

# Servant of India

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

To judge from reports published in the press, some of the Simon Committees seem to be acquitting themselves more creditably than was expected. The U. P. Committee for instance is reported to have been progressive enough to recommend among other things the institution of joint electorates and the transfer of all provincial subjects to ministerial control. It has no doubt coupled these recommendations with a suggestion for the establishment of a second chamber; but with all that, looking to the circumstances in which the committee came into existence it must be admitted that it is a wonder that it has gone as far as it has done to meet public opinion. It will be remembered that originally the U. P. Legislative Council had voted in favour of non-co-operation with the Simon Commission. Since then the bureaucracy set about the task of getting it to reverse this decision and when the necessary atmosphere was created by a judicious distribution of patronage and by the employment of means which can not bear examination a resolution recommending the setting up of a committee to co-operate with the Commission was brought forward before the Council. But before the discussion on this motion was taken up the leaders of the Opposition, Mr. Chintamani on behalf of the Nationalist party and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant on behalf of the Swaraj party, made statements which non-plussed the Government members. They charged the Governor and his Government with adopting an unconstitutional procedure and thus reducing the Council to a farce. They declared that the Government before they could put the motion for the election of such a committee before the Council ought to have asked it to rescind its former resolution regarding the Simon Commission which favoured its boycott. All the members of both the Opposition parties then left the Chamber, refusing to be a party to such travesty of constitutional procedure. The Government spokesmen were taken aback by the card played by the Opposition and the

Finance Member could give no effective reply to the points raised by the two leaders but only expressed his regret for their decision and personal admiration for their honesty of purpose. The whole transaction was thus a one sided affair and a packed committee consisting of rank communalists and arch reactionaries was then elected as proposed by the Government without any dissentient voice being heard. It would therefore be an agreeable surprise if the report of the committee constituted as this one was turns out to be even as good as is reported.

THE Conference held at Bombay under the presidency of Sir Parushottamdas Thakurdas expressed the opinion that the Excise Advisory Committees as constituted at present are a farce and favoured the adoption of a complete system of local option. While we agree that the powers of the Excise Advisory Committees and even of the Excise Licensing Boards such as those working in Madras and Bengal in the matter of the number and location of shops should be real, what is really needed is some definite steps such as the progressive reduction in the number of shops, rationing, etc., with a view to reach the goal of prohibition in a fixed period of time. As was only to be expected, the Conference entered an emphatic protest against the stoppage by Government of the rationing policy. In doing so, the Conference has faithfully voiced public opinion in the province. The protest received added force by reason of the fact that it was supported by Sir Chunilal Mehta, the father of the policy of rationing in Bombay. He put up a spirited defence of his policy and replied to some of the charges levelled against it. The stoppage of the policy is sometimes justified on the ground that it was needed in order to stop the loss of revenue which was a very serious matter. Referring to this charge Sir Chunilal asked: "Were not the Council and the officers of Government informed at that time that this policy was not a mere eye-wash, that it was bound to lead to great reduction of revenue and to bring out amongst the vested interests and those who profit by this nefarious trade all their devices and tricks in order to maintain the position which they have now been led to enjoy after so many years... I am free to admit that loss to revenue has occurred, it was meant that this loss should occur." Touching the alleged increase of excise crime due to the enforcement of the rationing policy he said: "There was and there is a way even now of dealing with this matter if Government or the Council will only be prepared to take the public into their confidence and say that they will carry out the wishes of the public." There is no doubt the Conference has served the useful purpose of focussing public attention on some flaws in the Government's excise policy.

No advocate of the Prohibition cause can take exception to proposals put forward by any Government to aid the cause of Temperance by helping the organisations devoted to the cause by means of grants. That public opinion must be fostered in order that any temperance or prohibition measures or legislation undertaken to attain the goal of prohibition may have the co-operation and support of the general public, no one can deny. The Government of Madras deserve congratulations for being alone among the Governments in India, or perhaps in the world, for undertaking this activity. We understand that the Punjab Government also proposes to earmark a definite sum to help the temperance societies to promote the noble cause of true temperance. The Madras scheme is to be worked by a Central Board with the help of the District Committees and carry on propaganda by means of leaflets and pamphlets; exhibition of posters, charts and diagrams; magic-lantern and cinema shows; mass meetings; distribution of books and periodicals to educational and other public institutions, exhibitions, etc. The programme outlined is fairly satisfactory and if carried out with the enthusiasm the cause deserves, we have no doubt the results will be very encouraging. We understand that the Central Board in Madras is to act also as an advisory Committee and suggest to Government such measures as may be deemed necessary to reach the goal of prohibition within a period of twenty years. Recognition of the fact that mere propaganda unaccompanied by steps necessary to discourage drinking by adopting measures of temperance reform, is commendable and we trust the other provincial Governments also will adopt a scheme of the kind now proposed in Madras with such modifications as may be desirable to meet the peculiar conditions in the different provinces.

**Malegaon Peasants' Conference.**

**PRESIDING** at the Peasants' Conference held at Umrana in Malegaon Taluka of the Nasik District Mr. R. G. Pradhan cried halt to the policy of enhancing the land assessment unerringly followed all over the presidency. While admitting that the Broomfield Report is a careful and thoughtful contribution to the clarification of the problem of the most equitable assessment of land revenue, and paying his tribute of appreciation for the work done by Messrs. Broomfield and Maxwell he directs his criticism against the Report on two points. Mr. Pradhan complains that after having declared the rental value basis of assessment as impracticable in the case of lands which are not leased at all, they themselves base their own assessment, however low it might be, on the rental evidence—the very method which they described as requiring great caution in its application to unleased areas. In his opinion it is incumbent on the signatories of the Report to make this point clear by means of a supplementary note. Secondly he thinks that the treatment of the question of the determination of the profits of agriculture by the Enquiry Committee is very perfunctory and unscientific; he does not believe that it is difficult to ascertain the profits of agriculture if scientific methods are devised. Mr. Pradhan emphasizes the most important lesson to be drawn from the Bardoli enquiry; it is that "if any injustice to the rayat is to be avoided, the work of the Settlement Officer must be done in the most careful and thoroughgoing manner." He therefore proposes that the existing system of revision settlement should be radically improved by the overhauling of the Land Revenue Code. So far as the Baglan and Malegaon Talukas are concerned, he says that nothing but a fresh enquiry on the lines of Bardoli would satisfy the people and he expresses a hope that

this simple and reasonable request would be granted by the Bombay Government, and that people would not be driven to despair. As a minor grievance Mr. Pradhan mentions the practice of making the distraint of the movable property of the defaulter who has failed to pay revenue within the prescribed time without issuing a written notice in accordance with section 152 of the Code. His suggestion is that the giving of such a notice should be mandatory instead of optional as at present; in addition he suggests that if a proper cause is shown by the holder for failure to pay the revenue instalment no penalty should be imposed except after the lapse of an additional period granted to him by an order in writing. In fact he pleads as he says for the principle of 'sympathy in collection' laid down in the famous Resolution issued by Lord Curzon's Government in 1902. These suggestions are in our opinion eminently reasonable. Mr. Pradhan hopes that the Government of India's Resolution setting out the conclusions reached by the conference of Revenue Members will contribute to the satisfactory solution of the vexed question of an equitable land revenue assessment.

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**THE Imperial Council of Agricultural Research** was formally inaugurated during the last week by His Excellency the **Agricultural Research Council.** Viceroy in the presence of Directors of Agriculture and representatives of public bodies. The original proposals of the Royal Commission on Agriculture have been slightly modified by the Government and the actual constitution is a change for the better. The Council is divided into the Governing Body charged with executive functions and the Advisory Board which will be a body of experts with only an advisory capacity. In order to enable the Legislative Assembly to exercise its proper constitutional control over the activity affecting an important industry in the country the Government have provided for the representation of the Assembly on the Governing Body. The Government ought to be congratulated on the recognition of the constitutional principle that no important activity of the State should be carried on except in consultation with the Legislature. In inaugurating the Council Lord Irwin emphasized the value of research in promoting the development of an agricultural country like India. He expressed the hope that the presence of the Ministers of Agriculture in the Provinces on the Governing Body of the Council would be a source of strength to that important organ of the Council and would link the activities of the Council with those of the provincial Agricultural departments. The tributes that the Viceroy paid to the varied experience of Sir T. Vijayaraghavachariar who will be the Vice-Chairman of the Council are certainly well-deserved and we feel confident that under his able guidance the Council of Agricultural Research will turn out valuable work. Lastly the Viceroy pleaded for a free interchange of information between the various parts of the Empire so as to ensure the minimum of over-lapping and the most efficient work and called upon India to join the Imperial Agriculture Bureau. Although the Government of India have reduced the initial outlay on the Council from Rs. 50 lakhs proposed by the Report of the Royal Commission to Rs. 25 lakhs, we still think it is a heavy outlay in the present condition of Indian finances. And we feel it necessary to give the warning that the recurring expenditure necessitated by the working of the Council should be kept within reasonable limits and the enthusiasm for research should not be allowed to outrun discretion.

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### THE VICEROY'S SPEECH.

IT was a very fine speech which H. E. Lord Irwin delivered at the Chelmsford Club on the eve of his departure for England. The most important feature of it was his reiteration of the resolve expressed by him before to place before the Imperial Government the views of all the political parties in India on the subject of constitutional reform. Before he came upon this theme he answered the indictment, popularly made, of his Government on three counts; and on all the three points his answer was effective. Our views on the Public Safety Bill have been repeatedly expressed before. We believe that the necessity for extraordinary powers to deal with the propagandist activities of foreign communists has never been satisfactorily established. We therefore opposed the Bill when it was before the Legislature and opposed the Ordinance when it was promulgated by His Excellency. We have however felt no sympathy for the cry often raised in popular circles that Government ought to have waited till the Bill had passed the Legislature before the ordinary law was set in motion against any persons suspected to foment disorder in the country. As Lord Irwin has now said, the Government would have shown lack of candour and therefore lack of courtesy if, having contemplated immediate action under the ordinary law, it had let the Public Safety Bill go through without giving the Assembly an inkling of the Government's intention in this matter. It would of course have saved itself much odium arising from the subsequent controversy with the President, but this would have been at the expense of good faith. In taking the more invidious but also the more honourable course Lord Irwin's Government has shown very commendable courage. We make this remark irrespectively of our opinion of the Assembly President's ruling, but for which an Ordinance would not have been necessary. The Viceroy's explanation therefore appears to us entirely satisfactory. May we not hope in this connexion that the Labour Government will repeal the Ordinance, relying upon the ordinary judicial processes for countering the sinister propaganda of foreign communists? In England itself there is no legislation corresponding to the Public Safety Ordinance and this fact should appeal more strongly to the Labour than to the Conservative party. The last Labour Government made itself odious to the progressive parties in India by reason of the use it made of the Bengal Ordinance. The justification for using or even for merely keeping on the statute book the anti-communist measure is much less. The Labour Government would not only live up to its principles but enhance its prestige very greatly in India if it decided to abandon this Ordinance and employed ordinary Law against foreign as well indigenous communists in the country.

The unpopularity incurred by the Government of India by passing the Trades Disputes Act in its present form has never been so severe as that incurred by it by promulgating the Public Safety Ordinance. One part of it is decidedly beneficial, and all parties

in the country, including the Swarajist party, have testified to this fact. It is only the second part declaring general strikes illegal which was condemned by the representatives of the people and all that the latter asked was to separate the two measures and deal with each according to its deserts instead of getting an objectionable measure tacked on to an unobjectionable one. The Viceroy refers, in support of his action, to the fact of many democratic countries either contemplating or having adopted similar measures. If he had such strong justification he ought not to have objected to bringing two separate bills dealing with two separate matters. It should be noted that the parallel he quoted in favour of the Trades Disputes Bill was not forthcoming in the case of the Public Safety Bill, in respect of which he desired India not to follow but to depart from the English practice. The action taken by the Government of India against Labour leaders who are now undergoing trial in Meerut is also *prima facie* not open to serious objection inasmuch as the action is taken under the ordinary law. Whether the prosecution is justified or not the event will show, but Government have certainly the right, and indeed the duty, of bringing to justice men who according to the information received by them have broken the law. To say this is not to justify the indiscriminate arrests that it is said are being made or the *venue* of the trial being placed in a small place where the accused will not have the benefit of the trial by a jury and where they will be labouring under several other disadvantages. Our protest therefore in respect of these matters remains. In so far however as the prosecution itself is concerned, we must confess we cannot take exception to it until it is found on evidence after the trial is over that the prosecution was launched without due care or in a spirit of vindictiveness.

But the most important subject dealt with in the Viceroy's speech is, as we have said above, that of constitutional reforms. If in regard to this he will frankly convey to the Labour Cabinet the prevailing opinion among all progressive groups in this country and ask it not to base its decisions on the views expressed before the Simon Commission, which, on his own admission, has failed to secure the co-operation of these groups, he will have done a real service to India. In speaking on this subject he mentioned two topics which are found to present difficulty to the framers of the constitution: the Hindu-Muslim differences and the Indian States. It cannot be gainsaid that, in spite of the earnest efforts made in the Nehru Report to reconcile the existing differences between Hindus and Mussalmans, reconciliation has not been effected and the most urgent task before Indian politicians at present is to make further endeavours to secure unanimity. This is not a task confined to non-officials; Government too must take a hand in it, though so far it has kept severely aloof from it. The Indian States problem will not in itself be difficult to solve if Government will cease unduly pampering the Princes. If only it will take a just view of the matter and assign to the Princes the position which is properly theirs, the Princes will not hesitate

as they do now to enter into a federation with British India on an equitable footing. But false hopes are held out to them, which are destined to be eventually disappointed but which while they last create an unnecessary difficulty in the way of British India attaining dominion status. The Viceroy will deserve well of India if he will give, as he promises, a faithful picture of the aspirations that have been stirred in the minds of political India. We can desire nothing better than that he will earn for himself the title which Sir Bhupendra-nath Mitra has conferred upon him, viz. that of India's chief ambassador.

### THE GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE AND THE STRIKE.

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR FREDERICK SYKES, the Governor of Bombay, deserves the sincere thanks of the public for the good example he set in taking the public bodies in Bombay into his confidence before taking any steps to deal with the present serious industrial crisis that has affected the interests of Bombay City and the Presidency. One wishes one could pay the same compliment to His Excellency in respect of the composition of the Conference convened by him in Bombay on June 19, the procedure adopted at it and the decisions announced by him on behalf of the Government. A large number of the public bodies invited to the Conference represented commercial interests having direct or indirect financial connections with the textile industry. It would have been a great surprise if these interests had taken an impartial view of the strike situation and suggested measures which would not have adversely affected the strikers and kept the millowners untouched. To counteract the influence of the commercial bodies it was necessary that the non-official public bodies having little or no connection with Capital or Labour, such as the Bombay Presidency Association, should have been given greater representation at the Conference than was actually done. In fact the number of such independent bodies was very poor! Instead, such agencies as the G. I. P. and B. B. C. I. Railways and the Port Trust which could hardly be called public bodies for the purposes of the Conference, got ample representation which they hardly deserved. If a sectional body like the non-official European Association was to be given representation, one fails to understand why other sectional Indian organisations, equally representative and influential, were not invited. Indeed the impression created on one's mind after seeing its composition was that the Conference reflected the capitalist interests more than the public interests and to that extent its views must be considered one-sided and partial towards the millowners.

The procedure adopted at the Conference was also very defective in that there was no scope for discussion on the points raised. On the first day after His Excellency's preliminary remarks, each organisation was invited to express its opinion on the strike situation, which being done, His Excellency

gave an indication of the proposals his Government had in view. On the second day, the organisations were again asked to express their views on the Government proposals and His Excellency finally announced the decisions the Government had reached with the object of meeting the strike situation. It seemed as though the Government had already made up their mind and the discussion that took place in the Conference and the views expressed thereat had no influence on their proposals and decisions. This considerably reduced the importance of the Conference and was, therefore, most unfortunate. The Bombay Government could well have adopted the measures they finally decided upon without convening the Conference. But it seems that with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald at 10, Downing Street, the Bombay Government were anxious to convey an idea to the public that in adopting these measures, they had the support of influential public bodies; and with the composition and the procedure adopted at the Conference, it may be said that they partly succeeded in achieving their object. Public opinion is, however, shrewd enough and cannot fail to understand the real situation and draw its own inferences.

The views expressed in the Conference were in conformity with the character of the organisations and dispelled all doubts, if ever entertained, about the partiality of the majority of them with the millowners. The European organisations and those dominated by European influence went the whole hog and demanded repressive measures to put down the strike. This was hardly surprising; but what was not only surprising but also painful was that some of the prominent Indian politicians expressed views which were hardly consistent with their reputation for sturdy nationalism and democratic ideas. Indeed it was humiliating to find how some of our public men of the front rank who hold radical views on political matters showed themselves to be not even moderates but reactionaries in industrial matters. One gentleman holding important position in the civic affairs of Bombay wanted peaceful picketing to be made illegal and thereby to deprive labour of its legitimate and constitutional weapon in industrial disputes. Another gentleman of higher standing and greater reputation even went the length of suggesting that an expression of opinion of the Bombay Legislative Council should be obtained on the desirability or otherwise of introducing legislation on the lines of the Presidency Area Security Act of Bengal, which is popularly known as the "Goonda" Act. The reactionary nature of these measures can be best realised when it is remembered that they are to be kept permanently on the statute book! It was a relief to find that at least a few organisations were emphatically opposed to any measures of repression.

General satisfaction will be felt at the decision of the Bombay Government to appoint a Court of Enquiry under the Trades Disputes Act. One or two organisations pressed for the appointment of an *ad hoc* committee on the lines of the Fawcett Com-

mittee with wider terms of reference so as to enable it to know whether there was any communist influence behind the present dispute. Such a committee had obvious disadvantages. In the first place, it was bound to take longer time than the Court of Enquiry; and promptness is the most important factor in the present dispute. Secondly, it had no power to make *interim* reports which the Court has. And thirdly, the greatest evil of the *ad hoc* committee would be that at each and every dispute that might occur hereafter and might be fought with the same militancy and determination with which the present strike was being fought, the capitalist interests would show a tendency to suspect communist influence and demand *ad hoc* committees. This evil must be avoided at any cost. Further, under section 3 of the Trades Disputes Act the Court is competent to say whether a trade dispute is an honest and *bona fide* one or not. The Court of Enquiry, therefore, satisfies the present needs of the situation and should go a long way in settling the present strike.

The Conference did not get an opportunity to express an opinion on the Government's decision to request the Government of India to issue an Ordinance to make intimidation a cognizable offence. Everybody was in favour of stopping intimidation and terrorisation if it existed; but the kind of intimidation and terrorisation complained of could hardly be stopped by means of an Ordinance under the circumstances in which the workers lived. If anything, some innocent people will come into trouble at the hands of the police. Intimidation and terrorism could be brought under control, if not altogether stopped, by the energetic and vigilant execution of the powers that the police have under the existing law. Further, this Ordinance, if issued, will create a bad precedent which might be taken advantage of by the capitalists in future industrial disputes. This is a danger which must be guarded against.

The Government's proposals to introduce legislation making peaceful picketing illegal and giving power to the police to remove from a certain area any one whom they suspect, are most reactionary and must be opposed. The Government have in view the British Trade Unions and Trades Disputes Act of 1927 which has made picketing illegal under certain circumstances. But it was pointed out in the Conference that legislation similar to the British legislation will not meet the situation in Bombay and that it will deprive labour of its legitimate and constitutional right. The Conference was called by His Excellency to state its views on the *present* situation in Bombay and suggest remedies; it was never called to express its views on the industrial problems of the day. And yet it was asked to give its opinion on the proposals which, if adopted, would put permanently on the statute book legislation restricting the liberties of labour to a great extent. The Conference was hardly competent to express its views on these proposals. The Government's decision to introduce this legislation

will only strengthen the suspicion lurking in the public mind that a systematic attack is being organised against the trade union movement; at any rate, such proposals are bound to complicate the already complicated situation and reduce whatever influence the sober element in the labour movement possesses today.

R. R. BAKHALE.

## OUR EUROPEAN LETTER.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

GENEVA, June 6.

### THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE.

THIS year's President, Dr. Brauns, delivered an interesting address replete with references to the philosophy of Labour as may be expected from a German.

"It is becoming increasingly recognised in scientific circles", he said, "that Labour law is primarily a matter of constitutional law. There are unmistakable signs that an industrial constitution is coming into being. The idea of an industrial constitution has found expression in the various legislative measures on work councils."

These measures, although largely given to the regulation of industrial disputes, tend to encourage, however timidly, greater participation by workers in the ownership and management of the industries in which they are engaged. "The collective regulation of labour conditions thus becomes a factor in self-government, and a specially important factor, because it is more suitable than anything else to provide a means of civic education".

After tracing the existing conception of social policy to modern industrial development and the concentration of population in great cities, and attributing the extension of its scope to the middle classes and intellectuals owing to the effects of the war which, depriving them of their means, compelled them to resort to organisation, similar to that of the workers, in self-defence, the President distinguished three kinds of marked changes in the objects of social policy. These were (1) the increasing direction of the protective action of the State towards able-bodied workers thus changing its character from mere relief, (2) the extensive development of a systematic employment policy, and (3) the collective regulation of Labour. To this last Dr. Brauns gave a great deal of attention because, in his opinion, the modern State did not merely recognise collective agreements, it also helped them to come into existence. The protection of the workers as well as the drive against unemployment proceeded from a recognition of the economic value of man-power, but neither of these, it soon became evident, could be promoted in our days of large-scale production if the old idea of demand and supply as regards labour prevailed. Such competition either resulted in important national enterprises being endangered by industrial differences or the workers being subjected to the risks from which the State strove to save them owing to their lack of real contractual power. The State could not remain indifferent to the effects of excessive and immediate rationalisation of an industry resulting in large numbers of workers being thrown out of work, nor could it regard dispassionately the reactions of long monotonous hired labour on vast masses of its citizens. Consequently, regulation of hours of work enabling the worker to set apart some of his time for the development of his personality and the establishment of profit-sharing giving him an interest in the result of his toil were matters of concern for the State.

The Conference has been holding a preliminary discussion on forced labour and hours of work of salaried employees, the purpose being to bring to the surface the root conceptions involved in these questions so that the committees concerned may deal with them accordingly. As regards the first Mr. Siva Rao was the principal exponent of India's views. He congratulated the Conference on the inclusion of a subject which concerned the coloured workers on its agenda and with gentle firmness reminded it that it could justify its name only by treating such subjects and maintain the allegiance of the large masses of workers outside Europe. Despite the Government of India's formal abolition of forced labour, Mr. Siva Rao was of opinion that the practice survived in the hill districts and existed in plantations under a different name. The serious lack of statistics from Indian States was also touched upon by him, and it is noteworthy that Sir Atul Chatterji, answering Mr. Siva Rao's criticism on behalf of the Government of India, also regretted the lack of informed opinion in this regard although he took it upon himself to assure the Conference that any convention which the Conference might conclude would be fully respected by the Indian States concerned. Public opinion, especially in Europe, is so far advanced that even if it had not been for the splendid attitude which the workers' representatives have taken up generally, no one would have dared put forward a plea for the perpetuation of forced labour, however apologetically. A consensus of opinion against forced labour in the Conference was to be expected, and the Governments' and employers' representatives, while formally condemning it on economic and humanitarian grounds, set themselves to emphasise the practical difficulties in the way of any radical convention being ratified. Forced labour is largely a question of colonial administration, and a noteworthy criticism, to which Mr. Siva Rao also alluded in the discussion was the totally inadequate representation of colonial workers in the Conference. This is a point which Indian workers have urged repeatedly and this year once more Mr. Joshi has sent in a draft Resolution on the same subject. That the admission of colonial representatives in greater number so far from causing difficulties would facilitate the work of the Conference was evident from an extremely sensible speech made by one of them. Hadji Salim from the Dutch Indies gracefully thanked the Netherlands Government as well as the Dutch trade-union movement for giving him the opportunity of participating in the deliberations and after acknowledging all that the Netherlands Government had done in this regard went on to say :

"A Government, however, is an abstraction; the work is done by human beings, and Government opinions and policy may change as the men who form the Government change. It would not be the first time if a colonial people is disappointed in the promises made to it by a Government. It is therefore necessary that a strong public opinion be formed. A Government cannot carry out its work in some districts without some measure of constraint, because it is not based on public approval. Although improvements have taken place, opinion in my country is not allowed free expression and it is not organised so as to influence the Government of the country. Accordingly I and others who come from Eastern countries must arouse the conscience of the West, of the colonising Powers."

The discussion of the hours of work of salaried employees is in some measure an evidence of the gradual increase in the scope of the Organisation since Washington. It is a matter on which varied practices prevail in different countries. Mr. Kalappa, speaking for India, said that "in India trade has grown

considerably and is still growing, and it is surprising that there is no regulation whatsoever of the working hours of employees in commercial establishments." "Many of these", he alleged, "work 14 to 16 hours a day".

## REVIEW.

### DOMINION SELF-GOVERNMENT.

EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH, STUDIES IN GOVERNANCE AND SELF-GOVERNMENT IN CANADA. BY CHESTER MARTIN. (Oxford University Press.) 1929. 23 cm. 385 p.

THE British Empire, or as it had recently been named, the British Commonwealth of Nations, is one of the strangest phenomena of practical politics ever designed through human agency, for in it are to be found societies of every shade of political and social development from the freest democracy to the highly developed autocracy, from the most modern system of government to the most rudimentary form of organization. But of all the political institutions of this extraordinary conglomeration of human beings perhaps the most interesting and at the same time the most instructive study is that of its self-governing units which are known by the name of the Dominions. Beginning their life sometimes by settlement, sometimes by treaty, sometimes by sheer conquest, they have attained for all intents and purposes the attributes of full and complete nationhood. For us Indians this study is the more instructive just at the present moment, for with the Simon Commission in our midst and the Nehru report before us, with the great problem of the minorities still really unsolved, with the question of linguistic provinces hardly touched, we would do well to study how other members of the British Empire have successfully solved similar national problems. Finally there is that great controversy with regard to the exact difference between Dominion Status and Complete Independence, and it is of the utmost importance that we should have a clear idea of the connotation of these two terms before we make up our mind to work for the one or the other.

The work before us is a masterly analysis of the gradual solution of these problems in the case of one of the most important of the British Dominions, i. e. Canada. If we were to compare the problems which the reformers of Canada have had to solve, we would be struck by the amount of similarity which exists between that country and India. We have there as well as in India a vast expanse of God's earth extending from the snowy north to the moderate south, the Rockies like the Vindhyas bisecting the two parts of the land, impenetrable forests making intercourse difficult between the east and the west, and lastly a province, that of Quebec, populated by a majority of people alien in race, religion, sentiment and perhaps general outlook on life much in the same way as the Mussulman majority in the Panjab, Sind and Eastern Bengal. Thus we see that the Canadians had just the same amount of difficulties to cope with as we Indians and, as if to make the similarity more perfect, just as we have Russia with her eye turned towards us from our north-west, in the same manner the Canadians had the young and vigorous republic of the United States menacing its very existence from the south.

The solution of these and other problems has been achieved by the courage and patriotism of both the sections of the population, i. e., the French and the English. Before we can gauge the situation with any precision we must be aware of the fact that the

French provinces which were to become the nucleus of the Dominion of Canada, were acquired by conquest, and it was not long after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham that the United States freed themselves from Britain. Then the policy adopted by Britain during the early years of Canadian history was one of *divide et impera* and it redounds to the courage and foresight of the French and the English in the colony that in spite of all these disintegrating factors they have stuck to each other through thick and thin and have developed their institutions to the extent that they have now attained nearly complete nationhood. The primary basis of political advance has been the intense love of the motherland which is manifest throughout, and as our author says:—

"It is a truism of Canadian politics that whatever the traditional view of political parties, the policy of Dominion-ministers in practice has had the appearance of unbroken continuity. Of the seven or eight successive party administrations since the Confederation not one has failed to enlarge the bonds of Dominion autonomy. Macdonald and Tupper, Blake and Laurier, Sir Robert Borden, the Hon. Arthur Meighan, and the Hon. W. L. Mackenzie-King have all responded instinctively, in practice, to the same national impulses."

But of course, intense and sincere patriotism was difficult of achievement without a mutual give and take on behalf of the two races of Canada, and it is highly creditable that both of them were willing to forego a part of their programme in order to attain the common good. They first of all recognized the distinctness of their individual culture and the complete equality of their status in the constitution. Those among us who think that principles of practical politics are uniform throughout the world would do well to study how different racial problems have been tackled in the self-governing dominions such as Canada and South Africa as well as in independent countries such as the states of central and eastern Europe. Practical politics know no dogmas, and what is good enough for one country is perhaps not good enough for another. In Canada they faced the question of two distinct races and cultures bravely, and instead of disregarding it or treating it lightly they approached it bravely and solved it successfully. In the Canadian House of Commons the representatives of the French province of Quebec must form at least 37.7 per cent. of the total number of members, while in the Senate their proportion to the representatives of the other provinces must be 1:4, and representatives of the French Quebec and the English Ontario must be equal in number regardless of the actual population of the two provinces. If real and sincere patriotism is to be the watchword of our country, might we also not come to a compromise with really open minds instead of beating about the bush with dogmas and catchwords?

It was indeed after a common ground for political and constitutional advance had been touched that self-government could be evolved, and as Mr. Martin says, "it is clear that the alliance between the (English) Baldwin reformers of Upper Canada and the French *bloc* under La Fontaine in June 1841... was one of the historic alliances of Canadian politics", and it was not till the "racial dualism" of Macnab-Morin administration of 1854 had given place to the uniformity of purpose that success was achieved and the British North America Act of 1867 became law. We must also remember that this great step on the road to nationhood was taken not by the British Government but by the Canadians themselves, and the terms of the British North America Act were almost exclusively the result of Canadian statesmanship. Canada also furnishes a

lesson in the matter of persistency and party discipline. There "responsible government was extorted not by spectacular advocacy but by disciplined political parties", and "the honours have gone to the statesman with his empirical methods and pragmatic temper rather than to the jurist and the doctrinaire."

It was really the force of circumstances as well as the persistency and unity of the Canadians which forced the British little by little to give way with hardly any outward revolution in method. The old laws still remain in force while the whole spirit of the constitution has been changed.

"Under Grey's instructions the governor ceased to be, like Sydenham, the 'minister,' in time he ceased to be, like Elgin, the political mentor of the 'Cabinet'; he ceased to attend, after the manner of Sir Edmund Head, their meetings; on July 1, 1927, he ceased to correspond officially with the Dominion Office except through his responsible ministers."

It is an instance of the silent gradual evolution of Canadian self-government that with all her free institutions, almost as free as those of Britain herself, "the principles of responsible government are unknown to administrative law", while of course this principle is the very life blood of the Canadian constitution.

It will be easy to understand the connotation of the term 'Dominion Status' if we were to analyse the present form of the Canadian constitution in the light of the powers of the Canadian Government as well as those of the British authorities. Even that great 'apostle of responsible government', Lord Durham, whose report is regarded as the gospel for all the self-governing colonies of Britain, reserved four distinct spheres of government for Imperial control, viz., the form of government, control of public lands, regulation of trade with the mother-country and other British colonies and foreign relations. Step by step all these have actually come within the purview of the Canadian national ministry. The first sphere to pass on to the national responsible government was the disposal of the public lands, and this right was taken over without even a murmur on the part of the Imperial authorities. The regulation of trade in favour of the mother country disappeared with the disappearance of the old mercantilist theory and the inculcation of the ideas of free trade. As regards foreign relations, our author is perfectly right when he says that complete control of the military and naval resources upon which all the foreign relations depend, can never in the long run be divorced from responsibility for the way in which such resources are to be used, and "a series of precedents from the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1921 to the Locarno Conference of 1925 has recognised the direct responsibility of the Canadian ministers for the external relations of the Dominions". As we are aware, Canada has her own representatives at Washington, Paris and Tokio and normally signs treaties with other Powers. Lastly, as has been already mentioned, the work of constitution-making is in reality in the hands of the Canadians themselves, and if the Canadians wish to amend their constitution in a certain manner, there is no power on earth which can keep the amendment from being passed through the British parliament. In fact, as our author says, by this method the Canadians are saved from all the difficulties and complications which usually beset such amendments in any other federation.

We can gauge the degree of nationhood which has already been achieved by the Canadians by the so-called 'vestigial anomalies' which the author enumerates. These are, according to him, the authority of the Judicial Committee of the Privy

Council, the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865 and the power of the British Parliament with regard to the amendment of the Canadian constitution. These, however, fade into insignificance when we read the epoch-making declaration of the Imperial Conference of 1926 that the self-governing Dominions are now "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, and in no way subordinate in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations". This freedom of the Dominions was really nothing new and was the result of a continuous evolution for decades, but the importance of the resolution lies in the fact that all vestiges of legal subordination to Britain now disappeared and the Dominions became entirely free to work out their own future.

HAROON K. SHERWANI.

### MISCELLANEA.

#### EAST AFRICAN FEDERATION.

*The following Memorandum was presented to Sir Samuel Wilson on behalf of the Eastern Africa Indian National Congress.*

THE Closer Union Commission laid down certain fundamental principles with regard to the government of East African territories which are in entire accord with, and emphasise the soundness and necessity of, the policy laid down by His Majesty's Government in 1923. These principles are that the Imperial Government should continue to be trustees for the welfare of the Natives, and that the grant of responsible government to a handful of white settlers is out of the question within any measurable period of time. Subject to these overriding considerations it made recommendations regarding uniformity of native policy, co-ordination of services of common interests and changes in the constitution of the Kenya Legislative Council, and suggested the appointment, temporary in the first instance, of a High Commissioner to pave the way for carrying them out. His Majesty's Government have apparently not accepted this recommendation, which was opposed by the white settlers, who repudiated the very basis of the report of the Committee and demanded the appointment of a special Commissioner to secure agreement. His Majesty's Government have deputed the Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies to discuss the recommendations of the Commission with the Government and communities concerned "with a view to seeing how far it may be possible to find a basis of general agreement" and "to ascertain on what lines a scheme for closer union would be administratively workable and otherwise acceptable."

The terms of reference do not indicate precisely the questions which are to form the subject of discussion, but we hope that the object of the Commission in recommending the appointment of a High Commissioner will be borne in mind, that the question of granting responsible government to a handful of British settlers in Kenya or enabling them to take a further step in that direction will not be reopened, and that the negotiations will be limited to the points referred to by the Commission.

The Commission carefully considered the practicability of establishing Dominion Government and an elected European majority and a majority consisting of elected and nominated Europeans in the Kenya Legislative Council at the present stage and definitely decided not to recommend any of these

alternatives. It quotes with approval the words of the Natal Native Affairs Commission (1906-7), that a White parliament by its very constitution "stands virtually in the relationship of an oligarchy to the natives, and naturally studies more the interest of the constituencies to which its members owe their position than the interests of those who had no voice in their selection, more particularly when the interests of the represented conflict with those of the unrepresented." After considering the effect that the satisfaction of the demands of the Kenya Whites will have on Tanganyika, where the unofficial White community contain Germans and members of other European nationalities who are more numerous than Britishers, and in stimulating native aspirations, the rapid development of which will confront Europeans with a serious problem, the Commission says that the grounds on which it regards the transfer of power to a few thousand Britishers as impracticable are:—

"first, that it would place the control of the government in the hands of a single small community among the inhabitants of the territory, while leaving the other communities (until the character of the electorate was changed) permanently excluded from power; secondly, that these conditions might lead to a change in the composition of the electorate which would place the control of the government in the hands of the native peoples before they are fitted for the responsibility; and thirdly, that for such time as can be foreseen the Imperial Government must be in a position to discharge its responsibilities and to ensure the carrying out of a consistent native policy throughout Eastern and Central African territories."

A section of the white community have vehemently asserted that no progress is possible unless the Imperial Government repudiates the main report's fundamental conceptions regarding self-government in future, and threatened the British Government with "vigorous action on the part of the Colonists to assert their points of view and ambitions." We trust that the story of 1923 will not be repeated by Government yielding to this threat, for that course is bound to be regarded as a surrender to unconstitutional action and to lead to dangerous repercussions throughout the Empire.

The constitutional changes recommended by the Commission are confined to Kenya. The question of having a common franchise is discussed as having an important bearing on the constitutional problem. After fully reviewing the past controversy on this subject it expresses its preference for the common electoral roll and a uniform franchise for members of all races. "Our view is", say the Commissioners, "that inasmuch as the progress of the territory must depend on co-operation between the races, the ideal to be aimed at is a common roll on an equal franchise with no discrimination between the races. The principle of joint electorates has also received the strong approval of the Donoughmore Commission which recently investigated the question of constitutional reforms in Ceylon.

"It was generally admitted", said the Donoughmore Commission, "even by many communal representatives themselves that the communal form of appointment to the Legislative Council was a necessary evil and should only continue until the conditions of friendliness and acknowledgment of common aims were developed among the different communities. It is our opinion, however, that the very existence of communal representation tends to prevent the development of these relations and that only by its abolition will it be possible for the various diverse communities to develop a true nationality. As has been suggested, it tends to keep communities apart and to send communal representatives to the Council with



the idea of defending particular interests instead of giving their special contribution to the commonweal. We very gladly recognise that most, if not all, of the communal representatives have risen superior to this natural tendency and have shown an interest in matters affecting the general welfare of the Island. We believe, however, that if these same representatives were elected, as we hope they may be, as territorial representatives, they will be able to give a fuller contribution, unhampered by having to be constantly on the watch, fearful of the antagonism or the oppressive action of the other community. Our investigations show that the desire for communal representation tends to grow rather than die down. In these circumstances, it being itself admittedly undesirable, it would seem well to abolish it altogether while the number of seats is still comparatively small."

The approval accorded to the joint representation by two exclusively British Commissions, which carried on their investigations in territories far apart from each other and widely dissimilar in their conditions may well be regarded as a conclusive proof of the soundness of the principle for which the Indian community has been fighting unceasingly for a long time in the interests of inter-racial harmony and the future development of the Colony. The Indian community has had the fullest support of the Government of India. In 1920 the Government of India said.

"We desire to reiterate our opinion that there should be a common electoral roll and a common franchise on a reasonable property basis plus an educational test without racial discrimination, for all British subjects. We believe that separate representation for the different communities will perpetuate and intensify racial antagonism. On the other hand, a common electorate, whereby a member of one community would represent constituents of another community, would tend to moderate and compose racial differences. In no other way, we believe, will the diverse races in East Africa become a united people."

They were compelled to yield to the decision of His Majesty's Government in 1923; but they expressly reserved to themselves the right to reopen the question on a suitable occasion. We have no doubt that they will again make vigorous representations to His Majesty's Government and that in the light of the experience of the last six years they will be able to make out an unanswerable case against separate representation.

The Closer Union Commission has expressed the opinion that the consent of the European community to a common electoral roll can be obtained only if it is assured that it will not be swamped by other communities. The Indian community has given the clearest assurances on the subject. It gave up its right to representation in proportion to its population and agreed to abide by the terms of the Goodwin-Winterton compromise in 1923 in order to make it indisputably clear that it did not wish to dominate the Government of the Colony and that it had no desire but to live on terms of amity and perfect equality with other communities. The demand for exclusive control of the affairs of the Colony has proceeded not from the Indian but from the European community. The Indian community reaffirmed its previous position before the Closer Union Commission. It has repeatedly given abundant and clear assurances in order to satisfy all reasonable apprehensions. It could not have adopted a more conciliatory attitude. One is forced to conclude that the continued opposition of the European community to a common roll is due not to any danger which joint representation may threaten their interests, but to their unwillingness to own any responsibility to non-White opinion and to consider questions from any but a sectional point of view.

There is no question on which the Indian community had displayed greater unanimity or intensity of conviction. Its security and the progress of the Colony alike depend on the evolution of a common East African citizenship. The only means of bringing about this consummation is the introduction of a common roll. The administration of Kenya is conducted under the direct authority of His Majesty's Government. The responsibility for deciding whether the interests of the entire territory ought to be sacrificed to the prejudices of a small section of the population, therefore, rests on them. A statement recently reported to have been made on the subject by the Secretary of State for the Colonies that while representation may be made to the Permanent Under Secretary of State regarding a common franchise, the policy of the Government was well known thereon, has been received with great concern by Indians. We do not know whether the Secretary of State has been correctly reported, but the attitude of His Majesty's Government on this question will decide whether Indians can expect fair play and protection within the Empire.

In regard to the composition of the Legislative Council of Kenya the Commission recommended the relinquishment of an official majority. It proposes that four officials should be replaced by four nominated Europeans to represent native interests, and that there should be in future a progressive substitution of nominated Europeans for official members. The immediate result will be an equalisation of the numbers of the official members and the non-official Europeans. The Council will thus consist of 16 official members, 16 non-official Europeans, 5 Indians and 1 Arab.

The Chairman, Sir Edward Hilton-Young, regards this recommendation as inadequate to the purpose for which it is designed and suggests that an unofficial European majority should be provided for immediately, and that an unofficial member, presumably British, should be appointed as Minister with "Cabinet" responsibility. We are in agreement with the Commission in strongly opposing this recommendation as its inevitable effect will be the concentration of political control in the hands of a handful of Europeans. Past experience shows that its acceptance will spell ruin to Indian interests, and will leave the native at the mercy of a community directly interested in his exploitation. It will, as observed by the Commission, lead to the creation of "an oligarchy in the guise of democracy." Though the Commission does not immediately go as far as its Chairman we fear that its recommendation is ultimately open to the same objection as that of the Chairman. It draws attention to the fact that as two Europeans have been nominated as members of the Executive Council and an official majority is seldom retained in Select Committees of the Legislative Council, Europeans have acquired an influence which is incompatible with the constitution. "The Government", observes the Commission, "still retains an official majority in the Legislative Council, but there have been instances in recent history in which local opinion has successfully resisted measures which the Secretary of State would have liked to enforce." It is surprising therefore that instead of urging Government to resume their rightful position under the constitution, it suggests measures which will further increase the disproportionate influence already enjoyed by the European community. Any addition to the strength of non-official Europeans will even in the first stage intensify the constitutional difficulties which exist; and the progressive replacement of officials by nominated Europeans will sooner or later lead to an unofficial European majority.

which will be in a position to disregard non-European interests. Whether in these circumstances, says Professor Keith, "it is really worth while seeking to increase the independence of the Kenya Legislature may well be doubted. The Commission itself shows that the European members exercise already a predominant influence and that under the committee system they have acquired a measure of power disproportionate to their numerical strength in the full council. Moreover, the British officials are essentially of the same class as the settlers, and it is absurd to imagine that they are likely to sacrifice the interests of Europeans to those of Natives; indeed, there is more justice in the view that they failed adequately to safeguard the latter." The Commission opposes the Chairman's plea for an immediate non-official European majority with unanswerable logic. Its reasoning is fatal to its own scheme. Dominion government having been declared to be out of the question "within any foreseeable future" we venture to think that it is unwise to take the first step on the path which leads in that direction. It is true theoretically that the power of certification with which the Commission desires to invest the Governor General will enable him to veto legislation which perpetrates racial injustice; but apart from the uncertainty of the exercise of this power by the Governor General on any particular occasion, the scheme propounded by the Commission will inevitably lead to that friction between the Executive and the Legislature which the Commission has been at pains to avoid.

From the Native point of view also the expediency of the step suggested by the Commission is open to grave doubt. The present representation of Natives by Europeans is not regarded on all hands as a success. We believe that there are differences of opinion among Europeans themselves about it. Further if white settlers are to be eligible as representatives of Natives as proposed by the Commission, the plan of the Commission has an element of serious danger in it.

The East African Conference recently held in London is understood to have recommended that Natives should be consulted in the appointment of their representatives and that these may be Natives. The practicability of this proposal may be judged from the fact that the Commission itself has recommended that "Native opinion should be consulted regarding legislation affecting their interests through Native administrations or District Councils."

Should, however, the indirect representation of Natives be persisted in, the official majority in the Legislature should be maintained and Indians should be appointed equally with Europeans to represent Natives. Whatever may be the faults ascribed to Indians, we trust it will be generally acknowledged that they have not by their presence here created any problem for Government and that race and colour prejudice affects them much less than Europeans.

The Commission was asked to consider the possibility of constitutional changes "so as to associate more closely in the responsibilities and trusteeship of Government the immigrant communities domiciled in the country." Its proposals, however, contemplate such association only in the case of the White community. The suspicion that the Native representatives are meant to add to the strength of European community will be removed only if Indians are chosen equally with Europeans to be advocates of Native interests.

There is an important aspect of the question of the closer association of immigrants in the responsibilities of government which has been entirely ignored by the Commission. The Indian community

forms an important part of the population and its share in the administration should be commensurate with its importance. Participation in administration is only possible if Indians with proper qualifications are appointed to responsible offices. No steps have hitherto been taken to recruit Indians for superior posts, nor does the Commission suggest a change in this respect for the future. We strongly urge the adoption of immediate measures with a view to removing the handicap under which Indians labour.

The question of closer union has to be viewed in the light of past facts. In any scheme of political co-ordination the White community in Kenya is likely to occupy the most important position. Its numbers and influence will play a decisive part in shaping the future course of policy, and Tanganyika and Uganda may be infected with the racialism which has tainted the public life of Kenya. We are, therefore, strongly opposed to any scheme of political federation or union.

We are in principle in favour of closer co-operation in economic matters between Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika, but the past experience of Tanganyika makes Indians outside Kenya apprehensive lest economic co-ordination should lead to a neglect of their interest. The proceedings of the annual meeting of the East African section of the London Chamber of Commerce indicate that their views are shared by a section of the European mercantile community. The result of such co-operation as has been already brought about regarding the working of railways and the imposition of customs duties has not given satisfaction either to Indians or Europeans. The present arrangements are believed to be more in the interests of the Kenya Highlands than of Tanganyika and Uganda. A great deal depends on the manner in which the economic policies of the three territories are assimilated. It is necessary, therefore, that the High Commissioner's scheme for greater economic co-operation should be published for general criticism before action is taken on it.

Native policy stands on a different footing from economic questions. The native policies of Tanganyika, which is a mandated territory, and of Uganda are much more favourable to Native development than the Native policy of Kenya. Besides, the character of Native policy affects the entire spirit of the administration, and its influence is, in consequence, felt by other than Native communities. Both in the interest of the natives and of Indians we do not, therefore, desire any change in the policies of Tanganyika and Uganda which will make them less liberal. The results of the attempts at uniformity in this matter through Governors' Conferences are not reassuring. A competent observer like Professor Buell thinks that Tanganyika has been compelled to modify its labour policy under the pressure of the Kenya white settlement school, and that the result of efforts hitherto made to secure uniformity in matters relating to labour might be described as the "encircling" of Tanganyika. If the supervision of the High Commissioner is meant for the greater protection of Native interests in future, it should be distinctly laid down that the Governments of Tanganyika and Uganda shall not be asked to suit their policies to the convenience of the White settlers in Kenya or to follow a less progressive policy than is in force there at present.

We may be permitted here to refer to the land question which has a direct bearing on both Native policy and general administration. In view of the complex problems created by European settlement and its effect on the position of the Natives and Indians, we are opposed to the creation of fresh Na-

tive reserves or alienation of land with the object of encouraging White settlements. Further, we do not desire Tanganyika to be confronted with the racial troubles which exist in Kenya. We are aware that the supporters of White immigration have persuaded themselves that contact with the Whites who represent a "higher civilization" is to the advantage of the Natives. We are not aware of any facts in support of this view. It will be instructive to quote the opinion of Prof. Buell on this subject. Reviewing the question in his book *The Native Problem in Africa* he says:

"With all its faults, the negro governing class in Liberia, a country from which European influence has been excluded to a greater extent than any other place in Africa, appears to be the most intelligent and able class of negro on the entire continent, simply because it has had a job to do."

"There is good reason to believe that the negroes of West Africa and of Uganda will eventually go further in cultural and material progress than the negroes of South Africa and of the United States, blessed though they may be by contact with Europeans. The history of these two countries shows that whatever benefits the White race may have conferred on the blacks have been more than outweighed by the disabilities which the Whites have imposed. It is perhaps of some significance that Kenya is the only place in Africa where it is orthodox to say that the Native is better off working for Europeans than for himself."

Subject to the foregoing remarks we are not against the appointment of a High Commissioner or Governor General, but special care should be taken to see that his headquarters are located outside the sphere of influence of Kenya. The authority of His Majesty's Government in racial matters should remain unimpaired. The Governor General should issue no instructions relating to such matters without consulting his Advisory Council and the members of the Advisory Council should have the right to appeal to the Secretary of State against a decision of the Governor General involving racial interests.

In order that the Governor General may take Indian interests into consideration it is necessary that his Advisory Council should contain an adequate number of Indians and that one of his private secretaries should be an Indian officer belonging to the superior civil services in India. We attach great importance to these proposals.

If the East African Council is set up, as recommended by the Commission, Indian interests should be represented on this council also, and Indians should be invited to attend the periodical conferences proposed by the Commission to be held in London for the discussion of questions relating to the East African Territories.

The report which the Permanent Under Secretary of State will submit to His Majesty's Government should be published and adequate time given to Indian opinion both here and in India to express itself before the report is taken into consideration. Our vital interests are involved in the questions that will be investigated. We strongly urge, therefore, that no decision should be taken without the fullest opportunity being given for the discussion of the Permanent Under Secretary's report.

## INDIAN STATES.

### INTERNATIONAL ACTION DEMANDED.

*The Libre Belgique*, one of the leading dailies of Belgium, published at Brussels, printed in its issue of May 13th an account of the murderous assault

made upon two Belgian Jesuit Missionaries at Ambakona in the State of Jashpur (C. P.) on April 2nd (vide *The Examiner* of Bombay of April 27th). As there was a danger that this event might be interpreted as "anti-Catholic fanaticism" on the part of Hindus in general, Dr. H. C. E. Zacharias wrote to the paper, pointing out that the true cause of the occurrence had to be sought in the lawlessness and despotism prevailing in most Indian States. As a consequence of this letter, he was interviewed by the *Libre Belgique*, which on the 23rd of May published on the very first page, displayed and in the best position, an interview with Dr. Zacharias of which the following is a literal translation:

Ten days ago we gave on account of the savage attempt, on Easter Sunday, at Jashpur (British Indies), on the life of two Belgian missionaries, Frs. Dumonceau and Andries, the assailant being a Notable of the State, who had crept into the bedroom of the first Fr., in order to kill him. Two days after the publication of this account we heard that the author of the assault was none other than a brother of the reigning prince of Jashpur. This detail we learnt through a note (which we published at once in our columns) sent to us, from the Belgian locality where he actually resides, by Mr. Zacharias, the distinguished and learned Catholic publicist, whom we have been able to quote on more than one occasion already: Dr. Zacharias, we may remind our readers, has lived thirty years in the East notably in the British Indies, where he has founded a Catholic paper [*The Week*], and came to Europe only last year.

The short note, which our esteemed colleague has sent us, has made us wish to ask him for more detailed information regarding the situation attended by him.

—Is the attack against the Rev. Frs. Dumonceau and Andries evidence of anti-Catholic hostility? Thus our first question to Mr. Zacharias.

He smiled. Not at all, said he. To understand this attack, one need to know the state of affairs in these Indian States. The Christian proportion in the population of these States is in fact higher than in British India: the 30 lakhs of Christians in the latter representing only 1¼ per cent, whilst the 17½ lakhs in the former represent 2½ per cent. of the total population.

—But what is the importance of these States? we ask.

—That depends on the States, was his answer. Some are as big as Great Britain, for instance Hyderabad; others like Mysore can be compared with Bulgaria. Jashpur, where the tragedy, of which the two Belgian Jesuits have been the victims, took place, has an area of 5000 sq. km. and a population of 1,50,000—i. e. the State is twice as big as Luxemburg, with only ¼ths of the latter's population. There are some 700—yes, yes, really 700!—of these States in India, of varying sizes and conditions. In the aggregate they comprise seven out of the thirty-two crores, which form the total population of India.

—But what, we proceed, is the political relationship between these States and British India?

—These relations depend on England as intermediary. Whilst she contents herself to be for the Princes a Suzerain Power, England governs the rest of the country directly through an Indo-British bureaucracy. The princes therefore are England's vassals; in return England grants them full liberty of action and guarantees them against external

attack and internal rebellion, as long as they do not act against her own interests. Having this full liberty, the majority of the Princes, it cannot be denied, abuse it and develop into tyrannical despots. Their own caprice stands for all law.

—But is the government in the rest of India not equally autocratic?

—That can no longer be said after the Reforms, which England granted in 1919. Since then, there is at least a beginning of democratic and parliamentary government, and there is some sort of parliamentary check on the executive. Liberty of the press and of assembly exists and Indians have a perfect right to criticize their government—in fact they are far less restricted in this respect than in many a European country. Moreover there is a reign of law, administered by the Courts which are independent and guarantee the individual's life and property.

—Does then such a state of affairs not exist in the States?

—Certainly not, at least in the majority of them. In a State like Jashpur, the prince has unlimited rights over his subjects. Their property and lives are never safe. If the prince is debauched—not very infrequent a case—he will seize whatever woman he lusts after; if he is grasping, he will confiscate any private property he covets. These princes consider their States as their private demesne and draw no distinction between their personal expenses and State expenditure.

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Coming back to the starting point of our conversation, we observed:

—The attack on the two missionaries then is no very out of the way occurrence?

—In the case of Indians, replied Mr. Zacharias, I would answer at once "no"; but it must be admitted that, generally speaking, the Princes are chary of flagrant acts of caprice and violence in the case of Europeans, since they know that protests and representations would result, followed by retaliatory action on the part of England—perhaps under pressure from the foreign governments whose nationals had been victimized.

—But what motive could have impelled the brother of the Raja of Jashpur to commit the crime against these two Belgian missionaries?

—Simply this: that Fr. Dumanceau had asked the Raja's brother, not to exact from the Christians any forced labour on Easter Sunday.

—Does then forced labour exist in these States?

—Rather! The people are generally forced to perform *bigar*, for which they receive a ridiculously small "pay". And please note, that this missionary had only asked for exemption on *one* Sunday in the year! Yet even that was enough to make the Raja's brother lose control of himself and as a consequence he has acted in this case towards Europeans, as he would have in the case of his own subjects, to rid himself of "troublesome" people.

—But how can such a state of affairs be permitted to last?

—Well, you see, though rebellion against such a Prince would be prompt and easy, if his subjects had only to deal with him alone, the fact is that England has guaranteed these Princes against all

internal rebellion, without any question of its cause, and a revolt against such a Prince would therefore mean a revolt against the whole British Empire. Hence no rising would have the ghost of a chance and the Princes can go on with impunity. The only means of improving the situation is the formation of an international public opinion on the subject: this alone will induce England to put pressure on these Rajas and force them to introduce some reforms in their States. Let us hope, that the sensation created by this attempted murder of two Belgian missionaries at Jashpur will contribute materially to such happy result.

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Such was the conclusion of our interview with Mr. Zacharias: and we thoroughly associate ourselves with the final sentiments, thus expressed.

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