

# THE Servant of India

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE atmosphere of suspension and distrust that has been created by the probable intervention of Japan in Siberia has cleared a good deal by the statement made by Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons. A statesman of the calibre and standing of Mr. Balfour is expected to weigh his words before he utters them, and the assurance given by him about Japanese objects is distinctly refreshing and encouraging. He described in great detail the reality of the German menace in Russia. He must have caused surprise in the House when he told the members that a German officer would be safer in Russia than an Allied one. 'America, Britain, France and Japan all desired to render aid.' Evidently the first three are not in a position to help and so Japan has stepped forward. But 'Mr. Balfour most strongly repudiated that Japan was actuated by selfish or dishonourable motives.' This is all to the good.

THE mist hanging over the intentions of the enemy as regards the probable offensive has not lifted. While all the portions of the Western Front are ready for the struggle and the preliminary aerial activity is nearly universal, there is a persistent report that Dunkirk is the enemy objective in the opening campaign. This is not the first time that Dunkirk and its neighbourhood have been threatened. In the early period of the war

the enemy aimed at securing some important point on that part of the French coast. A renewal of these efforts would point to an intended invasion of England. This might be almost welcomed as a good piece of news. The enemy could not help the British Government better in driving away the war-weariness of the people than by the threat of such an invasion. The inviolability of the land of England is an article of faith of the ordinary Britisher. The necessity of maintaining it intact will do away with all lethargy and lassitude, will rouse the Briton to a full sense of responsibility and will confirm him in his resolve to fight Germany to a finish. This is the way in which sometimes good comes in the garb of evil.

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THE provincial budgets bear a kind of family likeness, and the features of the financial statement of Sir William Meyer may be clearly traced in them. In each province the balances have mounted up to enormous heights and yet the provincial Governments are not in a position to draw upon them. The revenue, though cautiously calculated, is expected to be comparatively large for the coming year, and a surplus is assured in spite of heavier expenditure compared with the outgoings of the current year. Provincial Finance Members have ladled out a few thousands here and a few thousands there for additional outlay on objects like education and sanitation, but their dispositions seem to err on the side of caution bordering on timidity or niggardliness. In each provincial Council, as in the supreme Legislature, elected members moved resolutions asking Government to make a more liberal provision for schemes of educational expansion and sanitary improvement, but they were met almost invariably with the explanation that more money could not be spared or could not be usefully spent. Hon'ble members were told to hold their souls in patience and trust the executive Government to do the right thing at the right moment. Resolutions have, therefore, been either negatived or withdrawn and rarely accepted even in a modified form. Sweet assurances were given on behalf of Government that suggestions and recommendations embodied in resolutions would be duly taken into consideration and only in rare instances was a rebuke administered.

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THIS briefly sums up the history of the discussions that have taken place on the financial state-

ments of the different provinces. While conditions created by the war have brought more money into the provincial treasuries, through the increased productivity of sources like the income-tax, forests, excise and stamps, and though provincial balances have assumed larger proportions, the funds cannot be spent with a free hand. For increased expenditure on education and sanitation, the spokesmen for Government in the Viceroy's Council refer members to the provinces, and provincial Governments, when called upon to spend more liberally, make a counter reference to the supreme Government. It must be admitted, however, that on the whole, provincial Governments have been more sympathetic and more generous in their attitude on account of the satisfactory character of their revenues. In the Madras Council, for instance, of the 51 resolutions put down, 7 were not moved at all, 32 were withdrawn after discussion, 7 were rejected by the Council and 5 were accepted by Government. The hardy annual of the exodus to the hills figured in the Bombay and U. P. Councils, but the officials succeeded in maintaining the practice. It is quite clear that, though perhaps it will never be possible to accept all the financial readjustments proposed by the critics of provincial budgets, the position will never be satisfactory until far greater power is conceded to the Legislative Councils.

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THE Madras Government introduced an important piece of social legislation last week in the local Legislative Council, modelled on the lines of the Children Act in England. Madras has been committing the largest number of persons to gaol, in spite of the provincial Government's instructions to the magistrates in a contrary sense, and the Madras Government now propose, to adopt the phrase used by the Lord Advocate in the House of Commons in 1908, "to shut the prison door and to open the door of hope" to juvenile offenders. The Bill abolishes altogether the imprisonment of children under 14 years of age, and that of young persons between 14 and 16 years, except when they happen to be of such an unruly and depraved character that no other punishment is thought suitable. Again, under the existing law, Government can do nothing to rescue young persons from evil surroundings until they had actually committed crime. This defect is proposed to be remedied in the Bill by the institution of reformatory and industrial schools and by taking power to send young criminals to them, the parents in such cases making a reasonable contribution to the maintenance and training of youthful offenders.

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PROVISION is also made in the Bill for setting up juvenile courts, where children's cases would be heard. Such courts were established in the United States of America in 1863, in Canada in 1884, and in South Australia in 1895, and we have the testimony of the Lord Chancellor that "in all these cases the record is unfailing that the effect

of separate treatment of children under more sympathetic conditions, apart from the ordinary grimy surroundings of a criminal court, has been wholly helpful, and the children often being accompanied with much watchful care on the part of court officials, the result has been a very large diminution of youthful crime." The principle underlying this reform is that "the courts should be agencies for the rescue as well as the punishment of children." The clauses in the English Act, relating to infant life protection and juvenile smoking, have been omitted in the present Bill. Non-official members welcomed the Bill as a whole, and had only a few minor criticisms to offer on the working of some of its provisions.

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THE *Servant of India* referred last week to the refusal of the Madras branch of the European Association to abide by the Cabinet's declaration of last August regarding the political goal of India. Since then an account has come to hand of a meeting of the present Association in Calcutta, at which similar views were expressed by Mr. Eden, Vice-President. It is difficult to believe that there are not many Europeans who disapprove of such truculence and would favour a policy of closer identification of their community with the people of India. Why do they not speak out? They may be in a minority; but they owe it to themselves and the country of their adoption to prevent, if possible, the disaster which the reckless speeches and writings of men like Mr. Welby threaten to bring about. Messrs. Eden and Welby have another discovery in common. The European officials, who have hitherto protected the masses of India, especially the depressed classes, have suddenly betrayed their trust for fear of Mrs. Besant and her Brahman fellow-oligarchs. The non-official Europeans have, therefore, to shoulder the obligation of championing these defenceless people against their own tyrannical countrymen. Protestations, however insincere their origin, have a way of obtaining some credence by frequent iteration. It should be no wonder if some of those who repeat this blazing untruth actually believed it. Do not some Lancashire merchants shed genuine tears for the sweat-mill-hands of Bombay? It was unkind of Lord Morley to have called them hypocritical.

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THE editor of this paper would consider it a serious error on his part to misrepresent knowingly the view he criticised. And he would consider it an unpardonable sin if he refused to acknowledge a misrepresentation that he had made, when it was pointed out. The *Hindu* courteously invites him to reperuse its sentiments on the position of an Indian member of an executive council. The following is a quotation from its issue of the 14th February:—

"An Indian member is expected to voice the sentiments and the point of view of the majority of his educated countrymen and to persuade his colleagues to act in ac-

cordance with public opinion. *He has no right to parade his own opinions, when they run counter to those of the bulk of his countrymen and convert even his colleagues, who may feel inclined to take a more sensible view. When he acts in this manner, he is doing a double disservice to his countrymen and is not acting faithfully to the trust committed to his charge.*

\* \* \*

THE passage here printed in italics was thus paraphrased in the *Servant of India* :—

'He should keep his personal convictions to himself and always seek to get the popular view accepted by Government.'

Is this a misrepresentation or an exaggeration? The difference between the original and the paraphrase is a difference between many words and few words. ✓

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IN the *Hindu* of the 16th February, a number of quotations are given in support of the view expressed on the 14th February. But none of them goes the length of the italicised passage. It may be that the somewhat unqualified language of our contemporary was provoked by the circumstances of the case then under its consideration. On the merits of that case, the *Servant of India* said nothing. Perhaps if this case could be entirely kept out of view, and the position of an Indian member considered in the abstract, our views would not disclose much difference.

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WE confess we do not know the precise circumstances that have recently lent prominence to the movement for taking Burma out of the Indian Empire and making a Crown Colony of it, under the Colonial Office. Apparently the idea is gaining ground, for we find references to it in public addresses by important men. The Lieutenant-Governor has thought it necessary to repudiate it at some length in the course of his speech in the Legislative Council. In certain Burman circles there is a prejudice against men from India, as was made clear from some evidence tendered before the recent Public Services Commission. The Burmese representative in the Indian Legislative Council opposed the resolution on the Police Service the other day on the ground that the people of the province would prefer Europeans to Indians. In Congress circles the memory still survives of the conquest of Burma, which was undertaken and carried out in the teeth of the protests of the Indian political party. Mr. Curtis has advised the separation of the province as having no proper place in a self-governing India. But it is not yet a live issue and opinions are not clearly formed. The services and the trades in the two territories may have interests in common; but it is more than doubtful whether the peoples have yet learned to regard themselves as one community even for political purposes.

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THE recent enhancement of railway fares and the raising of the maximum rates, which railway administrations can charge for passenger traffic,

gave rise to adverse criticism during the general debate on the Financial Statement. The former also formed the subject of a resolution moved by the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on the 12th instant for the reduction of passenger fares to their former level. The Hon'ble Pandit wanted to know whether the Government of India was consulted before the step was decided upon, or whether the Railway Board had sanctioned it on its own authority. Further, referring to the administration report on Indian Railways for 1916-17, he pointed out that the fares could have been raised without raising the maximum rates fixed for passenger traffic and, in view of this, asked why it had been thought necessary to raise these rates. The request for information on both these points was repeated, when he rose to reply to the observations made by the official members concerned. But both Sir George Barnes and Sir Robert Gillan, while justifying the increase in fares, studiously avoided answering these questions. Their unwillingness to furnish the information asked for appears to indicate that they are not easy in their own minds regarding the propriety of the action which they defended, and gives rise to the apprehension that further enhancement of fares, which will weigh heavily on the poor, who have already been seriously affected by the rise in prices and the taxation of the last two years, may be under contemplation.

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DURING the course of the debate referred to above, the Hon'ble Pandit Malaviya raised an important constitutional point. He said it should not be possible to enhance railway fares without legislation. It is a form of taxation that presses on the poor. In view of the interest taken in the question of deadlocks, it would be instructive to have a list made out of the different ways in which the Indian executive may, according to the present law, raise money for the State without the sanction of the Legislative Council. The assessment on land is a notorious and grievous instance.

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THE Hon. Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla must be congratulated on his first educational budget. Since the beginning of the war, the policy of retrenchment all round was rigidly followed. Last year the Government of India announced a slight relaxation, with very beneficial results. We have always felt that the claims of education on the finances of a country are of such paramount importance that even the direst calamity should never come in the way of educational advancement. We are glad that principle has been accepted and in the case of the Bombay Presidency it has been put into practice in a very substantial manner. The proposal to double the supply of trained teachers for primary schools is a step in the right direction. The provision of two lakhs for aiding those municipalities that adopt compulsory education is another important feature of Sir Ibrahim's estimates.

### A FRESH START.

SINCE the advent of the English delegation to take counsel with the authorities and representative leaders of all parties regarding the constitutional reforms to be introduced in India, there has been a slight suspension of the vigorous political agitation in favour of the Congress-League scheme that had been going on before. This is not due to any decline of popular enthusiasm for the cause or weakening of the desire for a fair and substantial advance towards self-government with the clear definition of the further steps on the way to its consummation. It is due rather to the general sense that a calm atmosphere is necessary for the discussion of the profound issues involved and a feeling of eager expectancy, with which the public have been following the movements of the delegation. The last visible sign of activity in this direction was the series of meetings of the heads of local Governments with the delegation and the members of the Government of India. The Viceroy's recent pronouncement on the subject at the opening of the Indian Legislative Council proves that it is engaging the anxious attention of the responsible authorities and it is expected that, as soon as the Secretary of State returns home, he will publish the proposals which seem to him adequate and proper for fulfilment of the policy laid down in the declaration of last August.

Expectancy, however, cannot last indefinitely. The public mind is naturally beginning to show uneasiness as to the final result, and here and there men are resuming the work of public education and agitation. The Madras Provincial Congress Committee has resolved to keep alive and strengthen the enthusiasm for the Congress-League scheme, which, with a few exceptions, has received support from the largest and most influential sections in all parts of the country. *New India* says that this fresh start has been decided upon through the influence of eager young Congressmen. It is an inevitable reaction from the suspense of the last few months. The spirit animating it must be guided into fruitful channels by the wisdom and self-control of the elders. We have no doubt whatever that these will remember that the war has entered on a more acute phase than ever, and it is necessary to avoid everything which may tend to aggravate the anxieties of Government. The Madras resolution repeats the proposition on which there is all but universal agreement that the Congress-League scheme represents the minimum, which will satisfy the newly awakened aspirations, and it advocates a vigorous propaganda throughout the province, in villages as well as in towns, for getting the people to express, in the usual ways, their determination in this behalf. We observe, with satisfaction, an

indication, however slight, of a relaxation of the rigid formula, which had hitherto been invariably adopted in expressing the demands of Congressmen. The resolution lays emphasis on the 'principles' of the Congress-League scheme. These principles and fundamentals have been stated often before and by different persons. Universal and thorough agreement as to these is not possible; but it behoves practical-minded persons to attempt to disengage the principles from the details of the scheme, so that when the Secretary of State's proposals are published, they may judge with some confidence whether the principles have been substantially followed. It is probable that these proposals may proceed along lines very different from those of the popular scheme. Fair and unbiased consideration must be given to their merits, their immediate adequacy and the likelihood of their development, within a reasonable period, to full responsible government. In the first framing of programmes, it is well to fix our gaze clearly on ideals; but a time comes when responsible men will have to remember that compromise is the soul of politics. The period of actual negotiation is drawing nigh. The deputation that has started and the deputation that is yet to start must have precise ideas as to what to press and what to yield and certain amount of freedom in dealing with those who have experience in the working of constitutions and a voice in the settlement of the relations of India to the Empire. We trust that these considerations will receive full weight at the special political gathering at which the reform proposals will be discussed and in the choice of the representatives deputed to proceed to the seat of the Empire and in the framing of the instructions by which they should guide their work.

While renewed activity is natural and legitimate, we confess to a feeling of alarm at the suggestion made in *New India* that Congress organisations should seriously contemplate the need of passive resistance that may arise and make arrangements in readiness for the contingency. The suggestion is altogether unwise. Neither leaders nor followers should enter on delicate and fateful negotiations in that spirit. The negotiations cannot be conducted in the best conditions, when one party has its plans ready in case of a rupture and tells the other party of them. Our contemporary makes a distinction between a warning and a threat. In our judgment, no occasion has arisen for either. Patience and faith will win. These virtues are not yet out of date.

It is not necessary now to revive unpleasant memories by examining the nature of passive resistance or the class of wrongs which may be remedied by its means and the conditions which will justify its application. But the sugges-

tion of *New India* serves to exemplify in a striking manner the tendency of a mental habit engendered on one occasion to outlive that occasion and seek exercise even when circumstances no longer require it.

### THE SIR CURRIMBHOY EBRAHIM WORKMEN'S INSTITUTE.

ON Friday last Her Excellency Lady Willingdon performed in Bombay the opening ceremony of an institution for the benefit of its labour population. It is a new and bright chapter in the history of our industrial and social progress, in which Bombay these sixty years has more or less taken the lead in India. The Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim Workmen's Institute is intended for only workmen of the mills, of which the firm of Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim and Sons are agents; but the example set by the directors of these mills in setting apart, with the sanction of their shareholders, a portion of their profits for an institute of this kind, which will contribute to the physical, mental and moral welfare of their mill-hands, is sure to be followed sooner or later by the directors of other mills and wipe out the stigma whether rightly or wrongly cast against our mill-owners and mill-agents, that they have been enriching themselves at the expense and on the toil and sordid lives of their labourers. Sir Currimbhoy, his directors and shareholders, are the pioneers of a movement which has long been due in Bombay.

It is true, as was said at Friday's ceremony, that Bombay, since the advent of British rule in India, has been the first to take up the work of the elevation of the labouring population of this country; but it is a partial truth. That work commenced no doubt with the opening of a few night schools in 1871 in some of the centres where workmen lived in Bombay; but to whom was that due? Not to the employers of labour in Bombay. The schools were opened by the Prarthana Samaj. How many night schools in proportion to Bombay's wants have been added to them since and what impetus have mill-agents given to that activity in the interests of our labourers? The second stage of organised efforts to secure their well-being was reached when the late Mr. Sorabjee Shapurjee Bengalee, who lived for humane causes and won the popular title of Lord Shaftesbury of Bombay, fought hard for shortening the hours of labour in the mills against the formidable opposition of mill-agents and mill-owners. But night schools and short hours of labour could go very little way to improve the lot of labour in Bombay. In a congested city like that, what has been most urgently wanted is the means of a healthy life for the labourer and his family, free from squalid surroundings and the bestial temptations of drink and gambling, and besides that the boon of free education for the labourer's children, with facilities to the labourer himself for innocent recreation and amusement. The mill-agents' mind and the conscience of capi-

tal have in all industrial countries moved slow to realise that their labourers' good is their own. Credit is due to the Social Service League of Bombay, started in 1911, for awakening that mind and that conscience to a due sense of their own interest and responsibilities.

The Sir Currimbhoy Workmen's Institute begins, its life under very promising auspices. It has received blessings and promises of the keenest and most sympathetic support from His Excellency Lord Willingdon and his Government. That is an asset of great value to the movement, because Lord Willingdon's living sympathy for the poor in general and the workmen in particular has made him the beloved of all in this Presidency. There have been occasions recently when his genial presence and word among the workmen have solved the problem of strikes. It was a fitting tribute paid to him and Lady Willingdon at Friday's ceremony by the Secretary of the Social Service League that the work of the new Institute "receives its blessing and faith from one, who, as the Governor of Bombay these five years, with his noble wife by his side, has sweetened the spirit of social life and service among us." The directors of the Currimbhoy mills have gone further than founding the Institute. At the opening ceremony it was announced that they have, with the sanction of their shareholders, resolved to set apart four lakhs of rupees for the erection of chawls for their mill-hands and one lakh for social welfare work among them—two objects on which His Excellency Lord Willingdon has set his heart since he came among us and emphasized their value and worked for them with unabated zeal.

The Currimbhoy Workmen's Institute will consist of (1) a night school, for teaching reading and writing and the elementary principles of mechanics and the process of weaving and spinning, (2) a library of books, newspapers and magazines, (3) weekly lectures, especially on first aid, home-nursing and hygiene, (4) a sewing class for women, (5) a co-operative credit society and (6) a social club on temperance lines with provision for games, amusements and recreation for the mill-hands. This is an ambitious programme; and the Social Service League to whom it is entrusted realises its difficulties. As was pointed out by its Secretary at Friday's ceremony, the ignorance and the apathy of the workmen form the first count of the difficulty; added to that is the fact that the labourers live in days of a multitude of counsellors, each with his own hobby or aim. But the Indian workman has at the back of his mind the spiritual instinct of his race; and it will not be difficult to accustom him to the truths that the economic man is an abstraction, that labour is sacred and that capital is only another form of labour, if he is approached through an Institute of this kind from the spiritual side of his nature. But he will learn that and be a willing friend of industry, only if his employers too cherish the same lesson and act as his brothers in the great movement of Labour and Capital.

That consummation devoutly to be wished for for the safe and sound growth of industrial life requires for its accomplishment a sufficient number of social workers. Already the Social Service League has calls from other mills for social work on the lines of the Currimbhoy Instituté. But it is the old cry—the harvest truly is plenteous; only the labourers are few. There is ample scope for service to the Motherland, of which we hear so much.

N. G. CHANDAVARKAR.

### LANDLORDS AND THE RENT BILL.

THE Rent Bill has emerged from the Select Committee, and will very shortly come up for consideration by the Council. If report speaks the truth, it has managed to survive the onslaughts delivered against it in the Committee, and it may, therefore, safely be assumed that it will have a safe, if not an easy, passage through the Council.

While the Bill has not yet become law, it will not be out of place to examine briefly the position taken up by the opponents of the measure, and persisted in in face of facts and arguments which have not been seriously challenged. The whole attitude of landlords has been one of undisguised resentment at the proposed encroachment on what they are pleased to regard as the sacred rights of property. They do not want the Bill, and the suggestions which some of them have made for fixing a limit, when not dictated by considerations of self-interest, have been based on figures and contentions which are wholly misleading. It has been said that if a limit of Rs. 50 were imposed, 93 p. c. of the population would be afforded the necessary relief. I have pointed out more than once that this statement will not bear close scrutiny for a moment. The figures given in support of it relate to the year 1911, when conditions were vastly different from those which exist at present. Besides, persons living in three-room tenements are also included in these figures among those who are presumed to be paying a rent of Rs. 50 per month or less. Anyone who knows anything about present-day conditions in the city knows fully well that there are hundreds of three-room tenements which cannot be had for even double that figure. It is, therefore, positively mischievous to suggest that by confining the limit to Rs. 50 you are leaving out only an insignificant proportion of the population, whom it is not necessary to relieve at all. It may seem very magnanimous to proclaim that there is a general desire on the part of landlords to protect the poor who sorely need relief. But when large numbers of middle-class people, with fixed incomes and having a certain standard of life to maintain, are left out of the reckoning altogether, in spite of the admitted difficulties of their position in these hard times, the public can rate at its proper value the effusive sympathy with the poor, which some of the opponents of the Rent Bill are loudly professing.

Another contention put forward in support of a small limit is derived from the fact that the English Act does not provide for rentals exceeding £ 35 a year. Not one of those who have employed this argument, has cared to acquaint himself with the conditions which brought the Act into existence in England. It was not because there was profiteering in England in the sense in which we understand it here, but because there were large numbers of people in munition areas, who had no share in the increased wages, and who were faced with a special difficulty by reason of the influx of the population in some of these areas, in consequence of which attempts had been made by a few landlords to raise rents. Those who seek instruction upon this matter will learn a great deal from the newspaper files of that period, and from the speech made by the President of the Local Government Board in moving the Bill.

As regards the suggested exclusion of business premises from the Rent Bill, not much need be said. Some people seem to have been carried away by the fact that a few merchants and tradesmen have made enormous profits during the war. They forget that the large majority of what are called business premises consist of shops, of the greater number of which it cannot be said that they have reaped any extraordinary gains in recent years. And now that it has been decided that prices should be generally controlled, whatever force there was in the argument for allowing tradespeople to be made to share their profits with landlords, is almost wholly lost. Besides, it should be remembered that tradespeople have their own way of dealing with the situation, and that what they are compelled to pay to the landlords, they manage to get out of their customers. So the poor consumer gets it both ways!

It is not necessary to pursue the subject any further. My excuse for trotting out familiar arguments is that there has been a great deal of persistent misrepresentation about the issues involved in the Rent Bill, and that there is still a large number of die-hards left with us, who will not take defeat quietly. I hope they may even now come to realise that, however objectionable some of the features of the Bill may be from their point of view, it is the duty of every right-thinking man to support it as a war measure. After all, there cannot be any extraordinary hardship in being compelled to be satisfied with the normal increase of rents. If we are going to protest against hardships, there are a great many quarters to which our energies may be profitably directed. But in the midst of a world-wide war, with all its untold misery and agony, all this talk and noise about hardship to landlords sound like a ghastly joke, and could only come from men who are somewhat spoiled by the comparative immunity which we are enjoying from the worst consequences of this terrible struggle.

H. P. MOPY.

## SIR JAMES MESTON.

THE world has been moving rapidly during the past few years, and though we have not moved quite as fast, the change in our outlook of to-day and that of five or six years ago is considerable. Many a landmark has disappeared, and if we do not fully appreciate the difference it is because we rarely stop to look back. The close of Sir James Meston's tenure of office as the head of a provincial administration has evoked no keen expressions of regret at the loss of a ruler who was ushered into office with wide and genuine feelings of satisfaction. No less a man than Mr. Gokhale stood sponsor to his appointment, and the Provincial Congress Committee went out of their way to acclaim the advent of a Lieutenant Governor so universally believed to be the most liberal and sympathetic of the members of the Civil Service. It would not be a bold statement that if Sir James had succeeded Sir Antony Macdonell and not Sir John Hewett he might never have forfeited the good opinions that he had won as a secretary to the Government of India. Good wishes are all that we can expect from persons who have not the power of shaping policies, and if they give us sympathy it is easy to establish a mutual credit of good-will on that understanding. Ten years ago India was grateful for sympathy and was content if she secured a hearing. To-day sympathy has lapsed into political mannerism, and promises of redress leave a sense of reforms postponed. Men in power having exceptional social charm and remarkable felicity of expression, who had won our confidence through sympathy, made this difference by giving us nothing more than sympathy. Perhaps that was the secret of Sir James Meston's popularity as a subordinate official and of the featurelessness of his regime as a ruler of a province.

It is seldom realised how largely we are governed by the ideas of the last generation. Men bred in one school of thought can never work in their mature age, when they attain to positions of responsibility, the details of a different or a more liberal principle. The best effort produces a technical regard for the letter of the change without any assimilation of its spirit. And even though the intellect has endorsed the wisdom of the reform a kind of a moral conscience keeps them back from giving it unqualified adhesion. The paternal form of government in this country aiming at nothing better than a benevolent despotism came to an end with the inauguration of the Morley-Minto scheme of reforms. But officials hardened to a paternal treatment of the questions of Indian administration could bend themselves with difficulty to the introduction of a popular principle. They could only adopt a sympathetic manner in place of a responsible outlook. Sir James Meston typified this change, and he was the perfection of a type to which there is a marked attempt to approximate throughout the official world. His inner grace enabled him to make a part of his

nature what so many others wear only as a manner. But there is little in the shape of ameliorative measures on which we can look back as an earnest of his sympathy. A liberal support of reforms, when other hands have to work them and our own task is to approve, is easy—the translation of words into deeds is postponed beyond our time. Love of power clings to most dispassionate minds, and critics might put an uncharitable construction on this attitude of caution for the present and sympathy for the future. Yet this is what Sir James Meston did. Every "legitimate" aspiration of the people had his sympathy. Hindu and Musalman, Sunni and Shia, the League and the Muslim Defence Association, all had in him a kind and gracious friend, but few popular measures had his support—and it would be difficult to contend that none of them was legitimate. We look in vain for an attempt to lift up the services over which he presided to a level more appreciative of the change in the political situation or for any enactment on his part to better educate the people to a realisation of their altered status in the Empire. These alone are the things that matter, and these are the two questions a successful handling of which would facilitate the work to which so much attention is being given.

Sir James Meston wondered once why India was clamant at this particular moment. He gave the best description of the change in the political situation of the country. India had passed from the suppliant to the clamant stage, and what Sir James Meston was saying and doing—or what he expected his hearers to do—had ceased to have much value. With that provincialism of outlook which he shared with other rulers and governors in this country, he could neither appreciate the change in India or the world outside, nor fathom its depth. He was trying to lull people into belief, when the very foundations of belief had been shattered. He little realised that the sense of the security of things had largely disappeared and nowhere more so than in India. Indians are sorely agitated over problems which they find clouding their political outlook, and nothing has troubled them so much as the sudden awakening that in face of contingencies by no means impossible they would be helpless and at the mercy of circumstances. That is why India is clamant and that was why Sir James Meston's suavity of manner and cosmopolitanism of sympathy failed to soothe our fears—and he himself has left a sense of disappointment behind.

It is only Sir James Meston's due to say that he did not complicate matters at a time when neither the people at large nor the Government were very dispassionate. It is also only fair to remember that we have progressed a good deal and events beyond our control have forced the pace during his tenure of office, and a fulfilment of our hopes of 1913—even if there were warrant for thinking that they had been realised—would not have satisfied us in 1918. The standards of our judgment to-day

are by no means commensurate with our ideals of five year ago. It is to the credit of Sir James Meston that his regime was not punctuated by any lapses of social or political taste and that he leaves no ill-wills behind.

SHAMNATH MUSHRAN.

## THE CHAMPARAN AGRARIAN BILL.

### I

BEFORE dealing with the provisions of the Champaran Agrarian Bill, which was passed by the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council at its meeting on the 4th March last, it might help your readers to understand this problem if I gave a brief summary of the main grievances of the tenants. There are three large zamindaries in the district: the Bettiah Raj, which is by far the largest, the Ramnagar Raj and the estate of the Babu of Madhuban. The planters, who first settled in the district, took temporary leases of some villages from the Bettiah Raj and began to grow indigo. In course of time the number of factories increased and the area of land under indigo cultivation also increased. The whole district is now parcelled out among the factories, which are between 60 and 70 in number, and the area within which each factory holds its sway is known as its *dehat* or *ilaka*. Indigo used to be grown under two systems—(1) the *zerait* system and (2) the *assamiwar* system. The factories had lands of their own in which they had acquired tenancy rights. In villages of which they had taken temporary leases, the proprietors of private lands used to come into possession of the factories as lessees. In all these lands they used to grow indigo with the help of their own plough and stock. This was known as the *zerait* cultivation of indigo. They used also to get indigo grown by tenants on certain proportions of their holdings, for which they paid the tenants at a fixed rate under agreements. The proportion of the holding on which the tenant was required to grow indigo was sometimes 5 *kathas* per bigha or  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the holding, but oftener three *kathas* per bigha, *i. e.*,  $\frac{3}{20}$  of the holding. This has given the whole system a name, which has become so well-known in Champaran, the *tinkathia* system. Under it the tenant was required to cultivate the land with his own plough and stock and labour, and, when the crop was ready, to cut it and load it on carts supplied by the factory. The seed alone was supplied by the factory. The tenant was paid at a fixed rate, which varied from time to time. In the earlier days, about the fifties and sixties of the last century, it was perhaps Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 per bigha of indigo; now-a-days it is something between Rs. 15 and Rs. 19 per bigha for a first class crop. A different rate for payment was fixed for an inferior crop, and the agreements used to provide for payment in case of a failure of crop. The land on which indigo had to be grown was selected by the factory.

The principal grievances of the tenants in connection with the *tinkathia* system were:—(1) The factory having the right to select the land, their best and most manured lands used to be selected for growing indigo, and sometimes in order to harass tenants lands near their houses, which they would reserve for other purposes, were set apart for indigo. (2) They were required to devote their best time and attention to the cultivation of the indigo land to the detriment of the cultivation of other lands. The various processes in the cultivation were gone through under the supervision of the factory servants, who used to levy exactions from the tenants. (3) The cost actually incurred by the tenants in cultivating indigo was more than the price paid to them for the indigo supplied.

The complaints of the tenants have from time to time come up before Government during the last sixty years or so, and sometimes serious disturbances have broken out. Every time an attempt was made by *raiyats* to get rid of indigo, it

was followed by some sort of inquiry, which usually resulted in enhancing the price payable by the factory to the tenant. Things were going on in this way when, on account of the advent of the synthetic dye, the price of indigo fell considerably in the market. The indigo industry then ceased to be profitable. In the adjoining districts of Saran, Muzaffarpore and Durbhanga many factories were closed. But in Champaran some of the factories had acquired permanent interests, which are known in these parts as *mokarri* interests, in large tracts on account of the assistance rendered by them to the Bettiah Raj about the eighties of the last century in raising a sterling loan in England and as a guarantee for the due payment of the principal and interest thereon. They could not very well close the factories and go away. They had to find out some means of converting what threatened them with disaster into a source of profit to themselves, and of transferring their own loss to the shoulders of the poor tenants. The factories, by reason of indigo having been grown by the tenants on portions of their holdings for a long time, claimed that, apart from any agreement, the growing of indigo was one of the incidents of the tenant's holding, and, agreement or no agreement, the tenant was bound to grow indigo. The Bengal Tenancy Act provides that the rent of a tenant's holding cannot be increased by more than two annas in the rupee by contract between the landlord and tenant, except in cases where the tenant is released from the obligation to grow a particular crop for the benefit of the landlord and where the rent at which he held the land was specially low by reason of his having incurred such obligation. Taking advantage of this provision in the law, which is said to have been especially enacted in the interests of indigo concerns, the factories required the tenants to enter into contracts, agreeing to large enhancements in their rent in lieu of release from the indigo obligation. A large number of agreements as to the enhancement of rent were entered into by the tenants, the rent being enhanced at rates varying from 45 to 75 per cent., while in a few cases it was even 100 per cent. The tenants allege that these agreements were taken from them under coercion; they had known that indigo was bound to go when it became unprofitable to the factories, and having grown it for 60 years or more they would have allowed it to die a natural death rather than agree to such high enhancements of rent, which would go down from generation to generation. This enhancement which is known as *sharabeshi*, was taken in those villages in which the factories have a permanent or *mokarri* interest. Mr. Irwin alone, who has figured so prominently in the Press recently, increased his rent by something like Rs. 50,000 annually, and his is not the largest concern. The factories by this means gained an annual increment in their rental of about Rs. 3 lakhs, which would be their own saving and out of which nothing would go to the Bettiah Raj. Any enhancement in *mokarri* villages would naturally accrue to the benefit of the *mokarridar*, and the factories received the enhancement in such villages.

But the factories have a very large number of villages under temporary leases from the Bettiah Raj. Any enhancement of rent in these temporarily leased villages would go to the Bettiah Raj after the expiry of the lease, as the Raj might not renew the lease or, if it did, it might enhance the rent payable by the lessee. In these villages the factories hit upon another ingenious plan. They required the tenants to purchase their release from the so-called indigo obligation by paying down a lump sum. The sums so realised varied in the different factories from Rs. 40 to Rs. 100 per bigha and averaged Rs. 60 per bigha. When the tenants were unable to pay in cash, handnotes were taken from them as if for loans with interest at 12 per cent. per annum, and in cases where large sums were concerned registered bonds were taken, sometimes with fictitious necessities for the loan being given in the recitals. Mr. Irwin alone on his own showing, realised as much Rs. 3 lakh and 20 thousand



from his hapless tenants in this way. The exact figures are not available, but I believe that the sums realised by all the factories on this head would be something between 16 and 20 lakhs. These exactions are known as *tawan*. Here, again, the tenants allege that these exactions were forcibly realised from them, and this appears to have been the case, considering that for a large proportion of it they had to execute hand-notes and bonds. They were taken not only from tenants whose agreements for growing indigo were still in force or in villages which had been under the factory for a long time and in which an incident of growing indigo could with any degree of plausibility be attached to the holdings, but also from tenants whose agreements had expired or all but expired and in villages which had come under the possession of the factory recently and where therefore no incident could be claimed with any show of reason. At the time these *sharabeshi* agreements were taken and *tawan* was realised, Babu Braja Kishor Prasad, who was then a member of the local Legislative Council, drew the attention of the Government to the grievances of the tenants. But nothing apparently was done except promising some sort of inquiry. In the meantime special sub-registrars were deputed to the factories for registering the thousands and thousands of documents which the tenants were supposed to execute voluntarily. The situation was becoming very serious, and a resolution for inquiry by a Commission was moved by Babu Braja Kishor Prasad, only to be thrown out by the local Council. Government however promised to take such steps as might be found necessary on the report of the settlement officers, who had been deputed to revise the settlement and Record of Rights. The settlement was almost completed and the settlement authorities, while able to give relief in one direction which we shall deal with later on, refused to touch the enhancements, except in a very few cases. On the contrary, they confirmed the enhancements on what cannot but be called a perfunctory inquiry. I call these inquiries perfunctory, because when nine test cases were instituted in the civil court, the court, after protracted proceedings decided five of these against the factory, although it had engaged the services of the late Government Advocate of the Province, holding that the so-called incident on the holding did not exist and the enhancement was therefore illegal. The settlement officers decided something like 50 to 60 thousand of these disputes in a few months. They had of course no power to deal with the *tawan*. It was at this stage when the settlement officers had almost failed to give relief to the tenants in these matters that Mr. Gandhi arrived in Champaran in April 1917.

Mr. Gandhi's arrival in Champaran will always be enshrined in the memories of the tenants of the district and of the people of the province at large as a very memorable event. I need not detail here the attempts of the local executive officers to drive him out of the district. Those who were with Mr. Gandhi in this struggle know that at times it seemed that the agitation carried on by the planters in the Press and certain cases of fire in some factories would result in the Government taking drastic measures against Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi was, however, firm as rock, and the Government, knowing that right and justice were on his side, left him unmolested. Mr. Gandhi succeeded in getting recorded statements of about 13,000 tenants, 5000 in full and 8000 giving in a tabular form a summary statement of their grievances. He formulated his demands and submitted them to the Government, who thereupon appointed the Committee of Inquiry. One can easily understand the chagrin and bitterness of the planters at the appointment of Mr. Gandhi as one of the members of the Committee. The Committee held its inquiry and submitted its report, arriving I believe at the same findings as Mr. Gandhi had done before and suggesting remedies and special legislation. The value of the report is considerably enhanced by reason of the fact that the Hon'ble Mr. D. J. Reid, who was the Presi-

dent of the Bihar Planters' Association and the representative of the Bihar planters on the Council, and the Hon'ble Raja Kirtyanand Singh of Banaili, a big zamindar and indigo planter himself, also joined in the report and agreed with their colleagues, some of whom had considerable experience of the district and with the President, Sir Frederick Sly, an experienced revenue officer of another province, who approached the question with an unbiased mind. It is necessary to say this because the planters' representative in the Council challenged the report of the Committee as being partial and perfunctory. The main recommendation of the Committee on the question of *sharabeshi* was based on a compromise entered into between Mr. Gandhi as representing the tenants and the three of the largest factories representing 95 per cent. of the interest in which *sharabeshi* was taken and is to the effect that *sharabeshi* should be reduced by 20 per cent. in the case of one factory and by 26 per cent. in other factories. It is interesting to note in passing the furious attacks of Mr. Irwin on all and sundry and his attempt to get out of the compromise. He has made certain statements regarding what happened at the meetings for arranging the compromise, we understand, and these were repudiated by Mr. Reid, and the former has instituted a suit for damages for defamation against Mr. Reid for one lakh of rupees. With regard to the *tawan* the Committee held that it was wholly unjustifiable in the temporarily leased or *thika* villages and recommended that 25 per cent. of the sum realised should be refunded to the tenants through the Bettiah Raj, which, being under the Court of Wards, was directed to recover it from the factories and, on their refusal to pay, to decline to renew their temporary leases. As to the *linkathia* system, the Committee found that it was unpopular and unprofitable to the tenants, and that there were inherent defects in the system which no tinkering with it could cure and recommended that it should be abolished at once. The Bill, which was passed the other day in the local Council, was a result of these recommendations of the Committee, and the grateful thanks of the people are due to the Government of Sir Edward Gait for the scrupulously just attitude he took up in regard to this unfortunate controversy, which it is hoped will now cease.

RAJENDRA PRASAD.

## REVIEWS.

### CO-OPERATION IN MADRAS.

THE report of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies in Madras for the year 1916-17 is lucid, concise and interesting. Some years ago Madras was nearly at the top of the list of provinces in all aspects of co-operation, but now it occupies a position somewhat lower than the middle except in the matter of finance. This fact has been frequently commented upon in the press and in conferences of co-operators in different parts of the Presidency, but it is a pleasure to note that during the year under report the progress achieved was greater in all directions than in any other year of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai's regime. The number of societies rose from 1800 to 2216 and the working capital of all societies from 169 lakhs to 205 lakhs in spite of the stringency of the money market due to the war. There was demand for more money, which however could not be satisfied, and, for that reason and also because suitable provision could not be made for supervision, a good many applications for registration had to be rejected. The Madras Central Urban Bank the membership of which was previously confined to individuals was converted into a Provincial Apex Bank by admitting societies as members and reserving for their representatives three seats out of nine on the directorate. During the period under review three new District Banking Unions were formed, and steps were also taken to organise them in some other Districts. From subsequent newspaper reports we gather that

they have been organised in some of them, including Tinnevely, where, according to the Registrar's report, the opposition of joint-stock banks had made the organization of a co-operative bank hopeless. All the district banks in the Presidency have now admitted societies into membership with the sole exception of the Trichinopoly bank, which we hope will not envy the distinction. The most remarkable progress, however, was made in the case of supervising unions which rose from 29 to 56 and the number of societies affiliated to them from 604 to 1294. A large number of unaffiliated societies are also supervised by the staffs of the district banks and unions, and the societies whose supervision is not provided for are less than 400 or 18 per cent. of the total. The expenses of supervision are met mainly by a charge of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the borrowings of the societies. The difference which supervision by a union makes in the working of a society may be gathered from the fact that in Nellore district the arrears of loans in union societies are 14 per cent., while in non-union societies they are as high as 80 per cent. Purchase and sale societies or stores were a general failure, and the building societies did not work energetically. But it is interesting to note that two societies of the latter class were started, both for poor people, one for earth-diggers in a village in Guntur district and the other for fishermen in a coastal town. A printing society was started in South Canara, which is the first of its kind in the Presidency, and perhaps in the whole country. Of special interest are the societies started for the benefit of the depressed and specially backward classes. At the end of the period under report there were 25 societies for scavengers and other menials in municipal service, 14 societies for fishermen and 15 for members of hill tribes. Along with them may be mentioned the eleven societies that were started during the year exclusively for Christians in rural parts. In organising these the Y. M. C. A., the Fisheries Department and several Social Service Leagues took a keen interest and co-operated with the Department.

One feature in the organization of the Department in Madras which deserves the attention of the other provinces is that the Presidency is divided into seven circles for the present, consisting of three or four districts each and containing on an average about 300 societies. Each circle is in charge of an Assistant Registrar who is an officer of the Deputy Collector's grade and a native of the area. This arrangement stimulates the formation of new societies and renders efficient the existing ones. It may be mentioned here that after this report was submitted, Government have approved of a scheme for appointing Honorary Assistant Registrars, whose jurisdiction will be limited to a district or a part of it.

V. V.

### CO-OPERATION IN THE PUNJAB.

THERE was no expansion of the co-operative movement in the Punjab in 1916-17. The year was devoted solely to the over-hauling of existing societies and the expurgation of defects. How serious and widespread these defects were will be gathered from the fact that arbitration proceedings were launched against 13,000 members, that no less than 12,000 members were expelled from societies and that many convictions were obtained for misappropriation of money and other criminal practices. The state of things that necessitated such drastic remedies is a revelation to those who from statistics had come to believe that the Punjab was ahead of all the other provinces in the matter of co-operation. The root causes of all defects, not only in the Punjab but all over India, are the illiteracy of the people and the lack of supervision. We are told that in a single tahsil there are as many as 236 societies or one to every 950 acres. But of them only 20 are fairly satisfactory, about 70 could be improved, and 145 are threatened with dissolution. It is a pity that

adequate supervision was not provided for these societies, and even now if supervising unions of the right type are formed we think that most of them could be reclaimed. As the Registrar rightly observes, the chief lesson to be learned is the need for an adequate and well-trained staff.

The financial position of the agricultural societies on the whole is most satisfactory, about 56 per cent. of their working capital being composed of share capital and reserve fund. Many of the societies that have now been in existence for ten years can do without outside help and one society is in a position to lend money to its members without interest—a fact which will gratify Mussulman sentiment. As against 3417 agricultural societies, there were only 37 non-agricultural ones, and their story is a sorry one. During the year under review the movement received considerable help from non-officials, though one would like this help to be much more. Twenty-five gentlemen helped in supervision as honorary Sub-Inspectors. It is particularly pleasing to note that 'District Boards make contributions towards the pay of eight Sub-Inspectors.' The movement has done its bit for the war. One Inspector was put on special duty for recruiting all through the year and another for some months. The societies invested nearly 3 lakhs of their funds in the war loan, and members withdrew several lakhs from the societies for the same purpose. We commend this outspoken and interesting report to all co-operators.

V. V.

### LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

#### BOMBAY.

##### A WORKMEN'S INSTITUTE.

THE promoters of the Social Service League have put their hand to a new form of welfare work, as yet unattempted in Bombay, among the operatives working in the mills of Sir Currimhoy Ebrahim. They have established a workmen's institute with the object of improving the moral and material condition of the employees in these mills. The work of the institute will be (1) educational, (2) economic, (3) moral and (4) recreational. The educational work will consist of (a) a night school, where, besides reading and writing, some instruction in the elementary principles of mechanics and the process of weaving and spinning will be imparted, so that the workmen, who attend, will become more efficient and fit to rise to higher ranks; (b) a library of books, newspapers and magazines, which will be issued free of charge to all the workmen in the six mills working under the agency of the Company; (c) a series of weekly lectures on different subjects of general interest as well as lectures on first aid, home nursing, sanitation and temperance; and (d) a sewing class for women. The economic work will, for the present, consist of one co-operative credit society for each department of every mill. Thus there will be about 20 societies in all. These societies will give the members loans to the extent of three to four times their monthly pay at a reasonable rate of interest and will encourage thrift by inducing them to keep small monthly deposits. The work of moral improvement will consist of a temperance club, which will be conducted on the lines of social clubs, where tea, coffee and wholesome refreshments will be provided at a reasonable charge. Music, singing and indoor games will also be supplied. The club will be useful in weaning the workmen from drink and other unhealthy and pernicious habits. Recreational work will consist of Sunday excursions and sports, especially for children, aiming at physical efficiency. This is estimated to cost Rs. 9,000 by way of recurring expenditure and Rs. 5,000 by way of non-recurring expenditure, all of which the mill-owners have promised to pay for the first year as an experimental measure. Those who have taken this work in hand are fully conscious of the fact that those in whose interest it is undertaken are apt to resent it as savouring of charity and to regard it with suspicion as calculated to weaken their sense of solidarity. The Social Service League therefore insists that the work of the Institute must not be undertaken in a spirit of patronage and charity. The factory workers must come to feel that the employers regard the work as something which duty and justice alike prompt, and, what is more, that it is merely supplemental to other no less essential reforms. The latter

include the introduction of shorter hours, the abolition of child labour, the enactment of an Employers' Liability Act, and Workmen's Compensation Act, and the provision of homes for the workmen.

The Institute was opened by Her Excellency Lady Willingdon on the 15th instant. Lord Willingdon, who was prevented from attending the ceremony by the unfortunate accident he met with the other day, wrote to the organisers his appreciation of this new branch of activity undertaken by the League, and added: "I can only hope that this example set by a great industrial firm may be followed by many others, who will gladly give your excellent Society a full opportunity of increasing usefulness in the matter of the uplift of our working classes to which the members of your Society have given so much devoted service during the past years. You may always rely on the keenest and most sympathetic support from myself and my Government in your labours."

#### THE LABOUR TROUBLE.

It is most satisfactory to note that the lock-out of labourers in Ahmedabad has ended. Mr. Gandhi, finding that his appeals to the mill-owners were unavailing, had to take a vow to refuse food till an advance of 35 per cent. had been given to the labourers, just for a day, in order to enable the workmen to resume work. This has been now done, and Mr. Anandashankara Dhruva has been appointed to inquire into the whole question and decide upon the proper percentage of increase between 20 and 35 per cent.

#### MADRAS.

##### THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE.

ON Monday the 11th inst. there was a meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee at which two very important resolutions were adopted. One related to the Hon'ble Dewan Bahadur P. Rajagopalachariar's speech in the Legislative Council on the District Advisory Boards. All those that were present felt that the Hon'ble Member's speech should not be allowed to pass without a strong protest, while a section felt that a resolution of the Committee was sufficient but a majority were of opinion that it was necessary to hold a public meeting to express the popular resentment. Accordingly on Friday the 15th inst. a meeting was held and the following resolution was passed:—"This public meeting expresses its strong and emphatic disapproval of the speeches of the Indian member of the local Executive Council in the February session of the Legislative Council and is of opinion that the attitude of the Indian member towards Indian opinion was extremely disappointing and inconsistent with his position. That the chairman of the meeting be authorised to communicate the above resolution to the authorities concerned and to the Hon'ble member." The absence of prominent people from the meeting was noticeable.

The other resolution of the Provincial Congress Committee emphasised the country's adherence to the Congress-League scheme of reforms. After a good deal of discussion the resolution as communicated to the press was adopted in the place a stronger one that had appeared on the agenda.

##### THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The proceedings of the last session of the Council betrayed a woeful want of understanding among the non-official members. Even when they are united they have but little chance of success against the officials, but when they oppose each other, as they did the other day on as many as seven resolutions, it becomes a hopeless matter. Some time ago, the members used to come to Madras a day or two in advance of the date of meeting and talk over the business on the agenda. One hopes this useful practice will be revived soon. After the resolutions were discussed the Hon'ble Mr. Gillman introduced the Children Bill and moved that it be referred to a Select Committee. Social workers have long felt the want of such legislation in their rescue work and in reclamation of juvenile offenders and the motion received general approval. Much good can result from this Act provided it is made impossible for the police to abuse it. The Government deserves to be congratulated on having brought forward this measure, which, if conscientiously worked, promises to solve the difficult problem of waifs and strays.

#### TRAVANCORE.

##### EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

TRAVANCORE has just finished the fourteenth session of the Popular Assembly. It is an admitted fact that, in point of general literacy and average culture, we are far ahead of other Native States in India and most of the British Provinces. Travancore has the largest number of private educational institutions. Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, who was Dewan of Travancore, Mysore

and Baroda, once attempted a brief review of the progress made by the three States and said that, in the matter of voluntary principle of promoting education, Travancore was ahead of all. The interest the people have shown in opening new schools and contributing towards funds for educational purposes has been phenomenal. When the Government about half a dozen years ago made primary education free, the rush to the State schools was so great that it became impossible for the Educational Department to respond satisfactorily to the demand for admission. The Government, instead of constructing new schools here and there piecemeal, were then considering a scheme of extending the benefits of mass education by a definite programme of school-buildings, when the people came forward to put up school houses on plans approved by Government. The voluntary support they gave was so substantial that in the very first year the financial help they gave came to three lakhs for constructing school-buildings, while the total extent of lands surrendered, free of cost, by the people for locating schools came to 100 acres. The desire for English education is no less keen. At the last session of the Assembly several representatives of the people either asked for new schools in the taluks or requested the raising of the existing schools into high schools. On the Dewan asking them whether they were prepared to provide the necessary accommodation if the schools were raised to the high school status or to construct new buildings where fresh schools were demanded, the members of the Assembly immediately responded and even offered to place the necessary school furniture and appliances at the disposal of the Government. It is such a spirit of self-help that is responsible for bringing into existence 26 private English high schools out of 37 (in a State having an area of a little over 7,100 sq. miles) and two out of four private Arts Colleges. We are now agitating for vernacular education being made compulsory—a matter which is engaging the serious attention of His Highness's Government.

##### WORKS OF PUBLIC UTILITY.

Coming next to local wants, we find that the same praiseworthy voluntary principle has been responsible for some roads being cut by the people at their own cost. In not a few of the villages the residents have made their own roads. At the last session of the Assembly, popular representatives offered to place at the disposal of Government necessary lands free of cost for constructing roads. On account of this general desire of the people to co-operate with the officers of Government in the execution of works of public utility, the Chief Engineer of the State, Mr. A. H. Bastow, has submitted to Government a scheme under which the help of the people could be availed of by the P. W. Department. The Dewan promised to pass orders on the scheme after mature consideration. A third direction in which the people have been volunteering their services is that of medical relief. Representations had been made at the Assembly that in certain localities hospitals and dispensaries were needed. They also offered the necessary buildings to locate the same. The Dewan accepted such offers, and medical institutions have been opened. All this eagerness for reform is certainly to be attributed to a high percentage of literacy in the State.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### EDUCATION IN TRAVANCORE AND MADRAS.

SIR,—In the 7th March issue of your valuable weekly you compare the literacy figures for Travancore with those for the Madras Presidency. However instructive the comparison might be, in some respects, I think it ought not to be pressed too far. Madras is so varied in the character of its population that the literacy figure for the whole presidency has very little significance. It is vitiated by the inclusion in its limits of the barbarous hill tribes of Nilgiris and the Vijianagaram and Ganjam districts, and of several other semi-civilised tribes; while Travancore is a compact mass of land; small in extent and peopled by a homogeneous race which long ago attained a high degree of civilisation. It would be fairer to compare Travancore with some of the adjoining British districts, where the conditions are similar, rather than with the average of the whole presidency. The other part of the comparison about the State expenditure on education in Travancore and the Madras Presidency is, of course, perfectly just.—Yours, etc.

Secunderabad.

C. BHASKARAIYA.

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