which were clamouring for its dismemberment and partition; nor that England during that

wits' end to carry on the administration even at the old level. They have found it necessary to impose new taxation to the tune of Rs. 38 crores in two years merely to carry on. That is the financial situation of the country to-day. There is need of hard thinking on the subject of national finance, and there are so few books on Indian Finance that any addition to the literature on that subject is welcome.

Prof. Kale "ventures to think that his book will prove useful to all those who would get initiated into the mysteries of the finances of India." He begins the study of the subject at the point where Indian finances were properly systematised by the introduction of the practice of presenting annual budgets to the Legislature. That was done by Mr. James Wilson, the first Finance Member of India, in 1860. Prof. Kale describes in great detail the desperate condition into which the finances of India were brought by the Mutiny and the manner in which Mr. Wilson proposed to rehabilitate them, i. e. by new taxation in the form of (1) license duty on trades and professions and (2) income tax. Then he takes a jump backward in order to take a rapid review of the Indian finances during half a century before the Mutiny. Reverting to Mr. Wilson, the author dwells at length on his budget speech and the replies he made to his critics. Again there is a jump backwards to sustain Mr. Wilson's claim that the new taxes he was proposing were really not new but well grounded in the Indian financial system, whether at the time of Manu or Gautama or in the time of Kalidas or under the Indian princes ruling in the nineteenth century. The author then dwells on Mr. Laing's régime, Mr. Wilson having died before he could see whether his new taxes did make the budget balance. It is clearly shown how in the course of a couple of years Mr. Laing was able to make the budget not only attain equilibrium but actually to show a surplus. And the secret of his success lay in the fact that while with the restoration of peace and order the yield of the ordinary sources of revenue improved, retrenchment and economy were genuinely practised, and the military expenditure, in particular, the enormous swelling in which had upset the budgets, was taken back to its pre-Mutiny level. Prof. Kale's study ends at this point. In his final chapter entitled "Then and Now", attention is drawn to the many points of resemblance and contrast between the financial position after the Mutiny and after the late European War and some general remarks are made on the financial situation of to-day, but I am afraid Prof. Kale has failed to emphasise that the chief remedy for our financial ills to-day is the same that Mr. Laing applied sixty years ago.

The book is a fairly detailed study of the financial quinquennium after the Mutiny and as such would be useful in showing the student how the subject has to be studied. But it is ill-arranged and seems to be hastily put together. While reading it

one often wonders whether a particular statement is Prof. Kale's own opinion or that of Mr. Wilson or Mr. Laing or whomsoever happens to be particularly dealt with. At the end of the first chapter, figures are given of the surplus or deficit shown by the Revenues and Charges of India between 1814-15 and 1859-60. Would not the figures of Revenues and Charges themselves have been more instructive instead, or at least, in addition? In chapter VI the figures of military expenditure given on p. 109 do not tally with those given on p. 117 and the figure for total revenue in 1862-63 (given on p. 121) does not agree with that on p. 128. There are quite a number of typographical errors in the book and some of these would surely mislead an ordinary reader. Footnotes are wanting where they might be useful, e. g. as to what "Sayer" or "Mohturfa" means (on pp. 26 and 40 respectively). There are cases where an assertion made on one page conflicts with another made on the very next page, e. g. regarding the question: "Who mutinied?" referred to on pp. 52 and 53. In short, it would be desirable thoroughly to recast the book and see it carefully through the press at the time of the second edition.

R. M. J.

MISCELLANEA.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-GOVERNMENT.

BY THE RT. HON. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

I AM glad to send a few observations to *New India*, in response to the invitation of its Editor, on the subject of Self-Determination and Self-Government for India. It is interesting to recall that in the days of vigorous agitation on constitutional lines, immediately before the publication of the Reform proposals in 1918, Dr. Besant had put forward the two great ideas of Chapter VIII of her recently published book. Those two ideas were that the doctrine of Self-Determination should be applied to India and that the representative institutions of India should not take the precise form that they have taken in the West, but that suitable modifications should be made before adoption, so that the excesses of Democracy elsewhere might be corrected in India in accordance with her ancient genius. On one occasion it fell to me to combat the former idea as a practical issue. The latter did not receive general acceptance at the time in Congress circles, although, I am sure, certain of her proposals under the head of franchise had their attractions for many as they had for me. As a specific mode of settling the political future or the lineaments of our constitution, Self-Determination in the precise sense as used at the time in the political language of the victorious powers, is still absolutely inapplicable to this country. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which, subject to the final sanction of the Imperial Parliament, the features of Indian Home Rule or Responsible Government may be reduced to more or less exact form by the careful and wise efforts of the best men in India, who have received the confidence and the suffrages of the electorates. This, however, is a loose application of ex-President Wilson's peculiar expression and it is possible to take it too seriously.

I allow at once that Democracy in the West has grown without due safeguards and has therefore caused to sympathetic students like Lord Bryce much hesitation and misgiving as to its future. Who that realises the complexity of conditions in India will not grant the need of introducing sometimes into our new constitution the correctives which West-

ern experience has proved necessary, but which Western practice now finds it difficult to introduce? And to be sure, I know of no one who has the courage to suggest improvements of the kind required and the moral authority to recommend them in the same measure as Dr. Annie Besant. If it be not presumptuous, I would add that in reviving the proposals which she had adumbrated in 1916 and 1917, Dr. Besant only carries out in the political region the great function of admonishing and teaching which her followers have with rare and admirable loyalty accorded to her for a long period of years in the moral and spiritual sphere.

Let us now get into grips with some of her basic principles. Men who have to conduct human affairs have to conduct them at various levels. Some, at the very bottom, deal with matters coming under the constant observation of people, of a comparatively simple nature, and within the comprehension of all. Certain affairs at the top are of exceeding delicacy and intricacy, can only be understood by a few wise persons and require great experience and virtue in those that handle them. Between these extremes there lie many grades of complexity in affairs and responsibility in those that deal with them. Dr. Besant would distinguish and give special treatment to five such grades, electors at each grade having higher qualifications and being fewer than in the grade below and at the same time having lower qualifications and being more numerous than in the grade above. She would thus have universal franchise or adults in the Villages and prescribe qualifications of an ascending degree based on property, education and previous public service for the affairs of the Taluka, the District, the Province and the Nation in order. This plan pays homage to the idea underlying Democracy, in that it raises legislators and rulers by a process of due popular election, but seeks to ensure their efficiency and competence by ensuring the requisite knowledge and wisdom in the constituencies. Looked at from an *a priori* standpoint, the proposal has much in its favour and I make no doubt that its attractions will be irresistible to those students of human polity who would entrust the fortunes of communities to wise and benevolent autocrats, if a succession of these could be assured, and who will see the likelihood of such succession in a system of a graduated election such as the one adumbrated above. As I have stated at the outset, these attractions exist for me as well as for others. But in obedience to an incurable habit of seeing the other side to an argument and supplying qualifications and correctives, let me point out the risks attendant on the adoption of the drastic modification of Dr. Besant—an office not always welcome, but often well-meaning and helpful. An obvious criticism, of which the actual appeal to the general public will be in inverse proportion to its real value, is that under the proposal Democracy would, except at the bottom, become graduated Oligarchy and thus violate the essence of popular institutions in the West. The assumption too is questionable that affairs increase in complexity and difficulty of comprehension as we proceed from the Village through the Taluka and the District to the Province and the Nation. Larger areas and larger interests do not necessarily mean added subtlety or intricacy. Salt, for example, is an all-India matter but is by no means more difficult to handle than many village matters. Moreover, as popular enlightenment grows with the diffusion of ordinary education and political education, the average citizen is supposed to acquire the faculty of understanding and deciding on any clear and definite issue placed before him and debated from various points of view. In India, the supposition held with pride is that even the untutored peasant has an inner core of common sense and culture by reason of immemorial civilisation. We all belong not only to the village and the taluka but to the province and the country. Our interests therefore lie all over, and what we can be made to understand we should be allowed to regulate. In certain Western countries the referendum has established itself and His Highness the Aga Khan, in his evidence before the Joint Committee of Parliament in 1919, made an earnest plea for its introduction as a regular feature of the new Indian Constitution. If we are not yet ready in India for the referendum need we go so

far as to say that our average citizen enrolled in our comparatively narrow electorates will be unable to make up his mind at the time of a general election between competing candidates or broad alternatives of policy reduced to simple and clear terms? To make such an admission might be to play into the hands of those in Great Britain who have now begun to question loudly the fitness of India for representative institutions, and assert that a low level of popular enlightenment and a great variety of races and civilizations would justify nothing but benevolent and duly tempered autocracy. For an oligarchy, however renewed by fresh blood, has all the odious associations of despotism without its saving virtues. Let us likewise remember how the Congress-League Scheme of December, 1916, was assailed and condemned, on the ground that it made no provision for executive responsibility although in that respect it followed the high examples of such States as Germany, the United States and Japan. The average statesman in England has a superstitious veneration for his own particular constitution. He has been strengthened in his veneration by the imitation of many Continental countries, and it was this veneration which inspired the Durham Report in respect of Canada, which has since become the charter of Dominion freedom. Those that essay the building up of a new polity for India cannot afford to forget that, for better or for worse, she is wedded to British polity. Her youth for generations have been nourished on British ideals of individual freedom, ordered progress and universal suffrage as the ultimate goal of Democracy. Her political dreams for more than a generation have dwelt on Dominion Status and Equal Partnership in the free Commonwealth. These have been approved and sanctified by a succession of authoritative pronouncements and embodied in royal promises of *Swaraj* and the Preamble to the Act of 1919. In that direction clearly our progress lies. It is extension and not contraction of the suffrage that constitutes the essence of progress; not the erection of specialised qualifications but their disappearance, not privileges or responsibilities for the few but an increasing approximation to the ideal of equal privilege and responsibility for all, typified by the cry of one man one vote.

In suggesting the above lines of criticism my only wish is to test the basis of Dr. Besant's proposals both in theory and in practice, as a plan for an ideal State as well as a practicable line of departure for India's immediate future. Readers of *New India* may expect a harvest of speculation and suggestion. Let us hope that it will bring strength and durability to the fabric of the Indian Constitution.—*New India*.

A PELESTINIAN MULSHI PETA.

The Duke of Sutherland made the following statement on behalf of the British Government in the House of Lords on March 15 in regard to the Hydro-Electric Scheme in Palestine to which we refer in the "Topics of the Week":—

My Lords, the Rutenberg scheme is the most substantial practical contribution so far made by Judaism to the restoration of prosperity to Palestine. The proposal, put shortly is that the river Jordan should be dammed at the point where it leaves the Lake of Tiberias and the lake thus converted into a great natural reservoir. Turbines are then to be installed near the dam and the water power employed for the generation of electricity. The water after passing through the turbines will return to the old course of the Jordan. The scheme, as originally prepared, included, in addition to the production of electrical energy, an elaborate irrigation project, the effect of which would be to bring under cultivation large areas which are at present practically waste lands, used only for grazing at certain seasons of the year.

This irrigation project has not yet been taken up, as the Palestine Government feel that the time is not yet ripe to put it into operation. On the other hand, that Government has signed an agreement with Mr. Rutenberg to the effect that if he will form a company with a certain fixed minimum of capital, he will be given a concession for the hydro-electrical project. The agreement provides that the Memorandum and Articles of Association and other regulations and constitution

of the company to be formed shall be subject to the approval of the High Commissioner for Palestine, in agreement with the Jewish Agency referred to in the Mandate for Palestine. The concession also provides for the limitation of the profits to be earned by the company, and for control by the Government of the rates to be charged for electrical energy. The whole working of the company is, in short, to be under Government control and supervision. On the other hand, the Government has not accepted, and does not propose to accept, any financial responsibility for the success of the scheme. This answers the first, third and fourth points in the noble Lord's Question.

As regards the second point, ("whether the owners and occupiers of the lands affected have expressed approval of the scheme"), the whole scheme has been very carefully examined by the Palestine Government and by the advisors of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the fullest provisions have been made for preserving the rights and interests of the owners of the lands affected. These owners have not, however, been directly consulted in the matter. The scheme is one which, His Majesty's Government and the Palestine Government are satisfied, will greatly benefit the whole of Palestine. The natural conditions, the level of the land, and so on, make it necessary that the canals, the power-house and other works should be situated within a small area. It would obviously be contrary to public interest to allow the owners of the land in that area to impose an absolute veto on the whole project. There is not at present any evidence that these owners will desire to impose such a veto; but if the necessity arises land will have to be expropriated and equitable compensation given. The position is very much the same that arose in this country when the great railways were being built. It is common knowledge that at that time the owners of some of the lands over which the railways were to pass were bitterly opposed to the scheme and did their best to create difficulties. Vested interests, however, were not allowed to stand in the way of the common good, and I am sure that your Lordships will not wish that prejudices and vested interests, supposing such to exist, should be allowed to stand in the way of a scheme which will bring such immense benefits to the whole of Palestine.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

Reasons for Lax Administration.

THE feasibility of prohibition being at present examined by the Bombay Excise Committee, it is but natural that public attention should be concentrated on the enforcement of the prohibitory law in the United States. It is claimed by some that the amount of liquor illegally distilled by moon-shiners in that country or smuggled in by rum-runners "must be regarded as the inevitable percentage or margin which always separates the ideal from the actual." We are quite prepared to concede, however, that the administration of the law of prohibition is lax in America, but such laxity, far from being inherent in prohibition, is due to certain reasons which are peculiar to that country. One of the reasons is that mentioned by Sir Arthur Newsholme, viz. that it falls to the Federal authorities to enforce prohibition without any help being rendered by the authorities of the States. And another reason is, in the words employed by Mr. Whittaker, the famous temperance reformer, in 1899:

It is notorious that the administration of all laws is much more lax in the United States than in this country (England). Their lack of a permanent

civil service, their system of changing all their officials in obedience to the rule "to the victors the spoils," have very seriously affected the administration of the law in many districts. The liquor laws, in particular, have been very laxly enforced, especially in the cities and larger towns, and that is markedly so where the license system is in operation and the people or the authorities have not used their veto power. Even where local prohibition votes have been carried, it is true that the law is not always administered as efficiently as it would be here. But it is enforced as efficiently everywhere as the other liquor laws, and in the majority of cases far more so.

If then "from the earliest times no statutes have been so indifferently enforced (in America) or violated with so great impunity as excise laws," it is no wonder if the prohibition law is not very strictly administered. But there is no reason why the administration need be so loose elsewhere.

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