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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

AFTER hearing their praises sung so loudly from the Prime Minister downwards, it should have nearly broken the heart of the C. P. Association of European Government Servants that such a good friend of theirs as the *Morning Post* had described their action in communicating to the Secretary of State their views upon the Government of India's circular regarding the Indianisation of services, as a piece of gross insubordination resulting from demoralisation. Fancy the I. C. S. and other European Services being considered capable of demoralisation! The gentlemen constituting the C. P. Association certainly do not admit any such thing; nor are they suffering from any excess of modesty. They have not hesitated to sit in judgment over the Viceroy and the Secretary of State or to tell them that during the last three or four years they have not behaved properly towards the Services. They take objection both to the manner and substance of this circular of the Government of India. Indeed it now occurs to us that the latter had no business to send it out, though it was meant for only local Governments, without obtaining the consent and approval of the C. P. Association. What sort of a Government is it that we have in Simla? The C. P. Association tells us that it is one which by "subtle methods" has ruined the "prestige and prospects of Englishman in the service of the Crown in India" and has rendered their position "intolerable." It is a "Government prepared to sacrifice its old servants on the altars of the new Councils." And as to this circular, we are told that it "reveals, as though by a flash of lightning, the imminent approach of a danger so grave that it threatens not merely the success of the reforms but the safety of India and the integrity of

the British Empire." But what else can be expected when men not belonging to the I. C. S. are appointed as Viceroys and Secretaries of State?

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BESIDES these impertinent remarks about the Government of India, the bulk of the letter contains the familiar description of the diversities of race, religion and language and the danger of foreign invasion, which all convince the European official, whatever his department, that he is the fabric of the administration—arguments which have been used and continue to be used every time an administrative or political reform is contemplated. The C. P. Association admits that suitable English candidates are not coming forward to serve in India. But while the Government of India proposes to meet the situation by recruiting officers in India as far as possible and putting them in the Provincial cadre, effecting thereby considerable economy, the C. P. Association suggests that "a very material improvement in the status, pay and pensions of the Imperial Services" should be made in the immediate future. And how is that to be done in the present financial position of the Government, which is indeed what has made the Government of India think seriously of the Indianisation of the Services? We dare say the C. P. Association which has not to face any legislature nor frame a Government budget, will not hesitate to suggest even additional taxation. Yet it was in the C. P. Legislative Council itself that an official member recently said:

"At the present juncture recruitment from Europe should be stopped. With the recent rise in the cost of living and the consequent rise in salaries, and the total inability of the provincial Governments to expand their revenues, such a situation has now been created that the provinces cannot afford these high-priced officials."

The C. P. Association has expressed a fear frequently trotted out by European officials which very much irritates Indians: they speak of the uncertainty of their future pensions. So long as India will be in the British Empire—and not even non-co-operators want to go out of it—we cannot understand what fear there can possibly be about pensions. Persons who have liberally subscribed to Government loans and others who have sunk capital in this country are not nervous in the least. Then why are these officials nervous who generally think so highly of themselves and of their administration? We hope they do not mean a calculated insult to the Government and people of India.

**Punjab Councilors.** EIGHTEEN out of twenty Hindu members and eight out of fifteen Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council have thought fit to submit a memorial to the Governor in which they have taken objection to certain doings of the Education Minister and have requested the Governor to set aside some of the orders passed by the Minister. The Education Minister is the Hon. Mian Fuzli-Husain and the complaint of the memorialists is that he is working out a policy of communal favouritism which is very unfair to non-Muslims. They say that the Hon. Lala Harkishan Lal, the other Minister, could not have approved of the Education Minister's policy and the fact that it has not obtained the " unanimous support of the Ministry as a whole " it is an additional and weighty ground for the orders being set aside. They anticipate the objection to their proposal that a resolution or resolutions regarding this matter should have been moved in the Legislative Council, but urge that such a course would be altogether futile so long as the official members, contrary to the direction contained in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, give their support to every motion brought forward by a Minister and do not abstain from voting. With due respect for the memorialists, among whom are found men like Raja Narendranath and Mr. Manoharlal, it is difficult to countenance their action. The power of veto vested in the Governor is not meant for ordinary use and before asking that it should be used they should certainly have exhausted every other course open to them. In spite of the general attitude of the official members, they should have brought the matter before the Council and asked the official members to abstain from voting against them. If Mr. Harkishanlal supported his colleague they could have expressed their lack of confidence in him and asked him to resign office. Or they could have asked the Governor to dismiss one or both of the Ministers. In making these remarks we have not gone into the merits of the grievances of the memorialists.

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**Their Grievances.** THE main grievances set forth by them are three :—

1. The order introducing communal representation in admissions to Medical College and Government College, in place of the former rule which regulated admission solely on merit.
2. The orders dispensing with the services of non-Muslim temporary Assistant Surgeons, without regard even to the Military services of some of them.
3. Orders as to appointments, permanent and officiating, in the Education Department.

With regard to the first, it appears the Education Minister has issued instructions that 40 per cent. of the admissions should be reserved for Muhammedans. The memorialists perhaps do not know that in Madras and Bombay Presidencies where acute communal differences exist, similar reservations are made for the benefit of the backward Hindus and also Muhammedans. Mr. Fuzli Husain cannot therefore be said to have followed

an altogether new procedure. The question really arises on account of the accommodation in these colleges not being sufficient for all applicants. With our present communal differences and disparities the only right course would be to enlarge the accommodation in these colleges. The question of merit for admission, we think, should not be pressed too far. Every applicant that seeks admission has already passed the qualifying examination and has therefore merit enough to undergo the course. If further a competitive test is introduced persons belonging to backward communities will get very little chance of admission into those colleges. Pure competition may be allowed when communal disparities in education disappear, but till then some special consideration for backward communities is desirable in the best interests of the country. We quite see the injustice of a deserving applicant being turned out on the ground of belonging to a particular community. The proper remedy, however, would not be to turn out another deserving applicant but to provide more accommodation in the colleges, which the Legislative Council can certainly insist upon.

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**The Question of Appointments.** IT is in respect of appointments that the bitterest communal feelings

are roused, among educated people at any rate. In this matter, we regret to observe, both the advanced and backward communities show too little appreciation of the other point of view. The advanced communities, being already in a position of advantage, insist too much on competition, while the backward communities care too little for efficiency and even justice. It is no doubt desirable to appoint the best men available for all posts, high and low, and every one would have accepted the principle if communal consciousness were not so rife. Similarly communal representation in the services might be thought of if efficiency were no consideration. Some *via media* is therefore necessary. It appears to us that communal considerations would not be out of place in direct recruitment for posts of a routine nature. Candidates of backward castes and communities who possess the necessary qualifications, may be given preference over others who may be even better qualified than they. But in recruiting for posts requiring capacity in a special degree only the best men available should be chosen. But once in the service, justice requires that all should be treated alike and promotions should be made according to seniority and merit without communal considerations coming into play at all. Nothing demoralises the services so much as favouritism and injustice. It is only fair to demand, as the memorialists have demanded, that Assistant Surgeons who have held temporary appointments and have served in the war should be given priority when permanent appointments are made. With regard to the Education Department, a communique has been published giving details about appointments to the Imperial and Provincial Services which do not bear out the contention of the memorialists. But it is possible that they were not thinking of the superior posts so much as the subordinate ones. Any injustices of this kind could and should be removed by means of interpellations and resolutions in the Legislative Council. And that method may be tried even now.

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## POLITICAL PRISONERS IN BIHAR.

THE treatment of political prisoners formed the subject of a lengthy discussion in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council on Thursday last. It will occasion no small amount of surprise to the general public that there were complaints on this subject even in a province which was held up by several publicists, and notably the Deccan Sabha, if not as an exemplar, at least as one which had adopted the most advanced standard of prison treatment in regard to political offenders among Indian provinces. These publicists were not ill-informed. The original Bihar and Orissa rules were really of a generous character. Under them all prisoners sentenced to rigorous imprisonment under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, Sections 124 A and 153 A of the Indian Penal Code, or Section 108 read with Section 114 of the Criminal Procedure Code were ordered to be treated "as if they had been sentenced to simple imprisonment." The special merit of these rules was, to quote the words of the Deccan Sabha's representation, that they did not leave it "to the discretion of the gaoler or any other official to sanction or refuse special treatment to any individual prisoner, the gaoler being required to follow general instructions which do not vary in individual cases." In some other provinces, e. g. the Punjab, it lies within the discretion of the gaolers to place or not to place any political prisoner in the class of special prisoners, and the gaoler is generally guided in the determination of this question by the social position of the prisoner. Apart from the fact that if the gaoler is given power to discriminate, he is bound in some cases to abuse his power or at least there are bound to be complaints of abuse, it is not a sound principle on which such differentiation can be based. The Bihar and Orissa Government steered clear of these difficulties by specifying a few offences, conviction for which entitled persons engaged in political activities, to special ameliorative treatment in prison. These rules were hailed by the people in the Province and outside as very liberal and other Governments were urged to copy the example of this Government. But in Bihar and Orissa itself these rules were subsequently modified. It would appear that soon after they were made the Government began to suspect that they had gone too far and wished to retrace their steps. The rules were first issued about the end of December 1921, and there is evidence to show that not long afterwards they were thinking of receding, for on January 24, 1922, in the course of the debate on a resolution relating to the notification under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Hon'ble Mr. McPherson said: "The instructions issued by Government for the treatment of political prisoners are, I think, more generous than what had been issued by any other Government in India. The question is whether they are not too generous." (Vide Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council Proceedings, vol. IV., p. 52.)

It was contended on behalf of Government in the discussion on Thursday that these rules had been hurriedly drafted and were subject to modification later on. Mr. McPherson remarked that when they were first made, the persons whom the Government had in mind were of the type of Babu Deep Narayan Singh or Babu Rajendra Prashad and that they had never intended to extend special treatment given to this class of prisoners to the rank and file. As a matter of fact the speech which Mr. McPherson made on December 14 of last year, in which the Government's policy relative to this was unfolded bears no sign whatever of Government's intention to circumscribe this policy in any way. On that occasion he had said:

'Political prisoners' in the strict sense are persons who have committed offences against the State, under such Sections of the Indian Penal Code as Sections 124A and 153A. These are people who hold strong political opinions but have trespassed beyond the limits laid down in the law and committed the offence of sedition and such like. In the case of people of that kind, there can be absolutely no objection to some sort of preferential treatment in gaol, but if the Hon'ble mover intends to include under the term "political prisoners" all persons who commit offences of any kind but allege in defence that their offences were committed with a political motive, then no Government could accept a resolution of this kind. Take a case by way of illustration from our own Province. Can we include in the term 'political offenders' such people as, for example, those who have looted *hats* in North Bihar, or have stormed subdivisional jails and police stations in Giridih, or who have burnt down factories in Champaran?

The only people that were intended to be excluded from the scope of special treatment here were men who had committed acts of violence. Nobody has asked for the inclusion of such people or even of people who are guilty of incitement to violence. But, barring these, all other persons convicted of political offences should be accorded preferential treatment. There is no reference in the above speech to the social standing of prisoners. Mr. McPherson said on Thursday last that it would be perfectly absurd to mete out special treatment to all political prisoners (not guilty of acts of violence), whatever be their social status. Why? One may ask why in England and Scotland and Ireland persons convicted of sedition or seditious libel are placed in the first division of offenders, irrespective of their station in society. And if in regard to other offences discrimination is made, the discrimination is not based, as we have shown in a previous article, on whether man is of a good social position or of good education or not, but upon the prisoner's character and upon the honesty of motive. The discrimination founded upon this principle is right, but not that that founded upon the social status of the prisoner. We should like to mention that the treatment which the Bihar and Orissa Government imagine is given to first division offenders in England is really given to second division offenders. They think that simple imprisonment in India corresponds to the treatment accorded to first division offenders. It does not; it corresponds to the

treatment of prisoners in the second division, that given to the first division offenders being really equivalent to civil imprisonment.

In Thursday's debate Babu Purnendu Narayan Sinha made a moving appeal to the Government to treat with the utmost consideration men who are suffering imprisonment for their convictions. There is no one in the Council who is more respected than Purnendu Babu and his exhortations are the more impressive because they are so restrained. But the Government did not pay heed to his advice on this occasion. Still we are certain that they could not have failed to realise that incidents like the hand-cuffing of Babu Gopabandhu Das make all Indians feel, irrespective of their political views, as if the iron had entered into their souls, and that such treatment would be discontinued in future. But apart from this, the Bihar and Orissa Government has undoubtedly taken a retrograde step in modifying their original rules about prison treatment. They have made, not minor modifications, as Mr. Hallett, the Home Secretary said, but radical modifications of a character not likely to meet with general approval. The resolution discussed on Thursday was lost, and one need not feel particularly sorry for the result, because it merely asked for the appointment of a committee. But there is no doubt that in receding from their former position, the Bihar and Orissa Government have withdrawn a concession which had been cherished very highly. Now it is left to the trying magistrate to determine whether ameliorations should be introduced into the treatment of political prisoners, and some time ago 88 men were so placed in the category of special prisoners. In making social position the criterion of discrimination, the Government have placed themselves in opposition to the practice of civilised countries, for which the people will not thank them.

#### INDIAN EMIGRATION.

THE emigration of Indians abroad entered a new phase by the passing of the Indian Emigration Act last March. The rules for carrying out the Act are now being framed and are to come before the September session of the Legislative Assembly. To understand the question of Indian emigration a distinction must be made between emigration to distant colonies, such as Natal, Mauritius, Fiji and Guiana, on the one hand, and to near-by territories such as Ceylon, Malaya, Burma, on the other.

In the former case the distance makes continued intercourse with the mother country a practical impossibility; the labourers, consequently, tend to settle permanently in the new country and are lost, if not to Indian culture altogether, at least to the caste system from which they sprang. The result is that if by any chance such Indian colonists find their way back to India, their village community finds no niche for them into which they can slip back—they have become "aliens in their mothers'

house". Not merely because of the rigidity of the caste system but because they have grown actually very different in their outlook, their habits, their whole life. This is very serious, indeed, because it means that, once an Indian has gone to a place like Fiji, he is trapped and there is no alternative for him but to remain there, however horrible the conditions may be. And there is no doubt that these conditions have been pretty dreadful in most cases, and are so still, since the "indenture" system was really a form of semi-slavery and recruiting under it in India often smacked of the methods of the press-gang.

No wonder emigration stank and still stinks in the nostrils of the Indian public. This as far as Ceylon and Malaya are concerned is somewhat unfortunate since the premisses are altogether different. Emigration to these two countries ranks much as emigration to Assam or Burma, except that technically the last named territories are provinces of India, whilst Ceylon and Malaya are Colonies of the Empire. But they are within as easy reach of the emigrants' home as the former and as a matter of fact the emigrants to the two Colonies mentioned are really seasonal emigrants only. With the exception of a small fraction the bulk of Indian labourers in Malaya, for instance, on an average return to India after two years, stay there for some time, not only tolerated but welcomed in their old villages and by their families, because they have never got out of touch with each other, but merely left their homes for a season, for the purpose of adding to the family income.

Labour to Malaya and Ceylon goes entirely free, and the recruitment in fact is done by returned emigrants during their spell of home leave between two periods of life in Malaya. These men therefore are not exactly and cannot be ranked as professional recruiters. They are foremen, and the people they induce to emigrate are people of their own villages. It goes without saying that there must be cases of misrepresentation etc. even under such a system; but as each foreman only reaches a small number of people who ought to know all about him, abuses clearly cannot be of the same extent and nature, as in the case of professional recruiters who have to fill a shipload with human beings, who, once on board, have not the least prospect of ever getting back again—as used to be the case with emigrants to Fiji, etc.

The new emigration rules propose to get all would be emigrants carefully examined, before they leave their homes and again before embarkation, so as to make quite sure that none leave but those who are fully aware of their destination, prospective conditions etc. and to rule out all possibility of compulsion or deception. More important still, the new rules contemplate the institution of an Indian Consular Service in the Colonies to which the emigrants go—a new departure which is bound to have far reaching results, not only as regards the treatment and status of Indians in the Colonies concerned, but

also as regards the status of India, within the Empire.

Whilst one can but applaud all efforts made by the framers of these new rules in these directions, one cannot but recognise the existence of a section of Indian opinion which is not satisfied with them, but works for total prohibition of emigration to Malaya and Ceylon no less than to Fiji, Guiana etc. as is already the case.

The motives of these intransigents are varied. On the one hand there are the people who would rather cut off their nose, if only they can spite the Empire's face. Then there are all Indian employers of labour, who obviously are not enamoured of a system which forces them to raise their own wages, to counteract the attraction of higher wages abroad; a consideration which has prompted the representatives of Indian labour in the Legislative Assembly to veto total prohibition of emigration as being opposed to the interests of labour and to advocate a system of properly safeguarded emigration. Finally there are Indians settled in the Colonies themselves, who dislike the pressure of competition with them on the part of the constantly arriving new-comers from India, who write to the Indian papers about Indian atrocities in the places where they live.

Indian emigrants to Ceylon and Malaya find mainly employment as agricultural labourers in the rubber plantations there, and it is said that if perfection has not been reached in regard to their treatment, the idea of atrocities is absurd anyhow. Seasonal labourers, it is pointed out, are always labouring under certain disadvantages incidental to the fact that they are only seasonal residents and not settlers. Capitalism again is not primarily concerned with the welfare of its "hands" but with profits: and it is observed that it is not a fact restricted to Malaya Plantation Companies but is equally manifest in Bombay mills and Pennsylvanian coal mines. What aggravates the capitalistic exploitation in the case of plantations is of course the fact that the employers and the employed belong to different races and cultures. On the other hand we are asked to remember that there is a chronic labour shortage, and owners, managers etc. are therefore obliged to humour their labour. Either by giving a month's notice or a month's pay, a plantation labourer can leave his place of employment without more ado, and as there is no reservoir of unemployed or under-employed to draw upon, employers cannot be the autocrats which they no doubt would like to be as regards their labour. As a matter of fact if life on a Malayan plantation is not as good for a labourer as life in his own villages, it is probably a good deal better than the life he would have to lead as an industrial worker in cities like Bombay. The same economic pressure prompts him to go to the one as it does to the other. If capitalistic exploitation of labour be admitted to be unavoidable, it is perhaps better that it is done at home than out-

side. But it should be remembered at the same time that it is easier to get improved conditions for our labour from outside employers who apply for it than from employers in the country.

The whole question is now being threshed out at Simla by the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee for emigration, before which deputations from Malaya and Ceylon are also appearing and one cannot but feel that whatever the upshot, the status of the Indian, and therefore of India, abroad is bound to gain.

### THIRD CLASS RAILWAY FARES.

"THOSE who have studied the past history of railways in India must be aware of the difficulty which Government has experienced in inducing the railway companies to lower their rates," so said Sir G. L. Molesworth in July 1916. In the light of recent experience one would now be inclined to say, "How easy it is as between Government and the railways for each to induce the other to agree to a rise in rates to any extent and in any manner!" During war it became necessary to reduce the number of passenger trains on account of the impossibility of obtaining railway material from England and therefore in 1916 and again in March 1917 the Railway Board decided to raise the third class fares on all the broad gauge railways to three pies per passenger per mile, and on the other lines where the ordinary fare had been two pies, an increase of 25 per cent. was sanctioned. It was also decided to arm the railway administrations with full powers to raise, at their discretion, the already enhanced rate of 3 pies to 4 pies for mail and fast trains, while as regards the first class fare option was given to raise it to a rate not exceeding 24 pies per passenger per mile. (Page 24 of the Railway Administration Report for 1916-17). This action on the part of the Government was then described as a war measure, and in reply to a debate which took place on the subject in the Imperial Legislative Council in March 1918 the Hon'ble Sir George Barnes affirmed, on behalf of the Government of India, that the enhancement in the fares was made only on account of the difficulties created by the war.

The first inkling of the probability of a further increase came through the report of the Acworth Committee, in para 72 of which it is stated:—

"Indian railway . . . fares have always been among the lowest, if not actually the lowest, in the world. They have only been advanced in the last few years very slightly as compared with the rest of the world. A general and substantial increase is overdue. Witnesses from all parts of India have agreed in recognising that . . . fares should be increased, and saying that they will be ready to pay the increases, provided a reasonably efficient service is given in return."

Para 16 Chapter VI of the Railway Administration Report for 1920-21, which was issued about six months later, attempted a statistical justification for an increase in the fares in the following words:—

"During the year under review . . . passenger fares have on some lines been increased to a very small extent . . . but nothing in the way of a general increase has been made. India is alone among all the nations of the world in having escaped so far a general and extensive rise in railway rates, and it is impossible if railways are to continue to be worked on sound business principles that an increase in rates commensurate with the increased cost of working can be avoided. So far as passengers are concerned, the service given is the cheapest in the world as the following statement showing the average receipts per passenger per mile in different countries will demonstrate :—

*Statement showing average receipts per passenger per mile by railways of different countries calculated in cents ( American ).*

|                  | 1918 or 1917-18 receipts<br>per passenger per mile. |
|------------------|---|
| U. S. A.         | 2.45  |
| Holland.         | 2.27  |
| Canada.          | 2.10  |
| South Australia. | 1.44  |
| Norway, 1916-17. | 1.42  |
| Switzerland.     | 1.33  |
| New South Wales. | 1.21  |
| Japan.           | 0.67  |
| India.           | 0.515   |

The possibility of a further increase in passenger fares became a certainty on the 1st March last, when the Hon'ble the Finance Member in explaining the revenue side of the budget for 1922-23 said, "on one point, however, there can, I imagine, be no room for diversity of opinion, namely, that the railways must pay their own way. The estimates which I have just given already take account of a substantial increase in goods rates in substitution of the existing sur-tax. The only remaining course, therefore, is to effect a material increase in passenger fares. An increase averaging about 25% will, we estimate, produce an extra 6 crores of revenue." Further on, in dealing with the measures to be adopted in order to establish budgetary equilibrium, he remarked, "I submit, therefore, that there is no escape from the conclusion that it is imperative to take every possible step to increase our revenues. We can do this in two ways. Firstly, by ensuring that our Commercial Departments shall, at any rate, not be a burden upon the tax-payer and shall, if possible, yield a profit; secondly, by increasing taxation. As regards the first method, I have already indicated that we propose to increase the railway receipts to the extent of about 6 crores by an increase in passenger fares" (pp. 2659 and 2665 of the Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol. II).

The enhanced fares have since come into effect. An examination of them reveals the fact that while the total increase since 1916 in first class fares is only 48 p. c., in the case of the third class fares, it is 70 p. c.

There does not seem to have been sufficient justification for this large enhancement in the third class fares. The result which it was designed to achieve could easily have been secured by other means without inflicting any hardship on anyone. The railway revenue account at present bears a charge of about 5½ crores on account of

annuities in purchase of railways and sinking funds. This is a wholly illegitimate debit to revenue. The amount spent is in discharge of capital liabilities and as such is a charge to capital to which it should be transferred. There is a further equally illegitimate charge to revenue of Rs. 16 lakhs on account of the cost of land bought by Government but supplied free to railway companies for railway capital purposes. It is proposed to spend Rs. 13.10 lakhs during 1922-23 on railway surveys, most of which are apparently not of immediate urgency and might have been postponed. These three items alone between them give a saving of not less than Rs. 5¾ crores. Besides, during the period of the war, repairs and renewals at the cost of revenue had to be suspended to a very considerable extent. To that extent railway companies received, through the division of profits, larger amounts than they would otherwise have received, and now they will also share in the profits which the increased fares may bring in.

The argument advanced in support of the increased fares, to the effect that Indian railway fares have always been among the lowest, if not actually the lowest, in the world, and the service given is the cheapest in the world, states only a half truth, undoubtedly convenient for those who use it, but equally fraught with great hardship to those who have to bear the consequences of its practical application. In this connection we cannot do better than make a present of the following independent opinions recorded by railway experts :—

"The average fares charged in America in 1902 were:

|   | cents. | pies.    |
|---|--------|----------|
| For Pullman car, per passenger per mile | 2.48   | or 14.88 |
| For ordinary car.                       | 1.98   | or 11.88 |

The average fares charged in India in 1902 were.—

|                                     | pies. |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| For 1st class passenger per mile.   | 12.86 |
| For third class passenger per mile. | 2.33  |

It will be seen, therefore that the fares actually charged for both these classes are very much lower in India than in America.

The rate of wage in America for unskilled labourers averages \$ 1.25 or 750 pies or Rs. 3-14-6 a day. By the expenditure of one day's wages such a man can travel over 63 miles. By the expenditure of a month's (30 days') wages he could travel 1894 miles. The rate of wage (not average) in most parts of India for the same class of worker is 2 annas or 24 pies a day. By the expenditure of one day's wages such a man could not travel more than ten miles and his whole month's wages would only carry him three hundred miles. While therefore the fares charged to the lowest class of passengers are actually lower in India than in America, in effect they are much higher." (Paras 199-200 of the Report dated the 30th December 1903 on the Organisation and policy of Railways in America by Mr. Neville Priestley.)

"The fares . . . charged in India judged from the standpoint of the actual money payment made are considerably lower than those charged in England. . . . If like is compared with like, I think it will be found that the fares . . . in India should broadly speaking be only about one-sixth of those charged in England. Before, therefore, the fares



... in India can be regarded relatively as equal to those in England, the former would require to be lower than the rates now charged to passengers by about from 18 p. c. to 40 p. c." (Paras 191-193 of the Report of 1903 by Mr. Thomas Robertson).

Although since 1902-3 and particularly since the outbreak of the war in 1914, there has been some improvement in the wages in India, nevertheless the conclusions of Messrs. Robertson and Priestley are as correct as to-day as they were in 1902-3. For, owing to the lack of organisation, the Indian wage-earner has not been able to improve his prospects as well as his fellow-workers in England or America; as a matter of fact his effective income has been reduced on account of the abnormal rise in prices.

The burden which falls on the third class passenger in India is unequal not only in comparison with the lowest class passenger of other countries, but also in comparison with the higher class passengers in India itself. As stated in para 168 of the report of the Indian Railway Committee the third class passengers have to suffer a lot of inconvenience and discomfort owing to:

- (a) Overcrowding, to the extent at times of double or even more than double the approved carrying capacity;
- (b) Inaccessibility and insanitary condition of W. C.'s in third class carriages for long distance journeys;
- (c) Dirty condition of third class carriages;
- (d) Inadequate water supply on station platforms;
- (e) Inadequate food supply arrangements;
- (f) Inadequate waiting sheds or waiting rooms;
- (g) Insufficient booking office facilities; and
- (h) Uncivil treatment by railway staff.

The first class passengers have no such grievances. They have ample accommodation, electric lights and fans, cushioned seats, clean and commodious bath rooms, dining cars, richly furnished waiting rooms, up to date railway hotels, and numerous other facilities. One would therefore, think the railways earned a return from first class passengers, at least as good as that from the third class passengers. But what do we actually find? Taking the broad gauge railways, the average profit earned during the year 1919-20 on working a third class carriage one mile was 55'28 pies, while the working of a first class carriage, far from yielding any actual profit, involved a loss of 3'02 pies (cols. 82 and 85 of appendix 13 to the Railway Administration Report for 1919-20.) This means the profit earned on a first class carriage per mile is less by 58'30 pies than that earned on a third class carriage. The gross income [from first class carriage per mile is 29'86 pies (Col. 56 *ibid.*), so that for every 29'86 pies received from the working of first class passenger traffic, the under charge amounts to no less than 58'30 pies. The actual income from this traffic during 1919-20 was Rs. 181'8 lakhs (Col. 4 of Appendix 6 to the Rail-

way Administration Report for 1919-20). It therefore follows that the under charge on this traffic as compared with 3rd class traffic comes to Rs. 251'47 lakhs. We are fully aware of the theory of fixing rates and fares on the basis of "what the traffic will bear", but we contend that this theory is being worked to the undue preference or advantage of first class passengers and to the disadvantage of the overburdened third class passengers. The theory of "what the traffic will bear" applies to the maximum rate to be fixed but in every commercial undertaking there will also be a minimum below which a rate must not be fixed and the Government's own statistics prove in the case of the upper class traffic, that while perhaps appearing to act up to the first condition, the second has been completely ignored. The third class affords, in fact, in India the backbone, if not nearly the whole body, of the coaching receipts: the other classes might, as far as profit is concerned, be abolished; indeed, on most lines their removal would be a positive gain and it is not many years ago that a leading railway manager in India stated it would pay him to give every first class passenger twenty rupees to stay away (Pages 189-90 of "Railway Policy in India" by Mr. Horace Bell). But how can the supply of first class carriages be completely withdrawn or even reduced when it is, generally speaking, the European and Anglo-Indian community which uses such accommodation? (Para 28 of the Railway Administration Report of 1901). Railways are undoubtedly overstocked with first class accommodation and yet when the question of increasing intermediate class accommodation was raised the reply was that it could be done only by reducing third class accommodation.

The results of the last few months have already shown by the falling off in earnings the hardship inflicted by increasing the fare. The law of "Increasing Returns" has been defied and the natural retribution has followed. This falling off is a silent inevitable form of protest from the millions and millions of the third class customers of the railways. But it must be remembered that this is a protest of the weak and like all such protests of the weak its duration cannot be otherwise than only temporary. The fact, however, remains that any gain that accrues to the Treasury will be a gain wrung out of the poorest of the travellers by the coercion of monopoly.

#### ECONOMY.

#### THE MADRAS UNIVERSITY BILL.

THE one topic that has been engaging the attention of the Madras public for over three weeks has been the new bill regarding the reorganisation of the Madras University which the Education Minister proposes introducing at the coming session of our Legislative Council. The enlightened public of this Presidency has made full use of the Press and the Platform to ventilate its views on

the bill. The bill has its enthusiastic admirers but people are not wanting who condemn it wholesale. An attempt will be made in this short article to set forth the main features of the bill and its chief merits and defects as pointed out by its advocates and detractors.

It is eighteen years since the Act VIII of 1904 was passed by Lord Curzon. Much has happened in the broad world outside since 1904 and India has not escaped the influence of those mighty events. A reorganisation of the educational machinery of the country with a view to make it more up-to-date and efficient is felt to be long overdue and the popular Minister now in charge of the education portfolio in this province has set about the task in right earnest. Elementary and secondary education have been or are about to be thoroughly modified and he has published this bill so that the University, the keystone of the educational structure, may also be rendered up-to-date.

The bill proposes to convert the Madras University into a teaching and residential University with a territorial jurisdiction extending over ten miles around the Fort of St. George. This transition is to be brought about in course of time and till then the University will have an external side as it were which will concern itself with the existing colleges of the mufassil, to be called according to the bill "affiliated" colleges, as contrasted with the "constituent" colleges of the City of Madras and its immediate neighbourhood. The existing institutions of the University are transformed into new ones with new names and as recommended by the Sadler Commission and in conformity with the practice obtaining in all the recently started Universities of Upper India—Dacca, Lucknow, Patna and Benares, for example—we are to have a Court, an Executive Council, an Academic Council etc. Above all, we are to have a full time paid Vice-Chancellor.

The merits of the new bill which are sung aloud by the advocates of the measure are many. First, the present system of the University being that of a soulless machine for ploughing so many thousands of students every year, for perpetrating "the massacre of the innocents" as it is called, goes once for all, as it deserves to go, and the University assumes its proper function of teaching, of disseminating useful knowledge and becoming a centre of culture, an assembly of the learned.

Secondly, the Senate gets thoroughly remodelled and is rendered more democratic. The University is thus brought into wider touch with the surging national life around instead of leading an absolutely isolated life of its own as it has been doing hitherto. The Legislative Council, the Corporation of Madras, the Chambers of Commerce, Indian and European, all send their representatives to the Court and this flow of new blood in its veins is bound to stir the University into healthy activity.

Thirdly, the merchant princes and landed magnates are given an opportunity to bless them-

selves and the University by giving substantial donations which will, according to the amount of the gift, entitle them to come to the Court direct or send their representatives to the august body. This brings us the much needed money and draws us closer to the monied classes who have hitherto been given no opportunity to evince their interest in University education.

The bringing into existence of two bodies like the Executive Council and the Academic Council, the former to be in charge of administrative matters in general and the latter of the cultural side, with the Court to exercise a general supervision, is, it is claimed, a more satisfactory arrangement than the existing one where the Senate and its Syndic are called upon to do multifarious and at times incongruous functions.

The appointment of a full time and salaried Vice-Chancellor, costly luxury as it may seem at first, is bound to justify itself as we would then have an officer who may be expected to keep the University quite abreast of the times, and if anything goes wrong we at least have one person to fix the responsibility upon. Though in the past the Indian Universities have been exceptionally fortunate in having been able to secure the services of eminent persons who as Honorary Vice-Chancellors gave in an unstinted manner the best in them, yet it is felt we have come in the history of our Universities to a state when we can no longer be content with part time Vice-Chancellors, and if they are whole time officers it is too much to expect them to work without pay.

The multiplicity of institutions and their new names need not be felt as a grievance, as these are terms now current in all modern and up-to-date Universities of the West and there is some advantage in the uniformity of names, as otherwise every time an institution of a sister University is mentioned we have to refer to our table of exchange and find out what our corresponding institution is.

Thus it is claimed that the new bill if passed will rejuvenate our University by making it smaller and more manageable, a real centre of light and culture, an institution in which all the citizens will have a share and of which they may legitimately be proud, a real teaching, residential, civic University.

Let us turn to the other side of the picture. The bill has been condemned section by section and as a whole, and without going into details let us enumerate some of the chief defects pointed out.

First the question is asked, quite rightly as I should think, whether there is any necessity at all for a new measure. Does not the existing Act give us facilities for bringing about the desirable changes to our heart's content? Section 3 of the Act VIII of 1904 contemplates the converting of the existing Universities into teaching institutions, and if that radical change has not been brought about the real cause is the eternal want of funds



Given the necessary amount of money even now new chairs can be founded and facilities given for higher studies and research.

Then it is feared that the measure treats the Madras Colleges with special favouritism, and the mufassil colleges which now teach over sixty per cent. of the University candidates are given a step-motherly treatment. People of the mufassil apprehend that even if new Universities are started, say, one in the Andhra province and another in the Tamil districts, they may not be so liberally financed as the University at Madras, with the result that their efficiency will suffer and the market value of their products, to take a commercial view of things, will not be as high as that of a Madras graduate. It is this attitude of suspicion of the mufassil members that was mainly responsible for the Senate shelving the question at its last meeting (12th August).

The bill further gives no idea as to how the various Madras colleges are to be converted into constituent colleges of the University. The Government of Madras, Missionaries, the Trustees of the Pachiappa's—these are responsible for the management of the various arts and professional colleges now situate within the territorial jurisdiction of the new University, and whether it will take up all these colleges and run them, or whether the existing managements will be allowed to have practical autonomy in all internal matters, the University exercising only a general control over them, or whether a new Board will be brought into existence consisting of the representatives of the University and of the various existing managing bodies, these are questions left conveniently vague; and those who know the principles underlying and actuating the work of some of these foundations will be able to realise the immense difficulty that is likely to be experienced in throwing open their portals to all without any distinction of caste, creed or colour, or in not making attendance at religious classes compulsory as contemplated in section 6 of the bill.

It is further contended that the new bill by making the intermediate as its entrance examination will eventually reduce all the existing second grade colleges into glorified high schools. These second grade colleges of this Presidency have been discharging a very useful function in taking the benefits of university education to the very door of many a poor village boy. If the university gives up its Intermediates as it did give up its Matriculation, perhaps a new Intermediate and Secondary Board will step in its place and whatever be the nature of the future management, the colleges will lose their prestige and become bigger schools.

The Chancellor, if it is urged, is given more power in the bill than he has even now and this will go against the real independence of the University which is so necessary for its growth and efficiency. The Governor does not preside over the deliberations of the Legislative Council of his province lest the freedom of discussion be

curtailed. Why should the Chancellor of the University, who is the same Governor, have the power, it is asked, as contemplated in section 9 (i), to preside over the Court whenever present and thus curb the freedom of discussion of the Court?

Shrewd critics have been able to see in section 32 which empowers the Court to withdraw any degree from a person who "has been guilty of scandalous conduct" a powerful weapon put into the hands of the Court which is likely to be abused, especially in these days when feelings caused by differences of political opinion run high and the party in power may put their own interpretation as to what constitutes scandalous conduct.

On cultural grounds objection has been taken to the right given to plutocrats to have a seat in the Court or to return their representatives thereto as contemplated in section 13 of the bill. Money is good and we want more and more of it; but to give a man a seat in the Court, the supreme body of the University, for no other qualification than his gift of money to the University, is taking, it is urged, a rather low view of the dignity of the University. These merchant princes and business men will clamour for tangible results and quick returns and they will create an atmosphere not quite congenial to the undisturbed pursuit of knowledge and higher research work, which should go on indifferent to cost or result. The learned professions have not been given due recognition, while the Chambers of Commerce are asked to send their representatives to the Court. Why not such associations as the Madras Teachers' Guild, the High Court Vakils' Association and any recognised association of medical men be also empowered to send their representatives?

Lastly, it is asked, has any estimate been made of the additional expenditure involved by the change, recurring and non-recurring, and has any light been thrown on the possible source of this extra money? The Allahabad University, it is understood, has effected more or less the same changes in its constitution as contemplated in the Madras bill and they have set apart seven lakhs a year to meet the extra expenditure. How many lakhs would this measure cost us and where is the money to come from, even supposing that the best method of spending those extra lakhs is to spend them on the University?

Enough has been said above to show that the bill is not perfect as it is. It is drawn up with the best of intentions. It is highly necessary that there should be periodical stock-taking and shifting of things and no body would deny that our University does require a change; but whether the changes contemplated in the bill are the real changes felt to be necessary or not, that is the question to be decided.

The Senate has practically thrown the bill overboard. There is so much of difference of opinion about the bill in the country. It may not therefore be wise to rush the bill through the Let

gislative Council at its next session. The public should be given more time to discuss the bill in all its aspects and no party action should be taken in a matter like this, which is of far reaching consequences.

S. K. YAGNA NARAYANA AIYAR.

## THE BIHAR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

### II. VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

Following the example of the neighbouring provinces of Bengal and the U. P., the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council has done well in passing a bill to create self-contained village organization selected by the villagers from among themselves. These will be entrusted with powers of deciding petty civil and criminal cases, improving sanitation and water supply in their areas, conducting schools, dispensaries &c. that may be handed over by the District Board concerned and controlling the village chowkidars.

The chief features of the bill just passed are as follow. An area of about 20 to 30 square miles comprising several villages will be formed into a Union, the affairs of which will be administered by a board consisting of 15 to 20 persons elected by all who pay chowkidari or Union tax. The Union will be subdivided into smaller areas called Panchayati circles, and the judicial cases brought forward by residents of the circles will be decided by Panchayats or village courts consisting of three or more members elected from the board. The Panchayats will have exclusive jurisdiction in petty civil cases of a certain class up to the value of Rs. 25 and selected panchayats up to Rs. 100, and concurrent jurisdiction with the ordinary Civil Court up to Rs. 200 and in case of rent suits up to a limit of Rs. 25. In the matter of criminal cases of a certain class the Panchayat is given powers only concurrent with the Criminal Court of that area. As regards the control of village police, who are paid from a special tax levied on the villagers since 1869, not much substantial power is given to the board except the collection of the tax and recommending the appointment of chowkidars in case of vacancies. The board is given a free hand, subject to the control of the District Board in the matter of conservancy, water supply and road making in the villages. The Union board may be entrusted with the maintenance of primary schools and dispensaries if they are transferred by the District Board with its consent and with the registration of births and deaths, if required by the Local Government. For this purpose the Union fund will be created by a tax that may be levied upon the owners and occupiers of buildings within the Union and by a grant-in-aid of an equal amount from the District Board.

Under the legal fiction of employing chowkidars for the watch and ward of the village, the Chowkidari tax has been levied in all villages in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa for over fifty years past for the payment of the salary and uniform of the

chowkidar and the head chowkidar ( or duffadar ). But the control exercised by the villagers on the man who is supposed to be their watchman is nil, as he is under the direct orders and supervision of the police subinspector. No doubt there is a village committee of three persons nominated by the District Magistrate over the chowkidar, but it exists more in name than in reality. This is a flagrant case of taxation without representation. One would have expected the village union boards to be given full powers of appointing, dismissing or punishing the chowkidars, who cannot otherwise be made to feel that they are servants of the village and not of Government. It is a pity that this has not been done.

A special feature of the bill having some legal importance may be noted here. The division of Chota Nagpur comprising the districts of Singbhum, Manbhum, Ranchi, Hazaribagh and Palaman, has a very large population of aboriginals—Mundas and Oraons—who are not governed by the Hindu or Mahomedan succession law and whose tribal customs are very peculiar. At present cases involving questions of tribal custom are often decided wrongly by the Courts through ignorance. It was represented to the select committee on the bill that cases of inheritance or partition or cases in which succession to the office of village headman or of village priest was involved, could suitably be tried by panchayats consisting exclusively of members of the tribe concerned and that provision to that effect ought to be inserted in the bill in the case of panchayats in Chota Nagpur Division. This has now been done by clause 59 of the Act empowering such panchayats to try suits of such value as may be specified regarding succession to or partition of property and succession to secular or sacerdotal office filled by tribal custom.

The new Act, on the whole, is a progressive one, and the working thereof when it comes into full operation will be watched very keenly. No doubt self-taxation is distasteful in all countries and at all times, but when it is coupled with new powers and facilities for self-improvement and when interference in petty matters from above is absent, people in villages are sure to take kindly to this institution. The Act has been framed on very cautious lines. We very much wish that it had not been hedged round with unnecessary safeguards and precautions. But still we welcome it in the form in which it has finally emerged. If the experiment is assisted by the zealous work of an officer specially appointed for the purpose of promoting these boards of Panchayats, it will take root in a few years, as the institution of co-operative societies has done owing to the efforts of Government in that direction. Non-official guidance too is wanted urgently, and in fact more than official guidance, as after all the success will depend more upon the willingness of those whom the new institution is intended to benefit, than upon the eagerness of people from outside.

WAYFARER.

## THE WORLD OUTSIDE.

BETWEEN January 13th and March 3rd a strike of seamen took place at Hongkong, news of which, as it reached us here, was most disjointed. One is glad therefore to get—though late in the day—a consecutive and authoritative account of the occurrence from an able Chinese pen. Mr. Ta Chen, writing in the *Monthly Labour Review* of Washington for May, tells how the Chinese seamen made a stand against the 14 hour day, the rough treatment, the under-feeding &c., which had been their lot and by a really effective strike laid up 166 steamers (of 280,404 tons) and thereby paralyzed the whole life of the Colony. When after a fortnight the Governor could think of nothing better than to proclaim the Chinese seamen's Union to be an "unlawful society," sympathetic strikes amongst all Chinese employed by Europeans in Hongkong broke out and strike funds poured in from workers in other parts of China. Eventually the business community brought pressure to bear on the Government to bring about a settlement by negotiation, and when this was effected, it resulted in an increase of pay by 15-30 %, as against the 17-35 % originally demanded by the seamen; and payment of full wages (retrospectively) during all the time the men had been on strike—the latter a somewhat unusual proviso, to say the least of it. Anyhow the strike is a good illustration of the extent to which labour in China has been organized and of the efficiency with which Chinese labour is able to safeguard its interest. The old guild idea of course helps the Chinese a good deal for everybody in China has always belonged to some sort of craft-guild or professional association; and one cannot but help feeling how much power of resistance Indian labour has lost by the guild principle having come to be overlaid and stifled by the caste idea.

*Nationalism run mad.* NOTHING is more curious in the renaissance of Ireland, than the importance bestowed on the revival of Erse, a language as extinct a generation ago as Hebrew. Yet Hebrew has been revived as a matter of fact and become one of the main planks, whereby Zionism hopes in the new Palestine to wield the various fragments of Jewry into a modern national unity. As a matter of fact this policy has proved not merely feasible, but of great usefulness. Obviously some way out was needed, if the fiasco of the tower of Babel was not to be repeated—for hitherto the Jews' mother tongue has been, in the West, the language of the country (German, French, English &c.), and in the East, Yiddish, Polish, Russian, Arabic. As it is, the rising generation in Palestine is brought up on Hebrew as their mother tongue and Hebrew has already become one of the official languages of that country. But if some selection of a language had to be made in the case of the Jews, no such

reason can be adduced for Erse; for every Irishman used to speak English and nothing but English. It was only the hyper-sensitiveness of a subject race, which looked for an alternative to English, the universality and usefulness of which needs no labouring, that explains the revival of Erse. The only idea was to be as different as possible from the hated English—a monomania which resulted in the invention of "the Gael," one of those racial fictions which owe their origin to the crossing of Victorian semi-science with nineteenth century nationalism. One only hopes that Ireland—now that it is a Free State—will drop this nationalist make-believe, of which by the way the main exponents are the Spanish de Valera, the Polish Countess Markievicz and the Englishman Childers! It is interesting also to observe that the Irish are not alone in this, but probably have imitated the tendency of Germany, where Wagner's Grand Operas made the "Arch-German" of Woden mythology &c. popular. A harmless fad at first, it soon fell into the hands of anti-semitism there and to-day the murder-associations "Consul" &c. are worshipping the "pure German" to a man and vow death to the "alien" Jew; by a convenient trick extending their hatred to all progressives, as "Jewish tools"!

*Polish "Patriotism".* POLAND is passing through a ministerial crisis, the extreme Right by a small majority of 6 votes having overthrown the government and called on the notorious Mr. Korfanty to become Prime Minister—which proved a trifle too much even for the President of the Polish Republic, Marshal Pilsudski, who cannot be accused of any liberal leanings. Korfanty will be remembered as the organiser of the Polish propaganda in Upper Silesia and as the leader of the Polish banditry which devastated that unhappy district before and after the plebiscite. This is the man whom the patrioteers of Poland to-day acclaim as "the Liberator of Upper Silesia"—a man whose very appearance, let alone character, fills, every decent person with repulsion. Only the other day the leader of the Polish Socialists charged him openly with having during the war been in the pay of the German Propaganda—a fact sufficiently notorious all along. This Mr. Korfanty, who yesterday was helping the Germans, to-day however gets his pay from the French—of course. On the morrow of the transfer to Poland of Upper Silesian coal fields a French company was formed to take over the exploitation of "Polish State Mines," a company the directorate of which consists of the heads of all the big colliery owners of France, with Mr. Korfanty as the Chairman of Directors! And now Mr. Korfanty is to be Polish Premier. No wonder, it was a little too much for Marshal Pilsudski, who, militarist and reactionary that he is, does anyhow enjoy a reputation for common decency and even for a moral strictness and incorruptibility said not to be too common in those parts of Europe. Meanwhile the Polish budget, which last year showed a deficit of 141 thousand million marks, this year shows one of 400 thousand million marks. (25,000 Polish marks equal one pound sterling to-day). Poor insensate Poland, which instead of developing her resources, wastes her all on soldiers and yet more soldiers, and can think of nobody better to guide her than a brigand chief!

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