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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

AT the time of our going to press no report has yet reached India of the debate on Viscount Curzon's motion regarding the policy of the present Government towards India, which was to take place in Parliament on Tuesday last. But a special cable sent on the eve of the debate by Major Graham Pole to the *Indian Daily Mail* says that the Liberal amendment to Viscount Curzon's motion, asking for the appointment of "a Commission with wide terms of reference to enquire into the facts on the spot, review the working of the Reforms, and report what action, whether legislative or administrative, is required to carry out the expressed intention of the British Government that the Reforms constitute a definite step towards ultimate Dominion Self-Government in the Empire"—will be supported by the Labour Party. The London correspondent of the *Voice of India* has also cabled that the appointment of a Royal Commission is a certainty. He adds further that "the Premier's denial of invitations having been sent to Mr. Gandhi and other leaders is only formal and the matter is under consideration in connection with the appointment of the Commission." We believe these forecasts by men who are in close touch with Labour and Liberal M. P.'s will prove correct, and hope that Messrs. Gandhi and Motilal Nehru or any other leaders of non-co-operators and Swarajists who may be chosen will agree to serve on the Commission, and the harmful policy of wrecking the councils will be abandoned. This Commission will of course deprive the unwanted official enquiry by the Government of India of all its importance. Our readers may here be reminded that a resolu-

tion urging the immediate appointment of a Commission of this kind was adopted by the Liberal Federation which met last Christmas in Poona, and that it was moved by Mr. Sastri and seconded by Dr. Paranjpye.

* * *

THE proposal for a federation of all the East African territories, which is much talked about in Kenya in private circles, was formally put forward by Sir Sydney Henn in a resolution in the House of Commons on the 8th inst. He moved immediately for a co-ordination of policy on railway, customs, &c. so that it might lead eventually to a political union. A common policy in regard to certain services in these countries is no doubt desirable, but the "Kenyaisation" of the administration of Uganda, Tanganyika, etc. (as the federation proposal was rightly interpreted by a member of Parliament the other day) we must stoutly oppose. There is no reason to introduce into these countries the bitter race hatred which unfortunately prevails in Kenya to-day. Even now Indians are suffering unnecessary hardships because the White Paper policy which has been drafted with the peculiar conditions of Kenya in mind is supposed to be applicable to Uganda also, though the conditions there are entirely different. The acute controversy with which the problem of Kenya Colony is surrounded arises from the fact that the whites can permanently reside in that Colony. If the British Government cannot rise superior to a spirit of partisanship in the case of those Britishers who have made Kenya their home, why should it extend this spirit to those colonies where the whites can never be either a large or permanent element in the population? Our aim must be at least to isolate other colonies from Kenya and to resist all attempts to bring them under a common administration, dominated by the Kenya spirit. Of the same character is the proposal made in some quarters to detach the Highlands of Tanganyika from that country and amalgamate them with the Highlands of Kenya, endowing this white enclave with a separate self-governing administration. All these proposals, if given effect to, will have disastrous results, but we do not take them very tragically because Tanganyika being a Mandated territory, it cannot be brought under the same administration as other territories, and the non-inclusion of Tanganyika knocks the bottom out of the whole idea.

Fasting at Vaikom. WE trust the Satyagrahis of Vaikom will accept Mr. Gandhi's advice and abandon the foolish practice of *dharna*—fasting and sitting in the sun—in order to induce the Travancore Government to yield, as a result of which several volunteers swooned and had to be removed. In offering this advice Mr. Gandhi explains that fasting as a weapon of Satyagraha may be employed for reforming friends and those that love you, but not against tyrants and those that want to punish you. His fasting for reforming his followers when they became violent in Bombay and elsewhere was all right, he says, but there would have been no sense in his fasting for reforming General Dyer. Without admitting that fasting is legitimate or efficacious in reforming friends, one may agree with Mr. Gandhi that it will never reform a Government—call it tyrant or what you will—and ought not to be allowed to do so. Otherwise there would be no end to the tyranny that fasting would inflict. There is no analogy in the present case even with hunger strike. Those who go on hunger strike are aware that if their health suffers beyond a certain degree, the jail authorities, or whoever else are responsible for restricting their liberty, are bound to let them go. There is certainly heroism in fasting, but that does not justify, ethically or politically its employment in political struggles. If the Travancore police refuse to arrest the volunteers and at the same time not allow them to enter the street, the only right course for them, as pointed out by Mr. Gandhi, is to wait there in batches and try to tire out the police. The fault seems to be in the psychology of the volunteers and those that have led them hitherto. What they are after seems to be martyrdom in fanatical zeal, rather than the sober and firm assertion of a civic right. The hunger for martyrdom is natural in youths and in some abnormal persons who occasionally may prove to be geniuses. Nevertheless it is a feeling which ought to be kept under lock and key and brought out only very rarely. Since the above was in type the news has come that fasting has been abandoned.

Shameful WHILE this Satyagraha is going on at Vaikom to enforce the right of way of the low caste Hindus to a public road, it is not a little curious, nay audacious, that certain Brahmins of a street in Tinnevely should have prevented the servants of the municipality from repairing the street, on the ground that the coolies were low caste Hindus, and that they should have written to the authorities either to send coolies of the clean castes or not to repair the street at all, as if it existed solely for their own convenience. Of course the municipal council is not going to put up with their nonsense, and there has been a proposal to prosecute them; but it is certainly disgraceful that so late in the day these Brahmins should have assumed this attitude, and what is more, that they should have found some supporters in the municipal council. If these Brahmins wish to be so orthodox and ceremonially pure, why do they choose to live in municipalities, instead of retiring to inaccessible forests? We believe these

same Brahmins would have no objection to sit in a coach which is driven by an "unclean" Hindu or by a non-Hindu. And such an instance occurs, though happily only in an obscure corner, when our countrymen are subjected abroad by white colonials to similar indignities and the whole nation as a body is protesting against them! Oh, the shame of it!

Medical Examination of Students.

THE Senate of the Mysore University has passed a resolution requiring every University student, whether male or female, to undergo a thorough medical examination twice during the course, once in the first term of the first year course and the second time in the second term of the third year, i. e., before the student leaves college. It should be explained here perhaps that the University course there for B. A. is one of three years, one year after matriculation being spent in a continuation class in a high school, a system which is recommended by the Calcutta University Commission. This is no doubt an improvement on the present state of things, but we fear that by itself it will not achieve much good result. When the first examination shows a student's health and physique to be below par—and we fear it will be so with a large proportion of students—there should be some arrangement which compels him or her to come up to the required standard within a reasonable time. We would suggest that those who fail to come up to the standard should not be promoted to the next higher class or allowed to appear for the degree examination. Another method would be to institute minimum tests which would show that those who pass them are physically fit. Such a test for American high school students suggests

Pull up (Chinning)	... 9 times.
Running high jump	... 4 ft. 4 ins.
220 yards run	... 28 seconds.

In our country—where physical education is woefully neglected we want such tests in the colleges, as well as in the high schools. We hope the example of the Mysore University, even as regards medical examination of students, will be followed by the other Universities of our country.

The Poona Seva Sadan. THE following paragraph, appreciative of the Poona Seva Sadan, is taken from the latest quinquennial report on the progress of education in India:—"Remarkable success has attended the efforts of the Seva Sadan Society at Poona. Its activities are manifold. It has Vernacular and English classes, work-room classes, music classes, a college for the training of primary teachers, first aid and home nursing classes, and classes for the training of nurses and midwives with hostels attached to them. It has over one thousand women and girls in its Poona branch in the various departments of whom 190 live in the four hostels. A large number of those who attend the classes are married women of the working class who come in for two or three hours daily in the morning or evening. The institution has branches in Bombay and Satara. Its aim is to 'foster among women ideas of social usefulness and national service suited to the requirements of the country.' Credit for the wonderful success which it has achieved must largely be ascribed to the Secretary, Mr. G. K. Devadhar, of the Servants of India Society. The institution has no counterpart in any other part of India."

TO EX-MINISTERS.

No one who lives in India or visits it with eyes open can fail to gauge accurately the intense political feeling of ever-widening circles of people. Manifestations of this feeling are not the same as in England, nor can they be measured by the same standards. Especially is this the case with regard to the efforts made from time to time to interest the British public in Indian affairs or influence the action of Parliament, the Cabinet or the India Office. The great distance, the restricted means of the politically-minded classes and their comparative inexperience of the art of political campaigning account for the utterly inadequate efforts made at the seat of Empire to keep the authorities alive to the changing situation in this country. To these causes must now be added the new attitude of revolt at the very idea of having to seek political emancipation and communal salvation at the hands of another people, separated, not only by wide stretches of land and water, but by religion, language and culture. The non-co-operation movement, which has greatly strengthened, if it has not actually generated, this attitude of revolt, tends to choke the channels through which Indian discontent might find safe and legitimate discharge, such as is contemplated by the British polity.

The present juncture is one of those occasions when in the natural course of things India should have an agency of her own, equipped with ample resources, for conducting her propaganda with maximum efficiency in London. The Swarajists, having made an unprecedented stir in the legislatures of the land, will apparently do nothing to make this stir felt at the seat of Empire. The ill-effects of this mistaken policy may be checked in part if the other political parties in the country realise that the burden resting on them is increased in proportion. The Liberal party, badly beaten at the polls, must pull itself together at this crisis and deserve well of the country by serving her in a sphere where the field is free of competitors. When we bear in mind the nature of the mission, which the deputation about to leave for England has to fulfil, there is a consideration which gives the duty of the Liberals a compelling character. One of the main reforms to be urged on the London authorities is the establishment of complete provincial autonomy. The case for this political advance is often made to rest by party advocates on the complete failure of the dual system of administration in the provinces. Judicious criticism would base the claim rather on the imperfections and proved defects of an altogether novel and untried partition of administrative functions between agencies with different ideals and responsibilities. The theoretical reasoning by which this thesis may be maintained would require at every turn to be supported by the actual facts of experience afforded by the operation of the new scheme during

the last three years. In one sense this experience is no doubt public property, but the key to its exact interpretation and appraisal is in the hands of a few members of the Liberal party who have been privileged, as Ministers in charge of transferred departments, to operate the machinery as it were from the inside. We must of course exclude those who are at the present moment actually in office; but there are quite a decent number in a position of comparative freedom, whom their countrymen may well expect to undertake in person the advocacy of the national cause on this momentous occasion. They were traduced and held up to public odium as self-seeking place-hunters, but they assumed great responsibility at the call of duty and, be it said to their lasting credit, proved the competency of the intelligentsia of this country to shoulder the burden of administration. They must now place their first-hand knowledge of the new regime at the disposal of those in whose hands, whether we like it or not, rests in part the political future of India. We trust they will volunteer their services as members of some political deputation or other, unless the circumstances of any particular case forbid even a brief absence from India. We will not at present add more. Individual reputation, party interest and the good of the country, all alike call aloud for their services.

So far public announcement has been made of the following names for the deputations: Dr. Annie Besant, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. A. Ranganadham Mudaliar, and Mr. R. Shanmugam Chettiar. The reader will see at once that all but one are Madrasis, and not one is ex-Minister. Of this last class Lala Harkishen Lal is already in England, and ill-health might deprive us of the services of Mr. Chintamani which would otherwise be of the utmost value, in fact almost unrivalled. The other names that occur to us at the moment are Sir Surendranath Baner, Mr. P. C. Mitter, Sir K. V. Reddi, Mr. M. S. Das, Mr. N. K. Kelkar, Mr. D. M. Chitnavis, Dr. Paranjpye, Pandit Jagat Narain. Although not ex-Minister, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, who was executive councillor in the new regime, would be a tower of strength with his uncommon ability and commanding position in the Liberal party.

THE MADRAS HINDU RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS BILL.

LORD Willingdon is to be congratulated on having assured himself that the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Bill got into the Statute book before he relinquished office. It has not yet received the Governor General's assent, it is true, but there is no reason to suppose that it will be withheld. The Bill was passed by the legislative council in April last year, but there was a wide-spread agitation against it by the interests affected by its provisions, who raised the familiar cry of "religion in danger" and waited in deputation on the Vice-

roy, praying him to set it aside. At the same time a split occurred in the Ministerial party which weakened the position of the Ministers and particularly that of the Chief Minister who was responsible for the Bill, and as the elections were close at hand the latter did not care to spoil the chances of his party by appearing to push vigorously through its last stages what was undoubtedly disliked by a considerable section of the voters. In fact, at one time it looked as though the Bill had been abandoned. And it was only after the old Ministerial party had been returned once more to office, though weakened to some extent, that the announcement was made that the Bill would be returned in part to the council for reconsideration. It was actually returned with a message from the Governor only on the 17th March, a supplementary message was sent on the 1st April, the returned Bill with the message was considered and passed, a large section of the House taking objection to the procedure and terms of the message, and the Governor gave his assent to the Bill soon after, the whole business being got through in a few days. Not only the object and provisions of the Bill but also several constitutional points that cropped up during its recent discussion have combined to invest the history of its last stage with considerable interest for the general reader.

The alterations made by the Governor in the Bill were not many. One excluded the presidency town of Madras from its operations. This was considered necessary for a purely legal reason: that the local legislature was not competent to affect the jurisdiction of the High Court. The object of the other alterations was to restore the jurisdiction of the court, which had been specifically removed by the Bill with the object of lessening litigation. This is an important change. It had been pressed in the council last year when the Bill was under discussion and had been rejected. It was obviously restored owing to pressure from the Governor General at the instance of the critics of the Bill. It is an important deduction from the powers which the Bill had conferred on the Board. Nevertheless, it is not likely to affect the utility of the legislation, while it has the advantage of allaying the fears of some people who did not have sufficient faith in the impartiality of the Board. The position of the latter now is similar to that of the Board of Charities in England, on whose analogy the Board in the Bill has been created. In England though the courts and the Board of Charities have concurrent jurisdiction, the latter has proved so impartial and convenient from every point of view that nobody now resorts to the former. The object of the English legislation was identical with the object of the Madras Bill, viz. the regulation and supervision of the management of charitable institutions and the prevention of litigation, and it has been achieved by the gradual growth of public confidence in the Board of Charities. The same result may be expected in Madras when the public have had suffi-

cient experience of the Board created by the Bill. It will no doubt take some time for this confidence to grow, but the delay need not be regretted since it will enable the confidence to go naturally.

When the returned Bill was under discussion in the beginning of this month, the opposition did not much concern themselves with the alterations that had been made by the Governor but concentrated on the procedure adopted by him. Under Section 81 A of the Government of India Act the Governor had returned the Bill for reconsideration by the council with certain recommendations of his own. The objection was raised that the present council was different from the last council since a general election had intervened, and that a council which had not considered the Bill could not obviously reconsider it. The analogy of the British Parliament was quoted in support of the view that bills of one council had no life for a succeeding one. The action of the Governor therefore was *ultra vires*. The Advocate General and the Law Member, however, held the view—and this was accepted by the President of the council—that the character of the Indian councils was not the same as that of the British Parliament, for while the latter was determined partly by statute and partly by convention, the former was governed altogether by statute, and that the Government of India Act looked upon the Indian councils as corporate bodies with continual existence like municipalities or companies, unaffected by change of personnel. This view was further supported by the fact that before the amendment of the Government of India Act in 1919—which amendment only enlarged and widened the powers of the councils and did not alter their original character—the members of a legislative council were formally described as “additional” members of the Governor’s Council (the Executive Council) to assist in legislation. As the Law Member said, it may not be a convenient position, and it may be desirable to alter it, but under the existing law it is the position, whether one likes it or not. This is an important decision affecting all councils, and it remains to be seen whether any attempt will be made by Government or private members to have the position altered.

But, argued the opposition, after the Bill was passed by the council last year and while it was awaiting the Governor General’s assent, a general election had taken place at which the Bill was an issue before the electors and a mandate had been given them—at any rate some of them—to oppose the Bill outright. If the whole Bill was not returned to the council for reconsideration but only certain sections and clauses and they voted on them, it would mean that they approved of the principles of the Bill and the provisions of the other sections. It was therefore not fair, they said, to return only part of the Bill. In reply to this objection it was pointed out to them that since the acceptance by the council of the alterations proposed by the Governor was necessary for giving his assent to the Bill, they could bring in a blocking motion

or throw out the alterations and thus achieve their object. Accepting this suggestion, they brought in a blocking motion, urging the postponement of the consideration of the matter for a year, but after being talked to and voted upon the motion was defeated. The division list showed that the majority of the elected Hindu members, and indeed of all elected members, were in favour of the blocking motion; but they were not more numerous than the other elected and nominated Hindu members. After this defeat most of the opposition walked out of the council, so that the amendments were passed *sem con*. Some members, however, remained neutral, though of the Ministerial party, as they did not approve of the amendments. It would not be correct to infer from this that the majority of the electors are opposed to the Bill, whether as passed last year or as now amended by the Governor. For a good number of those who voted for the blocking motion did so as a protest against the procedure adopted by the Governor; indeed, the proposer of the motion, the Raja of Ramnad, admitted in so many words that the alterations recommended by the Governor had made the Bill more acceptable to him—and he had supported it last year. If, instead of the procedure now adopted by the Governor, a new Bill had been introduced, the result in the present council would not probably have been different, but it would have entailed considerable delay and added to acrimonious discussion in the council, which for some time has been rather pronounced and it would have also artificially stimulated agitation in the districts. A chivalrous Government or a Governor anxious to follow closely the model of the British Parliament may have caused a new Bill to be introduced, but Lord Willingdon and his Ministers cannot be blamed for fully utilising the provisions of the Government of India Act.

Serious trouble was about to arise over the wording of the supplementary message sent by Lord Willingdon on the 1st April. (Perhaps the wording became unhappy on account of the date of its delivery.) The message said, "he is unable to allow discussion on any further amendments save those which are indicated in the message." It was at once pointed out that the Governor was interfering with the rights of the members to move amendments and also usurping the functions of the President, who alone was competent to allow or disallow discussion on any point. The Law Member, however, tactfully averred what would undoubtedly have been a very unpleasant discussion by suggesting the interpretation that the message did not mean to interfere with the rights of members or the privileges of the President, but only said that any other amendments than those proposed by the Governor would not be acceptable to him, and so it would only be waste of time to propose them.

FORCED LABOUR CONDITIONS.

IS ANY MITIGATION CONTEMPLATED?

THE case of the natives of Kenya against the white settlers and their Government is that by a series of legislative and administrative measures a system of compulsory labour is put in force there, and a most important task before what one may call the Native Trusteeship Committee, which Mr. Thomas has promised to appoint, will be to examine the validity of this contention. Of the laws which contribute to this result, viz., forced labour, the two most important are the Master and Servants Ordinance and the Natives Registration Ordinance. We now understand that the Governor of Kenya is at present considering whether one of these laws cannot be repealed, and since we may be certain that in the event of its repeal the whites will maintain that a new era has now dawned for the African native, we in India, upon whom the reaction of any change in the native policy is bound to be great, should be prepared correctly to appreciate the significance of this event. The news of the possibility of repeal is contained in the answer to the following question put in the House of Commons on February 18:

Mr. Morel asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the recent declaration of His Majesty's Government that the administration of the Colony of Kenya shall be based upon the principle of trusteeship for the native population he will consider the repeal of the Registration of Labourers Act which requires of the adult male inhabitants of the Colony the possession of identification papers, failure to carry which by day or by night is treated as a crime involving arrest and imprisonment, and which the Chief Native Commissioner has reported is detested by the native population; and will he take steps to rescind the Clause in the Masters and Servants Ordinance which makes desertion from the European planter or farmer a criminal offence cognisable by the police.

Mr. Thomas: The Governor was consulted last August about the Native Registration Ordinance and the Clause in the Masters and Servants Ordinance. He is considering the repeal of the Clause in the Masters and Servants Ordinance to which my hon. Friend refers. The registration certificate would remain only as a passport or certificate of identity and a record of employment. As such it will be of equal value to native workers and to their employers.

The repeal of the relevant sections in the Master and Servants Ordinance is not yet decided upon; it is only under consideration. But when and if it comes about, will it put an end to forced labour or will it at any rate mitigate the worst evils of that system? To answer this question, we must review, however briefly, the past history of the labour conditions in Kenya. European settlement in this colony commenced immediately after the completion of the Uganda Railway in 1902 and at once there was a great demand for native labour which the Government took upon itself to supply. The result was that a tremendous pressure was put upon the natives, so much so that it was universally recognised that under official auspices forced labour was in use. In 1907, however, under instructions from England the system of official recruit-

ing for private employers had to be discontinued, and then labour difficulties became very acute. The serious shortage of labour that was experienced at the time was met by District Officers "encouraging" headmen to supply labour. This encouragement amounted to compulsion in practice, and there was thus little substantial difference between this system and that which obtained before 1907. Complaints arose both from employers and employed,—complaints of flogging, withholding of wages, bad and insufficient food, etc. on one side, and bad work, desertion, etc. on the other—and to meet them the Government passed the Master and Servants Ordinance in 1910. Though this law professed to be reciprocal in its application, in actual practice it rarely operated against the whites and even the most brutal form of ill-treatment of natives went unpunished. Nor were the employers by any means satisfied with the provisions of the law. Their contention was that while the Ordinance could enforce obligations attaching to the employers there was no practical remedy supported by the law against the desertion of labourers. And desertion was no doubt common. It could not be otherwise when wholesale compulsion was used in recruiting labour. Many of the men forcibly recruited intended from the beginning to run away, and even while they remained on the farms they did only the minimum amount of work that saved them from flogging. Such desertions can stop only when compulsion stops, but the white employers suggested the remedy of the enactment of a Pass Law.

The Government yielded to the pressure of the settlers, and, without putting a stop to virtual compulsion, gave them the remedy they were clamouring for. In 1915 the Registration of the Natives Ordinance was passed, which improved the form of registration of natives. There was even before some kind of registration in force, but for the purpose of tracing deserters it was useless. If the absconding person changed his name he could not be identified. Therefore in this new legislation the identification of the natives was provided for in addition to compulsory registration of all male natives above the age of 16 and the identification card was required to be carried by every native upon his person at all hours of the day and night, employers being forbidden to engage labourers who could not produce a previous discharge. But for want of sufficient official staff the Natives Registration Ordinance could not be put in force for some time, and therefore as a temporary measure till this measure could be applied, the Government also enacted another law (the Master and Servants Amendment Ordinance) making desertion a cognisable offence. Under the 1910 Ordinance the employer had to make a complaint to a Magistrate or Justice of the Peace and process had to be issued before an arrest could be effected. It was felt that "the delay caused by the necessity for a complaint to be made and the

issue of process by a Magistrate had been found to afford the accused an opportunity of disappearing so effectually that, in the absence of any general system of identification, he might never be found again". It was hoped that, "pending the application of the Registration of Natives Ordinance, 1915, the powers given by the Bill would do something to improve value of the Principal Ordinance by rendering the punishment of deserters more certain." The amending law therefore made desertion a cognisable offence, thereby enabling the Police to arrest without warrant. The italicised words in the above quotations made from the speech of the Attorney General who moved the first reading of the Bill, clearly show that the new measure was meant from its very inception to be temporary, and was intended to be dropped when the ordinance of 1915 would be put in force. The Governor is now contemplating to repeal only what it had been definitely promised would be repealed when they obtained this new power. This does not strike me. I must confess, as excessive generosity on the part of the Kenya Government. Nor does it appear to me that the abandonment of this power would effect a substantial amelioration of the forced labour conditions that exist in Kenya at present.

Universal compulsory registration, with the further requirement of carrying the identification card in a metal disc on the person, is itself in all conscience an objectionable feature, and the appearance of beneficence which it is made to wear in Mr. Thomas's answer is mere camouflage. It is said that the identification card will serve as a passport, and under it natives will be allowed unrestricted freedom to go from place to place. But for such a card, they would have to take out a pass every time they went on travel, but with this system of general registration and identification it is represented, this necessity would be obviated, and with one identification certificate they could move, from one end of the Protectorate to another without let or hindrance. But why is it made obligatory on the natives to take out passes if not in the white interest? It may be necessary for the purpose of securing a hold on the native population, but let it not be said that the natives themselves stand to gain by it. They do not; on the contrary they look upon the *Kipande* (as it is called in the native language) as a badge of slavery and rightly so. The truth of the matter is that there is not enough labour, both for native reserves and non-native areas in the Colony, and in the absence of any pressure the native will naturally prefer working in his reserve to working on white farms and therefore sufficient supply of native labour will not be available unless indirect, if not direct, pressure is used. And so long as pressure, whether direct or indirect, continues, desertions cannot be stopped by however stringent means. Even with the unconscionable power given by the Master and Servants Ordinance of 1916, desertions are by no means rare (in 1922 there were 882 convictions); without it the inherent character of the labour regulations

will continue intact, viz. forced labour will continue. Labour will become free only when the present method of white farming ceases to be in operation, i. e., in plain terms, when white settlement of the Kenya Highlands is in abeyance. If Mr. Thomas's Committee brings an open mind to bear on the question, I for my part have no doubt that it will come to this conclusion.

S. G. VAZE.

PROGRESS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

If any one now attempted to discourse at any length on the importance of education for nation-building, his audience would get impatient, because its importance has been understood long ago. Yet how many in the rank and file of our public men are evincing an adequate interest in the educational progress of even their district, let alone that of their province or of the whole of India? Twelve or thirteen years ago, when Mr. Gokhale's elementary education bill was before the country, and the Government was opposed to it, there was any amount of enthusiasm in the country for compulsory education. But after the Government's opposition ceased and compulsory education Acts were passed in the various provinces, practically nothing is being done to put them in force and get any benefit out of them for the masses. Even the comparatively easy task of speaking on the subject at public meetings is shirked. When charged with apathy and failure of duty, our minds are fertile enough to put forward in defence of inaction quite a number of plausible arguments, but the same fertility has not been helping us in overcoming the difficulties. Too many of us seek the excitement of high politics. Too many of us neglect the humdrum, nevertheless essential, work of promoting education, sanitation, co-operation, agriculture and other subjects, because they require steady application and are not of the fireworks variety. One can understand leaders at the top devoting all their energies to high politics; but when the ordinary rate-payer talks only of immediate and complete self-government, without taking the least interest in the affairs of his own town or village, he makes himself extremely ridiculous, like the man who always mouths Vedanta and does not practice common honesty and charity in private life.

These reflections force themselves on one when one realises how little progress was achieved, particularly in the matter of primary education (to which we shall confine ourselves on this occasion), in the most momentous quinquennium in the history of Indian education (1917-22)—when the number of Universities was doubled, compulsory education Acts were passed in most provinces, education was brought almost entirely under the control of popular representatives, larger funds

were placed at the disposal of provincial Governments and powers of taxation greatly increased, and a high degree of feeling displayed regarding national education. It is true that in some provinces, notably Bombay and the U. P. which had enlightened legislatures and capable Ministers, a degree of progress was achieved which could be considered satisfactory, but it was not so in the country as a whole and the apathy of the municipalities and local boards everywhere was very discouraging.

SLOWING DOWN.

During the quinquennium the number of primary schools for boys increased from 124,081 to 137,435, i. e. by 13,354 or less than 11 per cent. The increase was by no means uniform in the different provinces. The U. P. led with 47 per cent., Madras, Bombay and the Punjab had about 15 per cent., while in Assam and Bihar there was practically no increase. There was a reduction of more than 35 per cent. in Burma owing to withdrawal of recognition from a large number of inefficient monastic schools. During the previous quinquennium the increase was 13,389, so that there was no acceleration in the progress. For girls' primary schools figures for different quinquennial periods are not given, but while the increase in the number of all institutions for girls during 1917-22 was only 4,413, the corresponding figure for the previous quinquennium was 5,252—so that the fall in the rate of progress was quite distinct. Increase in the number of schools, however, is not so important as increase in the number of pupils. In fact, there will naturally be a rise in attendance with a fall in the number of schools, if Government or board schools take the place of aided or unaided ones. During the last two quinquenniums the progress in attendance of both boys and girls has been steadily getting low as the following figures will show:-

Period	Increase in boys (primary schools)	Increase in girls (all institutions.)
1907-12	892,000	308,000
1912-17	666,000	277,000
1917-22	335,000	188,000

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL-GOING AGE.

Is it that we are nearing the bounds of possibility under the voluntary system? That does not appear to be the case, as remarkably rapid progress is seen in Travancore and Cochin under the voluntary system—in fact much greater progress than in Baroda under compulsion. The real reason is that propaganda is not conducted among the agricultural and backward classes. The position reached in 1921-22 in the different provinces is revealed by the following table, which gives the number of boys and girls getting instruction in the primary stage and their proportion to population of school-going age, which is reckoned at 15 per cent. of the total population for each sex:—

Province	Pupils in thousands		Percentage	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Madras	1373	364	43	11.5
Bombay	693	173	46	11.5
Bengal	1165	336	34	10.0
U. P.	788	93	23	2.5
Punjab	271	62	18	4.0
Burma	173	116	18	12.5
Bihar	630	105	24	4.0
C. P.	242	38	24	4.0
Assam	159	27	28	4.5

In 1887 16 per cent. of the boys of school-going age were actually at school. During the last 35 years only 14 per cent. more have been added. At this rate when shall we reach the level of Japan or western countries? And when this is the case with boys, comment is needless in the case of girls.

EXPENDITURE FROM PUBLIC FUNDS.

Let us now see the expenditure incurred in each province by Government on primary education, whether of boys or girls. It need make little difference to us whether the money comes from provincial or local funds, so long as it comes from the tax-payer. The following table gives in lakhs the total expenditure, direct and indirect, on all education, and direct expenditure on primary education in each province at the beginning and end of the quinquennium, and the percentage which one forms of the other.

Province	For 1916-17.			For 1921-22		
	Total Exp. on Education in lakhs (1)	Direct Exp. on Primary Schools in lakhs (2)	Percentage of 2 to 1	Total Exp. on Education in lakhs (3)	Direct Exp. on Primary School in lakhs (4)	Percentage of 4 to 3.
Madras	113	50	44.1	194	80	41.1
Bombay	98	52	52.7	216	132	61.0
Bengal	91	21	22.9	152	28	18.7
U. P.	92	25	27.0	200	63	31.7
Punjab	63	16	26.2	122	31	25.6
Bihar and Orissa	47	14	29.7	74	21	28.2
C. P. and Berar	33	14	37.9	67	26	38.2
Assam	18	6.5	36.6	26	8	31.0
Burma	38	7	18.2	66	11	17.0

It will be seen that during the quinquennium the expenditure, general as well as that on primary education, for all the provinces has nearly doubled itself. But the disparity between the provinces is exceedingly great. Thus while Bombay has raised its expenditure from 52 to 132 lakhs and the U. P. from 25 to 63 lakhs, the increase in Bengal, Bihar and Assam is comparatively little.

A SCANDAL.

Indeed it is scandalous that the authorities in Bengal should be spending so little on primary education. Bengal actually spends less than the

Punjab, though its children at school are nearly 5 times as numerous as those in the Punjab. The proportion spent on primary education is not only the lowest (except Burma) but it has gone down from nearly 23 to 18.7 per cent. of total expenditure on education. More than 80 per cent. of the latter is spent on secondary, University and other education which benefits the *Bhadralok* and very little on what benefits the masses. What a contrast this is with Bombay, which is not only spending more money on education than any other province but a proportion on primary education which is far higher than that in any other province! The niggardliness of Bengal and of its sister administration, Bihar, is both the cause and result of a very inefficient kind of school prevailing there. Unlike other Indian provinces Bengal and Bihar have few Government, board or municipal schools, whether for boys or girls, their mainstay being the aided and unaided *guru* schools. These *gurus* or teachers depend equally on fees and grant-in-aid and manage to get altogether about Rs. 8 or Rs. 9 per month. At the risk of exhausting the reader's patience we give below the number of primary schools for boys and girls in each province according to management:—

Primary Schools for Boys and Girls by management in 1921-22

Province.	Govt. and Local Board.	Aided.	Unaided.	Total.
Madras	Boys	8825	21909	33,635
	Girls	1672	930	2640
Bombay	Boys	8838	2267	11,170
	Girls	1014	423	1452
Bengal	Boys	3162	28918	35621
	Girls	153	10,115	12162
U. P.	Boys	12941	2422	15496
	Girls	896	436	1344
Punjab	Boys	4623	837	5627
	Girls	701	299	1048
Burma	Boys	14	4360	4374
	Girls	—	671	679
Bihar and Orissa	Boys	860	16808	22448
	Girls	91	2069	2508
C. P. and Berar	Boys	3543	239	3987
	Girls	236	70	329
Assam	Boys	3167	624	3957
	Girls	307	10	343

It will be seen that besides Bengal and Bihar—and Burma whose case is quite peculiar—Madras depends largely on aided and unaided schools. But the evil there is mitigated to a considerable extent by a large percentage of the aided schools being run by Christian missions. It sounds unbelievable but is nevertheless true that the municipalities of Bengal do not recognise any obligation to provide schools for their children. In 1921-22 there were only 8 municipal primary schools in the whole of Bengal, though including Calcutta there were no fewer than 146 municipalities. In that year Calcutta spent Rs. 64,000 on education while Bombay spent nearly Rs. 16 lakhs.

COMPULSION.

Between 1918 and 1920 compulsory education Acts were passed in no less than seven provinces and in the City of Bombay. But by 1st April 1922, not a single local body had introduced compulsion

In Bengal, Madras, the U. P. or the C. P. ; while five municipalities in Bombay (Bandra Surat, Byadgi, Bakore, Satara) two in the Punjab (Lahore and Multan) and one in Bihar (Ranchi) had introduced it. "Little is reported of the success of these eight experiments" says the report. The Bombay Corporation introduced it in several wards, with the result that:—

"There has been a fifty per cent. increase in the number of schools and school children and in the number of trained teachers and a proportional increase in the general and medical inspectorate; a novel feature has been the appointment of lady Superintendents. The total expenditure on education in the municipality has increased 350 per cent."

Mr. Ritchey, the writer of the report, points out that in many areas a purely voluntary system has been proving ineffectual and uneconomic. There has not been an adequate return in the shape of attendance for the money spent on improving existing schools or starting new ones. Whatever point there might have been in exploring the limits of the voluntary system before the compulsory Acts were passed in the various provinces, there is no point in it now. We have seen how in 35 years we have barely succeeded in raising the attendance of boys from 16 to 30 per cent. of the school-going age, and how during the last decade the rate of progress has considerably retarded. Is this state of affairs still to continue? There are no doubt difficulties in the way. Lack of funds and the unwillingness of local bodies to embark on compulsion are the most serious of them. But they are not insurmountable—provided there is a will, a strong will. As for money, there is too easy a tendency in most of us to point out extravagance in the higher ranks of services, particularly the Indian Services, and urge that as a reason for not proposing fresh taxation whether provincial or local. Let retrenchment be attempted by all means as far as possible, but let us not delay the introduction of compulsion till its possible limits are reached. Retrenchment and taxation have to go on simultaneously if universal literacy, at least of the rising generation, has to be achieved in a measurable distance of time. If the local bodies fight shy of compulsion and taxation let the provincial legislatures take up the responsibility. But for the sake of India let the thing be done some how.

V. V. S.

RAILWAY POLICY.

CRITICS OF STATE MANAGEMENT

AT present in India, the separation of Railway from General Finance is under contemplation and is likely to become a settled fact in September, while state management has not been given effect to generally, though the principle has been conceded. Still critics of state management are not wanting, and it is our duty now to consider some of their arguments.

One argument advanced is that the history of state managed Railways tells us that they are less efficient and more expensive than company-managed Railways. Of course as it appears, it is a serious indictment against state operation; but the question arises, what is the standard of efficiency? Is it the proportion of working expenses to gross earnings? If it is argued, the less the working expenses are, the more do the Railways become efficient, no more unconvincing argument can be thought of. It proceeds on the assumption that efficiency and economy—rather thrift—are synonymous. It may be a good test of efficiency for a private company, but I doubt whether it will be a good test of efficiency for a company managing a public utility like the Railways. The ratio between the working expenses and the gross earnings may be one of the factors, but not the only determining or exclusive factor. It is at the same time a matter for serious doubt whether it has been the only or the primary consideration of the private railroads so long, especially in view of the Indian conditions under which the Government guarantees the interest, gives the land and supplies a lion's share of the capital; and in view of the losses to the state owing to the Railways since 1850, as they proved a decided liability at the rate of a crore of rupees per year till 1904. We shall have also to consider why the expenses become swollen. Leaving aside the abnormal circumstances created by the war and the post-war conditions, the extravagant salaries of the officers especially of European officers form a big and heavy item. Even Sir W. Ackworth himself, an authority on Railways and President of the Indian Railway Committee, admitted, "After all, there is no doubt that the salaries of men at the top are immensely higher in England than they are on the continent of Europe, and it is the English standard, not the continental, that governs the scale for India". The proportion of maximum to minimum salaries in India, according to Mr. Chandrika Prasad, is 500 to 1, which, even as it is, is greater in England than on the continent of Europe. In France it is the greatest, but there it does not exceed 21 to 1. The low paid Railway servant in India gets Rs. 7 and the highest paid official Rs. 3500. To conclude, even as a test of efficiency, as I am inclined to think, the ratio pales into insignificance in a state-operated Railway beside two other tests, viz the rates and the measure of safety and security ensured by the services, for the very reason that the rates can be adjusted in accordance with popular wishes.

In the very nature of things, the rates vary in the state managed and the company managed Railways. The principle underlying company management is that relating to the much misunderstood practice of "charging what the traffic will bear", while the state system is governed by the principle of low rates yielding a fair margin over the expenses. A reference to the average ton-mile rate

and the average passenger mile rate in different countries, compels the inference that rates are more favourable to the public under a state system than on private railroads and that discrimination so widely characteristic of the private system is at a minimum in state Railways.

Along with the rates, another test is that which relates to the security of service, and here again a reference to the figures in different countries, showing the passengers, killed and injured, and employees, killed and injured, enables us to arrive at the inevitable conclusion that service is the safest in state systems and the most dangerous in private systems, especially in the United States.

Next to the argument regarding efficiency, the argument regarding the political disadvantages due to state management has to be answered. It has been contended that state Railways corrupt and are being corrupted by politics. Now this charge is rebutted by a great writer on Railways in the United States: "In the United States, railroads have for many years done their best to control the government of the States." The Governor of a State observes: "The railroads will buy up a car-load of mules, and will buy up elections too if need be. But as a rule they do not have resort to bribery and corruption . . . and can carry their purposes by milder methods. . . . They retain leading lawyers and politicians as counsel or make them stock-holders or not unfrequently debtors or officers. They pack caucuses and conventions, subsidize the press, influence merchants and manufacturers by the grant of special favours or the fear of their withdrawals, making large contributions to party funds, etc. By these and other means they usually contrive to control nominations, so as to put many men who are in rail-road pay or otherwise affected with a rail-road interest, in the legislature or in office and at least they can prevent the nomination of men likely to be antagonistic to the rail-roads or too independent of them." Thus it will be seen that corruption is not the monopoly of state management. The evils, as sketched by the Governor, are equally rampant on the private rail-roads, and now the choice lies between corruption which can be immediately checked by popular voice and corruption which cannot be so easily amenable to popular control. The choice is easily made.

A third argument brought forward is that rail-roading is a progressive science, that the state official mistrusts new ideas, that the Indian Government is as slow as a mule and that in Railway development private companies are the pioneers. Now this is a charge not borne out by actual facts, to the full extent of its implications. Has not the Government taken the initiative in the introduction of improved methods in agricultural and industrial departments? In fact such a state of things is being rendered necessary by a measure of responsible government. Even supposing that the Government is slow to adopt improved methods, are there private Indian-moneyed, Indian-managed

and Indian-manned companies, capable of undertaking costly experiments?

In fact, a more plausible argument is that relating to the much-dreaded and the much-hated introduction of civilianism in the state-managed Railways. In the words of Earl John Russell, "A civilian is good enough to govern a state, command an army, man a navy and grow a potato." The only plain answer to this objection is that a civilian under a reformed legislature and under popular responsible government, is better than the irresponsible and the irresponsible Railway official.

A. S. VENKATARAMAN.

MISCELLANEA.

LIBERAL PARTY DISAGREEMENTS.

CONSERVATIVES & HERETICS.

A LETTER FROM MR. SASTRI.

(To The Editor of The Leader.)

DEAR SIR,—You traverse nearly all the arguments advanced by Dewan Bahadur Ramchandra Rao and Mr. Veekatpathi Raju in defence of their conduct during the last session of the Assembly, and you sum up, if I may say so without offence, by administering a gentle and reluctant reprimand. The contention is just that it should not be open to individual members of a political party to take action contrary to a principle or established practice of the party without agreement amongst the leaders or at a general meeting. Messrs. Rao and Raju apparently maintain that there was no agreed policy from which they deviated. Without admitting this plea altogether, I believe there was sufficient of an unexpected nature in the circumstances of the last session to require an exercise of independent judgment. The great demand for Indian Home Rule, now happily common ground among political parties, had come up on the agenda, and the almost universal feeling was that the demand should have the backing of all the progressive elements in the Assembly. The Swarajists, under the skilful lead of Pandit Motilal Nehru, ceased all talk of wrecking and made the comparatively mild proposal of strictly parliamentary obstruction to be adopted only in case of a three-fourths majority of the Coalition party declaring that the answer of Government was unsatisfactory. My calculation from the beginning was that this three-fourths majority would be secured in any event by the determined and disciplined Swarajist corps of forty-six. But there were others of influence among the Independents, who felt hopeful of being able to prevent a three-fourths vote after having presented the demand in full force. All aspects of the question being under continual discussion day after day and appeals to patriotism and united efforts for once being incessant, is it any wonder that the independents tumbled over one another into the new organisation? Our friends of the Liberal party, be it said to their credit, were among the last to fall, and Mr. Ramachandra Rao held out till some of his electors actually called upon him to join. Through a morbid dread of being encumbered by adherents of doubtful quality, members of the Council of State and nominated members of the Assembly had, at an early stage, been barred out of the Nationalist party. Messrs. Rao and Raju were thus the only two eligible Liberals. Remember too that both come from the Andhra country, where extremism and non-co-operation have long found firm lodgment. It is easy to understand why they let themselves be dragged by the main current more than their compatriots who owed their seats to the favour of Government. I did not and do not approve of their course. But having been a daily witness of the happenings in Delhi, I know how difficult their situation was. I know also that they shrank from the great lengths to which their Swarajist colleagues were prepared to go, and that to

their firm stand as to that of some others must be ascribed the reversal, after the first day's indiscriminate rejection of grants, to the normal course of discussion on the merits. The rejection of the Finance Bill was a manoeuvre adopted almost at the last moment as on the whole less damaging to the reputation of the party than the passing of the numerous amendments which would have made very large and indefensible reductions in the revenue.

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, I must say I am not prepared to hold that Messrs. Rao and Raju have committed an act of indiscipline or political apostasy. But I applaud your having criticised their conduct with candour and in public. It is the ill-natured whisper going round in private which does harm to the coherence of the party. I have had some experience in this line. Open criticism is met with open explanation and the residue is an honest difference of opinion which we may well allow to one another.

Our friends complain, in the course of their self-defence, that while at one end they are taken to task for action which is too advanced there are some at the other end who are responsible for action which is distinctly backward, but who escape judgment. Your answer is adequate in substance. One cannot, however, get rid of the impression that you are much more mild in the latter than in the former case. For some reason or other, it is considered by some Liberals a greater sin against their creed to agree occasionally with their extremist countrymen than to fall in, as matter of settled habit, with the views of Government. One almost suspects there are some regulation standards, known only to an irreproachable few, of strength of language and even tone of utterance beyond which criticism and indignation cannot go on Liberal platforms without incurring the charge of being tinged with non-co-operation. Eager natures are bound to recoil from such standards and go a little beyond the border line, when they find the really bold and progressive programme of Liberalism handicapped in execution by excessive timorousness or consideration for the susceptibilities of the powers that be.

Dear Editor, the malady of the Liberal party is deeper than some of us are willing to believe. Events have moved on in their headless way and left the old Liberalism a little behind. Instead of keeping in step with the rest of the world the orthodox champions of the creed would, if they could, begin to cast out the heretics, preferring the straight and narrow doctrine to a truer apprehension of the environment and a wider comprehension of the energy and patriotism around. In this we seem to reproduce with excessive fidelity the old ceremonial spirit of caste which continually drew its boundaries closer in the never-ending pursuit of an imaginary purity. In England Liberalism and Socialism, and in fact every other school of social and political thought that has taken a name and individual form, have never been the same from decade to decade. Indian Liberalism, as a definite party, has many things to learn, many lessons to assimilate. Let us not so soon erect a stake for the heretics amongst us. We are too few to divide further. Tolerance, not rigidity of faith, should be our motto; great, not less, response to the hurrying forces around should be our aim.

V. S. SRINIVASAN

Cawnpore, April 3,

We have almost not a word to say in disagreement with the substance or the tone of this admirable letter of Mr. Sastri's. We are painfully aware of the many and serious imperfections of the very weak Indian Liberal party organisation. And we have never had in mind the remotest idea that "a stake" should be erected "for the heretics amongst us." Our whole point was and is that action such as Messrs. Rao and Raju took was not calculated to unite closer, instead of dividing further, the by no means well-knit party to which they and Mr. Sastri and we have the honour to belong. We have not the slightest hesitation in avowing our conviction that the action of conservative Liberals at the opposite extreme is fully as damaging to the cause. Having drawn pointed attention to this nearly fatal weakness of a party already lamentably weak, we may well end this discussion in the

hope that the two foremost men among the active leaders of the party, we mean, of course, Mr. Sastri himself and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Presidents of this and the last year, will actively set themselves to remove the causes of weakness and disunion as far as possible and to strengthen the party organisation.—(Ed. L.)

THE BOMBAY SOCIAL SERVICE LEAGUE AND ITS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

We trust the following letter which appeared in a recent issue of *Co-partnership* will interest those that sympathise with the Servants of India Society and the Bombay Social Service League:

EIRENE COTTAGE,
HAMPSTEAD, N. W. 3.

SIR—Though the title of your paper, and the usual line of argument in your columns, connect you mainly with the special form of profit-sharing (and ultimately sharing in business government) known as Co-partnership, yet I think you will take an interest in all the phases of that great Co-operative Movement out of which the idea of Co-partnership sprang.

Particularly should we welcome the developments of that movement now growing in centres, which we look on as so backward, as China and Russia. Most of all, therefore, should we welcome it among those whom we should consider our fellow citizens in India.

The excellent society, called the "Servants of India," founded by G. K. Gokhale in that most advanced of Indian provinces, Bombay, has now, under the guidance of the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri, produced a variety of excellent efforts most successfully carried on for the physical, intellectual and moral improvement of the Indian population. Amongst these, as recorded in the report for 1923 of the Social Service League of Bombay, is mentioned the Co-operative Movement. It has been found to be a great means of deliverance from that great curse of the Indian poor, the unscrupulous and unscrupulous money-lender, and by co-operative credit societies it has enabled the poor to obtain loans at a reasonable rate of interest, and has encouraged thrift and self-reliance.

Co-operative Stores and Clubs follow; and there are now 102 co-operative societies working in connection with the League with a capital of about 138,697 rupees, and doing a really good business.

I should like your readers also to note that, while the great majority of the officials of the League are native-born Indians, there are at least three Englishmen among them, which shows that power of inter-racial action which had appeared before in the municipal life of Bombay City, and which is, of course, the greatest source of hope for India's future.

Yours faithfully,
O. E. MAURICE.

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