

# THE Servant of India

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK

As we go to press the expected news has come of the defeat of Mr. Baldwin's government and the assumption of office by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. A Labour Ministry is presiding for the first time over the destinies of Great Britain and her Empire. The suggestion made in this paper that Indian progressives should cable congratulations to the incoming Prime Minister has met with encouraging response. The Swarajist press, however, continues querulous and professes to be indifferent to happenings outside India. To recognise an unparalleled political event in England, to say a word of appreciation of those who befriended us in a time of anxiety and incidentally to remind them of their promises, are acts falling within the range of political propriety as we understand it, and cannot be stigmatised as a theatrical demonstration. Neither can those who send congratulations on this occasion be accused of identifying the fortunes of India with those of a political party in England. We wonder what an identification would at all mean if it were possible, so long as no political school in India has directly or indirectly adopted the principles and aims of the labourites, either all or any of these. It is a bogey by which, we hope, those who are otherwise disposed to take the suggested action will not be frightened. Another equally baseless objection is that a felicitation of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald may imply a slight of Mr. Asquith. Scruples of this sort have only to be mentioned to be dismissed by sensible people. We have in conclusion great pleasure in presenting our readers with an extract (published elsewhere) from an official organ of

Labour furnishing another proof of the genuineness of that party's friendliness to India.

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The Deccan Liberals are to be congratulated on the promptness with which they have disapproved, through their spokesmen, Mr. Sastri and Dr. Paranjpye, the obstructive methods of the Central Provinces Swarajists, who have declared their intention of wrecking the legislative council. Those who cut themselves off from the Congress for the sake of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and have stood by them through thick and thin, cannot be looking on with folded arms when they are being destroyed. Mr. Sastri voiced the true feelings of the Liberals when he said:

"We have incurred unpopularity and odium without end. We have been condemned as enemies of our country. We have been denied not merely the amenities, but even the opportunities of the platform. Have we suffered all this for making a success of the Reforms: and can we now see all that work destroyed before our eyes? How can we afford merely to look on? Let us take our courage in both our hands and beseech our countrymen in the C. P. and Berar not to pursue this suicidal course. Our voice may not be heard but it must be raised."

If the Swarajists do not heed us, as is likely, it is our duty to address ourselves to the task of awakening the good sense of the electors in the C. P. and elsewhere so that they may stop in time this frivolous yet dangerous game.

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WHILE almost every shade of Indian opinion is urging the Government to release Mr. Gandhi unconditionally as soon as he is well enough for it and not send him back to jail, the *Times of India* has counselled the Government not to yield to this 'unreasoning clamour' and to release him only on his agreeing not to take active part in politics for the remainder of his term of imprisonment. This is not a very helpful suggestion, seeing that just before he underwent the operation he told Mr. Sastri most unequivocally that his agreeing to conditions was impossible. For this well nigh unanimous demand the *Times* sees only two reasons—sentiment, necessarily unthinking, and a desire on the part of Congressmen who are now divided into different camps, to get back the only leader who can again unify them. With regard to the latter, it may suffice to point out that Mr. Gandhi's release, with his boycott of councils, will not suit the plans of the Swarajists who are now in a

Mr. Gandhi's  
Release.

majority in the Congress and that therefore their demand is not dictated by self-interest. As to the former, the *Times* seems to think that sentiment is a thing of which one should be ashamed and which should not be allowed to influence action! Are not affection, loyalty, religion, patriotism—all sentiments? No Government can afford to disregard the strong sentiments of its people. The Government of India if it is well advised will think of strengthening the people's kind sentiment towards itself— which surely requires strengthening now more badly than ever before—by gratifying the sentiment which people so strongly and unanimously feel at the present juncture towards Mr. Gandhi. That is where statesmanship comes in. Moreover, there are the motions in the Assembly and the formal demand of the Swarajists to be taken into consideration. Will it not be statesmanship to avoid an unpopularity which otherwise is certain to come, and also to take the wind out of the main sail of the Swarajists? Even before Mr. Gandhi's imprisonment, non-co-operation in its dangerous forms was nearly dead. It is not going to be revived by his release; while on the other hand the evil results of not releasing him will be really great, though they may not be immediately visible. At any rate, they are bound to be greater than any possible evils arising from his release.

\* \* \*

#### The Calcutta Murder.

THE murder of Mr. Day in broad day light in Chowranghee was a dastardly political crime, not rendered less dastardly by the circumstance that the victim was an innocent gentleman who was mistaken for the Commissioner of Police. Though the motive of the crime was political, it was not racial, as was acknowledged with commendable fairness by the European community at the public meeting held by them in connection with this murder. It was natural that on that occasion they should remind themselves of their political duties and promise support to the police and Government in the suppression of political crime and the maintenance of law and order. One does not like to examine critically the things said on such an occasion, but one or two ideas to which expression was given should not go unnoticed. The chairman, voicing the feelings of the audience, assured the Government "that the non-official Europeans would be behind them to a man in any steps they may take, whether they be called repressive steps or otherwise; to strengthen the hands of the police in this country." Nobody has grudged reasonable power to the police for preventing ordinary or political crime. The exercise of reasonable power for necessary purposes does not become repression in anybody's opinion. It is only when arbitrary and excessive power is placed in the hands of the executive and it is used or is capable of being used for suppressing the legitimate activities of the people that objection is taken. Being lovers of freedom in their own country, it is expected of Englishmen that they will not support repression in this country. Another idea expressed by more than one speaker was that the release of political prisoners would be fraught with the gravest danger to the province. We do not believe that in the present political condition of Bengal or the rest of India there is anything to justify

such an assumption. On the contrary, the release of prisoners not guilty of moral turpitude will lessen the bitterness of feeling existing in certain sections of politically minded people. Any way it is a question to be decided on its merits, without being influenced by the present crime.

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#### Pandit Malaviya's Satyagraha.

THE unusual sight of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya leading a satyagraha movement at the confluence of the Jumna and the Ganges would not have been witnessed if the district authorities of Allahabad had exercised in time more sympathy and imagination than they did. During the Ardh Kumbh Mela, which is now on and which lasts for nearly a month commencing from Sankranti, the 14th inst., several lakhs of Hindu pilgrims flock to Allahabad to have a dip in the sacred waters and particularly at the spot where the two great rivers join. The current of water this year has slightly changed its course and made bathing at the spot rather risky. A few days before the Mela was to begin the authorities decided to prohibit bathing there. The leaders of the Hindu community with Pandit Malaviya at their head made due representations against decision and thereupon it was agreed that steps should be taken to render a particular area safe and bathing permitted within that area. These steps were taken, the sanction of the Governor therefor being obtained. But on Sankranti eve the collector thought that the area which had been rendered safe was not large enough to accommodate more than a tenth of the pilgrims, and fearing a rush and a stampede, prohibited the bathing. This disregard for the religious feelings of the Hindus and going back upon all previous understandings and arrangements, was keenly resented by the Hindu leaders. Pandit Malaviya immediately telegraphed to the Governor that this prohibition was utterly uncalled for, that there was no danger whatever of any one being drowned or crushed, that a large number of Seva Samiti and other volunteers were ready to co-operate in regulating the crowd, that the water being only breast-deep he was advised that the collector's prohibition order was illegal, and therefore His Excellency should intervene and direct that bathing be permitted under conditions previously agreed to. Next morning, as the prohibition still continued, Pandit Malaviya sent a message to the officer in charge of the Mela, that the prohibition being an illegal, improper and unjust interference with one's liberty of performing one's religious duties, he would at a particular hour start to bathe within the enclosure unless prohibition was withdrawn in the meantime. When he went there he found the police and the military ready to support the authorities, while a large crowd, kept in check by the Seva Samiti, was behind him. A good deal of time was spent in vain negotiations and finally the satyagrahis broke through the barriers. It is very much to the credit of the collector that at this time he kept his head cool and did not give a rash order, the effect of which might have been very serious and far-reaching. But the whole incident and the excitement caused by it could have been avoided if the collector had not been so bureaucratically certain of his infallibility and if he had treated Pandit Malaviya and others as sensible and responsible people who were no less anxious than himself for the safety of the pilgrims. As a matter of fact subsequent experience has proved the place perfectly safe for bathing. We fervently hope that the incident will be treated as one to be forgotten.

## SWARAJISTS AND THE C. P. COUNCIL.

The policy pursued by the Swarajists in the C. P. Legislative Council, where alone they are in an absolute majority, has come as a painful surprise to many, who like ourselves, though not members of the Swaraj Party, were following its fortunes with interest, feeling confident that its members would exploit the councils to the greatest advantage of the country. We had thought that seeing the futility and senselessness of the destructive side and the dreariness of the so-called constructive side of the programme of orthodox non-co-operation, and also recognising the great part played by the councils in the political life of the country and their scope for usefulness—we had thought the Swarajists had entered the councils with the object of getting the utmost through them both from the transferred and reserved departments, and that they really proposed to attain Swaraj within the shortest time, by working the councils and not by wrecking them, whatever phrases they might have employed in order to get the permission of the Congress and the votes of the electors. We had believed that with the skill and tact which had given them such success in the Congress and at the polls, they would gradually disentangle themselves from their commitments to orthodox non-co-operators and soon reach the policy of responsive co-operation, their own and original position, from which they were carried away by the onrush of Gandhian non-co-operation. We had thought them too sensible to wreck the constitution. But it looks as though all such hopes were misplaced.

Having refused to accept office though in a majority, the Swarajists have passed a vote of no confidence in the Ministers and have begun obstruction pure and simple. We thought that such obstruction was to begin, if it all, only after the Government of India had refused the demand to be presented by the members of the party in the Assembly. It is surprising that in less than a fortnight of their meeting at Lucknow they should have thrown to the winds their programme. Having already started wrecking the councils, there is no point in their presenting a demand. With an unconsciousness all their own, they appealed to the Governor in the name of constitutional practice, not to retain Ministers in whom the majority of the council had no confidence. An appeal to constitution does not lie in the mouth of those who refuse to acknowledge the constitutional duty of accepting office when called upon to do so. The council has now been prorogued, and let us hope that before it reassembles the Swarajists will carefully reconsider their policy. But if they did not and continued their policy of obstruction by refusing to pass the budget, for instance, what are the courses open to the Governor? He would of course certify the expenditure needed for the reserved subjects. As to the transferred subjects, a suggestion has

been made which is calculated to bring home to the electors the folly of electing the Swarajists. It is that though the Governor is invested by the Government of India Act with power "in cases of emergency to authorise such expenditure as may be necessary for the safety or tranquillity of the province or for the carrying on of any department", he should not exercise that power but let the schools, hospitals etc. be suspended for a time, so that the teachers, parents and others may taste the direct results of the Swarajist policy and give no support to the Swarajists at the next elections. We do not think that a strong and enlightened Government like the British will accept this suggestion, as it entails suffering and hardship on the whole population for the fault of a small section of it. What the Governor will probably do is to carry on the administration by the exercise of emergency power and to dissolve the council at a suitable time, that is, when he thinks another party is likely to be returned with a majority. If at the next election also, the Swarajists should be in a majority and pursue the same policy, then the Governor General, with the previous sanction of the Secretary of State in Council, will "revoke or suspend for such period as he may consider necessary the transfer" of all the subjects. As there will be an obstructive majority in the council, no business of any kind will be transacted and administration will be carried on as in pre-council days. In fact the chief spokesman of the Swarajists said that that was exactly what they were aiming at: let the transferred subjects be withdrawn, they would be ending diarchy as they had promised to do; let Government carry on without the councils, then the administration would not be in the name of the people. This way of ending diarchy is like curing a patient by killing him. Is this what they meant all along?

But the main object of the Swarajists is the attainment of Swarajya, complete self-government, within the shortest possible time and a not mere reversion to pre-council days. Obstruction is only a means to that end. They believe, with a certain amount of plausibility, that reforms once granted cannot be withdrawn, that public opinion in India and England would not tolerate any such withdrawal. This reasoning would be correct if according to the requirements of democratic government they assumed responsibility for administration when the occasion demanded it and created deadlocks, not as a general policy with a view to make all administration impossible, but only on well-chosen occasions. Then they would have put the British Government in the wrong instead of putting themselves in the wrong as they have now done. Intelligent public opinion will now be on the side of the Government rather than on the side of the Swarajists. That will certainly be the case in England, and the Labour Party who for the first time are in a position to translate their sympathy into action, will only be handicapped. As obstruction in the councils will not by itself carry the

Swarajists very far, they will necessarily have to resort to exciting programmes of civil disobedience, non-payment of taxes, &c. These will lead to violence, disorders, anarchy. Is that the quickest way to Swaraj? History does not show that to be the case anywhere. By this mad method the Swarajists will most certainly be defeating their cherished object.

If it was not for benefiting the country by a better and more vigorous use of the power which the legislature places in the hands of its members than the Liberals did, where was the need for the Swarajists to fall out with the no-changers and create a serious division in the Congress, which has even now not been composed? If this obstruction is to lead to civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes, why did they bring on the stage this big interlude of council-entry and not go on with the original constructive and destructive programmes? The way to Delhi does not lie through Mexico or Cotopaxi. We earnestly hope that the Swarajists who have acquired an ascendancy in the C. P. Legislative Council by organisation and industry will utilise the interval between now and the next meeting to modify their policy of senseless obstruction. We also hope that all who have the good of the country at heart and who may have the ear of the Swarajists will help them to get back to the right course.

### WAS IT A PLEDGE ?

A POINT of academic interest is often raised as to the force of the resolutions of the Imperial Conference. Students would perhaps be benefited by a statement on the subject based on pronouncements by persons of more or less authority. The subject came up before the public by some dominion spokesmen referring to the resolutions as pledges which the Government of Great Britain ought to set the example of faithfully carrying out. Of course this view was pressed in regard to preferential tariff in which the dominions are so deeply interested, but with regard to which Great Britain has not been equally warm in her reciprocation. The recent Imperial Conference passed certain resolutions regarding these preferences and it was apprehended in certain quarters that the change of government now impending might result in the resolutions remaining unheeded.

The word pledge is used loosely. It sometimes means an undertaking of legal validity on the part of competent authority, which it would be a breach of ordinary or international law to refuse or fail to carry out. It is also used with reference to understandings arrived at between representatives of communities or states which have no legal validity until they are ratified by the communities or states represented. The resolutions of the Imperial Conference fall into the second category. Though they have no validity in themselves, they acquire a very high order of significance and give rise to sanguine expectations

on a wide-spread scale. This arises from two circumstances. In the first place, the dominions and India are represented, in the case of the former by prime ministers, in the case of the latter by delegates of the Government of India, while Great Britain deposes her prime minister and several other ministers of cabinet rank. In the second place, resolutions are not ordinarily passed unless they are unanimous. It will be readily seen that these two circumstances together invest a resolution with an importance which may not be that of a statute or a treaty, but which is of the highest moral authority and could only be set aside at serious risk. The resolutions and recommendations of the League of Nations, of the International Bureau of Labour and other international commissions, become binding on a state only when that state has ratified them in the appropriate way. If a law is necessary to carry out one of these resolutions and the state in question is democratic, fulfilment is not possible till the legislature has passed the necessary measure. To take an example which will appeal to us, the resolution of 1921 regarding citizenship rights for Indians in the dominions could not by itself confer the franchise on any domiciled Indian in Australia, New Zealand or Canada, but it is necessary that the franchise law of these dominions and of states composing them should be changed. The consent of the prime minister sitting in London, away from his Government and people, has no more meaning than this—that he would at a moment suitable place the matter before his legislature with a recommendation in its favour. As soon as this resolution was passed, it was understood that the Government of India would send out a deputation in order to put their case before the legislatures and electorates of the dominions. Mr. Sastri was sent round by the Government of India for this purpose. The prime ministers everywhere realised their duty and promised to bring the matter before the legislatures. While there has been great delay and grave misgivings have arisen in consequence, it could not be said that any pledge had been broken. It is perfectly open for anyone of the legislatures concerned to repudiate the consent of their prime minister to the resolution of 1921 and reject any bill which he may introduce to carry it out. Unfortunately this untoward result seems likely to happen in the province of British Columbia, for example, where influential bodies have declared themselves strongly against the extension of the franchise to Indians, or Hindus as they are called there. Strictly speaking, should this sinister turn of affairs eventuate, it would not be just to say that Canada had broken a pledge, but that the Parliament of British Columbia had refused to ratify the action of the prime minister of the dominion and thereby disappointed the natural expectation of the people of India and caused imperial complications. When Mr. Sastri was in Canada the prime minister, Mr. Mackenzie

King, wanted, perhaps for party purposes, to clear up a point that had been raised, viz, whether his predecessor, Mr. Meighen, by being a party to the Imperial Conference resolution of 1921, had only expressed his own opinion on the subject or had committed the Dominion of Canada to a pledge? Of course only one answer was possible and both Mr. Meighen and Mr. Sastri gave it—that it was not a legal pledge in the rigid sense of the word. Mr. King narrated this perfectly simple matter with unnecessary elaborateness at the last Imperial Conference, even reading his harsard for the purpose. It may be appropriate to give here two extracts: one from a letter of Prof. A. B. Keith in the *Times*, the other from a speech of Mr. Bruce, the Australian prime minister.

Prof. A. B. Keith writes :

"A Government which concurs in any recommendation of an Imperial conference undertakes, at the highest, no more than an obligation to bring the matter before its Parliament with a proposal to make the recommendation effective. It does not even come under an obligation to make acceptance of the proposal a matter of confidence, and the Parliament clearly is under no sort of obligation whatever to homologate the action of the Government, if it disapproves it. Needless to say, there is still less obligation on the Nation, as a whole, or on a new Parliament, in which the Government responsible for the actions of its delegates at the Conference has not a majority. Any attempt to negate this position would doubtless render Imperial Conference impossible."

Mr. Bruce said :

"To suggest that the nations participating were bound by the action of their representatives until the action was confirmed by the respective Governments was undemocratic and against the great principles underlying the whole of the present relations inside the Empire. . . . But it would be tragic if effect were not given to the resolutions of the Conference. He believed that it would strike a very vital blow on the unity of the Empire if the whole result of the Conference was destroyed."

Mr. Bruce's last sentences are very much to the point. It would be tragic if effect were not given to the resolutions of the Conference. It would strike a very vital blow on the unity of the Empire if the whole result of the Conference was destroyed. These ominous words have almost come true. While the three dominions concerned, have merely deferred action, to an undue extent though it be, the British Government, which was also a party to the resolution of 1921, has in respect of Kenya flagrantly repudiated it. There is not even the excuse of a superior authority like Parliament having refused to ratify it. The British cabinet itself has gone clean back on a resolution to which a Prime Minister, a Foreign Secretary, a Colonial Secretary, an Indian Secretary and several other cabinet ministers were parties. A very vital blow has been struck at the unity of the Empire. The shame of it burns us here. It should burn the people of Great Britain even more. If it does not, the meaning is that the corruption is too far gone.

### THE BENGAL PACT

IT is unfortunate that almost the very first handiwork of the Bengal Swarajya Party, namely, the

Hindu-Moslem pact, should have evoked angry criticism of the Hindu community not only in Bengal but in such distant places as the Punjab and Ceylon. The criticism can be explained in two ways: either the pact is prejudicial to the best interests of Indian nationalism or the Hindu community is unwilling to give the Moslems their due. Suggestion has also been made that the pact is nothing other than a party move to forestall Lord Lytton in his probable future policy of exploiting the communal feeling of the Moslems both inside and outside the Council, as was very successfully done by Sir Bamfylde Fuller during the Partition agitation in Bengal. We are prepared, however, to reject such imputation of motive and to judge the pact on its merits.

It is a well known fact that the present tension between the two communities is due to a large extent to the loaves and fishes of office. Representation on legislative and local bodies is another cause of dissension. These are deplorable facts, but they are there and will exist till the two communities are welded in their interests by the intense heat of patriotism. But that day is yet to come and some understanding has got to be arrived at in the meanwhile, if Indian nationalism is to be saved.

The urgency of an understanding between the two communities was recognised by the Congress and the League in 1916, and the understanding arrived at by those two bodies was embodied in the famous Lucknow Pact.

With the Non-co-operation movement opened a new chapter in Hindu-Moslem relations. The Versailles Treaty had injured the religious susceptibilities of Indian Mussalmans and both communities had suffered great humiliation and untold misery during the dark days in the Punjab. Both communities were stirred to their depths. Under the magnetic guidance of Mahatma Gandhi they stood tiptoe shoulder to shoulder, looking across the sevenfold boycott away in the horizon for the dawning Swaraj and rebred Khilafat. But standing tiptoe is not a normal human posture and with the waning of zeal, the reasons whereof need not be discussed here, the entente began to melt. The accession of Turkey to new strength and status in Europe and in Asia, took much of the wind out of the sails of the Khilafat movement and the alliance of the Hindus lost its former importance and primacy for the Indian Moslems. The communal instinct, lulled for a while, reawakened with a new vigour leading to riots in several places, notably in the Punjab and the United Provinces.

To many these events caused amazement and pain, to a few others amusement though secret and ignoble. The laws of bread and butter refused to be overmastered by altruistic principles and communalism threatened to drive nationalism out of the field. A breach had occurred, all assertions to the contrary notwithstanding.

The necessity of a pact to safeguard the interests of the different communities composing the Indian nation, framed in the light of the new situation, was insistent and imperative. The Congress accordingly appointed a committee to draft a National Pact.

In the meantime, before the committee had submitted its draft pact, the Swarajya party of Bengal, immediately after the election, felt itself called upon to draft a separate pact, without any suggestion that it was a mere suggestion, with a haste which can easily be misinterpreted as light-heartedness. Whether the communal relations in Bengal demanded such feverish despatch or not, is best known to the framers of the pact. But whatever the condition of communal affairs in Bengal, the framers of the pact cannot pretend to have been ignorant of the pact sub-committee of the Congress and would certainly have shown greater wisdom and discipline to have awaited the draft pact of the sub-committee.

Leaving aside the circumstances that led to the pact, let us examine the pact itself. To accept the principle of communal representation logically involves the acceptance of representation on population basis. For good or for evil democracy, as it is understood at present, depends on the counting of heads irrespective of their contents, and there is no reason to suppose that the quality of contents of the Hindu heads en masse is any better than that of the Mussalmans. So far as representation in the Council is concerned the Bengal pact provides for this. But it has blundered in assigning separate electorates, for separate electorates tend to emphasise the communal bias of the representatives and thus hamper the growth of national unity. Joint electorates on the other hand act as a corrective of communal extravagance. But while we are conscious of the logicality of the representation on population basis, we would like to point out the difficulties of pushing this principle to its logical end. The Lucknow pact was arrived at on the basis of negotiation and on the numerical strength of the two communities. The ratio of the total representation in councils provided for in the Lucknow pact between the Mohamedan and Non-Mohamedan was 1 : 2, while the relative population would warrant the ratio of 1 : 3. It will thus be seen that so far as representation in councils is concerned the Lucknow pact was much more generous than representation on population basis, which the Bengal pact adopts, would be. The Khilafat Committee has emphatically endorsed the Bengal pact. But we do not know if the Khilafat Committee and Swarajya party of Bengal have enough authority to make those provinces where Mohamedans form a small minority (e. g. Madras and the C. P.) and where their representation is in excess of their numerical strength, accept the principle of representation on population basis.

It is difficult to see the necessary, even a

present, of extending communal representation to the local bodies. In the construction and maintenance of roads and canals, in the imparting of primary education and the rendering of medical relief, in the matter of water supply or conservancy, there is little scope of divergence of communal interests. A provincial enactment 'to eliminate force of compulsion by any one party in derogation of any other party' in the local bodies will be necessary in such a case. It has to be always remembered that communal representation is prejudicial to national solidarity and our constant endeavour should be to eliminate this element from our national political organism as soon as possible. To extend it to local bodies will carry the poison of communalism to the remotest hamlets and if this pernicious principle is allowed to take root in rural areas where enlightened nationalism has hardly any scope for operation, the result will be disastrous. Indeed it will defeat the very aim which the framers of the pact have in mind. The provisions of the pact concerning representation in local bodies if carried into effect will create such a mighty communal vortex that no party, however powerful, could feel safe from it.

So far as the provisions relating to religious toleration are concerned they are unobjectionable in principle and only require some readjustment in point of detail.

The provisions concerning apportionment of public services are objectionable both in principle and in detail. A spirit of temporising characterises all the provisions. 'Satisfying the least test' on the part of Mussalman candidates for public services, may satisfy the framers of the pact, and surely they will satisfy the Mussalman candidates but will not satisfy the acknowledged conditions of efficiency, and much less satisfy the more capable rival candidates belonging to other communities. It cannot be maintained, indeed it will be foolish to do so, that there will be less need for efficiency in Swarajya. On the contrary, we shall then require the utmost skill and efficiency to build up, in all departments of national life. Population can never be the basis of apportionment in public services, unless indeed the recruitment to public services is levelled down to the standard of recruitment of unskilled labour for tea-gardens. Fixing the proportion of services on the ratio of *educated* population of different communities has the appearance of being just and reasonable, but is extremely unjust for smaller communities and for the communities which unfortunately have not a sufficiently large educated population. The best course is to recruit the best men irrespective of caste, creed or community.

Special provision however should be made for depressed and backward classes, whose 'depression' and backwardness is due not so much to their own fault as to the unjust social laws of the Hindus. It is a well known fact that the depressed classes form the recruiting ground of Islam in Bengal'

The large uneducated Moslem population consists to a great extent of persons formerly belonging to depressed classes. If Government posts are filled up according to faith and not according to merit, the depressed classes will find it very profitable to change their faith and become Mussalmans and coin their faith readily into cash. These provisions, if not rejected soon, will be swallowed bait and sinker by those for whom they have been thrown out, and if timely precaution is not taken to modify them, the political anglers need not be surprised if they find themselves in deep waters before long.

While making these observations we cannot fail to notice that in Bengal the pact is being criticised not on very rational lines. It has offered an occasion to many pontifically inclined persons to give vent to their pious wishes and kindly emotions. There are others again whose abundant and inclusive sympathy for both the communities, which the pact has evoked, threatens to crystallise into municipal commissionerships for themselves. We urge all leaders to keep the issue clear and not to confuse a situation already greatly confounded.

Leaders who prefer to sail on 'the zoneless, shoreless sea of well-wishing' for all the communities do not solve the problem, although such well-wishing may serve as laudanum for their own uneasy conscience or as a cloak for their incapacity to handle a difficult situation.

We want communal peace but it must be a negotiated peace and not a dictated peace, for we are convinced that dictated peace ends in war and chaos, and has an uncanny habit, as the framers of the Bengal pact must be aware by this time, of recoiling on the heads of the dictators. We hope we shall not be misunderstood. The communal problem in India is critical and full of great difficulties. It is because we are conscious of these that we ask our leaders to be dispassionate and cautious and to evolve a plan which while accommodating the just rights of all the communities will avoid all immediate and party interests.

AMICUS.

### CONTINENTAL LETTER.

BRESLAU, 27, DEC. 1923

Capitalism all over the world can strike up a triumphal song, for the eight hours working-day in Germany is dead. Mr. Poincaré has killed it. Not directly and not officially. On the contrary, in the occupied district the French military is careful to wash its hands of this dirty business. The social idea in the world is so strong that even militarism in its most triumphant attitude avoids being looked upon as its direct antagonist. But it was simply the natural consequence of the measures taken, a most desirable by-product, so to speak, of the political victory. The great French industrialists, the French bourgeois in general, will be satisfied. The satisfaction

of the same class of people in Germany is unanimous. In this respect international harmony leaves nothing to be desired. How could it be otherwise? Victorious France that dictates her will to the nations of Europe now, is a bourgeois republic of the most reactionary type. Her electoral franchise is antiquated, compared with those of her neighbours. In these very times her representatives waste their time in discussing a new system, which would give an additional vote to every father of a family for each one of his children. Serious people utter the idea, without being afraid of raising their audience's mirth, that this privilege will contribute to increase the number of births in France! Their social institutions too are considerably less developed than those in England or Germany. The organisation of the social insurances especially is in many ways in a state of babyhood. Trade union rates of pay are not yet come to any fundamental importance. Before all the possibility to declare such rates as obligatory does not exist. Also what the workingman has achieved in the workshop as to his participating in the management in England and Central Europe is still absolutely unknown in France. Nominally a law of 23rd April 1918, had introduced the eight hours day, it is true, but practically the overpowerful influence of the bourgeois parties soon led to a perfect "sabotage" of this institution. How then could the ruling classes of such a country suffer the working population of their German neighbours to enjoy the benefit of decent and humane conditions of work? In their hands they held the means to do away with such a bad example for the "greed" of their own manual labourers and they have not hesitated to make us of it. The scheme did not even demand a direct action, for it sufficed to ruin the whole financial system of Germany to make the workingman a helpless prey to the compulsion of the circumstances. For what should he do? Strike? His funds are absolutely exhausted. Use violence? The reactionaries of the extreme Right would simply jubilate and use the occasion to do away with the last democratic rights of the nation with the help of the "Reichswehr", those mercenary troops which the Versailles treaty has forced upon us, a thoroughly anti-republican institution, which is permeated by a strong royalist spirit and means therefore a constant danger to the very existence of the republican state-form. So the eight hours working-day has been given up, not in theory, it is true, for the law knows it still, but in practice. It is much more than a mere economic measure. It means the triumph of the employer, the fulfilment of his desire to subdue the workingman's independence, the rehabilitation of the government of the bourgeois classes, the great conquest in the very class struggle which in the revolution of 1918 had temporarily ended with the victory—a very humble victory it is true—of the workingman. Many of the fruits of this victory had become illusory but the eight hours day

was the one achievement of November 1918, which seemed to be absolutely taboo for the workers, something which it was sacrilege to touch even in thought. To have to give it up must needs curb their spirit and inspire their social adversaries with new hopes. Reaction of all sorts is "en marche" now.

#### THE NEW CURRENCY.

It is true that the bourgeois parties tried to sweeten the bitter pill which the workers had to swallow by constant hints at the sacrifices that were asked from other strata of the society as well. The great downbreak of the German currency has indeed asked for a good many sacrifices. The new currency, the "Rentenmark" was introduced at a moment when the goldmark had reached the fabulous amount of a billion i. e. thousand milliards of papermarks. The ciphers had become so great that it caused the most serious difficulties to calculate at all. The banks and similar institutions had to keep more than twice the usual numbers of clerks simply because of the extra work brought about by the smallest ciphers being infected by the elephantiasis. The influence of the inflation on the market was more fatal still, the merchants doubling their prices continually because the money they earned in the morning had lost half its value already in the afternoon. When some weeks ago the new "Rentenmark" appeared at last, which is based on the credit provided by the landed property of the country of which five percent have been declared due to the state, a feeling of relief went through the whole country. The fever that raged in the body of the nation seemed to abate suddenly. New difficulties however arose at once. At first the prices refused to go down. The diffidence was still too great. The retail merchants moreover had become so accustomed to the continual raising of the prices that they tried to go on with this pleasant game, in spite of the stable character of the new money they received. What facilitated this attitude was that some years of continual advancing of prices had brought the regular standard of prices almost entirely into oblivion with most people. Then government ordered the communes to publish the prices of 1914 in order to bring them back into memory. Now the figures slowly receded. But the curious phenomenon remains that after counting with 'astronomic figures' milliards and billions for months, one has become 'long-sighted' as it were and lost all sense of proportion as to the value of money. Everything appears to be tremendously cheap now as it seemed to be tremendously expensive some weeks ago. The real emergency however begins but now. Up to the present we were like a sick person who is deluded about his pains by frequent injections of camphor. The camphor was represented by the products of the paper-money-press. It was suddenly brought to a standstill. Perhaps too suddenly, or if not too suddenly, certainly too late. It ought to have been possible to secure the

receipt of heavy rates or taxes paid in gold mark at the moment when the other sources ran dry. This however was not achieved. So the state found itself all at once almost entirely without money. It seemed impossible for it to pay its numerous officials. At last it was effected somehow, everybody receiving trifles like two or three marks, every third day. The amount of time wasted in this way was extraordinary. On closer examination it was found that what the bankrupt state was able to pay to its officials was after all no longer enough to cover the necessities of life. The wages of the workingman too have gone down appallingly. The miner who works more than eight hours underground e. g. in the Silesian mining district does not receive more than four goldmarks daily now, a sum which does not allow him to protect a large family from hunger.

#### THE FLIGHT OF OFFICIALS.

Still he at least does not run the risk of being dismissed from office. For the state being unable to keep its large army of officials, it has been decided that one quarter of them should to be dismissed. One can imagine what tribulation this measure means. When the Versailles treaty compelled us to dissolve the German army many thousands of officers, military and naval had to be provided for. Most of them found a position in industry and commerce during the years that immediately followed the war. But circumstances deteriorated meanwhile a good deal. The French policy of throwing a sword into the complicated wheel-work of our industrial centre on the Ruhr has proved effective. Millions are still unemployed and the French endeavour to manage the German railways of the occupied district by means of a French administration has, in spite of the giving up of the German passive resistance up to the present day, resulted in a general confusion on the lines concerned, which is however considered as a kind of merri-making by the invaders who keep to the opinion that the greater the destruction of Germany the greater the "security" of France. The state of affairs created in this way is, it is easy to see, not of the kind to allow many dismissed state-officials to find employment in private enterprise. So the despair among them is very great. But even those that are left in office are far from being in security. Not only that their salary is less than half of what it was before the war, the financial situation of the state is still quite unsettled. The creation of the 'Rentenmark' is after all an experiment which may not turn out a success. The richest parts of Germany being kept under the invaders, sway, not only is the tax collecting there made almost impossible but the ruined state has to pay enormous sums daily for the unemployed in these parts of the Reich, who are more or less purposely prevented from working by the invader. A more fiendish scheme has never been invented. A wound is continually kept open on the body



of the 'Reich' in order to bleed it out and to prevent it from recovering.

#### GERMAN INDUSTRIALISTS.

Now the result of this sort of policy on the French finances too is far from satisfactory. Concord nourishes, discord ravishes. The franc has lost 73 percent of its value. The monthly deficit of the French state budget is at present 'two milliards of paperfrancs'. It is, it seems, the commencement of the same inflation that we have witnessed in Germany. Already now the masses of the workingmen, employees and officials have become impoverished, are no longer able to save any money and demand supplementary salaries or wages in order to be able to live. That has not however been able to alter the French mentality in the slightest degree. Clemenceau's programmatic word that there are twenty million people 'de trop' in Germany begins to fulfill itself. The starvation is horrible. For the influence of the great capitalists' prevails. Their narrow and egotistical outlook on life, it must be owned, is the same all over the world. In Germany the great industrials have refused to recognise any liabilities towards the community and have been clinging to the absurd belief that in a bankrupt state a flourishing industry might keep alive until the insolvency of the state had reached a degree that it seemed very doubtful if the state would be able to pay one more penny to its officials. Not before this moment arrived the Stinnes press discovered that the general chaos was at hand and that in case the unpaid police-post-railway-officials or members of the law-courts or of the public administration refused to work, industry too would be drawn into the great whirl-pool, and contrary to its former attitude, it hastened to declare now that something ought to be done i. e. that something ought to be paid to the state. Not before the clock showed one minute before twelve had they come to recognise the solidarity of the nation's interest. This sounds almost incredible but it is nothing but the truth. In France however things go exactly the same way. There too farmers, manufacturers and merchants have up to now done splendidly. The money that has been lost by the *petite bourgeoisie* has migrated into the pockets of these classes. The whole Ruhr-policy, like all measures taken against Germany up to now without exception, has only served to make the industrials richer and the poor poorer. But, alas! the masses are still very far from seeing the reason for their growing pauperisation. A venal press prevents them from seeing it. They go on paying milliards of francs to Poland, Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia because their press tells them that these nations must be armed by France against the threatening German neighbour—the completely unarmed neighbour—and this money only serves to fill the pockets of the captains of the great armament industries of the Schneider-Creusot type, for whom the Government provides the orders quite officially from the states that get the loans. Was there ever so much stupidity in the world?

LEVIN. L. SCHÜKING.

#### REVIEW.

#### INDIAN ART.

COOMARASWAMY, ANANDA K.: INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN ART. With 34 ill. 6x5. Madras. 1923. pp. xi+141. (Theosoph. Publ. House Rs. 3.—)

EXAMPLES OF INDIAN SCULPTURE AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM. 12 Collotype Plates selected by Laurence Binyon. With an introduction by William Rothenstein and a foreword by Sir Hercules Reid. London. 1923. 11x8. pp. 12+plates 12. (Indian Society. £ 1-10.—)

WHAT Mr. Rothenstein remarks about some Indian carvings—viz. that they have been taken to Europe more as curiosities than as works of art—applies really to all specimens of Indian plastic art collected until 20 or 30 years ago. They were of ethnological interest, at best interesting "as merely exotic and eccentric manifestations of oriental religious fervour," as Sir Hercules Reid puts it. It is only since Japanese paintings opened the Western eye to a new aesthetic viewpoint, that gradually art students in the West acquired the aptitude of understanding and appreciating Indian Art too. In fact, in some quarters the claim is now being made that this art is "artistically on even a higher plane than the classical productions of Greece and Rome:" a claim which on its part has called forth renewed criticism of art so highly lauded. "Fine Art", i. e. useless art, "art for art's sake", of course is an idea alien to Indian art, and as Dr. Coomaraswamy says, would but have seemed "a monstrous product of human vanity" to the average Indian mind. But then, let us not forget that, if sculptures and paintings were in India regarded, not as works of art but as means to definite ends, the same attitude was taken in Western countries too. Not in India only did "image making become a craft inseparable from architecture and all other crafts": witness the Cathedrals of the Western Middle Ages. In those ages, as in India, the names even of individual artists are unknown; the art is that of a race, not of any individual. Virtues and defects of any work are the virtues and defects of the race in that age; changes are not deliberately made, but correspond to changes in the racial psychology and reflect the necessities of current theology. But in the West the individual has come into his own, just as is the case in India. Dr. Coomaraswamy himself quotes temples in the Deccan of about a thousand years ago, where "many figures are signed by the Kanarese artists, a thing practically unknown in earlier periods, when the artist's name is only mentioned when he himself is the donor." In ancient Greece too, surely, art was "an integral quality inhering in all activities entertained by all in their daily environment;" and not in Greece only, but everywhere.

Surely all art starts by being racial—whether we think of pre-historic man or of modern primitive races. And all art starts also by being symbolic rather than representative : being based on a “ memory picture—or rather, a synthetic image based on past experience .” But if Indian art knows of no “ innate striving towards realism,” as does, soon after its first beginnings, Greek and Christian art : that in itself cannot surely make it essentially superior to the latter schools. Besides, though it is true enough that “ Indian art is always a language employing symbols,” Dr. Coomaraswamy surely goes too far when he asserts that it is “ valid *only* by tradition and convention,” or that “ this language is *never* one of direct observation of nature.” The Sarasvati (Plate 6) of white Rajputana marble, e. g. was clearly made by a master who not only had striven after, but has achieved, realism by direct observation of the female form and has succeeded in reproducing it in its ideal perfection—as did the Greeks. And since this Sarasvati of divine beauty is dated 11th or 12th century, no Hellenistic or other foreign influence can be pleaded ! Again, Mr. Rothenstein rightly calls attention to “ the profound understanding of animal form and the innate sympathy with animal psychology which distinguishes Eastern artists ”—neither of which is conceivable without direct observation of nature. Dr. Coomaraswamy actually asserts that the “ perspective ” of modern Western art is but “ the art language of our own times, while it does not by itself make modern art superior to ancient art ” : and he seems to see no reason why such “ art language ” should not have as much right to be architectural ( as he pronounces Bajput painting to be ) or calligraphic ( like Jain painting ), as photographic. Now the answer to that seems to me to lie in the fact that the three-dimensional world, when projected on to a surface, i. e. a two-dimensional plane, naturally appears as modern “ perspective ” drawing represents it to be : as witness the photographic plate. By the very nature of things therefore “ perspective ” is proved to be a true and therefore the final expression of the three-dimensional in the two-dimensional. The arbitrariness of a convention therefore, if it may be contrary to the facts, must necessarily rank as an imperfect expression. Art of course is not mere objective representation of all the facts visible : it is necessarily selective, because its aim is not the making of a scientific record but the rousing of an emotion in a human mind—be that emotion aesthetic pleasure, or religious devotion, or moral fervour or what not. The same emotions can be evoked, sure enough, without calling in the aid of visible forms at all—as by poetry or music, for instance. But when the visible universe is called in by art, surely that art is of the highest kind which works with, and not against nature, as nature happens to be. Merely ideographic art in general therefore surely must be ranked as inferior to realis-

tic : which does not prevent of course that a concrete work of ideographic art may be of infinitely higher artistic value, than a concrete piece of realistic art. In fact, I venture to think, that no purely conventional work of art can be ugly : the aesthetically ugly, as the aesthetically most beautiful, is only possible, once art has become realistic. With art it surely is as with morality : in the primitive beginning of things we have an age of racial innocence, which is succeeded by an age of individual effort and responsibility, ushered in by the emergence of Reason.

But though I venture to disagree with Dr. Coomaraswamy’s philosophy of art, I have of course nothing but admiration for him as one of the greatest living *cognoscenti* of Indian art. The little “ Introduction to Indian Arts ” which lies before me, is indeed perfect little masterpiece of intuitive appreciation and lucid, if concise expression. One hopes that it will find its way into the hands of many and rouse in India too the intelligent interest in Indian art which is so badly needed. Our author deals in fact only with purely Indian art and stops short at the irruption of Moslem art. In seven short chapters of only about ten pages each, he deals with Vedic origins; the artistic inhibitions of the ascetic age of the 8th century B. C.; the triumph of art over these puritan ideals in the succeeding Mauryan, Kushan and Andhran periods ; and its maturity in the Gupta period, which he calls the “ Golden age, when Bharatavarsha attained the fruit of her birth.” In this period it was that Indian culture was unified and imposed on the further East ; when “ all earlier tendencies converse, all foreign influences have been absolved and Indianised.” The medieval periods following (treated in four further short chapters) are likened to the breaking into form of a wave, whose crest had risen highest in the Gupta period of the 6th century A. D. In the medieval period we get a tendency to over-ornamentation, though also a “ superb technical accomplishment, which uses stone like metal and covers whole ceilings with frozen lace or wreaths of dancers ” (of which latter a beautiful example is given in fig. 26 from Mt. Abu). But it is the Gupta period which gave to the ideology of art the concept of *Nataraja*, the Divine Dancer, which (to quote Mr. Rothenstein) “ in a flash of intuition expressed the perception of the eternal cosmic harmony as dynamic ” ; just as the supreme expression of the previous periods had been “ the plastic interpretation of *Samadhi*, or religious absorption, familiar through its countless repetitions in all Buddhist lands.” (Plate 2 of the India Society’s publication gives a magnificent example of this in a head of Sri Buddha from Boro Budur). These two concepts are surely permanent contributions of Indian art to the art of all humanity and all ages : surely no mean an achievement.

One can only repeat one’s hope that works like the two before us—whether the sumptuous produc-

tion of the Society's, or the truly wonderful "value" of the Theosophical Publishing House's little manual, will be studied and pondered by ever increasing numbers; and that the time may soon come, when an education which, as our present one, leaves out all reference to the plastic and pictorial arts, once the kindergarten stage is passed, will be considered as all the more barbarous, as it spurns the very treasures, which should be its own by mere right of inheritance.

H. C. E. ZACHARIAS.

MISCELLANEOUS.

LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND INDIA.

The following short articles in the editorial columns of the latest issue of the *New Leader* will be read with intense interest, in view of the fact that a Labour Government has actually come into power:—

What with the mysterious doings on the Afghan frontier and the success of the Extremists in the recent elections, the affairs may furnish an anxious test for a Labour Government. The frontier is the best place in the world for Mr. Bonar Law's watchword of "tranquillity." The success of Mr. Das and his party in increasing their membership of the Bengal Legislature, the similar position in the Central Provinces and Bombay, and the still more significant success for the Left in Elections for the Delhi Legislative Assembly, create a problem for which there may, in the long run, be no satisfactory solution by compromise. Lord Lytton acted correctly in offering office to Mr. Das in Bengal. His refusal of it was an honourable action, but it precludes trouble. He took the view that a party which intended to make the working of the present system impossible, could not consistently assume responsibility for it. In plain words, Mr. Das and his party mean to wreck. The solution which the authorities favour, if we believe the *Times*, both in Bengal and in the Delhi All-India Assembly, may be astute, but it will bring its nemesis. The idea is to detach from the main body of the "Swaraj" party the minority of Moslems which adheres to it. The policy of division on religious lines is always attributed by its critics to the bureaucracy, and always indignantly repudiated. Here we have the frank confession that it is about to be used again. The result may be a revival of the ancestral feud which Mr. Gandhi did so much to appease. When it blazes up again we shall be told that the British Power is necessary to keep peace between the warring sects. How long by such tactics India can be kept divided in the interests of European ascendancy, one cannot say; sooner or later, as the national idea gains ground, a stronger and perhaps less scrupulous leader than Mr. Gandhi will arise, who will sweep these thin partitions away. The wiser course would be to hasten the pace of the inevitable concession of Dominion Home Rule, and to prepare at once the transition stages in the Army and the Civil Service, which a wise policy would spread over a number of years.

— *The New Leader*

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From International Labour Office, Geneva:

- STUDIES AND REPORTS (Series D.). Hours of Labour in Industry: Italy. Geneva. 1923. 9½ x 6. pp. 34. 1s.
- STUDIES AND REPORTS (Series D.) Hours of Labour in Industry: Switzerland. Geneva. 1923. 9½ x 6. pp. 26. 1s.

From D. Appleton Ltd., New York:

TYNE, E. H. van: India, in Ferment. New York. 1923. 8 x 5. pp. xiii x 252. 8s/6d.

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Commercial Intelligence Department, India: Statistical Abstract for British India from 1911-12 to 1920-21. Calcutta. 1923. 10 x 6¼. pp. xi x 705. (Rs. 6 as. 8).

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SPENDER, J. A.: Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. London. 1923. 2 vols. 8¼ x 5¼. pp. xv and 350; xiii and 444.

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From the India Society, London:

Examples of Indian Sculpture at the British Museum. Twelve collotype plates selected by Laurence Binyon. With an introduction by William Rothenstein and a foreword by Sir Hercules Reid. 1923. 11 x 8¼. pp. 12 + 12 plates. £ 1.10.

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