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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE obscurity of the situation in Siberia has not been lessened. It is difficult to make out whether it is the German menace or the civil war between Bolshevik and Cossack leaders that necessitates Japanese intervention. A few thousand German prisoners armed with Russian weapons can hardly hope to found a German Empire in the Far East. Nor is the Russian civil war in Siberia likely to force the Allies to take action in that part of the world. The hands of the Allies are already too full. Reports about negotiations in regard to intervention are not very reassuring. The United States seem to be almost decidedly averse to Japanese action. The other allied Governments would rather 'wait and see,' while the new Government of Prince Lvoff with headquarters at Peking is awaiting the landing of the Japanese with a view to co-operation.

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THE advantages secured by Germans in the East have surpassed their wildest expectations. The occupation of the Aaland Islands gives them a complete mastery over the eastern Baltic. This secures the northern point of their eastern frontier. In the south they have forced Russia to evacuate the Anatolian provinces of Turkey and to give up Batoum and Kars. Roumania has been forced to cede the Dobruja. Although a trade route to the Black Sea via Constanza is to be provided, Roumania has been completely cut off from the Black Sea. The independence of the Ukraine and the Southern

Provinces of Russia has been recognised. All this means that Russian influence will be eliminated from the Black Sea which will henceforward be dominated by the Alliance, that is, by Germany. In the centre, large tracts have to be evacuated by Russia whose frontier is to recede to the east. With the Germanisation of the Baltic and the Black Sea in this way and with important extensive territories between the two, left to be dealt with by the Germans in their own way on their own principles, Eastern Europe appears for the moment to be completely at the disposal of Germany for exploitation. The prospects of the Allies look gloomy, but their resolve is as firm as ever. At one time the whole of Europe was at the feet of Napoleon and retribution was not far off. To-day the Allies have the whole of Western Europe in their hands and they are supported most enthusiastically by the United States with all their vast resources.

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THE discussion of the Financial Statement took place on Friday last under the new rules. It was kept to the line by the Viceroy, who had not often to interfere and who interfered gently when there was occasion. Pandit Malaviya voiced a regret no doubt shared by others at the loss of the right that members had long enjoyed of unlimited criticism and suggestion. Sir George Lowndes promptly got up to say that the statute of the British Parliament, which constituted the Council, laid down the limitation, now for the first time enforced. This being Sir William Meyer's last budget, members paid him the usual compliments, but with more than usual feeling and generosity. He had guarded the Indian treasury faithfully and well in critical times, and he had been violently attacked for his vigilance. We did not mind, therefore, how thickly we laid it on. Sir William was touched. He loved India and found that India loved him.

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THE discussion was enlivened by one of Sir Dinshaw Wacha's outbursts. With fifty years' study of public questions, reminiscences came crowding in upon him and the House listened to him with amused interest. He gave odd scraps of the history of Indian finance, made little biographical sketches of eminent Finance Ministers and concluded with eulogy of Sir William Meyer, which made the already incense-laden air of the Council-room oppressively so. When Sir Dinshaw

is fairly roused, he lays about him right and left, and his resounding blows fall impartially on the back of a promise-breaking Government or a shallow-pated colleague. As his sincerity is transparent nobody remembers any thing, and there is laughter and good humour all round.

* * *

PRINCIPAL HEATON, speaking at a function in the Engineering College at Sibpur, is reported to have said :—

'Mechanical and electrical engineering are professions in which there is absolutely no colour bar; they are worked on commercial principles; an efficient man is certain of employment. If a choice has to be made between two equally efficient men, the post would naturally go to one whose conditions of life enable him to accept the smaller scale of remuneration.'

The remark would be true where normal conditions prevailed. In India, as the Public Services Commission have admitted, the conditions are somewhat unnatural. Different races that have not yet learned to trust one another fully, come into competition, and political and other considerations often conflict with considerations of economy and efficiency. Not only Government, but railway companies and private firms, bestow their best jobs on racial grounds, though they all defend the preference on grounds of *true* economy. Indians can do equally well with others and ask for less. But they cannot overcome racial distrust or colour prejudice.

* * *

New India objects to the suggestion that we made in a former issue that, when the legislature of the reformed Indian constitution refuses to vote supplies, the executive may be given the power of carrying out the previous year's budget. Our contemporary says this would be levying taxes not voted by the people's representatives and proceeds to ask: 'If autocracy is to be re-established, why all the present pother?' The expedient is taken from the constitutional practice of Japan and is intended to afford time for the executive and the legislature to settle their differences and come to an understanding. A year's interval may bring about much change in the public mind, and it is not right to assume that the executive will always be wrong and the legislature always right. Would *New India* describe the Japanese constitution as autocratic? But we forget. Earlier in the paragraph, our contemporary has mentioned two alternative courses as possible in the event of a deadlock: "emulate Cromwell's 'take away that bauble', or submit meekly to the overbearing executive?" The latter is assigned to us. Perhaps *New India* prefers the Cromwellian method.

* * *

By the way, our contemporary's reading of history on this subject is entirely its own. We have always understood that responsible government *grew* in England; while Canada and the Dominions *adopted* it. In Canada, there were rebellions, it is true, which had been preceded by

conflicts between the executive and the legislature. Are we advised to go through the same course? Surely the experience of mankind is to be used for its improvement, not to be faithfully reproduced. What England granted to Canada after a rebellion she granted to Australia without a violent struggle. If deadlocks be an indispensable means of political evolution, it is necessary to make them possible. Means of getting over them should not be provided, and we must pray to God that the executive should be obstinate and refuse to yield even when supplies are not granted. For if they should, under the Congress-League scheme, quietly carry out the will of the legislature and skilfully avoid deadlocks, we should be face to face with stagnation!

* * *

THE meetings recently held in several parts of the country against the continuance of the Press Act are a sad reminder of the fate which the Press Deputation met with last year about this time at the hands of the Viceroy. There is no justification for this sword being kept dangling over our heads. Speaking with the keenest sense of responsibility, which we should expect from a retired High Court Judge, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar said of it at the Bombay meeting: "The Act is vague in its definition of seditious language; it arms the executive with what is practically irresponsible discretion and power; and the judicial safeguards provided against it are apt to be illusory." It would be difficult for the ordinary man to speak of it in such restrained terms.

* * *

A MOST momentous and influential meeting was recently held in Calcutta to protest against internments, at which all shades of Indian opinion in Bengal were united in demanding the repeal of the provisions of the Defence of India Act and the antiquated Bengal Regulation of 1818, which are now being applied for purposes of internal administration. In the belief of even the most lenient critics, gross injustice is being done in a majority of cases dealt with. The executive may have perfect confidence in the judgment and honesty of the Bengal C. I. D., but that will neither blind the vision nor blunt the feelings of those who witness hundreds of happy homes stricken with misery and sorrow and hundreds of promising educated young men converted into demented and emaciated wrecks of their former selves. An occasional admission of error of judgment on the part of over-anxious, over-worked officials shows that there is still a small chink in some corner to admit light, but it does not take away the dark character of the whole system. Neither peace nor loyalty is promoted by pursuing a policy of internments.

* * *

THE landholding classes of Bihar seem to be greatly perturbed by the compulsory Education Bill being brought up in the local Council. Their representatives went into the Council chamber on 4th inst., armed with speeches in opposition, but

before they could deliver themselves of this ready-made eloquence, a Select Committee had been formed! Thus forestalled, they have tried to make the best of a bad bargain, and have now sent copies of the speeches which they would have made to the local Government. The clause about the education cess seems to cause them the most severe trouble; but they are not less deeply concerned for their tenants. They have a rooted objection to compulsion in any form or shape; they cannot bear to see small agriculturists deprived of the earnings of their children; they fear a resulting diminution of agriculture; they remember the saying that little knowledge is a dangerous thing; and they are convinced that the only result of imparting such an education will be an artificial rise in the standard of living, which again will force up the wage level. They therefore invoke the covenant into which both the Government and the people entered at the beginning of the war to drop all controversial questions, and ask that this contentious measure be not proceeded with.

* * *

THERE has been some friction between the landholders of Tanjore and their *panchama* tenants. When disputes arise between them—which unfortunately have become very frequent now-a-days—the latter are put to great hardship by being ejected. The Government of Madras some time ago deputed an Indian officer to investigate and report on the matter. He has recommended that where there is a demand on the part of the tenants the Government should acquire house-sites and hand them over to the tenants on a co-operative basis. They should be required to deposit 20 per cent. of the cost of acquisition to start with and agree to pay the remainder in instalments spread over a period of twenty years, the applicants being jointly and severally responsible for the payment. The Government have accepted the proposal and deputed an officer who was for some time an Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies to acquire the house-sites. Much good is expected to result from the scheme. Fear, however, has been expressed in some quarters that the requirement of an initial deposit of 20 per cent. may nullify the scheme. We are not so pessimistic, and if the fear should turn out to be true, we dare say the Government will relax the rule.

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THE Champaran Agrarian Bill passed the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa at a single sitting on 4th inst. The representatives of planters attempted to put up some fight, but Government members being ranged on the popular side they found themselves in a hopeless minority. The *tinkathia* system of growing indigo, which is at the root of this trouble, has been abolished at a blow, and the planting community were reduced to beg for a period of grace wherein they could adjust themselves to new conditions. They prayed that the existing contracts be allowed to run their

course, and that the termination of this system be deferred till 1920. The supposed iniquity of closing down existing contracts vanishes when we remember that a clause in the Bill provides for compensation in cases where it has not been already taken. As the member in charge said, "To allow this system to continue is to perpetuate the circumstances which have made it so unpopular." When a division was taken on this amendment only three members were found to support it. Planters' representatives also tried to have the duration of contracts extended to five years, as against three recommended by the Committee of Inquiry, though with equal ill-success. The *abwabs* clause has been taken out of the Bill, no attempt having been made to amend it so as to afford real protection to tenants without subjecting them to harrassment. The settling of this age-long question within so brief a period in a peaceable manner is the greatest tribute that could be paid to Mr. Gandhi's pacific but determined methods of agitation.

* * *

THE Government of Madras have recently introduced some minor reforms with regard to the sale of country spirits. Among other things they have restricted the sale of arrack to the interval between 9-30 A.M. and 8 P.M., empowered the Collector to close arrack shops in the vicinity of factories and large centres of labour and where this course is not practicable, to close them on pay-day afternoons and have authorized him to insert special conditions in licences for closing the shops during fairs and festivals and on market days. These reforms would be of some value if the Collectors had the mind, but lacked the power, to check the evil of drink. We do not know that that is the case. When all the non-official Indian members of the Supreme Council are united in demanding total prohibition, these small reforms are not likely to rouse enthusiasm in the public.

* * *

THE hand of death has removed a great figure from the field of British politics. John Redmond, leader of the Irish Nationalists for many years, is dead. Endowed with the highest order of Parliamentary gifts and possessed of the deepest knowledge of Parliamentary procedure, it was yet his lot to serve his country and the British Empire without accepting any office during a public career of more than thirty-five years. The great ambition of his life, Home Rule for Ireland, was indeed won in 1914, though with Ulster excluded, but the war intervened to postpone its being put in operation. It was his lot to have strong opposition all through—the Conservative Englishmen for a long time and his own extremist countrymen latterly. His adherence to principles, self-sacrifice, moderation and sense of justice, in the face of much unpopularity and uncharitable criticism, make him a noble example to all who seek to achieve political reform by constitutional means.

OUT FOR MISCHIEF.

AT the annual meeting of the Madras Branch of the European Association, some uncharitable things were said of the political movement towards self-government in this country. The retiring chairman sought to frighten his hearers by speaking of the issue before them as being whether India was to be under British rule or Brahman rule. This is a gross perversion of the truth, calculated to injure a particular class, who seem at present to be all but outlaws in the Madras Presidency. The progressive party even in that Presidency, where Brahmans are undoubtedly ahead of other communities, does not consist solely of mainly of them, nor will the Congress scheme, or any other scheme that has been proposed, enable them to monopolise political power. Enemies of the Indian cause have taken advantage of the jealousy entertained by certain sections of the people against that caste and tried, not without some success, to alarm them and to draw them into an agitation against Home Rule. 'British rule or Brahman rule' is an effective war cry to these reactionaries, not the less effective because it is false and malicious. But the new chairman of the Association went one better. He was not content to inflame caste hatred. He must drag the authority of the British Cabinet in the mire and question the validity of the declaration of August last as to responsible government by drawing a pedantic distinction between a promise made by His Majesty's Government and a promise conveyed in a parliamentary statute. Legally that distinction is real. Parliament can refuse to ratify the promise of a Cabinet by rejecting a bill brought forward to carry out the promise. But a parliamentary statute can also be nullified or repealed by a subsequent statute. It is possible for a combination of the forces of Toryism and vested interests to defeat the legislation that Mr. Montagu may bring forward in fulfilment of his great pronouncement. But it is scarcely conceivable that any such combination can get Parliament to denounce the pledge embodied in that pronouncement. That pledge will continue to cry aloud to the honour of the British nation for its redemption quite as much as though Parliament had made it. Those who do not recognise it do incalculable harm to the British Empire, and it is a wonder they are not repudiated publicly by the loyal and patriotic section of the European community, whom we believe to be in the majority. The fire-brand no doubt exists everywhere; but he is held in check in Calcutta and in Bombay, while Madras seems fated to witness the unbalanced outpourings of a knot of political irresponsibles, who profess concern for the British Empire and do not even profess respect for the British Cabinet. Some time ago

local Governments showed great zeal in putting down what they considered to be unrealisable propaganda. Are we to believe that the Madras Government look upon the propaganda of the European Association as declared by their new chairman, the editor of the *Madras Mail*, as harmless, legitimate and helpful in maintaining a calm atmosphere? Do they regard as attainable in a quiet and peaceful way the desire of Mr. Welby and his friends to obtain a reversal of the Cabinet's policy, accepted whole-heartedly by the Viceroy and the Government of India? There are two extremes on every question, equally injurious when they take violent forms of expression and equally to be discountenanced.

Mr. Welby loftily commiserates the present Secretary of State, who has had the hardihood, in defiance of Lord Morley's dictum against parliamentary institutions for India, to proclaim responsible government as the aim of England's policy in this country and come out here to devise practical measures for its 'progressive realisation.' Mr. Montagu, says Mr. Welby, must have seen the insuperable difficulties of his idea and could save his honour only by framing an ingenious bill, which would start with a moderate first instalment but include clauses coming into operation at different periods and irrevocably committing the suzerain power to the transfer of responsibility to the legislature of India. Mr. Montagu must not be allowed, whatever may be his first step, to commit the British nation to future steps and the Congress party, whose hopes have been unduly flattered, must be taught, as quickly as possible, that the British Cabinet, though it may include Lord Curzon, Lord Milner and Mr. Bonar Law, must bow in Indian affairs to Lord Sydenham and Mr. Welby. We quote below the passage from Mr. Welby's address, which has given rise to the foregoing observations.

They must consider the position of Mr. Montagu. He had raised very great hopes in the people and if, as a result of his experiences in India, he found he could not fulfil them to the letter, what was he to do? The obvious way out of it was to propose a very large scheme and to say that it would be applied to India piecemeal. There was parliamentary procedure which would enable him to do that and to say that certain clauses would come into operation at once and the others be deferred. The danger of that sort of thing was that it might look to some people a very moderate scheme. Perhaps only one-tenth would come into operation at once and the other nine-tenths would come into operation by instalments in the course of years. That was one aspect of the matter. Considering the matter from this point of view, it would be at once suggested they were morally bound by the Montagu Bill to do certain things in India. If this kind of thing was allowed to go through, then Great Britain would be pledged, and without accusations of bad faith or treachery they would be unable to get a reconsideration of the main question. That question was whether the goal was to be responsible government. One was not reactionary in objecting to that. Lord Morley himself had refused to contemplate parliamentary institutions for India as even a distant goal. It would be necessary for them not to be blinded by what might appear to be moderate measures.

If the honour of the British nation was once committed by Parliament, then it would be extremely difficult for them to get any reconsideration of it without an accusation against the morality of Great Britain. He knew there were in other parts of India members who, when this question was put before them, talked about irresistible forces and looked like immediately surrendering. All forces were irresistible to those people who went out to battle with the white flag in their pockets. The argument that they might ultimately be defeated was not an argument for not putting up an opposition.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

OF the features, which can lend special interest to a budget debate, two could not but be wanting in the financial statement for 1918-19, which Sir William Meyer presented to the Imperial Legislative Council on the 1st March. No one could expect that it would contain any proposals for reduction of taxation or make provision for the development and expansion of services on which the moral and material well-being of the masses depends. War is writ large on every page of it. It has been so framed as to give England the greatest possible financial help that India can in the prosecution of the war. But while any relief was not to be looked for, it was feared that the next year might witness fresh additions to the burdens laid on the shoulders of the people. The presentation of the financial statement was, therefore, awaited with no little interest and anxiety. Fortunately that contingency has not come to pass, and the public, as soon as as it learnt that the exchequer was overflowing with money and that no new taxes would be levied, heaved a sigh of relief and ceased to concern itself any further with the budget. This represents also the attitude of most of the members of the Legislative Council, who have no expert knowledge of the financial problems. They were glad that no new tax would be imposed, and bestowed warm encomiums on Sir William Meyer for his skilful management of the finances of India, which, in their opinion, was exhibited in avoiding fresh taxation. That Sir William Meyer richly deserves the praise showered on him, nobody will be disposed to deny. Even a layman may be permitted to say that the introduction of a graduated income-tax, the steps taken by him to bring Government into contact with the small investor and to popularise notes, and the resourcefulness he has shown in dealing with the ways and means difficulty will render his regime memorable. His tenure of office has also been signalised by the enhancement of the duty on imported cotton goods without corresponding addition to the duty levied on similar goods made in this country. With a true regard for the over-burdened masses, he refrained, in spite of deficits, from imposing extra taxation during the first two years of the war. For pursuing this policy, he was assailed with harsh and undeserved criticism, but India saw in him only a faithful guardian of her financial interests.

Without detracting, however, from the praise which is justly due to him for the skill with which

he has managed our finances, it is permissible to offer a few criticisms on the financial statement, which he has laid before the Imperial Legislative Council. Let us first take the current year. Taking into account the taxation imposed, in order to meet the interest and sinking fund charges in connection with the war gift of £100 million to the British Government, the imperial revenue was estimated to be £66.42 million and the expenditure about £66.28 million. According to the revised estimate, however, the figures of revenue and expenditure are likely to be about £76.68 million and 70.85 million respectively. Thus the figure adopted for revenue has turned out to be an underestimate to the extent of a little over £10 million. Of this, about a million is due to the gain in exchange, and £1.5 million to advance payments of salt duty. The real difference between the revised and budget estimates thus amounts to 7.5 millions, of which 4.5 millions is accounted for by railways. It is true that the times are exceptional, and that the estimates have to be framed on cautious lines. But even so, it would hardly be illegitimate to complain of the wide divergence between the budget and revised figures for revenue. It may be said, as the Finance Member did say in replying to the debate on the financial statement, which took place on the 8th instant, that if the revenue was under-estimated, so was the expenditure also. The expenditure has no doubt exceeded the original estimate by about 4½ millions, of which 3½ millions is due to the increase in military expenditure. But Government will still have a surplus of about 5.83 millions or, excluding gain in exchange and advance payments of salt duty, about 3.33 millions at its disposal.

The arguments advanced above will appear in a clearer light, if we deal with the years 1916-17 and 1917-18 together. Excluding the taxation imposed in March, 1916, the imperial revenue and expenditure for 1916-17 were roughly estimated to be as follows:—

Revenue	£ 52 million.
Expenditure	£ 54.6 million.

The revised estimates for 1917-18, as stated above, give the following figures:—

Revenue	£ 76.68 million.
Expenditure	£ 70.85 million.

Thus, in less than two years, the revenue has risen by a little over 24.5 millions. Of this, as pointed out above, 2.5 millions are due to gain in exchange and advance payments of salt duty. We have accordingly to see from what sources the remaining 22 millions has been obtained. The taxes, which were levied to yield 7 millions, have actually yielded 9.5 millions. The railway revenue has expanded by about 7.3 millions, and the expansion of other sources of revenue has provided a little more than 5 millions. It is apparent from this that the greater part of the money has come from the expansion of the ordinary sources of revenue, which was perhaps brought about by those very causes, which led to a decrease in the

revenue in 1914-15 and 1915-16. It seems that to a certain extent this might have been anticipated, as the revenue had begun to show signs of recovery in 1915-16, the revised exceeding the budget estimate by about $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions. If this had been done, it would perhaps not have been necessary to enhance the duty on salt, which presses mostly on the poorer classes.

So far as the next year is concerned, it is a matter for sincere satisfaction that no additional taxes will be imposed. The revenue and expenditure are estimated to amount to about 73.99 millions and 71.7 millions respectively, and the surplus to about 2.29 millions. The provision for military expenditure is 29 millions. This includes a reserve of £ 1.7 million as against that of £ .7 million provided last year. A recurring grant of 30 lacs has been made for the development of primary education. In view of the substantial reserve provided to meet unforeseen military charges, half a million more may well be allotted to the development of scientific and technical education and sanitation. This will still leave the Finance Member with a surplus of a little over £ $1\frac{3}{4}$ million. Two resolutions were moved by the Hon'ble Mr. Sarma asking for an increase of 80 lacs in the expenditure on the objects mentioned above. The resolutions were not accepted by Government, but Sir William Meyer assured the Council that if his colleagues, who were responsible for scientific and technical education and sanitation, asked for additional outlay on these he would make every effort to provide them with necessary funds.

Subscriptions to the war loan have yielded about 35 millions or $52\frac{1}{2}$ crores in India. The success of the loan has far exceeded the most sanguine expectations, and has materially helped the Finance Minister in meeting war expenditure, which is incurred in India on behalf of His Majesty's Government but payment for which is made to the Secretary of State for India. Fresh contributions to the loan will be invited this year, and the Finance Member expects that the receipts will amount to 20 millions. In the course of the debate in the Imperial Council, several members regarded this estimate as a very optimistic one and urged Government to take steps to insure that no official pressure will be brought to bear on the masses to compel them to subscribe to the loan. The request was a reasonable one, as complaints of official pressure have come from almost every province during the current year, and Sir William Meyer promised on behalf of Government that instructions would be issued to the provincial and local war loan committees that they should give no cause for such complaints in future.

No review of our financial position can be adequate which does not take account of the difficulties which have confronted Sir William Meyer in the region of capital expenditure. Taking England and India together, the position is quite satisfactory, but our liabilities wear a different aspect

when we look at India alone. In the current year's budget it was estimated that the repayable war outlay on behalf of the British Government would amount to 39 millions. This was proposed to be met to the extent of $24\frac{1}{2}$ millions from revenue, representing ordinary home charges, and to the extent of 10 millions from the proceeds of the war loan. But the expenditure incurred on behalf of His Majesty's Government now amounts to no less than 66 millions. Further, the Secretary of State's drawings are expected to amount to 34.8 millions, and, in all, provision has to be made for discharging liabilities which have mounted up to 111 millions. The situation has been materially eased by the unexpected success of the war loan, but for which, says Sir William Meyer, we would have been in a very parlous state. The courageous innovation introduced by the Finance Member, in issuing Treasury bills, has further provided him with 30 millions. Investment in London on behalf of the Paper Currency Reserve has set free rupees worth 8.7 millions in India. And 13.3 millions are expected to be obtained from fresh coinage of silver. The last step was no doubt inevitable, but it has added to the difficulties of the poor. During the last two years about 50 crores of fresh rupees have been coined and the total and active circulation of notes has risen by about 42 and 28 crores respectively. The cumulative effect of all this has been to inflate the currency and to affect prices which were already rising owing to conditions brought into existence by the war. The need for adding to the volume of currency cannot be gainsaid, but Government should try to mitigate, as far as lies in their power, the hardships due to the inordinate rise which has taken place in prices, as their own action seems to have stimulated the upward tendency to a certain extent.

H. N. K.

A CRITIC OF THE "INDIAN OPPOSITION."

To many outside observers and students India appears a land of mysteries and paradoxes. For instance, several of them cannot understand how educated Indians who firmly believe that India can attain her salvation only under the guidance and with the co-operation of the liberal minded and liberty-loving British race, can consistently assail the administration in the press and on the platform for its sins of omission and commission in unsparing language as if it were bringing ruin upon the people of India. To us, however, there is little in this which is inexplicable or unintelligible. Dadabhai, Ranade, Mehta and Gokhale believed in the divine dispensation which brought Britain and India together, and if they criticised the administration it was because they felt that the benefits of British rule could be fully reaped by the Indian people only if certain necessary reforms were carried out. Indians have learned to admire British institutions and are convinced that their national salvation lies in

becoming self-respecting, prosperous and contented units of the British Empire. This explains the agitation of the Indian National Congress for constitutional reforms which will raise India to the status of the self-governing Dominions. Only those who cannot understand the inwardness of the situation will see any inconsistency between the professions and criticisms of Indian leaders.

One such critic is Mr. William Archer, who has taken upon himself the task of explaining to the British public the position of affairs in this country and of demolishing the case for economic and political advancement presented by Indian leaders. He has devoted one chapter of his new book* to the refutation of the arguments advanced by Indian leaders in favour of a radical change in the policy of the government of India. He has taken the observations of Mr. Gokhale, in particular, relating to such questions as India's poverty, heavy military expenditure and commercial exploitation by non-Indians, and seems apparently satisfied that he has been able to demonstrate the fallacious character of the criticism by the 'Indian Opposition' of the existing method of administration. We cannot here examine the whole of Mr. Archer's position and can deal with only a few points raised by him.

The gist of Mr. Archer's contention is that the evils complained of by men like Mr. Gokhale are inevitable so far as they are evils, that but for the British rule the evils would have been much more serious and that the Government of Britain ought not to be held responsible for any social and economic grievances which are complained of. Our rejoinder to this reply briefly is that, as we have pointed out above, India's faith in the beneficence of British connection is based upon the conviction that under the British rule alone can the people of this country rise to their full stature, but this belief is accompanied by the equally firm conviction that this consummation cannot be attained unless a spirit of justice, of liberty and of noble statesmanship in consonance with the instincts of the British race and with the pronouncements of sovereigns and ministers is brought to bear upon the governance of India. The principle that Indians should be treated in this country as the British people are in their own and that they should be given opportunities to become what the subjects of England and the self-governing Dominions have become, sums up the claim of Indian leaders.

Does the present administration of India stand this test, is the crucial question that has to be answered and the difference between Mr. Archer and the 'Indian Opposition' lies in the answer that is given to it. Take the problem of India's poverty. Mr. Archer says: "The root of Indian poverty lies in the fact that the people at large have no will to be rich, or even well-to-do. Not till they learn to 'want more wants' will they learn to take

thought how to supply them." English economists used to confront the British labouring classes sixty years ago with the same arguments and to fling the 'iron law of wages' in their faces when they clamoured for the amelioration of their economic condition. But the British Government has now provided for old age pensions and labour insurance and has adopted measures for the economic improvement of the people. This was precisely a subject about which Mr. Gokhale used to make constant complaint. Administrations in India do not take long views of things; they simply drift along the current of time. 'This is enough for my time, I cannot bother myself about the future'—this is what each administrator says, and things move helplessly along. Mr. Archer himself is convinced that 'the population is constantly tending to outpass the limit of profitable employment upon the soil.' Is it not then the duty of the State—the Indian State, in particular, which is entrusted with the destinies of this land—to see that the productive capacity of the growing population is increased and that national income is augmented so as to ensure to the people a larger amount of wealth? The spread of education, State encouragement to indigenous industries, economy in expenditure—are all measures which have, for years, been incessantly pressed upon the attention of Government by the 'Indian Opposition' for this self-same purpose. Mr. Archer thinks the evils are inevitable. We do not.

The Indian Opposition wants that the Indian Government should be national in spirit and in action and that it should do for the Indian people what Governments in other countries are doing for their people. If this is done, no one will blame Government for the social and economic ills that will remain—for there is no country which has got no difficult problems of its own to face. The drift of the whole argument of Mr. Archer is to show that India would have been worse off under any rule other than British. To our thinking, this consideration is absolutely irrelevant. What is pertinent is the question whether India cannot be better than she has been under British rule itself. Mr. Archer trots out Sir Theodore Morrison's exposure of the theory of the so-called 'drain,' and he gives India's balance-sheet showing advantages and cost. But he fails to realize that the essential complaint is not against the payment that India has to make for services rendered to her. It is against the lack of opportunities and facilities for Indian people to serve themselves to the best of their abilities. Even a child will understand that an expert brought out to India for a certain purpose, must be paid and that this payment is no 'drain.' Every nation has to make such payment—Japan made it. But Japan has now her own experts, her own manufacturers, her own merchants, her own educationists and her own administrators. People have got to be trained and their faculties developed and utilized. Can Mr. Archer say that Indians are in any way inherently in-

* "India and the Future" by Mr. William Archer. (Hutchinson, London.)

ferior to the Japanese? Some have indeed said so, but the history of India during the last few years gives the lie direct to such an assertion. Difficulties in the way of progress one can understand and they have been pleaded. But critics of the 'Indian Opposition' must bring a different frame of mind to bear upon the discussion of Indian problems than the one revealed in Mr. Archer's book if they wish to help the cause of the progress of this country.

V. G. KALE.

LOCAL BOARDS AND LOCAL WORKS.

THE report of the P. W. D. Reorganisation Committee which has been recently published is a document that should immensely interest all those who desire an advance in local self-government. It deals exhaustively with the questions of transfer of public works to local bodies, the encouragement of private enterprise, the reorganisation of the P. W. Department, the pay and prospects of the specialist branches such as consulting architects, sanitary and electrical engineers and lastly with the all-important question of engineering education. I propose to examine its recommendation as to what appears to me the most important aspect of the question, namely, the devolution to local bodies of some functions now performed by the P. W. D.

The main branches of the administration in charge of local bodies vary from province to province, but as a general rule they include roads and other communications, school buildings, medical institutions, sanitation, vaccination, markets, &c. There is, however, no clear and well-defined distinction in the classes of public works undertaken by Government and local bodies. In Madras, Bengal, and Bihar and Orissa their functions are of a more advanced character. In Bombay and U. P. all important works are under the direct control of the P. W. D. The District Boards of Madras, Bengal, and Bihar employ an engineering establishment of their own, with a qualified District Engineer at its head, and carry out practically all their works. Other provinces have a less trained agency at their disposal and execute only minor works and repairs, other works being carried out for them by the P. W. D. The most patent defect of the existing arrangement is the duplication of administrative machinery with its inevitable friction and waste of energy; one establishment being maintained by Government and the other by District Boards working side by side. In Madras, the evil is intensified by a small additional engineering establishment being kept up by the Collector to look after minor irrigation works owned by Government.

This duplication could be prevented either by transferring all public works to the P. W. D., the system which is practically in vogue in Bombay and U. P., or by handing over all ordinary works to the local bodies with an independent agency of their own. To those, however, who hold local self-government of any account the former course is unthinkable; they would naturally seek a solution of the present difficulties in the direction suggested by the latter alternative. The P. W. D. Committee too have recommended this course and as such their proposals should meet with popular favour, as being conducive to the growth of local autonomy and in consonance with the practice prevailing in more advanced countries. This is no doubt a "drastic" innovation, and not a few objections could be raised and difficulties pointed out in the matter of carrying it into effect. None of these objections and difficulties however need be insuperable. It is argued, for instance, that this step is likely to lead to inefficiency, as the District Boards will not be in a position to entertain a competent executive agency. The answer to it will be that with the proposed delegation of additional func-

tions to local bodies the sphere of their activity will be widened and they will be in a position to have a well-trained staff. The Committee besides recommend liberal financial assistance from provincial Governments to enable local bodies to cope with the additional burden. The assignments, they propose, should cover not only the cost of original works but their maintenance and inspection charges as well. The second difficulty urged against it is that it would weaken the Government agency for dealing with famines. It can however be easily obviated, as the Committee observe, by the Government taking over the power of requisitioning the District Board staff in times of acute distress. The third difficulty brought forward is in respect of the deterioration of the engineering service. The conditions of service under local bodies being not quite attractive, it is apprehended the candidates will be of an inferior calibre. The Committee have carefully considered this aspect of the question and have so regulated the scale of pay as to avoid this danger. Moreover, further improvement may be effected by co-ordinating the whole Local Board engineering service so that it would afford well regulated and distinct steps of advancement to deserving officers.

Although it is thus necessary and desirable with a view both to preventing wastage and advancing local self-government that most of the functions now performed by the P. W. D. should be devolved upon local bodies, it may be asked whether the means proposed by the Committee, for carrying out this devolution, are calculated to attain the best results. They suggest in the first place that a special Committee formed out of the members of the District Board, with the Collector as Chairman, should supervise the public works and control the District Engineer. Next, wide powers are to be vested in the Collector and the Commissioner as to the appointment and dismissal of engineers in the employ of District Boards. The Local Government is to have the power of requiring District Boards to dispense with the services of any of their engineers. In addition, the Collector can suspend and the Commissioner can cancel any resolution relating to public works, the Commissioner may require a local body to execute a particular work within a reasonable period, the local Government may dissolve any local body refusing to take over Government works or may even supersede a local body for incompetency or wilful neglect of duty. With such a stringent limitation of the powers of local bodies one may well doubt if the proposed devolution will at all advance the cause of local self-government. The composition of the works committee has not been prescribed, but that the Collector is to be its chairman will detract not a little from its self-governing character. Whatever it may be in outward appearance, in many districts it will be dominated by the Collector; and in practice it will make little difference, so far as local self-government is concerned, whether the local works are executed by the P. W. D. or by an engineer controlled by the Collector. The other provisions mentioned above place the district board more or less at the mercy of the Collector and the Commissioner, and it may be argued with good reason that, whatever good it may effect in other ways, the proposal of the Committee in this behalf will not further the cause of local self-government. Nor will it, so far as it appears to me, promote efficiency. At present, the district engineer is subject to a hierarchy of officials in the P. W. D., and if the control is too detailed and minute it is the control of experts. If that is replaced by the control of the Collector and the Commissioner, as it will be in the result under the scheme proposed by the Committee, instead of professional men exercising the control, laymen will be exercising it. Such a change is surely not for the better. There is no doubt to be a Divisional Inspector of Works, but his function being purely advisory he cannot maintain any effective check over the district engineer. Indeed, suspicion is entertained in responsible quarters that the practical effect, if not the designed intention, of this recommendation of the Committee will be to bring under

the jurisdiction of revenue officials a department which has so far remained independent of their control. Till now in many cases the district engineer has been able, with the help of the superior authorities, to repel any encroachment of his rights on the part of the Collector, but now he will be a creature of the revenue officials.

This is in my opinion a very serious flaw in the recommendations of the Committee, but it is not an inherent part of it. It could be easily removed without any injury to the devolution which the Committee seek to accomplish. Means could be devised whereby the interests of local self-government, efficiency of public works and the engineering profession could be reconciled with some modification in the scheme. For one thing, the Inspector of Works could be made chairman of the works committee in the place of the Collector, who need not be associated with it in any capacity. The Inspector will amply safeguard Government's interests, but will be without all those adventitious advantages of influence and power which belong to the Collector's position. In his hands the course of development of local autonomy will go on unimpeded. I have already suggested the formation of an amalgamated local boards service for the whole province, which will enable an efficient check being exercised over the work of the district engineers without the revenue officers having to interfere in matters of which they have no professional knowledge. The qualifications and scale of pay for the different classes of engineers are to be prescribed by Local Governments. This will be a guarantee that the present incumbents of office in the P. W. D. will not suffer.

External control should as far as possible be restricted to cases of gross dereliction of duty. The Collectors and Commissioners used to autocratic powers are likely to magnify the errors committed by local bodies and to allow friendly guidance to degenerate into excessive interference. On the other hand, there is every possibility of the Local Board members misconstruing the attitude of the revenue officials. This difficulty can be obviated by the creation of a central supervising board which can easily be made representative of all the interests concerned. The recommendations of the Committee as regards the devolution of public works, with some such modifications, would, I believe, result in the creation of a healthy public spirit and will stimulate interest in civic activities without in any way interfering with administrative efficiency.

K. M. T.

REVIEWS.

FIVE YEARS OF EDUCATION IN MADRAS.

The five years that have elapsed since 1912 have witnessed a fairly general progress in education in this province. Dr. Bourne continued as Director of Public Instruction till February 1914 and during the long course of more than a decade that he held office, a policy, conscious or unconscious, of checking the growth of education in this province had been followed. A sharp line of distinction was sought to be drawn between secondary and elementary schools and admissions from the latter to the former were penalized. The grant-in-aid code was devised with the result that grants both to elementary and secondary schools were considerably diminished, and many schools, particularly of the latter kind, that used to draw large amounts of grant before had to go without any. Many secondary schools went out of existence in consequence, the existing schools became overcrowded, and many children who would otherwise have gone to secondary schools had to stop. In technical and industrial schools there was no increase, and Dr. Bourne would not have Government start such schools but would only give grants in aid of those that were started by private agencies.

His successor, the Hon'ble Mr. Stone, had thus a difficult task before him when he assumed charge of office. It should

be justly claimed for him that he has courageously tried to reverse in many respects the policy of his predecessor, though it has to be confessed at the same time that so far nothing very substantial has been accomplished. Interesting and thoughtful passages can be quoted from his report, which refute many of Dr. Bourne's set ideas. Regarding the distinction between elementary and secondary education, Mr. Stone observes that in most modernized countries it is disappearing, that it is needless and irritating and 'liable to press harshly in its application upon the brilliant boy of poor parentage.' It was Dr. Bourne's policy to increase local board and municipal schools by taking over teacher-manager schools—a policy neither consonant with the previous policy of Government nor suited to the general expansion of elementary education. Considering the cost that such conversion would entail and remembering the fact that 75 per cent. of the institutions are teacher-manager schools, Mr. Stone is wisely seeking to improve their efficiency 'by closer supervision on the one hand and better pay and prospects on the other' so as to attract the trained teacher to their service and bring them up to the level of board schools.

Again, speaking about the low average duration of school life in elementary schools, he writes: "Of course, the evil to be combated is not the admission of pupils but their premature withdrawal. In Europe legislation has been necessary to prevent this. In India legislation would be equally necessary. Without it we cannot eradicate the evil, we can only apply palliatives." This is an official recognition freely and frankly made of the need for compulsion. On the subject of secondary education too, the Director has made some excellent suggestions: "At present educational facilities are too much confined to a number of large centres, and boys who desire secondary education have to leave their homes at an early age and often live in an insanitary, undesirable environment. The extension of the hostel system, useful and desirable as this is, will not provide a final solution, as many schools with hostels will still be overcrowded, and living in hostels is generally more expensive than living elsewhere. What is required is a wider extension of facilities for secondary education so that a lesser number of pupils will have to leave their homes at an early age, and so that pupils, whose parents cannot or will not send their children away from home, may be able to take advantage of these additional facilities. The problem is largely a financial one, but its solution is necessary for the progress and development of secondary education."

All these, however, stand as expressions of opinion merely. No strenuous attempts appear to have been made, to put them into practice. More than two years have elapsed since a conference of officials and non-officials was held to discuss problems relating chiefly to the grant-in-aid code and to the policy to be followed in respect of secondary and elementary education, and it is indeed a matter for great regret that so far no orders have yet been issued by Government.

As it is, the actual increase in the quinquennium in the number of schools and pupils has not been very considerable, as the following table will show:

Class of institutions.	No. of institutions in 1911-12.	No. of institutions in 1916-17.	No. of pupils in 1911-12.	No. of pupils in 1916-17.
Arts Colleges (for men and women)	32	36	4,939	7,724
Secondary Schools (for boys)	343	345	99,668	1,36,141
Elementary Sch. (for boys)	24,034	23,867	9,40,084	12,31,198
Secondary Schools (for girls)	35	39	5,495	8,121
Elementary Sch. (for girls)	1,152	1,684	87,916	1,32,224

This works out an increase of only one (from 3 to 4) in the percentage of the number of scholars, male and female, to the total population. And if we allow for the normal

growth of population at the rate of one per cent. a year, the increase will be found smaller still. 'Of villages or groups of hamlets in close proximity having a population of 2,000 or of between 1,000 and 2,000, 9 per cent. of the former and 19 per cent. of the latter are unprovided with schools.' What is particularly distressing is that although the number of pupils in secondary schools has increased by nearly 40 per cent. the increase in the number of such schools is only 2.

Of technical and industrial education too there has not been any general expansion, though it is some satisfaction to note that the Department of Industries which was abolished some time ago under the orders of the Secretary of State, on the plea that it was against the principle of Free Trade to which the Imperial Government stood pledged, was reconstituted in 1914. The granting of three scholarships to students proceeding from this Presidency to the Victoria Technical Institute of Bombay, and of three others tenable at the Madras College of Engineering, the starting recently of the Leather Trade School at Madras, and of the Madras Trades School where instruction is given by competent men twice a week in mechanical engineering and plumbing, are the only improvements effected during the period under review. With the reorganization of the Madras Technical Institute, now being pushed through, we may expect some further improvement being made.

What, however, will make the Government of His Excellency Lord Pentland and the regime of the Hon'ble Mr. Stone well-remembered in this province is their work in the field of secondary and higher education for women. The Queen Mary's College for women, the first residential College in India started under the auspices of Government, the two secondary schools at Vizagapatam and Triplicane and the Widows' Home at Triplicane also under the management of Government, are all doing excellent work. It is true that here and there one hears a whisper of dissatisfaction and discontent with the way in which things are carried on in these institutions—their foreign tone, the undue importance attached to English, the neglect by the girls of certain habits which are regarded as purely Hindu, and so on. But these are matters of detail which can and will be set right in course of time as more and more high caste Hindu or Brahman ladies come to be employed as teachers in these institutions.

The impetus given to physical education by the appointment of two physical Directors, the special grants paid to many schools for the acquisition of playgrounds, the provision of more hostels and the utilization of the Land Acquisition Act for acquiring lands and buildings for schools—these are other features of the quinquennium that deserve thankful recognition.

At present one hears everywhere of educational reconstruction and there is not a single periodical of note in England but sets apart a large portion of its space for the discussion of plans and methods for importing better and more improved education to the children there. Situated as India is as an integral and vital part of the British Empire, she feels she has a right to claim that more attention be paid to the spread of education amongst her sons; and wisdom will consist in taking early note of this and planning effectively and well so as to remove the reproach so often levelled at the Government, that being so largely foreign in its *personnel* it does not exhibit any great anxiety to spread knowledge and enlightenment amongst the masses.

P. A. SUBRAMANIAN.

LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

SIND.

THE PRESS ACT.

There has been unusual activity of late on the part of officials in Sind in muzzling the independent section of the

public press. During the time of Mr. H. Lawrence, the present Commissioner in Sind, as many as four newspapers have been called upon to deposit security under the sledge-hammer Act of 1910. The *New Times*, an Indian Daily issued from Karachi, was made to deposit a security of Rs. 500 a few months ago, on account of a few stray passages which the City Magistrate of Karachi held to be objectionable. The *Home Ruler*, a recently started strong Home Rule weekly, had to deposit a security of the same amount before it was permitted to be issued. The most surprising instance was that of the *Trade Advertiser*, published at the Luxmi Press at Shikarpur and dealing largely with trade matters. Both the paper and the press existed before the passing of the Press Act, and yet on the reports of the Police and without a specification of any offending articles, the District Magistrate served on 7th February notice on the keeper of the press and publisher of the paper to show cause why security should not be demanded from him. The date happening to be very inconvenient, the publisher applied for a postponement of the hearing. The Magistrate altered the date to 21st February but the publisher did not receive notice of it until the 25th. In his absence the Magistrate issued orders on 23rd February, calling upon the publisher to deposit Rs. 1,000 as security. The publisher having then applied for cancellation of the order, the Magistrate reduced the amount of the security to Rs. 500, on the ground that the publisher was 'poor' and that 'the building in which the press is housed is not his own.' I learn that the matter is to be brought up before the Judicial Commissioner.

The most recent instance is the demand of security from the *Hindvasi*, leading vernacular daily of Sind dealing with national politics. The paper is a strong advocate of Home Rule. The publisher and Editor, Mr. Jethmal Pararam, received notice on 24th February to show cause why security should not be demanded from him. At the first hearing on the 28th, Mr. Gibson, the District Magistrate of Hyderabad, disagreed with the contention of Mr. Jethmal's plouder, Mr. Santdas Mangharam, that having once exempted the press and the paper from the security, the Magistrate could not, under the Press Act, impose it afterwards. He specified 13 articles, some published after the receipt of the notice and one on the very morning of the hearing, and said that they contained vilification of Mr. Lawrence and other officials and the tone of the articles was such as to produce hatred or contempt of Government. The hearing was adjourned to 7th March at Jandomari, a village 4 miles from the railway station. Mr. Santdas on behalf of Mr. Jethmal addressed the Magistrate for nearly four hours, reading and discussing each article. Most of the articles criticised the speeches of Mr. Lawrence in the Bombay Council and at durbars in Sind and his conduct as a public servant. Mr. Santdas showed that the articles contained fair criticism and were protected by explanation II to section 4 of the Press Act, that the articles dealing with the Income-Tax Bill contained legitimate criticism of the measure, that none of the articles had a tendency to bring the Government into hatred and contempt, and that some of the articles contained no reference, direct or indirect, to Government. The Magistrate did not discuss the articles at all and at the end of the arguments said that he would pass orders on the 12th March when encamped at Uderlal. The case has excited considerable public interest, as the *Hindvasi* is a very popular paper.

BENGAL.

AN ANOLO-INDIAN MEETING.

THE most notable event of the last fortnight is the annual general meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which came off on February 26th last. It was presided over by the Hon. Sir Hugh Bray who has won an unenviable reputation by his historic speech in the Imperial Council in September last year. He was by no means in the same fighting mood on the present occasion. Bengal was pleased to hear him plead for "a better knowledge of our Indian fellow-subjects and an appreciation of their point of view."—I wish the Hon'ble member had observed this rule himself, in which case his Simla speech would have been very different in tone and language from what it actually was. However we are a forgiving people, and we shall think no less of him if he henceforth follows his own precept.

In the same strain was the speech of Mr. Shirley Tremenne. What do you think of this observation, for example? "I am and have always been an ardent advocate of local and responsible self-government, for we shall have eventually to give the people of this country a much greater voice in the management of their own affairs, and it is far better to set about doing this cheerfully, instead of grudgingly and of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." But let not the *Home Ruler* be overpleased. There is a fly in the ointment.

The masses are uneducated; therefore you can't have Home Rule in the near future. "Home Rule, is at present a far cry, but it will gather force, and it is for the Government and us to prepare and educate the masses for it." Mr. Trehearne asked his hearers to abstain from the use of provocative or offensive language, which is "an act of political incendiarism," and, "to acquire a generous and sympathetic insight into the aims and aspirations of educated Indians," and not to turn them disloyal by treating them with unmerited suspicion and distrust.

Excellent advice this. But sweet words butter no parsnips. No more of such gentle patting on the back. India is bent on having autonomy on colonial lines. In this struggle for emancipation we invite and would welcome the co-operation of our Anglo-Indian fellow citizens. But if their co-operation is not forthcoming, even then we are determined to go on. May it be that the annual meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce is indicative of a new spirit among Anglo-Indians.

BOMBAY.

OPPOSITION TO THE RENT BILL.

The Rent Bill continues to be the foremost topic engaging public attention, and the opposition offered by some of the leading citizens adds an element of piquancy which otherwise would be wanting. That the war profiteers should feel their position imperilled and that they should be up in arms against the bill is to be expected; but those who mouth democratic doctrine on public platforms, and set an enormous store by an appeal to socialists in England for a reconstruction of Indian polity should not be exactly the persons to lead a campaign against this eminently socialistic piece of legislation. It is now well-known—though an attempt was made to suppress the fact—that among the landlords who met in the Presidency Association rooms to devise means to nullify the efforts of Government towards protecting the poor from the exploitation of the rich, are some prominent persons who profess advanced views in Indian politics and who set themselves up as champions of the masses. That the public organs of this school of Indian politics are very lukewarm in their support of the Bill does not fail to raise a suspicion in the public mind that the sentiments expressed by the capitalists are shared by the whole party generally, and it is clear that at all events no help could be expected from them in this truly national work of protecting the poor from the exactions of the rich.

The poorer section of the population of the city is in great need of protection at this time. Although Government has already prohibited unreasonable increase in rents which were below Rs. 10, still the landlords, taking advantage of the ignorance and helplessness of the labouring classes, are still able to extort higher rents than are allowed. In order to put a stop to this, large vigilance committees are necessary; but unfortunately they are not coming into existence. Government have appointed ward committees for this purpose and they are doing good work as far as lies in their power. But these committees will not be able to cope with the work that lies before them if they are not helped by a large number of volunteers. It is encouraging to note that there are some progressive politicians like Sir Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar who have not lost the moorings of their anchorage and who have remained true to their principles and support the Bill in a whole-hearted manner. Under the leadership of these a public meeting is to be held on 12th March to support the Bill, and I am sure the meeting will be a great success, judging from the temper of the real democracy at this time. Unfortunately most of the public bodies in Bombay are so much dominated by capitalists and rich landlords that sufficient vent is not given to the volume of public opinion which exists in favour of the Bill. Only two public meetings were held in Bombay to protest against the exactions of the landlords, and they were held under the auspices of the Social Service League, a body which is entirely unconnected with politics.

CORRESPONDENCE.

STUDENTS AND POLITICS:

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' ORDERS.

SIR,—Although Local Governments' orders forbidding the association of students with politics are of a piece and alike inspired by a mistrust of the students, they differ largely in scope and emphasis, and it is interesting to make a comparative study of them. (They have all been published in the "Gazette of India" of February 16.) While the United Provinces Government saw no occasion to renew their order of 1907, the Bengal Government (May 1917) contented them-

selves with prohibiting students in Government or aided schools or colleges from joining the Home Rule League either as associates or members, a proceeding to which little exception could be taken in reason. The Punjab and Delhi Governments (July 1917) intimated that the association of school-boys with politics was harmful and should be prevented, but they recognised that college students were entitled to a greater degree of liberty. The extent of liberty to be allowed to college students they did not care to specify, but from the fact stated further on that in the Punjab and in Delhi no need had arisen to prohibit the students and the staff from taking an active part in political meetings, as was found necessary in another province, it may be presumed that the range of freedom was rather liberal. The Bihar and Orissa Government in 1914 reiterated the instructions in the Risley circular which laid down that school boys might not attend political meetings whilst, though college students might attend such meetings as a general rule, they might not take any active part in their proceedings. Later, in July 1917, they thought it necessary to announce that heads of "Government and aided schools" should prevent the participation of students in the Home Rule League movement. The Central Provinces Government ordered (February 1917) that attendance at political meetings should be absolutely prohibited in the case of school boys, and that the headmaster's previous permission should be obtained for attendance at any public meeting. The Madras Government's orders were of a more sweeping character. They directed (May 1917) that no students in schools or colleges "whether under public management or otherwise" should be permitted to attend political meetings. But in December 1917 they modified this order to the extent that the discretion which had heretofore vested in heads of colleges to allow their students to attend such meetings was restored to them.

But the Bombay Government certainly carries the palm in making the most stringent regulations of all the provinces. While in 1908 they had ordered that no schoolboy in Government or aided school should attend or take part in any public meeting of any kind and that college students might attend public meetings with the previous permission of the Principal, in June 1917 they extended the scope of their restrictions in two respects: they made the prohibitive order applicable to students in unaided schools and colleges, and deprived the Principals of colleges of the discretion which they had till then enjoyed. Attendance at public meetings of students from schools or colleges "whether Government, aided or unaided but recognised," they said, was contrary to rules and should be forbidden, and they particularly banned meetings "organised by Home Rule Leagues or at which home rule is advocated." The Bombay Government have not yet definitely revised their orders like the Madras Government so as to give the heads of colleges the discretion which rightfully belongs to them and, indeed, in the December session of the Legislative Council the member in charge of education and the President spoke in a contrary sense on this point. Said the Hon'ble Sir M. Chaulal: "I must confess that it did not occur to Government that the circular would be interpreted by principals of colleges as interfering with their discretion, and if any pronouncement is wanted on that particular point, I now give it in behalf of Government that it had not the remotest intention to so interfere." But this emphatic pronouncement on the intended scope of the measure was contradicted in the concluding speech of Lord Willingdon, who said, "We are perfectly ready to consider, if principals of colleges will say to us definitely, 'we can control our students', whether we cannot give the principals a fuller discretion in the matter. ... If they will say to us, 'we can perfectly control our students...' then we are perfectly prepared to consider some alteration in this particular circular," implying, against Sir M. Chaulal, that as matters stand at present, the circular *does* take away the discretion of principals. The alteration in the circular, herein promised by His Excellency has not yet come; but it seems to be in early contemplation inasmuch as the Government resolution on the quinquennial report on education has it that "as regards undergraduates in colleges Government adhere to their policy of reserving to principals and heads the discretion they had under the previous orders." If the Bombay Government have reverted to the position that prevailed before the circular of July 1917, is it not advisable to make the fact known by a Press Note? It will cause general satisfaction.—Yours, etc. A TEACHER.

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