

THE Servant of India

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE advance of the Allies goes merrily forward. In the East, Damascus has fallen. So has St. Quentin in the West. In the intermediate theatres, in the Balkans, in Albania, on the Italian front, the enemy has been falling back continuously. Some of the key positions of the enemy on the Western front are threatened by the Allied armies. Cambrai has been reported to be evacuated; Lille is supposed to be in imminent peril. When these things fall out as expected, Allied territory will be cleared of the enemy at no distant date.

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INTERESTING news comes from the Balkans. First, there was the proposal for an armistice from Bulgaria, which had, afterwards, to be transformed into one for a substantive peace. Then followed reports about a change of ministers and the release of all political prisoners. Now on the top of all this, a message from Sofia says that Tsar Ferdinand has abdicated and has been succeeded by Prince Boris on the throne. The Balkans are the wonderland of Europe, and there is no knowing what may happen there at any time. Especially so is the case with the approach of winter. However, the part played by Bulgaria during the two Balkan Wars and also in this war, is typical of Germany and her allies. Her collapse in this sudden manner was regarded in all Allied countries as heralding the end of the military domination of the Central Powers and of all the German schemes of commercial exploitation in Turkey and Mesopotamia.

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NOR have these expectations been falsified. After the ministerial crisis in Germany, Prince Max of Baden, the new Imperial Chancellor, an-

nounced in the Reichstag that he had sent a note to President Wilson accepting the conditions of peace as laid down by the latter in the message to the Congress in the beginning of the year and his speech on September 30. It is reported that he has also proposed an immediate suspension of hostilities. A peace note submitted by the Central Powers on this basis is a clear confession of defeat, and as such it will be regarded all the world over. But it has come with such dramatic suddenness that there is a tendency to suspect the genuineness of the desire for peace. Besides, the past record of Germany does not create a very strong presumption in favour of her honesty or consistency between her intentions and professions. If, therefore, the Allies doubt her sincerity and require preliminary guarantees therefor, Germany has to thank herself.

* * *

GRANTED this preliminary condition, we fail to understand how the Allies can refuse to discuss peace terms and attend a peace conference. President Wilson has laid down the conditions of a permanent peace. They have been accepted by the Allied nations. The Central Powers, who were till recently playing with them, give their adhesion to them in all their entirety. After all this, it does not lie, we are afraid, with any single Power or group of Powers to say that they are not willing to discuss peace terms with Germany. It has been said that the Allies cannot make peace with the *present* rulers of Germany, and that no peace is possible until the regime of the Prussian *Junkers* is at an end. No one is in love with the present system of government in Germany—no subject nation in the world can love autocracy or bureaucracy. But it is a far cry from this to the proposition that some of the belligerents would not begin peace negotiations unless and until there has been an internal revolution in the opposing nations. Such an attitude will raise issues of enormous significance, which it may not be convenient for many of the belligerents to face. However, there is no need to speculate. We can 'wait and see' as the question will be decided in a couple of days.

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THE news of the transfer of Lord Willingdon from Bombay to Madras will be received with genuine regret all through the Presidency. It is true that Lord Willingdon had already overstayed here, but when this was done, it was expected that

he would be continued here at least for some time more. During the tenure of his office, Lord Willingdon has endeared himself to all classes of the people by his sweet manners and his large hearted sympathy. We congratulate the sister Presidency on having secured Lord Willingdon as the head of the administration for the next five years.

BOMBAY cannot congratulate itself for the selection made in regard to her Governor for the simple reason that so little is known about Captain George Ambrose Lloyd. He seems to possess some miscellaneous qualifications and, for ought we know, may prove a success. Our complaint is that more or less untried men are sent to India at the present moment. When the reforms have been carried out, the provinces enjoy full responsible government, and the Governors have to play the role of constitutional monarchs, it does not matter who is sent to India. But in the critical times through which we are passing, when the old order has been thoroughly discredited but has not made its exit, and new order is being talked about, but has not been inaugurated, it may not be quite safe to try experiments.

BOMBAY has been very badly treated in regard to the temporary King's Commissions. Out of the 41 candidates selected, not a single one hails from this Presidency. We do not grudge the good fortune of the Punjab or the N. W. F. Province, the people from which have shed their blood profusely in defence of the Empire! But has Bombay lagged behind, we ask? Although the Marathas have inherited glorious martial traditions, they were almost systematically discouraged in regard to military employment till about the beginning of the war. In spite of all this, they responded in a splendid manner to the call of duty, and extorted glowing tributes to their valour from military commanders both in the East and the West. With all this we do not find among the list the name of a single Maratha cadet! Prince Dhairyashil Rao of Baroda is a Maratha no doubt. But he belongs to a Native State, and our grievance that the Marathas of the Presidency proper have been unjustly treated still holds good. It is a pity that the Government have not seen their way to recognise the merit of this gallant race, and have not utilised this opportunity of marking their appreciation of the services of the Marathas in a fitting and substantial manner.

THE hand of Providence has fallen heavily on this unfortunate Presidency. As if the miseries caused by the war and the famine were not enough, there is the influenza raging furiously in various parts of the Province. The daily mortality in Bombay has exceeded 760 which is a record even after years of plague. Poona is equally bad with a mortality of more than 200 for some days. Sholapur is even worse. With a population smaller than that of Poona, it has a mortality

50 p. c. higher. Many other towns in the Deccan are passing through similar experiences. It appears the poor, the labouring classes, the men who do not know anything about personal hygiene and sanitation fall easy victims. They have besides no means to provide medical relief and make proper dietary arrangements for the patients. In Poona, the Municipality has started a temporary hospital for poor people. Volunteers have been organised, and a great deal is being done to take medical relief to the doors of the needy. The mortality returns for the week show that the epidemic has begun to subside.

HAPPILY, the latest news of Mr. Gandhi's health is encouraging. An Ahmedabad message of Tuesday, Oct. 8th, 6 P. M., ran as follows: "Condition shows slight improvement. Mental depression still continues. Mahatmaji is on biochemic treatment and can take sufficient Mellin's food. Sure signs of recovery, which must be very slow." All India wishes for the speedy and complete recovery of the saint-patriot.

HARI SHRIKRISHNA DEVA, L. M. & S., passed away quietly at Dhulia in the early hours of Tuesday, Oct. 8. He was tapped for the fourth time in Bombay, and though the operation was successful, it gave him little relief, and doctors, despairing of his recovery, recommended his removal to Dhulia in the midst of his parents and brother and sister and nephews. He was accordingly removed there on Friday last, Mr. Gharpure accompanying him part of the way, and the end came three days later. Dr. Deva served the Sangli State as Durbar Surgeon for nearly fifteen years and earned the warm appreciation of the Chiefs and the gratitude and love of all the subjects in the State, high and low alike. During the progressive regime of Capt. Burke as administrator, Dr. Deva was the general counsellor of the State in all matters of administration, and in the inauguration of the People's Assembly, the making of elementary education free and compulsory and the initiation of like reforms, which characterised the period, Dr. Deva was the right-hand man of Capt. Burke. He joined the Servants of India Society in the beginning of 1914, though from the very first he was a warm sympathiser with its objects and contributed regularly towards its funds. He was the Secretary of the Society and served it well in that capacity in a number of ways. In Champaran, after Mr. Gandhi had commenced Passive Resistance in Kaira, the main burden of directing the work of the volunteer agency fell on him, and he did it to the complete satisfaction of Mr. Gandhi. He was nearly 54 at the time of his death. In him the Society loses one of its most devoted workers.

Owing to the prevalence of influenza, and the consequent dislocation of business, we are issuing an eight-page edition this week. We are afraid, we may be required to do the same for two or three weeks more.

CONTROL OF COTTON CLOTH.

THE proceedings of the conference, which recently met in Bombay, of the representatives of the various provinces and of interests concerned in cotton trade and manufacture, and of which a report has been just issued, are of a reassuring character inasmuch as they go to show that prompt measures are going to be taken to give effect to the Control of Cotton Cloth Act passed a few days ago by the Supreme Legislative Council. Experience alone can tell how far that Act will be productive of tangible results. Prophets are not wanting who predict that whatever control Government may exercise over the manufacture and distribution of standard cloth, the prices of the article are not likely to be appreciably reduced. The fact that cloth prices considerably declined as a result of the passing of the Control Act, combined with other causes, appeared to lend colour to the view that Government interference with cotton manufacture and trade was superfluous, and that the best course for the State to follow would be to let well alone. It is, therefore, a gratifying circumstance to find that Government intend to carry out the policy laid down by them after prolonged deliberation and consultation, and will not be swayed by the counsels of the advocates of a State attitude of masterly inactivity. The hardships caused to the mass of people by prevailing high prices of cloth along with other necessaries of life, are an admitted fact. Equally generally admitted is the fact that the future is uncertain to a degree, so far as economic conditions are concerned. It follows, therefore, that the State will be failing in the discharge of its obvious duty if it did not take all practical steps betimes to provide whatever relief it can to people suffering from high prices.

It is an interesting study in human psychology to consider the different arguments advanced by different critics to deprecate State control of cloth, and to examine the nature of the sympathy which is freely extended to the masses, who are the victims of high prices. The cloth census taken by Government has disclosed the fact there are large stocks at the various ports and in the large markets throughout the country. These stocks, it is stated, are sufficient to carry the country over two years, and the prevailing scarcity is directly caused by speculation and the difficulties of transport. Even admitting that this is true, we do not see how it strengthens the case for non-interference on the part of the State. What guarantee is there that prices of cloth, which have slightly gone down for the moment, will not jump up again? On the other hand, there is every likelihood of prices remaining at a reasonably low level if an adequate supply of the kinds of cloth normally consumed by the masses is assured, by mills being compelled to set aside a certain amount of loom power for the production of those grades. The large class of poor consumers cannot be left to shift for itself, at the tender mercy of the fat speculator who is

making hay in the sunshine of war conditions. A writer contributing to the columns of the *Times of India*, argues that the evil of high prices can be cured by the prevalence of a scarcity of cloth and not by the supply of a quantity of cheap cloth. The controller of cloth is going to take pretty good care that the standard cloth, which mills will be compelled to produce, will be evenly distributed and will reach those poor classes whom the new Act is intended to help.

Dealers in cloth do not naturally like State control and would very much wish that they were left unfettered to speculate as usual. Mill-owners seem inclined to throw the whole blame upon middlemen and speculators, and attribute the prevailing scarcity solely to a withholding from the market of large quantities of cloth. Manufacturers think that so long as the price of raw cotton is high and is allowed to be kept at artificially high levels, it is impossible that cloth should become cheap. Owing to the dearness of the raw material, of labour and of other essential means of production, it is contended, the cost of manufacture is bound to be high and no State control of production is likely to bring prices down to any substantial degree. With supertax making a big hole in the pocket of the mill-owner and the war profits tax looming large on the horizon, the manufacturer is represented as an object of pity rather than of envy. If we turn to the dealer in raw cotton, and suggest the control of exports and of speculation, he will be struck with horror and will cry 'hands off!' The manufacturer of cloth has a fairly large margin of profit left to him; even when raw cotton is dear, he will say, and will point to the heavy loss the rayat is likely to suffer if cotton prices decline as a result of State control of exports, as if all speculative prices go into the pocket of the cultivator. It will also be urged that the country will be robbed of a quantity of wealth that would otherwise flow into it in payment of the high prices of its staple, and the Indian market will be flooded with Japanese cloth which will be manufactured in more favourable conditions.

The responsibility for the high prices of cloth is thus thrown by the vested interests upon the shoulders of one another, and the poor consumer is left to extract what comfort he can out of the plausible explanation of extraordinary war conditions and the play of national forces. The legislature has, however, armed the Government with certain powers to deal with them, and we are glad that it is determined to use the weapon. We admit that the problem bristles with difficulties. There are numerous factors which have to be taken into account, and no one wishes that anything should be done which will unnecessarily inflict a loss upon any party or hamper the normal course of trade. It is clear from the proceedings of the conference in Bombay that these considerations will be duly weighed, and that all interests will be safeguarded, so far as it is possible to do so consistently with the attainment of the object the Control of

Cloth Act has in view. Control of a very stringent character is being exercised in England in a variety of forms and in various directions, and India is only copying British methods. The State has a heavy responsibility to bear with respect to the supply of the necessaries of life to the mass of population in these critical times, and the operation of economic laws cannot be pleaded to defend the position of vested interests, speculators and profiteers in the prevailing extraordinary conditions. Public opinion must strongly support whatever measures Government will take to relieve the hardships the masses have to suffer and ought to urge greater activity in that direction.

THE LUXURY TAX.

"Henry VIII taxed lands, and graduated the tax according to the status of the wearer. For example, the Sheriff of Canterbury was constrained to pay the sum of three shillings and four pence for the privilege of sporting his venerable whiskers. Elizabeth, likewise, fixed a similar tax on every beard of over a fortnight's growth. In 1695 it was decided that the arrival of every child into the world should be greeted by a tax. The birth of a child to a duke cost the proud but harassed father £ 30, while the advent of a commoner's child into the world was hailed with a tax of two shillings. Moreover it was an expensive matter to die, and bachelors and widowers also were compelled to pay for the privilege of single blessedness. It was due to William Pitt that the window-tax was instituted. In the reign of George I, it was necessary to have a license in order to sell hats. Then there was the tax on hair powder and the tax on watches and clocks."

Towards the middle of August last, the dear old Reuter gave us an elegant *aperçu* of a new eirenicon enunciated by the Luxury Tax Committee, which compelled the British to strain their eyes with a view to finding a parallel buried in the musty archives of the past. History has repeated itself, and a duty of two pence in the shilling is about to be levied on the purchase price of jewellery, gems, perfumes, ospreys, aigrettes, pictures, yachts, motor cars, grand and automatic pianos, gramophones, liquors, etc. The tax also applies to meals if exceeding three shillings for breakfast, one shilling for tea, and five shillings for dinner. It is a pity that such an ill-judged measure which Mr. Bonar Law and his henchmen bring up before the forthcoming session of the British Parliament should have been nonchalantly ignored by the press in India. True to its traditions, *The Times of India* stepped into the breach and said some brave translunary things about the "inane futility" of the contemplated sumptuary laws, which have been in desuetude for centuries. Its frank avowal of the fugitive acquaintance with the History of Rome made it impossible for it to seek the justification of sumptuary legislation in the lavish expenditure of the wealthy class surrounded by a troop of domestics and retainers and a host of artisans and others, who ministered to their pleasures or supplied their wants. The existence of a great non-producing population at the heart of the Empire, whose secondary wants grew faster

than the wealth necessary to supply was a standing menace to the organisation and power of the Empire, while the extraordinary inequality in the distribution of wealth aggravated the feeling of suppressed antagonism between the idle rich and the dependent poor. With the natural instinct to discern the weak points of a measure *The Times of India* foresaw "numerous difficulties" and its London correspondent tells us of the multitudinous reefs and snags calculated to rouse the Luxury Tax Committee from dogmatic slumber to find what consolation they can in the reflection that the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley. Unfortunately, the leading paper of Asia did not help its readers over the stile by a reasoned discourse to prove that the proposed legislation is prompted by considerations of financial opportunism rather than by the clear-eyed perception of the proper sources of taxation and the rationale of the taxing process. Nevertheless, the journal deserves to be warmly congratulated on its public spirit in nailing its protest to the door.

I do not presume to offer myself to your readers as a Sherlock Holmes who can deduce and balance the most elaborate legal niceties, but should like to judge the new-fangled tax by the dry light of reason. Nor am I disposed to flourish the bogey of the despotism of socialism after the manner of Eugen Richter whose "Pictures of the Future" represents extreme Manchesterism *in excelsis*. It would be downright folly to impugn the spirit of humanity and philanthropy breathed into our laws by the growth of social democratic movement, which has consigned or is about to consign George the Third's motto of government, namely, "Everything *for* the people, nothing *by* the people" to the limbo of exploded heresies. The socialist State, however, exceeds its legitimate bounds when it extends its undertaking beyond distribution, transportation, communication and the production of the necessaries of life and does not leave the painter of portraits and landscapes as severely alone as the performer on the 'cello or the writer of a novel. No one will stickle at the tax on the Marchand million dollar bedrooms, Vanderbilt two hundred thousand dinners, million dollar baths, costly yachts, gorgeous palaces and the like, but when the State bestows similar attentions on the comforts and decencies of life we must din into its ears Voltaire's significant dictum, *viz.*, "The superfluous is very necessary," reminding it, as *The Times of India's* pleasant chaff had it, of the wise words of M. Leroy. Beaulieu, who points out that the desire for luxury has a stimulating effect on production in general; it is perhaps with the sole object of "enabling his wife to wear laces that the husband has earned millions," much in the same way as Jacob, who submitted to seven years of the pastoral drudgery for Rachel. We must do this to prevent the recrudescence of the era of senselessly tyrannical legislation when, in the words of a

clever wit, "the schoolboy whipped has taxed top. The young man drove his taxed horse, in a taxed cart, on a taxed road. The patient worked out of his taxed window, lay down on his taxed bed, poured his taxed medicine into a taxed spoon, and died attended by a taxed apothecary."

It is not insinuated that no check should be imposed on the capital sunk in unproductive consumption, where the material and labour are out of all proportion to the individual satisfaction obtained, or which encourages a tribe of hangers-on, lackeys, touts and parasites. But, wise statesmanship ought to appreciate the refreshing influence of good books, good pictures, and even a good dinner, on the human faculties. The *raison d'être* of sumptuary legislation in ancient times lay in the absence of the social instinct and in the expediency of industrialism. In the Middle Ages and after, sumptuary laws were passed to restrain excess in dress, food, etc. the importation of foreign luxuries and the introduction of foreign labour. Now-a-days the moral sense, patriotism and altruism are making themselves felt on the luxurious, corrupt and artificial life of wealthy cities. Luxury has become fastidious, and there is a marked tendency to husband resources, to check expenditure and to invest capital productively. A measure which takes no account of the changing condition of the people and the normal laws of social growth is manifestly impolitic and generally does more harm than good. "It is the highest presumption," says Adam Smith, "in kings and ministers to pretend to watch over the economy of private people, and to restrain their expense either by sumptuary laws, or by prohibiting the importation of foreign luxuries. They are themselves always and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in the society." The Luxury Tax Committee are finding to their cost that their chickens are rapidly coming home to roost, and the most energetic campaign is launched against the brainless expenditure in the various departments of the State. What is wanted is the elimination of waste in all its protean shapes and the requirement of some work of public utility from every man and woman of the leisured class, who are working off their ennui by spending quite a disproportionate time in mountaineering, hunting, deer-stalking, rowing, yachting, cricket and football, coaching, etc. etc. besides riding roughshod on the backs of their less fortunate brethren as the Old Man of the Sea sat on Sinbad the Sailor.

"The cry of Europe is *cheap bread*" and the present dreadful war has opened the eyes of the British public to the danger of possessing their souls in patience by burning incense at the shrine of Cobden. The conviction has at last dawned upon them that in the agricultural self-sufficiency lies the sovereign remedy for scarcity of employment, growingly progressive emigration, legalized pauperism, mendicancy and vagabondage. As Mr. H. G. Wells, trenchantly puts it in his latest book entitled, "In the Fourth year," "the German sub-

marine campaign is only a shadow of what a submarine campaign might be," and those who know what the *Merrimac* proved to the United States fleet in the waters of the Chesapeake will not treat this warning as an alarmist cry. When once the locked-up land is released for the production of food crops and the knowledge of the chemistry of foods is "in widest commonality spread" the worst of the social evils will disappear. As it is, Professor Thompson tells us that: Out of 3,200,000 tons of potatoes, 47 percent is given to live stock and only 25 per cent is used as human food. Of oats 73 percent is used by live stock and 5 percent by man. Of 150,000 tons of barley, no less than 73 percent goes to the brewery, although there is ten times as much nourishment in the barley as in the beer. A writer in *The Daily News* recently quoted Professor Wood's figures that a pig consumes 12 lbs. of dry grain to manufacture one pound of pork; a fowl's ratio is 4 to 1; a sheep's 24 to 1, and a fat bullock's 64 to 1. The last is monstrous; sixty-four pounds of corn to one of meat casts a serious shadow over the roast beef of old England. Our dear loaf comes directly from the fact that the bullock and the sheep and the pig are eating 9,000,000 tons of grain to our 5,000,000 tons, and the obvious remedy is to abolish the sheep, the pig and the bullock. Such is the consensus of educated opinion in the United Kingdom and yet a writer in *Agricultural Journal of India* for January 1918 sapiently remarked; "One of the best methods of meeting such a crisis as is anticipated (*viz.* the world-shortage of food-grains) would be to increase the consumption of animal food in Europe by high feeding of the available stock, etc.!"

Meanwhile, we in India will watch with keenest interest the fate which awaits a measure flagrantly obnoxious to the ingrained habits of the British public.

KESHAVALAL. L. OZA.

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

LONDON, AUGUST 16.

LORD CURZON'S REAR-GUARD ACTION.

IF the speeches delivered in the Lords and Commons in the recent debates, and the letters now appearing over the signatures of prominent men in the various organs of the Press, be carefully examined, it will be seen that there is practically no difference of opinion as to the acceptability of the general principles of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme. It is true that Lord Curzon hesitates to give it his benison, on the pretext that it is incomplete, in the absence of the reports of the Committees to be appointed to examine the questions of the franchise and transferred subjects. But it is generally believed that he is fighting a rear-guard action and playing for time. He could not, and did not, in fact, declare that the scheme, in its fundamental principles, departed from the spirit of the pro-

nouncement of August 20, 1917. Nor did he at all take away from the definiteness of Lord Islington's declaration that "it is absolutely incumbent on His Majesty's Government, if they are not to be charged with the gravest breach of faith in the history of the Empire, to adopt a scheme of constitutional reform in India at the earliest possible date." Mr. Austen Chamberlain, too, in reply to a criticism by Mr. Charles Roberts that the War Cabinet had shown a reluctance to commit themselves to the adoption of the scheme, in its main outlines, said, with much emphasis (and Mr. Chamberlain is a member of the Cabinet): "My hon. friend need have no apprehension in his mind that the Government mean to go back in the letter or even in the spirit on that declaration (of August 20) . . . It was not a hasty declaration, for no responsible Government would offer a hasty declaration on a subject of such importance . . . The Government of that day did not make that declaration lightly. . . ." The principle of responsible self-government, as the ideal to be worked for in the constitutional reforms for India has, as Mr. Montagu rightly stated, in his reply on the debate, not merely been accepted by the Government, but by Parliament, and certainly by the country at large. For it is extraordinary how small has been the real opposition to the ideas that are therein implied. If the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme is not textually adopted by the War Cabinet, and even its authors have not expected this, it is certain that, in spite of Lord Curzon's declaration, the Government are every day more committed to proceed along the lines indicated in the Report, and the fact is that the two Committees are to be appointed not by the India Office, but by the Government as a whole. This Lord Curzon made quite clear.

ADVOCACY OF COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION.

Whilst it is difficult to see exactly what useful purpose is to be served by those who are aiming to delay the reforms, it is very obvious that an attempt is now being made to focus attention upon the divisions of Indian society and the extreme difficulties that will be found in creating the necessary electorates, so that as wide a basis as possible may be found for the franchise. The lukewarm, moderate reformers here are being shepherded in the direction of communal representation, and that was the real reason why the Sydenham organization has been anxious to secure the unmuzzling of Dr. T. M. Nair. Dr. Nair, muzzled, was a rock of offence, and quite a number of right-minded people here, unaware of the reasons for the institution of the muzzling order against him, felt that the India Office had something to conceal. Now that the embargo has been removed, Dr. Nair has proved quite harmless and disappointing. His first redoubtable feat was to follow Sir S. P. Sinha's example in addressing a gathering of members of Parliament. But whereas Sir Satyendra made a very great impression upon a large and influential audience, composed of some of the halting oppon-

ents of the scheme, among others, Dr. Nair's audience was miserably small. I am told that it did not exceed fifteen all told, and that it included Mr. H. E. A. Cotton, M. P., who subjected the worthy Doctor to a good deal of heckling. So he has since confined himself to a few splenetic letters to the Press, in which, of course, he advocates communal representation. By implication, he accepts the principles and the spirit of the scheme, so that, like so many others, he differs only in matters of detail. But he is very much annoyed with Mr. Montagu. He appears not to have read Lord Curzon's explicit statement that the appointment of the two Committees was to be made, not by the Secretary of State for India on his own responsibility, but by the Cabinet as a whole. He does not think it worth while troubling about the Franchise Committee. In fact, he thinks, in the face of the Report and the attitude taken up therein in the matter of communal representation, it is difficult to suppose that the Committee will express an opinion the other way, and he regards it as a waste of time for him to try to convince it. He proposes, therefore, to keep his powder dry, and keep up his bombardment of the Government until the matter comes up again before Parliament. Meanwhile, I understand that he intends to leave for India next month, and to return here next year. If he does not succeed in inducing the Government to adopt communal representation I am told that he threatens to join Mrs. Besant.

It is very unlikely that Parliament will be asked to consider the reforms seriously this side of Easter. The Committees have not yet been nominated. They will have to reach India, travel, and report, and only then will it be possible to examine the Bill that is now being drafted, in the light of the result of these investigations. A good deal of spade-work ought, however, to be done here before then in order to cultivate public opinion on the views to be taken on the various details of the scheme by the Congress—I am presuming, of course, that the Congress does not reject it *in toto*—and especially in the matter of the communal franchise. I think that you will stand on very strong ground if you insist upon the retention of the proportions of seats in the Councils to be reserved for Mussulman representatives, decided upon at the Lucknow Congress. It would create a tremendous impression here, and you would carry Mussulman opinion entirely with you.

LORD REAY'S SYMPATHY.

Lord Reay presided at the annual meeting of the East India Association. It seems strange to think that the society started by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji under quite different auspices, should have entered upon its second half-century of existence. Lord Reay has for some time been very ill, but he has now more or less recovered. Intellectually he is quite robust, as you will note from the terms of his remarks on the reforms, which you will have from other sources. But physically, he is far

from being his old self, and he had to be carried into and out of the hall. But he is the same shrewd, lovable man as of old, and his tributes to the memory of Mr. Dadabhai and Sir William Wedderburn were sincere and full of emotion. He made quite a good point, too, in reply to those who are alleging that, in spite of all experience, to associate Indians with the responsibilities of Government inevitably means to take the downhill path. He reminded his audience that, when Governor of Bombay, it was the late Mr. Justice Telang, among others, whom he consulted in the matter of the framing of the Bombay Municipality Bill, and who kept him from running too far ahead of the times.

It is unlikely that anything startling relating to Indian affairs, on this side, will take place during the next few weeks, for this is the holiday season, and everyone is taking what comfort he can out of the vastly better news from the Western Front that has been coming forward during the last month. People are actually beginning to prophesy that the war will some day come to an end. Some are rash enough to say that the end will come next year.

LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

MADRAS.

Madras, Oct. 5.

COMMOTION IN MADURA.

IN connection with the sedition trial in which Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu is the accused, there is a huge commotion and unrest in Madura which would not have arisen at all, but for the hastiness of the Police. On the 27th of September, a vast concourse of people is reported to have surrounded Dr. Varadarajulu's carriage when he came out of the Court. The police ordered them to disperse. They refused to budge and began to throw stones at the police. The police charged them with bayonets and then fired on them with the grave consequence that one reserve constable and a Sourashtra lad were killed, and some others injured. The origin of the affray is shrouded in mystery. Some say the police fired, and then the people threw stones. Others say that the people began the affray first by throwing stones. One report says that the police fired first in the air and then on the ground and then only on the crowd. Another report says that the police fired without any warning at all. Who gave the order to fire or whether anyone gave such an order is still a mystery to all people. Mr. G. F. Puddison, the Collector of Madura, and Mr. C. B. N. Pelly, the Deputy Inspector-General of Police are at present conducting a departmental enquiry into this sad affray and it is earnestly hoped that the enquiry will result in the proper apportionment of blame and the punishment of those who were guilty. Meanwhile, feeling runs very high in Madura against Mr. H. Elliott, the present D. S. P., and his dismissal or transfer has been demanded at some public meetings.

THE FOOD PROBLEM.

The food problem still continues to be very acute in every part of this presidency. On the 28th of September the Madras Government issued a communique on this question which can hardly be beaten for callousness. They do not propose to control prices yet, for the Famine Code would not let them. Can red-tapeism go to a more inhuman length? Did the Famine Code allow the Bombay Government to control prices? When will our Government learn wisdom? Are they waiting

to see a repetition of the sad experience of the last month? It would almost seem so. While we are thankful to them for the improvements they have promised in matters of transport and supply, we are bound to say that they are entirely inadequate and that if something more is not done, it will be Government and not political agitators that will pave the way for future trouble, whatever the Government may say to the contrary.

OUR NEW GOVERNOR.

The appointment of Lord Willingdon as the next Governor of Madras has caused universal satisfaction here. Even the *Hindu* considers him a better Governor than Lord Pentland, while *New India* positively rejoices at the appointment and has hailed our new Governor as "almost a Nationalist." What greater welcome could Lord Willingdon expect!

SELECTIONS.

INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

SOCIAL SERVICE LEAGUE'S CAMPAIGN.

UNDER the auspices of the Bombay Social Service League a public meeting was held at the Servants of India Society's Home in Sandhurst Road, Bombay, on Wednesday, October 2 to adopt measures for organising volunteer agencies for work among the poor in the city in connection with the influenza epidemic. The Hon. Mr. G. K. Parekh was voted to the chair.

Mr. N. M. Joshi, Secretary of the League, read a statement, showing what the League proposed to do. In this he stated:—

Some time back the first influenza epidemic came to Bombay. It was in a mild form then. It has now reappeared in a severe form. The mortality has been going up during the last fortnight and has reached a point which was never reached before in the history of this city, not even during the worst days of plague. The Municipal Health Department is, perhaps, doing its very best to meet the extraordinary situation. At such an abnormal time, the ordinary machinery for the preservation of health of the city can never be strong enough and is bound to break down. And the need for the co-operation of voluntary and non-official agency is very keenly felt. One point which the League has kept before itself in its work is to take the relief to peoples' homes, instead of expecting them to seek relief from Municipal dispensaries. The Municipality has not even got sufficient staff to undertake this work. The second point, which I would emphasise in doing our work is that voluntary work must be done in co-operation with the Municipal Health Department. After all, the main burden of medical relief of the poor falls on the Municipality and the voluntary relief can only be supplementary. Moreover, co-operation between different agencies for relief will prevent overlapping and unnecessary waste of energy. The scheme of work published on behalf of the League is based on the above two principles.

THE LEAGUE'S SCHEME.

For the above mentioned work, the League has opened four centres, two on Parel side, one at Tardeo and one at Madanpura. Out of the two centres on Parel side, one is located in the Parel Settlement of the League on Parel Road and the other in the Currimbhoy Ebrahim Workmen's Institute on Delisle Road. The Tardeo centres has its headquarters in the Temperance Club of the League on the Foras Road and that of the Madanpura centre in the League's Urdu Library in Ghelabbay Street. One more centre will be opened at Colaba. At each centre there is a full time superintendent and the volunteers will be attached to the different centres and they will work under the superintendent. The medical work of each centre will be in charge of some medical men and some of the senior students of the Grant Medical College.

The work which the League intends doing with the help of volunteers may be described as under:—(1) In the first place the volunteers will co-operate with the Municipal Health Department in securing for the people medical treatment. They will take medicine for the patients from the Municipal dispensaries and arrange for visits of the doctor if convenient and necessary. (2) The volunteers will advise the people about the few elementary principles of treatment and nursing such as allowing fresh air to enter the sick-room, not to give solid food to patients, not to allow the patients to be fatigued by moving out of their bed, to remove the worst cases to the hospital on Arthur Road and such other things. (3) They will also advise people about the preventive measures to be taken, such as keeping the bowels clean and stopping every kind of bodily exertion as soon as head-ache and other signs begin to appear. (4) The volunteers will not only give advice but will try to attend upon the patients as far as possible. (5) The League proposes to distribute milk free of charge through the volunteers for use of poor patients. (6) The volunteers will be provided with thermometers, some quantity of preventive mixtures, poultice materials, etc. (7) The League also proposes, if possible, in co-operation with the Health Department to organise moving dispensaries. The doctor will take in a motor-car or in a victoria a few standard mixtures and directed by the volunteers may visit different chawls and treat patients.

NEED OF MEDICAL MEN.

The Municipal Health Department has promised to give all possible assistance to the League's volunteers. The Municipal dispensaries will supply milk to certified cases. To carry out this programme of work a large number of medical and other volunteers is necessary, and it is a matter of satisfaction that our President's appeal for volunteers has received a good response. We have already got more than fifteen senior students of the Medical College, six of whom are lady-students. The young women-doctors will be specially useful to examine Mahomedan women patients as there is a great prejudice in that community against the male doctors examining the female patients. The Deccan volunteers, the Bhatia volunteers, the volunteers of the K. K. Mitra Mandal and the Young Men's Hindu Association have also promised co-operation. Besides these, about 25 other volunteers have registered their names, and it is hoped many will follow after the meeting. To meet the expenditure required for this organisation, the League has asked from the public about Rs. 15,000, and the appeal has met with a generous response. Rs. 6,00 have already been contributed, and money is being subscribed very promptly. To supervise all the work a representative committee will be appointed at this meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE.

Mr. Jannadas Dwarkadas moved the appointment of a committee, consisting of about seventy-five representative gentlemen, belonging to different communities with power to add to their number to supervise the work of the influenza epidemic relief undertaken by the League. Sir. N. G. Chandavarkar was proposed as president of the committee, and the following gentlemen as its secretaries:—Messrs. K. J. Dubash, Hussenhoy A. Leljee, Umar Sobhani, Morarji Mulraj Khatau, V. L. Mehta, T. A. Kulkarni, C. B. Lalaiye, Kanji Dwarkadas Dharamsey, Ishwardas Icharam Mashruwala, L. R. Tairsey, K. J. Chitalia, and N. M. Joshi.

Mr. Syed Hussain seconded the proposition, which was carried.

On the motion of the Rev. R. M. Gray, a vote of thanks was accorded to the chairman, and the proceedings terminated.

The League has till now been able to collect over Rs. 23,000. Besides the medical relief provided by opening free dispensaries in the various parts of the city, the League has

decided to open two hospitals. Total number of patients receiving medical aid now is nearly 1700. More than 100 volunteers have enrolled and are doing the work of relief.

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