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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

Home Rule Demonstration.

THANKS to the wonderful organising power of Dr. Besant, the Indian deputation has been doing great things in England. Almost daily it is having interviews with statesmen of all schools of political thought and enlisting the support of groups of M. P.'s in London. But it has not neglected the country. It has had meetings in several places, large and small, the last of which is the demonstration held at Manchester on the 6th inst., where about 3500 people were present. Mr. Lansbury, in his introductory speech, insisted that India must be given the right of self-determination, thus flatly contradicting Lord Olivier, who lays more stress on England's consent than India's right. Mr. Sastri in his speech dealt with the opposition of those who say that India is yet unripe for self-government, as if in any country and at any time the process of conferring rights on people was regulated by the latter's fitness. There is no reason to assume that the rulers always held nice scales in their hands, in which they were ever in the act of measuring the fitness of those whom they ruled to govern themselves and parted with power in proportion as the fitness was demonstrated. If the conferment of power really depends on anything, history shows that it depends more on the capacity of the ruled to give trouble to the rulers than on their capacity to manage their affairs. Nor can those who are never given a chance to manage their affairs be able to manage them well. And again, one may say *per contra*, that all the self-governing countries do not govern themselves well. The fitness for self-government therefore, of which one hears so frequently, has no validity as an argument against the denial of power to the people.

THE *Indian Daily Mail* has paid Excise Duty and Labour. Mr. N. M. Joshi the compliment of devoting a long leading article to his denunciation. We will not comment on the arrogant tone and abusive language of our contemporary. The immediate cause of this outburst is Mr. Joshi's "extraordinary proposition that the removal of the excise duty should be dependent upon a guarantee from the mill-owners that wages would not be reduced." It is not a mere academic proposition. Owing to the comparative depression in the textile industry, the mill-owners of Bombay are urging the repeal of the excise duty. At the same time they are also thinking of reducing the wages of workmen, as mentioned publicly by the President of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association. The excise duty is there, whatever its history. Its removal is now urged by the mill industry for its own benefit. The State is asked to forego revenue in order to help the industry when it is low. The State should no doubt do it. But it is also the State's duty to afford reasonable relief to labour. Therefore there is nothing out of the way in the proposal that while giving relief to the millowners the State should require them not to lower wages, which are much more important to workmen than profit is to millowners. If the *Daily Mail* only looks about we dare say it will find many similar "extraordinary propositions."

THE other day Mahatma Gandhi Tarakeshwar "Satyagraha" condemned the miscalled satyagrahis at Tarakeshwar for employing unpeaceful methods in attaining their object. Now Lord Lytton has come down heavily upon this movement which he calls "a colossal hoax." The Mahant, he said, had given place to a high caste Hindu gentleman of unimpeachable character—appointed not by Government but by a court of justice—to take charge of the temple and its worship." Babu Bipin Chandra Pal also strongly disapproves of the present agitation. He says in the *Bengalee* that if the properties attached to the temple are a trust, the fulfilment of the conditions of the trust can be enforced only by legal process. "Individuals have the right of instituting civil suits to secure faithful fulfilment of the conditions of public trusts by the management thereof. That is the correct way to try to remedy the evils complained of in this case also. In fact cases are already filed in the courts for the decision of these issues. The court has even appointed a Receiver

to take charge of the trust properties and manage these, pending the decision of the suit. In the face of it the present campaign wears a frankly un-savoury look. Those who had been roused to a high pitch of righteous indignation at the reports of the crying evils of Tarakeshwar should have given over the fight, at least for the time being, the moment the Receiver went to take charge of the estate. This is clearly illegal. It is even worse, immoral."

* * *

Princes and Reform. A MONTH ago we invited men like Mr. Jayakar who seek to justify their conservative attitude in regard to Indian States in comparison to their radical politics in British India by "a difference in conditions," to specify points of difference which warrant, not an acceleration, but a slowing down of the pace of reform in Indian States. Apparently the answering of such a friendly challenge is attended with some amount of inconvenience, to judge from the reluctance one sees everywhere in taking up the challenge. The *United India and Indian States*, however, answers our question by another question: whether, in our scheme the Indian Prince has any place in the future constitution of India. Our contemporary seems to think that by asking this question it has put us upon the horns of a dilemma. For it seems to think that, if we admitted that the Indian Princes were to be retained, we should also have to admit, as a logical corollary, that the constitutional progress in Indian States must be slower than in British India. This assumption, however, is entirely unfounded, for full responsible government can well co-exist with a hereditary ruler. Only the latter will then be a constitutional ruler, in which case there need be no diminution in the power enjoyed by the people. The retention of Princes does not therefore require a slowing down of constitutional progress in Indian States, and we can think of no difference in conditions which cannot be to the advantage of Indian States as compared to British India. If there is a marked difference in the contrary sense, as our contemporary affirms, the *United India* will perhaps have the goodness to set it out in clear terms for the behoof of all interested in the advance of Indian States.

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Lovers of Dark-ness. THE one thing that is necessary in order to reform the Indian States Administrations is that their doings should be dragged into the light of day, but it is by no means easy to light up the dark places in these States. In the case of many States Administration Reports are not available for love or money. Of course in the Reports the subjects that really interest the subjects of Indian States are either omitted or so inadequately treated that the information contained therein can hardly be used for the purpose of bringing the administrative and other abuses into light. But the State generally

takes care not to let its subjects or "outside agitators" possess a copy of it. The British Government also is ready to help the Indian States in shrouding the latter's affairs in obscurity, if it is not willing to help them in other ways. How obliging the British Government is in this matter may be inferred from the fact that for the last two years all references to topics like police, criminal justice, prisons, civil justice, registration, public works, local funds, trade, medical relief, etc. in Indian States are omitted from the Administration Reports of the Bombay Presidency. In fact the matter relating to Indian States in these reports is curtailed by more than half. If the Bombay Government has any other reason for effecting this change than the general one of maintaining friendly relations with their Allies—the Princes—it had better be publicly given, in default of which the people can hardly be blamed if they draw the inference that the Bombay Government is now anxious, more than ever before, to shield Indian States from public criticism by shutting out the only avenue, open to them, to relevant information on the administration of States.

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Mysore Press Law. MR. BANNERJI'S defence of the new press law in Mysore was not in the least convincing. That it is better than the one which it will replace is no argument for its enactment. He ridiculed the opponents of the measure for sticking to the abstract ideas of liberty, equality, &c., which were quite good for college debates and class room essays. We venture to remind him that they are also good for administrators and that many a ruler has lost his seat for ignoring those ideas. To the criticism that British India had dropped its press law Mr. Bannerji gave an answer which is becoming quite the fashion nowadays, that conditions in Indian States are very different from those in British India. We are unable to understand how popular freedom is less desirable to the people of Indian States than to their brethren in British India. We can only look upon the expression as a formula for covering illiberalism. Mr. Bannerji also said that it was necessary for preserving the loyalty of the people to the ruler. We refuse to believe that the presence or absence of a press law can affect loyalty. The utmost that a newspaper in a State may do is to criticise the personal expenses of a ruler or to urge constitutional development. No one ought call it disloyalty. We are afraid Mr. Bannerji has made the common mistake of confounding criticism with disaffection. He also said the law was necessary to prevent communal squabbles. The more stringent law now in operation has not prevented them and the new law is not going to do it either. As to any real offences there is the ordinary law which is quite sufficient for all purposes—certainly much more so in Indian States than in British India.

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DIE-HARDS AND DEPRESSED CLASSES.

WE have been familiar with Earl Winterton's performances in the House of Commons. Thanks to the enterprise of the *Times of India*, the benefit of his wisdom is brought nearer to us. In a recent issue of that paper the noble gentleman explains what in his opinion is "the real bar to Swaraj." We are told that he is a firm believer in the policy that led to the Indian Reforms of 1919; nevertheless, he says, "I find myself to-day as far off as ever from visualising the conditions under which the territory which is now known as British India will one day exercise the functions of self-government within the Empire." It is amazing that he does not see the inconsistency of the two statements. He tells us that this is also the view of Messrs. Lloyd George and Montagu and Lord Chelmsford. It is possible that he represents correctly Mr. Lloyd George whose strong point is certainly not conviction or consistency and whose angle of vision changed considerably after the exigencies of the war disappeared. But we refuse to believe that Earl Winterton represents at all Mr. Montagu. Earl Winterton and the class he represents would no doubt like to go back on the pledge of granting responsible government to India, only they cannot do so with any decency and other people would not listen to them. Therefore they are doing their best to arrest the further constitutional progress of India and to delay the fulfilment of the promise as long as possible. They will not, however, be serving the British Empire that way.

One real inconvenience there is for the class represented by Earl Winterton: "certain ex-Governors, in their public speeches and writings, advocate a quicker march towards self-government than the Montford Act lays down." For getting over this inconvenience Earl Winterton makes an admission which completely refutes his own position. "The small circle which embraces the politicians and administrators among the Indian races contains quite as high, if not higher, a proportion of men of great ability and social charm as that of similar circles in other countries. They are delightful acquaintances and in conversation their quick-witted intellect enables them to outship the more lumbering British minds." The ex-Governors "have worked with these men, they have formed strong friendships with many of them, they have experienced years of tactful but persistent pressure from them to accelerate the process of Indianisation; what easier than to say, let them have the Government which they want?" The ability of Indian politicians and administrators being admitted to be no less than that of British politicians and administrators, there can be no valid reason for not entrusting the administration of their country into their own hands. They can look after their interests as well as British politicians and administrators do. It is on account of this conviction that ex-Governors like Lord Wil-

lingdon, whose knowledge and experience ought certainly to carry greater weight than the imaginings of Earl Winterton, advocate a quickening of the pace. It is also necessary in the real interests of the Empire, for the analogy of Ireland is not false as supposed by Earl Winterton but very much to the point.

Of the difficulties in the way of self-government for India, Earl Winterton selects three: Hindu-Moslem feuds, the difference in interests between British provinces and Indian States and the position of the depressed classes. He is willing to concede that the first two are not insurmountable. If Turkey is able to solve its religious problem in politics, the Earl concedes, India also will be able to do likewise. We would add that these religious differences have never been so acute in India as in Turkey and that the British officials can do a good deal to foster harmony between Hindus and Muhammadans if they do not deliberately adopt a policy of dividing them. Earl Winterton also concedes that in course of time a federation could be devised that would satisfy the British provinces and the Indian States. But he stumbles over the 'one supreme' bar, the depressed classes. We have no desire to minimise the difficulties of the depressed classes, but to say that they are the one supreme bar to self-government in India is gross exaggeration and perversion. The statesmanship that can get over other difficulties can very easily get over this also. Earl Winterton and those whom he represents are seriously mistaken in believing that the depressed classes in India are under political disabilities. Social disabilities we admit—and Indian reformers are as earnestly attempting their removal as any others—but no political disabilities. Earl Winterton asks: "Would a purely Indian Administration, assuming that the very difficult question of defence against external aggression had been found to be soluble, be able before it was set up to give the British Parliament effective guarantees that under the depressed classes would enjoy equal political rights with the highest classes? That, in other words, there would be no political discrimination on religious grounds against any caste or class, and where religious scruples or practice run counter to natural rights, the sufferers shall have the power by their votes and through constitutional action, to get their grievances remedied?" The answer is emphatically in the affirmative though Earl Winterton gives a negative answer. We do not know how he came to possess the idea that any caste or class would be subjected to political disabilities under self-government in India. The franchise at present in British India as well as in advanced Indian States is based on property and educational qualifications as in other countries, and there is no disability imposed on anyone on account of his religion. Those members of the depressed classes who are qualified for the vote do exercise it as freely as others. As, however, the

voters among them are but few, and they cannot yet put forward candidates who can secure a sufficient number of votes to be returned to the Councils, they are nominated by Government, wherever suitable men are available. Neither in British India nor in advanced Indian States are they denied entry into Government service or public institutions. In remote corners of South India a few streets are not open to them, but a most vigorous fight is now being conducted by political and social reformers for getting them thrown open to all alike. It is true that they have no access to wells and temples which are used by the higher castes. So far as wells are concerned Local Boards are trying to provide them with separate wells and it is hoped that as a result of the present campaign against untouchability and of other reform movements, this disability will disappear before long. The question of temples is more difficult as they are purely religious as opposed to public utility institutions. A modern state may well hesitate to interfere with the worship and other purely religious matters relating to them.

Earl Winterton says: "Obviously the first thing to do is to give the depressed classes a chance of being educated. Yet though education as a transferred subject is managed by Indians themselves, the tentative efforts of Indian Ministers in various provinces to extend the educational system for the benefit of the depressed classes, have met with persistent reactionary obstruction from other Indians." We wish the Earl had substantiated this charge by quoting instances. So far as we are aware, there have been no cases of such reactionary obstruction having prevailed over Ministers. On the other hand in spite of great financial difficulties Ministers have generally been enabled to do something special for the education of the depressed classes, by opening schools, instituting scholarships and in some cases opening free boarding houses. These special facilities are given also in advanced Indian States like Baroda, Mysore and Travancore. The difficulties of the depressed classes are not political but social and economic, and Earl Winterton and his friends need have no fear whatever about the political future of the depressed classes, nor for the matter of that, of any particular caste or community.

But one is tempted to ask, why do all these diehards suddenly exhibit so deep a solicitude for the depressed classes? They had the run of the administration for a century and more. What did they do during this period for the classes whom they now regard as their especial wards? Did they do anything for the removal of the disabilities of the untouchables, or did they do enough to justify their rule in this country for a century and half? Earl Winterton wants to be satisfied before he votes for a further transfer of power into Indian hands, that under a popular rule the depressed classes also would have greater opportunities of self-development. Indians will afford complete satisfaction to him and men of his ilk on this point. But why

does it not occur to his Lordship to inquire if the past achievements of bureaucratic rule in this direction justify the putting of the depressed classes back under the bureaucracy any longer. None of the educational and other facilities thrown open to the depressed classes by the bureaucracy have been withdrawn by the Ministers. In fact they have been very largely increased by popular Ministers at the very first chance they had. The bureaucrats never dared to go against social customs: when a resolution was brought forward in the Bombay Legislative Council urging that wells, *dharma-shalas*, &c., built out of public funds should be thrown open to the depressed classes, it was thrown out by official votes. It may be that they felt public opinion had not been ripe, but they did not abstain from voting, leaving the responsibility for the decision to non-officials; they turned it down by 'obstructive opposition.' But only a few years afterwards the Ministers accepted the resolution and are prepared to give effect to it, clearly showing that what the bureaucrats are too fearful to do the Ministers can do without any opposition. Even supposing the Ministers have not demonstrated their capacity to look after the interests of the depressed classes in the spirit of justice, one thing is perfectly clear, that the bureaucracy has demonstrated its utter incapacity to look after their interests, and at least as a lesser evil, the bureaucracy must be replaced everywhere by popular Ministers.

OPIUM POLICY.-IV.

PUBLIC OPINION IN INDIA

WE have already observed what a great part public opinion has played and should play in bringing about reform in such a matter as the opium policy of a country in the British commonwealth. Whatever might have been the importance of public opinion in India in the past on this particular question, it acquires an almost decisive influence today, in view of the statement made by Lord Hardinge, on behalf of India, in the League of Nations last year: "If, therefore, popular demand exists for a modification of the policy hitherto followed and if a provincial council wishes to restrict still further the sale of opium for eating in India or to prohibit the sale of opium except for medical and scientific purposes, it is, in all provinces but one, open to the Indian Minister to initiate legislation in that sense. I would further add that in the event of any such legislation being initiated in any province, it would undoubtedly receive support from the Government of India." Before, however, we examine the latest opium policy of India, it would be interesting to discover what Indian public opinion has been in the past. The Government of India claimed that its opium policy had the support of Indian leaders, while Mr. C. F. Andrews contends that "it is utterly untrue to say that the Indian leaders have accepted the British opium policy or even that they had made

no protest against it. For the protest has been continuous and urgent." Miss La Motte, on the other hand, represents that "the followers of Gandhi and all those who are honestly opposed to drugging and who foresee for India a fate similar to that of drug-ruined China, find an explanation of the opium traffic in a deliberate design to destroy the people, to provide them with pills and pipes to take their minds off politics." Let us examine these conflicting views. One thing, however, is clear and uncontested, and even Mr. Andrews concedes that "the people of India have hitherto been inert" in the matter of opium. There never was a strong popular anti-opium feeling surging through the country as the anti-liquor feeling was during the non-co-operation movement, and as the anti-opium feeling was in China. Let us, however, see what representative leaders had to say on the subject in the Legislative Councils, the Indian National Congress and the Temperance Conferences.

Let us first turn to the proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Government of India. In 1895, the Royal Commission on opium, which was forced on the Government of India by the anti-opium reformers in England, issued their report which upheld the opium policy of the Government of India. The debate in the House of Commons was a signal victory to the Government of India and a stunning defeat to the agitators. In the Imperial Legislative Council, Sir James Westland, the Finance Minister of the Government of India, with undisguised glee, poured utter ridicule on the devoted heads of the "many old women of both sexes at home, who have no business of their own to attend to" and therefore "send out commissions of enquiry to convict them"—Indians, who were "absolute ascetics as compared with ordinary people of England" with a drink bill of £3-10-0 per head per annum,—"of indulgence in intoxicating drugs." He almost shrieked with joy "that the verdict has been so very completely given against them", the anti-opium reformers in England, and "with costs." This last was a reference to the fact that the expenses of the Royal Commission were paid by the Home Treasury, of which Sir James said, "I think it is a good principle that when it is found in an inquiry of this kind the Indian Government and the Indian people are absolutely in the right, the people at home should be made to pay the expense." Sir P. M. Mehta and Sir G. M. Chitnavis, to mention only the representative Indians on the Council, listened to this amazing performance without intervening and allowed to pass, without challenge, Sir James's statement that the Indian Government and the Indian people were absolutely in the right in their opium policy.

The debate on the allied drug "Ganja" in 1896, is significant in this connection. The Government of India came forward with a proposal to tax pretty heavily the production of "Ganja", in accordance with the recommendations of another commission, the Royal Commission on Hemp Drugs, which also

upheld the "Ganja" policy of the Government of India. Rai Bahadur Anandachari of Madras actually contended that the tax should be smaller on the plea that, in view of the findings of the Royal Commission, "the tendency of legislation should, therefore, be to minimise and not destroy production." Regarding opium itself, he heartily congratulated the Finance Member on the increase in opium revenue and looked forward to a further increase in opium revenue to bring down the salt duty.

In 1906, the famous resolution that the opium traffic with China was "morally indefensible" was passed in the House of Commons. In his Budget speech in 1907, Sir Edward Baker announced that an agreement was being negotiated with China for the ultimate suppression of the Indian opium trade with China. The agitation over the partition of Bengal had created a new national consciousness in India. And yet we find Dr. Rash Behari Ghose disquieted by "the dark shadow hanging over our opium revenue" and seeking hope in exclaiming that "there is, however, a well-known saying about threatened men and I believe this will hold good of our trade in opium in China." Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis bewailed that "however much the opium policy of the Government of India may appear reprehensible on moral grounds, no finance minister can view with equanimity the loss of so much as 5 1/2 crores of rupees a year." Greatly apprehensive of the "threatened success of the anti-opium movement" in England, he demanded that India should be recouped from the British Exchequer, a proposal to which he returned again and again. Every year from 1908 to 1915 the Finance Minister announced fresh developments in the opium situation. In 1910, he announced that the Government of India had accepted resolutions of the International Commission on opium at Shanghai and he made it clear that the Government refused to consider opium-eating in India as illegitimate. In 1911, another agreement with China was concluded and the Government of India introduced a system of special certificates to prevent smuggling into China of opium exported to non-China markets. In 1913, Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson sang the funeral oration over the China trade. In 1915, the India Government promoted the policy of supplying opium direct to governments in preference to private merchants, of consuming countries. How were these measures, which ought to rejoice the heart of any anti-opium reformer, received by the representative Indians in the Supreme Legislative Council? Sir Manekji Dadabhoy, Sir David Sassoon, Rai Sitanath Roy Bahadur, Mr. Madhu Sudan Das and Sir Ibrahim Rahimatullah, all these at different times had hardly a word to say of approbation, but plenty of bitter complaint against England and profound grief at the loss to Indian revenues. Rai Sitanath Roy observed, "We find what a sacrifice has been made for a sentiment, and all this at the bidding

of a few moralists at Home, who want to appease their moral susceptibilities at the expense of poor India." Just a hair's-breadth separated Sir Surendranath Banerjee from Rai Sitanath. Sir Surendranath regretted that opium ever formed part of the Indian fiscal system, but being there, he would demand of England compensation for forcing its abolition on helpless India, just for the moral sentiment of England, regarding which he sarcastically remarked that "sentiment is not sentiment worth speaking about unless it involves sacrifice and its sincerity proved by such sacrifice."

Almost the only politician of the first order who took a different view was Mr. Gokhale. He rejoiced at the prospect of the extinction of the opium trade with China. He would not, however, ask for compensation from England since India profited by the revenue, not England. All that he wished was that the loss of revenue should be spread over a period of ten years to give time for Indian revenues to adjust themselves without serious dislocation. Nawab Syed Muhammad took a somewhat similar view.

None of these, however, not even Mr. Gokhale, expressed himself against opium eating in India. Only the Tikka Saheb of Nabha in 1907, desired Government to "check and suppress the bad habit of opium eating that is taking hold of the Indian population and demoralising it." The Tikka Saheb was, however, such a puritan that he would prohibit tobacco also. Maung Bah Too thanked the Government in 1910, for its opium policy in Burma, which was fully approved of by the Burmese.

In 1918, Sir B. N. Sarma moved a comprehensive resolution inviting the Government to accept a policy of ultimate prohibition of "alcoholic and intoxicating liquors and drugs." Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir Surendranath Banerjee, Sir Dinshaw Wacha, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Nawab Ali Chowdhary stoutly supported the resolution. Except the last, none of these, however, referred to or asked for the suppression of opium consumption in India. The burden of the song was always stop liquor. If they referred to opium at all, it was only to the relinquishment of opium revenue by the Government for the good of another country, China, and to press it as an argument as to why the Government should not allow revenue consideration to stand in the way of ultimate prohibition of liquor in India. The feeling is typified in Pandit Malaviya's appeal: "The Government of India sacrificed the opium revenue to save our Chinese brethren from the evils of opium. Will the Government of India hesitate on grounds of revenue, to prohibit the manufacture of liquor..." Nawab Ali Chowdhary alone referred to the evil of "smoking narcotic drugs" and urged the people to emulate the admirable way in which "the Chinese people are making a tremendous effort in shaking off their opium habit."

It would appear from these that, far from having to fight a pro-opium policy of Government or even far from filling the sails of its anti-opium

policy, representative Indian opinion was actively opposed to the extinction of the trade with China and had almost nothing to say against the consumption of opium in India itself.

It was left to a Viceroy, Lord Minto, to urge that "we could not, with any self-respect, refuse to assist China on the grounds of loss of revenue to India", and sympathise with the Tikka Saheb's plea against opium-eating in India and to a succession of Finance Ministers to suppress the opium trade with China, though such a course did involve fresh taxation of the people of India.

But let us see if there has been any change in Indian opinion since these antediluvian days. The new reformed Assembly met on 1921. Mr. T. Rangachariar moved a reduction in the opium demand. Sir Malcolm Hailey confessed that opium cultivation was not proving attractive to the ryots in United Provinces on account of the rise in prices of other crops, a fact which, he feared, would rejoice the heart of opium prohibitionists, who were not to be found so much in India as in England and America. He wound up on the significant note that the reduction in the grant would mean less opium revenue, and immediately Mr. Rangachariar withdrew his motion!

A few months later, the Indian delegate to the League of Nations stood out for the view that opium eating was legitimate in India and that created some stir. Yet, in 1922, and yet again in 1923, the opium demands were passed in the Assembly without as much as a comment about the illegitimacy of opium-eating in India or the immorality of selling opium to poison other peoples.

Since the new reform of 1919, the internal consumption of opium in India has come under the control of the Indian Ministers and the local legislative councils, except in Assam. It requires a microscope to discover references to opium in these provincial councils, so small a part it seems to play in the minds of the people.

In the Punjab, C. P. and also in Behar and Orissa, we find Ministers refusing to suppress opium eating. Opium is hardly mentioned in Bombay and Madras. It is only in Assam, though there opium is not a 'transferred' subject, that action has been taken to bring about ultimate opium suppression. This neglect to demand opium reform in India is not due to absorption of the legislative councillors in other and more exciting political problems. Almost every provincial council has tackled the liquor problem in great earnestness. But opium, there is hardly any notice of. Quite a typical example of this is found in the Report of the Excise Committee appointed by the Bombay Government (1922-23). Opium is dismissed in one short paragraph in a report running to 135 pages foolscap!

Let us now turn to non-official organisations, and take the Indian National Congress first. There is hardly any mention of opium in its proceedings all these years. It is not, however, due to political preoccupation. The very first Congress passed a resolution on drink policy in India and almost all

subsequent Congresses did the same and such eminent politicians as Sir Dinshaw Wacha took prominent part in these discussions. It is true that occasionally the phrase "drink and drug" was used and this may give the impression that opium was included in "drug". But one has only to read the speeches to discover that nothing was farther from the speaker's mind than opium. The word "drug" here was just an alliterative and associated appendage, an expletive and nothing more. There have been occasions when cocaine was specifically referred to, but hardly ever opium. Even when the Royal Commission on opium was in India, the Congress did not pass a resolution on opium, or prefer evidence before the Commission.

Even the Temperance conferences rarely, if ever, make reference to opium. In the All-India Temperance Conference of 1913, held in Karachi, there was no reference to opium in the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee or the President nor in the resolutions, though there was a special resolution on cocaine. The same may be said of the conferences of 1914, 1917 and 1919. There was no reference to opium, except in regard to Assam, in the statement of the Temperance deputation that waited on the Viceroy in 1913. Even the non-co-operation movement seems to have ignored opium, except again in Assam.

From this review it follows that, in the matter of opium eating, the Government of India's claim that its policy was supported by leaders of public opinion, is not without justification.

In the matter of export, the Government of India's policy underwent more than one change during the last thirty years. In the nineties, Government defended the export trade, and claimed Indian support and had its claim allowed. In the subsequent decade, it undertook to gradually prohibit export to China and did it with a will. It is of this particular phase of its policy, that it can be said that the Government of India had not the support of the Indian leaders, but not in the sense of Mr. Andrews! In its latest phase, which is neither pro- nor anti-opium, the Government can again claim that it has the support of the Indian legislature.

Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Andrews, some notice has after all been taken of opium by the Congress. The last meeting of the A. I. C. C. passed a resolution on opium policy and the Assam Congress Committee has appointed a committee to report on opium consumption in Assam. *

All the same, there is no escaping the fact that opium is not yet a live problem in India, in spite of the admirable efforts of Mr. Andrews and a few others, principally European missionaries in India. Indian leaders, many of them, are quite unable to appreciate why the League of Nations should have taken up this question at all and why India, innocent of opium feeling, should have thrust on it a sinister shadow and be discredited among the nations of the world. To the Indian the drink problem is the only excise question of the first mag-

nitude and he is not a little surprised that the League of Nations has not taken up that question on a world basis, instead of merely confining its benevolent exertions in this behalf only to the Negroes of Africa.

P. KODANDA RAO.

THE INDIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT.—I THE NEED FOR SELF-HELP.

Out of a long and chequered history of the labour movement in various countries one fact emerges, the truth of which underlies all the latest phases of the socialistic activities. It is that the working-classes can never be permanently helped by any other class in the society. Not only do the immediate interests of the latter clash with those of the former, but even if they consent by an unanimous will to make that sacrifice, labour, unless it works of its own accord for its moral and physical improvement, will not really benefit by it. Nor will society be a gainer by thus reducing the labouring classes to a veritable class of partial destitutes weighing upon the resources of the nation. In other words, opportunities and conveniences for self-improvement can be placed in their way by the state and the employers: it will be for the workers to take advantage of these. If they find that either the state or the employers, are doing less in this way than what they ought to or could, they can press legitimately for further improvement or, what is better, they should be spurred to more vigorous independent action. This self-reliant attitude, which is so marked a feature of almost all Western labour, is sadly lacking among the workers in this country. Something must be set to the account of the average temperament of the Indian, which waits for things being done for itself by others. A little more of this drawback might also be explained by the comparative shortness of the period through which industrial labour has lived in this country. But the main causes of weakness lie in certain characteristic's of Indian labour which are perhaps very natural but extremely undesirable. We do not here refer to that inefficiency of our workers which is due to their climatic surroundings and the want of any technical training or aptitude. But more than these unavoidable circumstances the workers suffer from two features of their own which can be remedied without any outside help.

In the first place for a general labour movement to grow up among the workers not only must they be steady individually but also collectively. In fact, however, we find the reverse of this requirement prevailing in our industrial centres. The individual worker is, in most cases, 'an agriculturist first and agriculturist last.' He moves to the place of employment during the slack agricultural season, and when he has made some money, wherewith to pay off an interest charge or an instalment of his family debts, or to buy a few useful but more showy things he returns to his

village in time to help his relatives to cultivate the land. People from typical Konkan villeges, which supply a large part of the mill-hands in Bombay, tell very interesting and instructive accounts of these amphibious visitors, many of whom return to their homes practically without cash, having spent all their earnings in Bombay. What is worse than this wasteful habit is the fact that having lived in the great city and contracted habits such as tea drinking, smoking of cigarettes wearing of fashionable clothes, and being taken up with some ideas of their own superior enlightenment, they are less fitted for the hard drudgery of agricultural work. They do it, of course, but with less efficiency than before. As we are not specially concerned with this side of labour employment, the loss to agricultural industry from this source may for the present be ignored. But from the point of view of industrial efficiency, with which we are vitally concerned while considering the problem of Labour, this unsteady conduct on the part of workers is greatly undesirable. Some have seen in this peculiarity of the Indian labour force almost a providential arrangement by which the connection between town and country is maintained, and the devitalising effect of a city life remedied to a great extent. In a very small measure this contention is true, but the truth is vastly out-weighed by the injury to efficiency that unsteadiness means. Not only the hopes of the industrial prosperity of the nation, but also of the improvement of the position of workers themselves are conditioned by a high productivity of labour. For this more efficiency, more steadiness, and above all a greater practical effort to work for its own material and moral improvement is necessary in the worker. These things will of course not be achieved in a day. But one thing is certain, and that matters to us here, that this drawback of the Indian worker can be remedied by none but himself. The cultivation of the field need not be ignored. There are hands enough and to spare for that purpose. The present position in which the whole labour population an of industrial city is a perpetual mass of changing units is beneficial in no way. It of course hits the employer by way of reduced output. But it hits the workers even more. Not only does lower efficiency spell lower wage, but in such a floating mass the possibility of forming strong trade unions for common action is very far removed.

The psychological necessities of a successful trade union movement are three. In the first place the workers must have the aptitude to work in cooperation with each other. The Indian villagers, out of whose ranks the industrial workers are recruited, are almost traditionally trained in this virtue. The second requirement is that the workers joining in a union ought to have the capacity to work and to wait for the result. The greatest obstacle in the way of the union organiser in this country is the impatient question always put by the members and the would-be members, 'What if

we become members and pay a certain fee out of our small earnings? When and how will we benefit by it?' These questions are not perhaps peculiar to this country; but in an incoherent mass they create further difficulties in the way of a genuine labour movement. Unless the workers see for themselves—and many are so converted each day—that discipline, common action and above all faith will help their righteous cause, as it has done in all countries, no advance can be made in the organisation of labour. But granting a stable industrial population and a fairly extensive organisation, there still remains a paramount need of the devotion to public service. In this country it is a sacred duty enjoined on all individuals to serve the community. This scriptural direction must be adapted to the needs of the modern situation. And those among the working classes who find themselves impelled by the desire to be of use to their brethren have to take the earliest opportunity and the greatest pains to inculcate upon the minds of their fellow-men the need of improving in the direction of steadiness, sobriety, devotion, and alertness to benefit to the utmost by all opportunities held forth by the employees and the community. The Indian employers are indeed very sympathetic; but they are not angels and in all conscience the disputes between them and their workers will continue to exist. For the contingency the workers must organise their combined strength, if they are to secure anything like their due share in the product of industry. But strikes are a means and labour organisation, in so far as it is meant to facilitate the conduct of a labour dispute, is the means of a means. The real objective of labour organisation is the independent and self-reliant improvement on the moral and physical drawbacks of the workers. Unsteadiness, ignorance, inefficiency, improvidence, all these must be remedied and the success of a labour movement in this country must be measured not by the number of unions or their members, nor by the statistics of successful strikes, but by the concrete improvement that is visible in the efficiency and standard of life of the worker.

D. G. KARVE.

POST OFFICE AND GOVERNMENT'S POLICY.

"If we are to have surpluses in the future, I do not want them raided by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and I got the Cabinet to agree that any gain which is effected will go not to the Chancellor of the Exchequer but the reduction of the Charges".

Rt. Hon. F. G. KELLAWAY, P. M. G.,
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WITH the advent of a Labour Government in England, the rights of labour and quasi labour classes to organize and improve themselves and their claims to a progressive living wage will scarcely be disputed. These rights of labour pertain not only to the "menials" but also to those who perform the highest class of labour in the wider sense.

of the term. Postmen, peons, packers, hamals are admittedly labourers but clerks also come under the same category, and Government owe a duty to the lower staff of their service to grant wages according to the average standard of living.

It is however a noteworthy fact that the condition of the Postal officials in this country is far from satisfactory. A time there was, when Government desired that the Department should be run on a business principle, but the recent announcement in the Legislative Assembly by the Hon'ble Mr. Chatterjee has made it clear that the Post Office is a public utility service and not a revenue earning Department. Government are therefore bound to see that the gains from that Department are utilized for (1) the improvement of the conditions of the Postal officials and for (2) the increasing and cheapening of public facilities. But Government have not been following this declared policy either in letter or in spirit and their attitude is largely responsible for the present undesirable state of affairs.

The Post Office has yielded large profits for the last so many years, and excluding a deficit of a crore of Rupees for the years 1920-22, the net surplus amounts to Rs. 276 lacs. Government admit they have got Rs. 24 lacs as net profits during the year 1922-23. Moreover, the Postal Department has not been given credit for the income of the combined offices, and also for the banking, customs and loan work and for payment of pensions to Indian military pensioners, although these duties are performed by the servants in that Department. Still in spite of this defective system of accounts the Post Office has yielded a large surplus. But have the authorities taken steps to improve the conditions of service? No. The joint Postal and R. M. S. conference has formulated certain irreducible minimum demands at Delhi, and they have been reiterated at the several Provincial and All-India Conferences with a united voice. The scale has been adopted for the clerical staff in the Audit office. And having regard to the high prices and the ordinary standard of living, it is perfectly moderate and reasonable. But the Government have not listened to these fervent prayers and have rejected these demands with a stroke of the pen. Nor have Government extended other facilities to their subordinate employees. Many people do not get even one day's rest in a week. They have to attend duties at the most inconvenient hours. They have to pass many a sleepless night. They have to undergo the trouble of double attendance. The Department is undermanned and though the Director General admits that 700 men are short in the Postal staff, still new men are not engaged, because of the hope that the enhanced postal rates will decrease the amount of work; but the hope is not realised and the employees are put to excessive strain. Can the authorities claim that they have adequately increased the pay and prospects of their servants or improved the conditions of their service?

The declared policy of a civilised Government

ought to be to supply the cheapest post card to the poor and the public. But two years ago the Government in this country doubled the postal rates in spite of popular opposition and indignation. At least the public are entitled to expect more facilities but they are keenly disappointed; because 205 Post Offices have been altogether reduced in status in the year 1923-24 with the result that the more important work is not transacted there, and not less than 255 offices have been altogether abolished in the same year. One can very well imagine what inconvenience must have been caused to inhabitants of the villages surrounding the former post offices and what their feeling must be when they remember that the rates are doubled. The extra departmental agencies, which minister to the postal requirements of the rural areas were increased between 1905 and 1910 by 15 per cent. and between 1910 and 1922 by about 2.9 per cent, but since 1922, when enhanced rates were brought into operation, we do not find any progress made in this direction. The villagers may well complain: "What have the Government done for us? They have increased the telegraphic rates; they have increased the postal rates, and yet deliveries are curtailed." In fact Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao rightly observed in the Legislative Assembly that the increase of postal rates and the withdrawal of postal facilities during the last year or two have gone more or less hand in hand and they have contributed very naturally to the unpopularity of the administration.

It is therefore the duty of Government to remove the chaotic condition of accounts, which do not show the exact extent of the receipts and expenditure of the Postal Department. At present the servants in that Department have been doing the work of collecting customs duty, payment of pensions to Indian military pensioners, savings banks accounts, Postal Life Insurance policies, Post Office cash certificates and combined telegraphic work in offices. Is there any reason why the Post Office should be called upon to do this work gratis? In fact the Post Office must receive a reasonable percentage of credit for this additional and remunerative service, and Government ought to adjust these and proper accounts at no distant date. Secondly, Government ought to improve the condition of the clerks and subordinate employees with regard to their pay, prospect and pensions. Some time ago some relief was no doubt given but it is inadequate. The irreducible minimum demands of the postal servants should be immediately granted. The leave reserve should be immensely increased and the employers should be allowed more rest and additional holidays, similar to those enjoyed by members of the other departments. Thirdly, if possible, authorities should reduce the enhanced rates and give increasing facilities for means of communication to the people. But if this be not practicable, the balance of the surplus must be utilized for opening new post offices in rural areas, increasing deliveries, and extending additional concessions and fa-

cilities to the public in general. In short Government must show in actual practice that the Post Office is a public utility service and not a revenue earning department.

It will perhaps be argued that the Post and Telegraph departments go together, that the surplus of the one is balanced by the deficit of the other and that together they yield no appreciable revenue to the exchequer. There is no reason why the Telegraphic Department should be run at a loss. It is now running at a loss on account of its European and Anglo-Indian personnel, whose pay, leave and cadre are fixed on a much more liberal scale than those of the postal employees who are mainly Indian. Moreover, while there is a shortage of hands in the Postal Department, there is an excess of hands in the Telegraph Department, as admitted by the head of that Department himself. By the two Departments being combined, not only does the Telegraph Department benefit at the expense of the Postal, but the general taxpayer loses sight of the fact that the former is being worked uneconomically. If for political or other reasons the expenditure on the Telegraph Department should be retained as it is, the Postal Department has every right to say that it should not be starved on account of the other Department's extravagance and that justice should be done to its employees and the public alike.

N. V. BHONDE

LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, JUNE 19.

O'DWYER-NAIR CASE.

THE O'Dwyer-Nair case is still on the lips of people, and there are some who do not intend that the remarks of Mr. Justice McCardie shall remain forgotten. Dr. Haden Guest, who is a member of the Executive Committee of the British Auxiliary of the Indian National Conference, yesterday asked the Prime Minister whether his attention had been called to the statements made by the Judge during the trial of the action, with reference to the punishment of General Dyer by the Government of India and the British Government; and whether, in view of the effect of this case on political opinion in India, the Government proposed to hold any further inquiry into the circumstances of General Dyer's removal. Mr. Dixey, who is, I find, Unionist member for a Cumberland constituency, asked, for reasons very different from those animating Dr. Guest, whether, in view of the fact that General Dyer is seriously ill, the Prime Minister would consider immediately what steps could be taken to reconsider the position of the General and the treatment accorded to him. The Prime Minister was brief and to the point. The findings of jury on the questions submitted to them, he pointed out, did not contain any indication or suggestion that General Dyer was not fairly dealt with by the authorities, and His Majesty's Government agreed with the late Government in regard to the judgment which was passed upon his actions. Dr. Guest tried to press the matter further, and asked whether the Government would take an early opportunity of dissociating themselves in the most emphatic

way from any attempt to govern India by force or the suggestion that such methods were justifiable. To this Mr. MacDonald made no reply, nor did he to a further question by Sir Kingsley Wood, who drew attention to a Notice of Motion put down by Mr. Lansbury calling for the presentation, of an address to the Crown demanding the removal from office of Justice McCardie, and asking for facilities for discussion. Mr. Lansbury sought to enlist the co-operation of the Speaker in securing a reply from the Prime Minister, but the Speaker suggested that Mr. Lansbury put a specific question on the Paper. The only way that a Judge can be removed in this country is by an address to the Crown by both Houses of Parliament. There is no compulsion upon the Government to provide time for such a discussion, and I have reason to believe that Mr. MacDonald will go far to refuse to provide time for a discussion, with a view to let the whole matter rest, so that angry passions may cool down. I understand that Mr. Lansbury was pressed in various quarters to withdraw his motion, but refused. His motion now stands in the names of Mr. John Scurr, Mr. Smillie, Mr. Walter Baker, Mr. Thurtle and Mr. Thomas Johnstone. Mr. Smillie is the Chairman of the executive of the Parliamentary Labour Party, of which Mr. Lansbury is the Vice-Chairman, whilst Mr. Johnstone is secretary of the Scottish Labour group and a member of the executive of the Parliamentary Labour Party. With such backing it may not be possible for Mr. MacDonald to continue to refuse facilities for a discussion on Mr. Lansbury's motion. Even if the motion be passed in the Commons—which is very doubtful—it will be merely in the nature of a demonstration, for there is not the least likelihood of a similar motion passing the Lords, and without this, no action is possible. But it will ventilate a lot of bad feeling and will possibly generate a good deal more.

The *Times* points out that the last instance where the behaviour of a Judge was raised in the House of Commons was in July, 1906, when a motion was proposed that the House should resolve itself into a Committee to consider the complaints made against the conduct of Mr. Justice Grantham during the trial of the Great Yarmouth Election Petition. On that occasion the Attorney-General stated that he did not think that Parliament had ever addressed the Crown for the removal of a Judge except in the case of grave moral misconduct. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, then Prime Minister, mentioned that a memorial asking for the discussion of the motion had been signed by 347 members of the House. After a full discussion, the motion was withdrawn and the matter dropped.

The *Solicitors' Journal* discusses the action of the counsel for the defence in the O'Dwyer-Nair suit in accepting a majority verdict. The journal says that he "obviously disregarded a rule very familiar to jury practitioners. It is generally regarded as unwise to accept the verdict of a majority of the jury when the summing up of the presiding judge is obviously not very favourable to the verdict desired by one's client. In such a state of affairs, if the jury cannot agree, the obvious presumption is that the majority favour the view evidently considered right by the judge, and that the disagreement is in all probability due to the obstinacy, or, perhaps, one ought to call it, the independence of one or two jurors who are less influenced by the summing-up of the judge than jurymen usually are. Of course cases to the contrary occur. . . But this seldom happens, and it is a good rule of practice never to be tempted into accepting

a majority verdict unless the judge has summed up in your favour. But, of course, no hard and fast rules are possible in a varied profession like that of forensic advocacy. Reasons for making exceptions will always occur. The fact that the trial is very long and expensive, and that re-trial might be more ruinous than an agreed verdict, has always to be borne in mind. Probably this weighed with the defendant and his counsel when they agreed to accept the verdict of a majority, which they can scarcely have hoped to be favourable to them, except by a gambling chance in view of the very decided directions given by the learned judge."

The last issue of the *Nation* contains the following interesting note on the effect of this miserable affair:—"Nothing more deplorable has occurred in connection with India than the O'Dwyer-Sankaran Nair case. If an enemy had designed to do this country the maximum of harm in India he could not have struck a shrewder blow. It will reverberate through India with effects that will be felt for many a long day. The trial and the verdict, but most of all the attitude of the bench throughout, will be interpreted as an official whitewashing of the worst blot upon our rule in India in living memory, and a touch of irony is added to the tragic circumstances by the fact that the central figure in the affair is not an extremist but one of the most conspicuous friends of this country among the leaders of Indian opinion, and that the book out of which the case arose was an indictment, not of our rule, but of the evil effects of the Gandhi propaganda. On the specific point of the libel there is no doubt that Sir Michael O'Dwyer was entitled to the verdict, but the handling of the case and its employment to revise and reverse the whole judgment of this country upon the events that culminated in the massacre at Amritsar are a heavy price to pay for dissociating Sir Michael from certain aspects of the events. I understand that Sir Sankaran Nair was strongly advised not to accept an agreed verdict; but the case had cost him £12,000, he knew that there would have been a new trial, and he was not prepared, after his experience of Mr. Justice McCauley's conduct of the case, to risk a further contest in the British Courts. It was a natural decision on his part: a deplorable decision so far as the interests of this country are concerned. A new action before a new judge could not have failed to modify the mischievous effects of the most lamentable judicial exhibition that I recall in connection with a matter of such gravity. The public will expect to hear from Lord Olivier on this important subject when Parliament meets." Parliament met on Monday, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was not long in saying how the Government views the situation, though I note that the political paragraphist of the *Westminster Gazette* thinks that the Prime Minister might have gone further in dissociating himself from the remarks of the judge.

OTHER MATTERS.

Sir Charles Yate is very worried about the inefficiency of the Indian municipalities, especially those in Bengal and the United Provinces. So he asked the Under-Secretary for India the other day what steps had been taken by the Government of India to improve matters. I do not know whether Sir Charles and his friends are as ignorant of the provisions of the Government of India Act as they appear to be, or whether they systematically pretend not to recognise the purport and provisions of the Act, or whether they put these silly questions merely with the object of annoying Indians. It would have been quite proper for the Speaker not to have allowed this question. However, he did so

and Mr. Richards crushingly replied that local self-government being a transferred subject in the provinces, it was not open to the Government of India to intervene in its administration, and that the efficiency of the municipalities in the different provinces was the responsibility of the Minister in charge of local self-government in each of these Provinces and through him of the provincial Legislative Council. Whether Sir Charles Yate wanted or needed to learn this elementary lesson is a matter of doubt.

The Indian press cables are full of reports of political feuds and communal divisions which, if they are true or even partially true, make very sorry reading. Naturally, reactionary circles here make great profit out of these reports, and the result appears in the various questions put to the spokesman of the India Office week by week by Sir Charles Yate and his fellows who batten on this sort of thing. Assuming the truth of the allegations, for purposes of argument, they exhibit no sense of sorrow that there should be these divisions, but only an unholy exultation at the multiplied evidence of the need for Englishmen to continue to control the destinies of India and, naturally, to reap the reward of such disinterested service.

Mr. Sastri spoke last night to the re-named British Committee on Indian affairs at the House of Commons on "The Breakdown of Diarchy." I am not at liberty to divulge the text of his remarks, but its tenour will be very well known to your readers. Next Wednesday, the 25th instant, there will be the big Queen's Hall demonstration in India, when the principal speakers are Mr. Sastri, Mrs. Besant and Munshi Iswar Saran.

The sudden death of Sir William Duke, the Permanent Under-Secretary for India, is greatly deplored by all who know him. He has been described as by far the most liberal and broad-minded member of the I. C. S. However that may be, he was a hard-working, honest, disinterested, and sympathetic man. His connection with the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms is larger than many people suppose. He was in harness up to the very last. He had left the office for tea, and had intended to return, but an attack of heart-failure seized him and he succumbed almost instantaneously. His remains were cremated at Golders Green on Monday last. It is an ironic commentary that two men of the calibre of Duke and Meyer should have been laid low in this way at a critical moment in the history of their respective departments. Sir Arthur Hirtzel, a member of the Home Civil Service, is spoken of as Sir William's successor. He has the reputation of being a man capable of coming to a decision, efficient, but narrow and inelastic.

Says the Oxford University correspondent of the *Observer* :—

Two decisions with regard to the status of Indian students are now under consideration. Congregation last Tuesday passed the preamble to a Statute providing that a B. A. of an Indian university approved by the Hebdomadal Council may under certain conditions be exempted from Responsions. Next Tuesday Congregation will decide whether an Indian candidate for entrance to this University must be acquainted with any Western language other than English. The former question seems the more important; and the Principal of Hertford's assurance that the claims of Indian universities to be "approved" would always be carefully scrutinised was welcome. It is no kindness to admit any students who are not really qualified to profit from Oxford teaching; nor is there any question of race prejudice, since, as everyone knows, it is not by any means every Western university that secures "approval."

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