

# THE Servant of India

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

MR. Gandhi has appealed to the press and the public to assist the cultivators of Kaira district in the campaign of passive resistance which they have just started. To recapitulate the facts briefly, there has been partial failure of crops in the district affecting about 600 villages. According to Government rules, where the crop is estimated to be under four annas total suspension and where it is below six annas half suspension of revenue should be granted. In the present case the Government estimate is that in the large majority of villages the crop is over six annas. They have, therefore, given full suspension in only one village and half suspension in about 104 villages. The ryots consider the Government valuation too high and the relief inadequate. Independent investigations were made by the Hon. Messrs. G. K. Parekh and V. J. Patel and by three members of the Servants of India Society and lastly by Mr. Gandhi assisted by about 20 volunteers. Mr. Gandhi personally visited 30 villages and his party investigated in all 400 villages. His conclusion is that except in a few cases the crop was under four annas and in only three cases above six annas. Mr. Gandhi represented to the authorities that as there was a fundamental difference between the popular and the official estimates, they should appoint an impartial committee of enquiry, with the cultivators' representatives upon it, or gracefully

accept the popular view. As the Government adopted neither of the suggested courses and as there is no legal remedy for revenue grievances, he has inaugurated the passive resistance campaign as the only effective means of getting a hearing.

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WE cannot say anything of value on the merits of the case and shall deal in a future issue with the movement of passive resistance to which it has given rise. At present we must ask the Government of Bombay to look at the matter not merely from the revenue collecting point of view but from the larger standpoint of statesmanship. The political temper of the people is for many reasons sensitive to a degree. Even a slight grievance might lead to consequences disproportionate to its magnitude. We trust that Government will not regard this matter as a trial of strength. A trial of strength there never can be between a strong administration and a weak people. Nor can the Kaira affair, in so far as it is in the hands of Mr. Gandhi, be regarded as a political move. Apart from his record in South Africa, which has recently received recognition from an impartial authority, we have his personal assurance that behind this movement "there is no desire to discredit the Government or an individual official." Besides, it is in the power of the Bombay Government to deprive it of any political tendency it may still be supposed to have.

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AN extensive resort to coercive processes will give rise to numerous cases of hardship which, circulating all over the country, will evoke a sympathetic response and may give occasion for a general agitation. Such a result Government cannot but foresee, and foreseeing must avert it. We appeal to Government, because Government is infinitely the stronger of the two parties, and the possession of superior power carries with it greater moral responsibility and the duty of being more generous and forbearing. That plague is scourging the people of Kaira is another powerful reason for not pressing the rights of Government even though they might be altogether just. Besides the two alternatives suggested by Mr. Gandhi we have no third course to put forward; if a generous policy be decided on, the authorities will not be at a loss for a plan of action which will save their prestige while at the same time satisfying the people affected.

THE speech which Sir William Meyer made the other day at Calcutta in reply to a statement of difficulties and grievances presented to him on behalf of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, shows once more how the financial situation continues to cause trouble and anxiety. The crux of the whole position lies in the inadequacy of funds required to finance trade; and the monetary stringency is due, as is now well known, to the fact that the Government of India has to make disbursements on a large scale on behalf of His Majesty's Government. The cause of the financial stringency is bound to remain in operation for a long time and the effects have to be put up with. What the Government of India can do is to try its utmost to minimise the inconvenience caused to the public, and Sir William Meyer explained, and we feel satisfactorily, how the situation is being met. Varied restrictions on imports and exports and on the issues of capital by public companies, the issue of a big Indian loan and the continuance of the issue of treasury bills, a sufficiently large provision of silver for the coinage of rupees—these are measures which have been and are being taken by Government; and we must say that the situation is being carefully handled and that every consideration is being shown to the different interests affected by it.

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THE Bombay Provincial Congress Committee had rather a stormy meeting the other day. The question before it was the validity of the elections to the All-India Congress Committee held last December as very great mistakes in the scrutiny of the votes were alleged to have been made. The complete results of the elections were thus called into question. On a point of order raised by Mr. Tilak, the Chairman of the meeting Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, ruled that the results must stand as they had been announced at the meeting of the Congress at Calcutta, though they were not communicated to the Congress Secretaries by the regular channel. The irregularities brought to the notice of the meeting were, however, too serious to be thus allowed to be quietly forgotten. A resolution appointing a Committee to investigate the matter as brought forward by Mr. Samarth was then proposed by the Hon. Mr. Paranjpye in the interests of the purity of public life in the country as veiled insinuations were bandied about in the course of the debate and even outside the meeting.

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ON this there was a battle royal. At first an attempt was made to hush up the whole matter and Mr. Horniman proposed, as an amendment, another Committee to make rules for the future, only omitting all references to the past. After a vigorous speech by Mr. Bahadurji in favour of Mr. Paranjpye's proposition, this proposition was carried as well as Mr. Horniman's proposition with only three or four dissentients. In the course of this discussion Mr. Tilak came out with the

astounding remark that the Committee had nothing to do with the purity of public life in the country, that it was not a body to preserve morals and that hence the question ought to be dropped. The remark was too much even for his staunch supporters, when made in this brutally blunt fashion.

It is gratifying to note that the Government of Bengal have at last tried to conciliate public opinion and consented to appoint a Medical Board of officials and non-officials to examine Babu Jyotish Chandra Ghosh with a view to ascertain whether he is insane or not and to submit a report about the physical and medical condition of the detenu. Looking to the urgency of the question and also to the fact that the public mind all over the country has been greatly excited over this unfortunate case, we hope the Government of Bengal will be prompt in appointing the Board so that the work of investigation may be taken in hand without further delay. The sad tale of this brilliant young man needs no repetition as it has been fully reported in the Press throughout the country. It throws vivid light on the queer ways and methods of work of the bureaucracy in Bengal. The treatment meted out to this political suspect and his dependants is revolting to a degree. We do not think the Government of Bengal are at all justified in throwing his dependants on the mercy of the public, or in treating him as worse than an ordinary criminal. It seems quite probable, that Prof. Jyotish Chandra, who is now a physical and mental wreck, will succumb in the asylum. Who in that case will be responsible for the premature demise of such a brilliant citizen of Bengal? We firmly believe that such actions only tend to widen and deepen the feeling of discontent and are, therefore, neither wise nor politically expedient.

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THE President of the Sind Provincial Conference has rightly drawn pointed attention to the existence of certain well-known abuses connected with the administration in Sind. *Rasai, lapo and cher*, as Hon. Mr. Bhurgri observed while moving his resolution for the appointment of a mixed committee of enquiry in the December sessions of the Bombay Council, have been of a long standing in that province. Government, it must be acknowledged, have taken measures in the past to eradicate the evil, but as Hon. Mr. Lawrnce admitted in his reply to the Hon. Mr. Bhurgri, they have not been, so far, very successful. The failure is due to the self-evident fact that in all previous investigations no attempt was made by the officers to enlist the sympathetic co-operation of non-officials. Under these circumstances the acceptance of the resolution of Hon. Mr. Bhurgri has given general satisfaction. We do not know, as yet, the personnel of the committee, but we are sure, looking to the fact that on this particular question there is complete agreement between Government and the representatives of the people, the committee will

be a fully representative one so that it might inspire confidence in the public mind. We understand, the question of an increment in the emoluments of Tapedars is also under the sympathetic consideration of the Government of Bombay. A satisfactory solution of it is sure to lead to a mitigation of this widespread evil.

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ONE advantage which Indian States have over British India is that they can more courageously initiate and carry out measures of social legislation. The Government of Travancore has been rather active in this respect during recent years. The peculiar customs of the Malayalees with regard to marriage and inheritance have become an anachronism, and enlightened opinion urges a change. But people are not wanting among educated men to cry "religion and society in danger" and create a noisy opposition. The Government consequently are at times obliged to drop important clauses from proposed measures. But opinion in favour of social legislation is slowly growing, and non-official representatives of communities have begun to ask for it in the popular assembly. In response to the request of the Ezhavas the Government have now appointed a committee to enquire into the customs and practices in vogue among them in the matter of marriage, inheritance, partition, management of the family property, &c., and submit a draft Bill containing definite proposals. The legislation is expected to be similar to the Nair Regulation passed four years ago, and we hope, it will meet with better luck and escape mutilation.

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THE Kolhapur Durbar have, we learn, decided to abolish the second-grade college which they have maintained at Kolhapur for a little under forty years. The Rajaram College claims among its *alumni* distinguished men like Ranade, Gokhale and V. S. Apte, the Sanskritist, and till a few years ago a lively expectation was entertained that it would be raised to the first-grade status. The Durbar have chosen instead to abolish it, apparently on the ground that they contemplate heavy expenditure in the near future because of their decision to introduce compulsory primary education in the State. The scheme of compulsory education as outlined by the Durbar, is very defective in conception, and the execution may take several long years, if at all it materialises. And in the meanwhile, when the counterbalancing prospective gain is so shadowy, the immediate loss is great. It will result in a severe set-back to the progress of higher education in all the Southern Maratha States, unless these latter pool their resources and set up a college conjointly.

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RECENT news from South Africa is that the Durban Town Council has prepared a draft municipal ordinance, which affects the rights of Indians prejudicially. The municipal franchise is not sought to be restricted to Europeans in this ordi-

nance, as it was in the larger ordinance which has now been suspended owing to the storm of protest it created, but it is to be restricted to British subjects. In the light of a recent decision of the supreme court, however, a large number of Indians, born in Native States, are faced with a deprivation of their vote as aliens. The Council also seeks power in the ordinance to appoint separate tramcars for Europeans, Asiatics and natives and to restrict their use to the respective communities. An attempt is thus made to deprive Indians of a civic right to which by all accounts they are in law entitled. Again, it takes power to regulate the use of public streets or places of entertainment or recreation by Europeans or natives and to set apart public places or places of entertainment for the exclusive use of one section of a community. We learn, however, some of the contentious clauses in the ordinance have been deleted by the Natal Municipal Association and some more likely to be deleted before it is introduced into the Provincial Council at its next session. Let us hope that it will be rendered entirely innocuous in the process.

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THE Social Service Exhibition which was opened at Calcutta on the 26th of last month at the University Institute, was an invaluable aid to all social workers of the province. There were exhibited pictures, maps and charts relating to health, infectious and other diseases, food, sanitation, education, economics, co-operation, temperance and other subjects. Facts presented graphically and in contrasts not only fix themselves in one's memory but awaken moral fervour. Sir S. P. Sinha pointed out to the young men that the most menial service becomes high and noble when performed as a matter of love and said in almost touching words, "I hope that my young friends here will profit by the example of an older man, who regrets towards the end of his life that he did not learn when he was young that the object and aim of life is not to prosper for himself but to see that others are happy."

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✓ THE reason which led Mr. Gandhi to take a vow of fasting till the weavers' strike at Ahmedabad ended is not correctly understood by many. As he has himself explained, he did not do it in order to appeal in a special way to the feelings of the mill-owners towards himself. He knew that, if the starvation of hundreds of their fellow-countrymen did not move them, that of one more person would not, even though he be Mr. Gandhi. He fasted for the principle that a leader should undergo all the privations of his followers, for the same principle for which time after time he voluntarily went into gaol in South Africa and kept company there with his poor countrymen. It also transpires that some unscrupulous agents of mill-owners had tried to work upon the strikers by saying that, while the strikers starved their, leaders lived comfortably.

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### THE WAR.

WE are passing through a critical stage of the war. The great German offensive in the West had been long expected; but it has created a situation which was not expected. The Allied commanders were prepared for all eventualities and had strengthened their line at almost all points. Owing to the complete collapse of Russia, however, and the consequent clearing out of the Eastern front, the Germans have been enabled to pour their troops in France and Belgium to an unlimited extent and enabled them to resort to their usual and favourite tactics of hurling immense bodies of troops at given points. No Power, however great its resources, would have been able to hold its own in such circumstances, especially when it had to protect a long front extending over hundreds of miles through three continents. So all the precautions taken by the Allies were found insufficient, and the Allied line in an important sector could not be held. The operations of this eventful fortnight have resulted in the loss of the territory taken by the Allies during the 1916 offensive and their retirement on the Amiens-Paris road. This means that the Allied line has bulged out to the West, and if the enemy advance is not checked immediately the communication of Paris with Amiens will be cut off. As the objective of the enemy has been stated to be Paris, he will strain every nerve to strengthen his forces by bringing up reserves thousands of miles away and to completely isolate Paris. The seriousness of the situation is reflected in the utterances of the Prime Minister. The reports that new measures for adding to the supply of men to the fronts in England will be easily carried, indicate the same fact. And the acceptance of a French Marshal as the Generalissimo of the Allies' armies with something like enthusiasm by all the Allied nations strengthens these indications. It is but right that this should happen. The Empire is in the throes of a stupendous struggle which requires its supreme effort. The voice of controversy must be hushed and every true citizen of the Empire must use every ounce of his energy and every unit of his will-power to accomplish the high purpose of the Allies.

Reflections like these sadden the heart of the Indian. He cannot have any bitterness against the Government at such a time, but with all the will in the world to help the Empire, he finds his hands tied behind his back, and he simply cannot help. Help in the form of money and material, the Indian has rendered to his utmost capacity. But as to the other form of help which represents the hardest problem of to-day, we mean help in the form of men, he feels that he is denied the opportunity to help. We may be told, and sometimes we are told, that the British Government is ready to enlist, nay keen on recruiting, men for combatant service and also for the labour corps. Those who indulge in such remarks, and we know that they are neither few

nor unimportant, take leave of their knowledge of human nature. Even the 'mild Indian' has his self-respect, even he is touched by sympathy, and even he is urged to greater effort by a policy of trust and confidence. But the policy of the British Government in regard to this question of the Indian army is the entire negation of all this. The most urgent reform in this matter is the establishment of military Colleges in India and the granting of the King's commissions to Indians. Only last year when the formation of the I. D. F. was first announced and some hopes were raised as regards commissions, a wave of enthusiasm passed over the nation. When later the meagreness and the hollowness of the provisions was fully grasped, the enthusiasm almost died down. It was revived by the announcement of the 20th August. Again there was a set-back when it was discovered that after all no new commissions as such had been given, and that even educated Indians of proved ability such as College Professors of University Companies need not aspire to, and could not obtain, anything higher than a poor *Jamadarship*! The humiliation is deep that an Indian, however high his position and brilliant his attainments, may not take any position of responsibility in any scheme for the defence of the Empire.

If only British administrators in India had imagination, they would have announced long ago the establishment of Sandhurst in India and the selection of a hundred Indian cadets for being trained in them. Thus would India have easily contributed its due share of men, which would be by no means a mean share. After all the problem of the moment is the problem of man-power, and the help of India with a few of its hundred thousands will turn the scale on the western front within a measurable distance of time. Even now it is not too late to exploit the man-power of India. This cannot be done by Conscription Bills for the whole or a part of the Indian nation, nor by the energy of recruiting officers. It can be done only by allaying political discontent in India by granting rights and concessions which are overdue, but even more than this by an open-handed and open-hearted treatment of Indians. The expression 'comrades in arms' has been used to do duty for the fact long enough, and time has come to translate it into action. We therefore appeal to the British administrators here and the higher authorities in England to right the wrong and to remove the bar sinister from the Indian shield, not so much for Indians themselves as for the preservation of all that is high and noble and exalted in the ideal of the free British Empire.

### THE EXCLUSION OF NEWSPAPERS FROM BURMA.

WE congratulate the Civil Rights Committee of Madras on having organised a most successful meeting to protest against the arbitrary exclusion

from Burma of the *Hindu*, *New India* and the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* by an executive order of the local Government. The meeting was as important, representative and influential as the one recently held in Calcutta to protest against the policy of internments; and the object of both the meetings was the same, the safeguarding of the rights of the individual against the arbitrariness of the executive. As pointed out in a closely reasoned speech by Dewan Bahadur Govindaraghava Aiyar, who presided over the Madras meeting, and by other speakers, the action of the Burma Government is un-British in the extreme. The papers concerned were little given to criticising the actions of the Burma Government; they were enjoying unchecked circulation for a number of years; no event of importance has happened in Burma and no change has taken place in the policy of the papers recently to justify their exclusion; other papers expressing similar views are not under the ban. It is therefore not even possible to account for the step, unless it be due to the zeal of the bureaucracy in Burma to withhold from the simple people under its paternal care all profane criticism of brother-gods in the executive pantheon—a zeal for which no thanks will be given either by the brother-gods or by the simple people.

Nor was the step taken in a bold and straightforward manner. For a long time the papers were not even informed of the prohibition. When the authorities were addressed by the *Hindu* the reply given at first was that the matter was under consideration and later on that action was taken under section 26 of the Post Office Act. No reasons were given. A more arbitrary and un-British procedure it is difficult to imagine. Even that most determined champion of executive high-handedness—in recent times, we would add in fairness—the *Madras Mail*, does not support the action, though what makes our contemporary angry is the lack of uniformity in the policy of local Governments. Section 26 of the Post Office Act is intended for cases of special emergency, where public safety or tranquillity is in danger and where it is impossible to trace the press from which the dangerous matter is issued. It is therefore an indirect proceeding to use it for suppressing the circulation of newspapers. It is bad enough that there should be on the statute book legislation which gives to the executive final discretion on vital matters: it is worse that emergency laws meant to protect the State against revolutionary conspiracies and foreign enemies should be misapplied for purposes of internal administration; but to abuse the provisions of the ordinary law in a way never contemplated is the climax of the 'lawlessness of law.'

In addition to the Post Office, the Customs and the C. I. D. police also are entrusted with the censorial function. We understand that the baggage of passengers landing at the ports is rummaged and Congress and Moslem League literature among others is carried away and kept for days

together for being translated and otherwise examined though it has been passed by other local Governments. Instances are available, we are told, of books being thus translated two or three times, involving waste of the public funds and the time of the officials. The search we understand was very harassing at one time, though of late there has been some relaxation. These facts would make it appear that Burma is the paradise of the bureaucrat. He does not seem to care much even for the Government of India. Under the very eyes of the Secretary of State these inroads are made upon the rights of the people. The suppression of the circulation of newspapers cannot be a purely local matter. The Burma Government is apparently assuming an amount of autonomy, which is surprising. From time to time we have seen appeals made and admonitions administered to the public to refrain from criticisms which tend to lower the administration in the eyes of the people. But nothing brings the Government into contempt so much as unjust and arbitrary action of the kind here mentioned. In fact it is the strongest argument for doing away with the present system and for bringing the executive under the control of the popular will.

## THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE AMENDMENT BILL.

### I.

It was a wise decision on the part of the Government of India to refer the Bill for the amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code to a small committee on which the legal and judicial professions were to be strongly represented. There can be no doubt that this is the proper course to be followed with regard especially to legislative measures affecting the administration of justice. The result of the labours of the committee appointed to revise the Criminal Procedure Code Bill is such as to justify the anticipation of the Government that their recommendations will command general confidence. The Bill as revised by this committee is a great improvement upon the Bill submitted to them and upon the provisions of the existing Criminal Procedure Code. Almost all the changes introduced are in the right direction, and the committee are fully justified in claiming that they have aimed throughout at simplification of procedure, clearness of wording and prevention, as far as possible, of abuses brought to light and have tried to hold the balance between the requirements of judicial efficiency and interests of accused persons, but inclining to the latter in every case of doubt. The Bill in its present shape is a praiseworthy performance, and it will be useful to draw attention to the more important changes in the law recommended by the committee.

The principle is not unknown in the existing code that when one of several accused persons has a right to take his case before a higher tribunal, any person jointly accused with him who may not

by himself have any such right should also be in a position to take advantage of the reference or appeal to the higher court at the instance of his co-accused and claim to have his case also considered by the higher tribunal. This principle has been extended by the committee to a number of other cases also, not provided for in the present code. The clauses which have been amended with reference to this principle are clause 18 relating to imprisonment or failure to furnish security, clause 80 relating to committal of a previously convicted person to the court of session or High Court, clause 81 relating to reference to a superior court for the purpose of adequate punishment, clause 97 relating to appeals by one of several persons jointly tried and clause 98 relating to an appeal by one of several persons convicted by a jury. One source of grave abuse under the existing law is the liberty allowed to private individuals to institute, with the previous sanction of the courts concerned, prosecutions for offences connected with the administration of justice. The recommendation of the committee to abolish the system of sanctioning prosecution by private individuals is excellent. Prosecutions for such offences are to be prohibited except upon the complaints, in writing, of the court or public servant concerned. Sections 195 and 476 of the code have been amended in accordance with this principle. The provision for the investigation of claims to property attached by a criminal court is a very desirable addition. With reference to the investigation of offences, it is proposed that, where an officer in charge of a police station does not himself proceed in person to investigate an offence, but deposes one of his subordinate officers, the subordinate should not be below the rank of a Sub-Inspector. The power conferred upon a police officer making an investigation, to make or cause a search to be made, outside the limits of his own police station, in cases where delay will be injurious, will be conducive to quickness and efficiency of investigation.

The admissibility of statements made to the police in the course of an investigation has been a vexed question in the courts, and the solution adopted by the committee is satisfactory. They provide that neither such statements nor any record of such statements in a police diary or otherwise shall be used for any purpose except as provided in section 162. The effect of the new proviso to section 162 is that the court shall, on the request of the accused, refer to the writing and may, if it thinks expedient, direct that the accused be furnished with a copy in order that any part of such statements may, after due proof, be used to contradict a witness. If any part of the statement is used by the accused, any other part may be used in the re-examination of the witness, but only for the purpose of explaining matters referred to in the cross-examination. In trials in sessions cases, the committee have rightly adopted the view that the defence should have the last word, unless any witness has actually been examined by

the accused on his own behalf. In cases in which a sessions judge disagrees with a verdict of acquittal by the jury and refers the case to the High Court, the committee propose that the judge should proceed to try any charge of previous conviction and submit the record in a complete form to the High Court. Under the existing law, the charge in a case of previous conviction cannot be gone into, unless and until the accused has been convicted of the subsequent offence, the object of the provision being to avoid any prejudice to the accused in the mind of the jury. It may no doubt be urged that the judges of the High Court are not likely to be influenced by the fact of previous conviction in the same way as a jury. Even High Court judges cannot be above the frailties of ordinary humanity, and it seems desirable not to remove the existing safeguard. Supposing the High Court, agreeing with the judge, sets aside the verdict of the jury, there is not much likelihood of delay in consequence of the subsequent trial of the charge relating to the previous conviction. The matter is one which can be easily proved by production of the former judgment, and the delay involved will be very slight.

Amendments have been proposed in section 309 with the object of restricting the questioning of assessors to the purpose of merely ascertaining their opinions and preventing a cross-examination. The intention, however, may be made clearer by the use of apter language. The provision of the present code for the payment of compensation in frivolous or vexatious cases is defective in not requiring it to be shown that the charge is false. This defect will be remedied by the amendment suggested by the committee. The list of offences compoundable with the permission of the court has been enlarged by the addition of certain offences, such as, wrongful confinement, criminal force, mischief and house trespass. Where a case is heard before a bench of judges and they are equally divided in opinion, the existing practice is to lay the case before another judge and his judgment is final. This procedure has been felt to be far from satisfactory. The committee propose an amendment, which would enable any judge, who is a member of the divided bench, to require a re-hearing before the additional judge and the original bench sitting together. Where this course is not feasible, power is given to the Chief Justice to direct a re-hearing before three judges, other than those who originally heard the case.

P. S. SIVASWAMY AIYER.

#### NATIONAL EDUCATION.

WE have been often told by some of the leaders of the advanced school that we should not divert our energies from the single agitation for Home Rule for India to advocate other kinds of reform, for it is contended that with Home Rule once secured all other kinds of reform can be effected in no time by ourselves. This is not our own opinion, for we

have grave reasons to fear that under Home Rule the path of some items of reform will not only not be more smooth, but will on the contrary be considerably more difficult. We do not say, however, that the agitation for Home Rule, or by whatever other name we choose to call it, is to be given up, but only maintain that our energies should be directed to the all-sided advance of our country. We should consequently have been justified if we had entered on a propaganda for an educational object or for social reform at the present moment; but the mentality of the leaders who have entered on this National Education campaign is rather difficult to understand, considering their former violent protestations. Nobody denies that education is a very vital problem, but so is the caste problem, so is the problem of Indian poverty, and so are half a dozen other problems. It is however a very slippery matter, this mentality of some of our leaders, and we leave it for the present. We only wish to examine a little carefully the ideas underlying this so-called national education, for we refuse to be led away by mere words, which have often furnished the only equipment for a campaign, in up-to-date American style, to our friends of the Home Rule school.

To justify this campaign it is requisite to damn everything that has been done so far. Hence the present system of education is said to have been invented for the single purpose of providing clerks for Government. Any good results that may have arisen out of it are said to have come in spite of the system. We are afraid that this is going too far. For a rational estimate we must take into account the good results as well as the evil, and every reasonable man will be constrained to say that the former vastly preponderate. Even this present feeling of nationality is the direct result of our present system of education. Did the Madras, the Bengali, the Maratha and the Sindhi even do lip service to the idea that they are all children of the same soil and their interests are mainly identical sixty years ago? Had it not been for our English education, Mrs. Besant would not have obtained her position in India as the President of the Congress and Mr. Tilak might have been either a soldier of fortune or the founder of a religious sect. The present system has its defects no doubt, and attempts should be made to improve it; but it would not be desirable to do away with it root and branch, even if it were possible. We have always regarded as the surest sign of quackery this abuse of all other medical practitioners on whose unfortunate heads are showered all evils, real or imaginary, which flesh is heir to. If the advocates of national education wish to be regarded seriously and to produce permanent results rather than a mere momentary impression, we would warn them against the methods of the quack.

National Education in England has always meant the education of every child in the country and has generally been regarded as the duty of the

Government. The late Mr. Gokhale's advocacy of free and compulsory primary education was in this sense directed to secure National Education in India, and so also his followers who try to make Government alive to its responsibilities in this matter may be said to be workers in the cause of National Education. Such a system of universal education cannot be achieved by any private agency, however energetic, though we have a vast respect for the energy of Mrs. Besant and her co-workers. It has got to be done through the agency of Government and Government alone. Private agencies can at the best be only supplementary to Government, stepping in to make new experiments, to fill in occasional gaps and to make Government realise its duties.

Perhaps National Education may denote that the educating agency should be Indian. The new campaign makes a great point of this, though it looks rather inconsistent to have Mrs. Besant and Mr. Arundale holding the two most important places in their proposed organisation. We have ourselves no objection to accept with thanks the help of anybody who will serve us whole-heartedly, but here again only those who make so much of the necessity of purely Indian element in our educational system are convicted of inconsistency. Our object in asking for a predominantly Indian element is that it is only Indians who can be naturally expected to be the proper teachers of Indians, that they will be cheaper, that they alone can thoroughly understand the social system of India, and that any preference shown to Europeans in the matter of education leaves in the minds of Indians feelings which are altogether alien to true educational ideals. But on this point Mrs. Besant and her *confrères* have made no new discovery. Many Indian witnesses at the last Public Services Commission—and at the one before the last—advocated this view and the evidence given by the writer of this article asking for a thorough Indianisation of the educational services created some stir four years ago. As Mr. Arundale admits in his manifesto, the Deccan Education Society, the D. A. V. College, the C. H. College and several other bodies have been making private efforts to show that such a thorough Indianisation will not lead to a disaster.

There is a third point on which this campaign insists and that is that the medium of education should be the vernaculars of India. The promoters of this campaign attribute all sorts of evils, real or imaginary, which India is suffering from to the present system of higher education through English. This point of view, so far as the limited amount of truth that it contains is concerned, is again no new patent of the Adyar school of educational reformers. Curiously enough, on this subject extremes meet. The enemies of Indian progress are found bemoaning the day when English education was introduced into India and would, if they could, set back the hands of the Indian educational clock and fight again the battle so

decisively won for English by the strong advocacy of Macaulay. We ought to take care that our advocacy of the vernaculars from our point of view does not play us into the hands of the Sydenham school. Mr. Arundale in his memorandum advocates that the vernaculars should be exclusively used in the High Schools for the learning of the various subjects, but this is exactly what Prof. Limaye and others have been doing, though they have been sober in their advocacy, not using abuse of English as their weapon but basing their case on merely educational grounds and taking care to see that the students' command over English would be in no danger under their system. The question of the medium in Colleges is not so very urgent, as by the time a boy goes there he should have acquired such command over English that the medium would be a minor matter there. It should not be forgotten that English is necessary for India's progress and that no vernacular can take its place in the Indian political, social and intellectual world.

Another point on which the promoters of the campaign lay so much stress is the subject of religious education. The opinions of the writer of this article on this matter are well-known and he has the satisfaction of feeling that he is therein supported by a much larger volume of Indian opinion than people believe. Whatever the merits of religious education may be, it has nothing in common with anything "national." Religion in the accepted popular sense of the term has been mainly an anti-national force in India. There is nothing so efficacious in rousing the most potent anti-national feelings as the introduction of the religious element. Mrs. Besant herself had a good deal to do with Hindu-Moslem claims in our public life. The Jain, the Lingayat, the Christian, the Jew and others are also putting in their separatist claims. The lines of cleavage in India are religious and sectarian. The problem before some Indian leaders is how to efface these lines of cleavage. Nothing would please our enemies better than to see this propaganda attain the utmost success. Is it wise to play into their hands? We know of course that the Adyar school say that the religious instruction which they have in their minds is not to be sectarian, and they fondly hope that it is to be theosophical. But if there is one position more certain than another in educational politics, it is this that a milk-and-water religious education satisfies nobody. Plain Bible teaching in England finds few supporters. The teachers will necessarily introduce the peculiar tenets of their own sects. How will a Smarta like to see the Bhagawadgita expounded to his children by a Vaishnava? or will a Shiah have the Koran taught to his children by a Sunni? The theosophists are making an utterly false calculation if they think that their national university is going to remain permanently in their hands. However intimately they may for the moment appear to be working with

Hindu orthodoxy, they will find that in this matter their interests are as distinct as may well be. Some years ago Mrs. Besant started a similar campaign in favour of the C. H. C. and the Hindu University. But she appears now tacitly to disown the child in whose maternity she cannot disclaim her share. The Hindu University has gone another way, which is not Mrs. Besant's, and we make bold to prophesy that the same fate is sure to attend her national university, unless it transforms itself into another theosophical seminary.

Several other points, some even more important than those so far considered, in connection with this campaign in favour of national education still remain, but we reserve them for the next week.

R. P. PARANJPYE.

#### DRINK IN MADRAS.

THE Madras Government recently published an order on liquor consumption together with the report of the Committee appointed on the 28th May 1917 to enquire into and report on liquor traffic in the Madras city. The Government accept the findings of the Board of Revenue, which are also published in the Government Order. The Board itself does not much differ from the report of the Committee, and both hold that the present policy is the right one and that 'total prohibition, progressive limitation of supplies and the licensing of consumers are hardly practical politics.' This proves at the outset how the angle of vision from which the Government views this problem is radically different from that of the public. Government are still opposed to prohibition and trust to the policy of maximum revenue and minimum consumption to bring about the end desired equally by them and the public. One would have hoped that what has been achieved during the war in western countries would have persuaded Government to realise that their policy is not the right one. It is much to be regretted that the Committee has done nothing whatever to disturb the settled conviction of the Government. But no one that knew the composition of this Committee could have expected greater things from it, since not one well-known temperance worker was invited to join it. There was only one Indian member, and it is well-known that he looks at such problems from the western standpoint.

The Board of Revenue accepts the recommendation that the Corporation might as an experiment erect a few model shops to be rented to licenses and entrusts this work to the Licensing Board, which is to be constituted shortly. It submits a copy of the design adopted in Federated Malay States. This is one of the points on which the witnesses were asked to give their opinions. The present policy with regard to the location of shops has to be modified. Shops should be relegated to out-of-the-way places so as not to be handy. The present arrangement by which they are located in much-frequented places throws temptations in the way of the casual passer-by who is not a habitual drinker. Shops should be situated outside the municipal limits but not in lanes; nor should there be allowed dark or hiding places inside them. This provision is necessary in the interests both of the public and of the inspecting staff. The Board has rightly waived the objection sometimes urged that cleaner and better built shops attract bigger crowds. Even in a place like the liquor shop it is always better to be sanitary than otherwise. Light and good air may be expected anywhere to have an elevating influence. While the Board has suggested a few reforms the Committee has recommended hardly any. It recommends the closure of a few more shops and the increase of duties. It is willing to provide counter-attractions. The latter reform cannot do any good unless Government secures the co-operation of bands



of earnest temperance workers and helps them liberally in all possible ways. Some people fancy, and the Committee agrees with them, that cinemas and theatres constitute counter-attractions. None of the witnesses except one held that these would exercise a deterrent influence; the fear is entertained on the contrary that they afford an additional zest to the drunkard by finding for him a place where he could spend his time after the usual cup. On the other hand, a properly conducted club, preferably in the open air, where after toiling in closed houses people could find opportunities of refreshing themselves may be expected to be very serviceable. But such a club, to be useful, needs the help of dozens of devoted workers.

On the whole, we are inclined to the opinion that the Committee has done precious little to tackle this grave problem. In spite of the indifference of the Committee, the Government have formulated certain changes which vest additional powers in the hands of the District Magistrates whereby if they like they can control the traffic by closure of shops, refusal to grant special licenses, etc. But such changes cannot do any substantial good. They do no more than tinker with the problem. Such halting reforms will not satisfy public opinion.

Prohibition ought to be the goal of our excise policy. The contention that this would encourage illicit drinking and would result in enhanced consumption is utterly fallacious, as has been repeatedly proved. The following remarks, of the *Bombay Guardian*, a Christian journal of high standing, are very apposite on this point, which should finally dispose of the Government's plea. It says in its issue of 30th March: "One thought that we were living in times when no well informed person would use any argument in favour of the liquor question. *There is no argument but the selfish one, the one of the interested party.* (Italics in the original.) If the Hon'ble member (in the Bombay Council) who used the argument that if liquor shops were closed there would be increased and illicit consumption would have troubled to look up statistics from America, where this has been tried to the fullest extent, he would see how far he is short of the mark. When liquor shops are closed the source of temptation is removed, and there is no case on record where the consumption is increased by their removal, but rather it is reduced, and in time altogether put away. The State of Kansas, U. S. A., is a notable example, and there are mothers and fathers in that State who have never seen a saloon or drink shop or a drunken person, and all they know of drink is what they have read about it or what they hear from their elders; and why? Because the saloons were removed over thirty years ago, and now theirs is one of the most prosperous States in the Union, and their prisons have been turned into agricultural schools and their lunatic asylums into packing houses for food-stuffs."

D. H.

## REVIEWS.

### MR. TILAK'S SPEECHES.

TILAK'S SPEECHES. (R. Triumatai and Co. Re. 1-4-0)

BAL GANGADHAR TILAK: HIS WRITINGS AND SPEECHES, with an appreciation by Babu Aurobindo Ghosh. (Ganesh & Co.)

WHAT will attract the reader's attention before everything else in these pages, published on the eve of Mr. Tilak's visit to England, is his views on the utility or desirability of sending a deputation to England to plead India's case before the British democracy and British statesmen. On this subject Mr. Tilak's opinion has undergone violent oscillations. In the Congress of 1904 he supported the delegation to England in a vigorous speech, and committed himself to the extreme view that "our principal work, our principal purpose and our principal hope to carry out the programme that we prepare here lies not here

but in England." And he added, quoting Sir William Wedderburn, "We prepare our brief here, but the brief has to be carried over to England. It is there that the judges sit, and our advocates must plead our case before the English judges, and not before the judges in India." He was so much impressed with the necessity of an English deputation at the time that he earnestly urged the establishment of a permanent political mission in England and he expressed the hope that "within a very short time we shall succeed in winning to our side many indifferent Englishmen that now have no notion of the subject and would perhaps be very willing to help us in forming India a living member of the British Empire." When Mr. Gokhale returned from England, after his brilliant services there, Mr. Tilak joined in giving him an ovation. But soon after he came under the influence of 'new ideas,' which treated all agitation in England as mendicancy, and so not befitting our national self-respect. Indeed he made that the cardinal difference between the old and the new parties.

"The new party perceives," he said, "that this is futile (to bring pressure of English public opinion to bear on the party in power in England and the bureaucracy in India). "To convert the whole electorate of England to your opinion and then to get indirect pressure upon the members of Parliament, they in their turn to return a cabinet favourable to India, and the whole Parliament, the liberal party and the cabinet bringing pressure on the bureaucracy to yield—we say this is hopeless. You can now understand the difference between the old and the new parties. Appeals to the bureaucracy are hopeless. On this point both the new and old parties are agreed. *The old party believes in appealing to the British nation and we do not.*" In view of the fact that the present home rule league deputations have pinned their faith on and are going to address their efforts exclusively to the labour party, it is interesting to see how he inveighed against the Congress party in the beginning of 1907 for reposing excessive faith in it. He said, "You now depend on the labour party. Labourers have their own grievances, but they won't treat you any better. On the contrary, they will treat you worse, because British labourers obtain their livelihood by sending us their goods." Those were the days of self-help and boycott, and his programme then was: "We shall not give them (the Government) assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when time comes we shall not pay taxes." The reaction now from the upheaval of those times is so great that the speech in these volumes which would have ordinarily attracted the widest attention and which reflects the strong individuality of the speaker happens now to be bereft of all practical interest.

Mr. Tilak's views on national education have been set forth in one of the speeches in four precise propositions: religion to form part of education, the burden of foreign languages to be lightened, industrial education to be imparted and political education also to be included. In speaking of foreign languages, he has expressed the opinion that there is no reason why the study of English should be made compulsory—an opinion which will be shared by few even among the advocates of national education. There is nothing noteworthy about his minor speeches, but it may be mentioned by the way that it causes surprise to find Mr. Tilak upholding the system of indirect representation in the Imperial Legislative Council on the ground, among others, that direct representation was not adopted in the provincial Council.

But the subject that will rivet popular attention in his speeches is undoubtedly that of home rule. He answers the objection that the Secretary of State's pronouncement of August 20th has superseded the Congress-League scheme in a powerful passage. He denies that that pronouncement requires that even the first stage of responsible government

that will be evolved here in the fulness of time must provide for a removable executive; nor does he think that the Congress scheme is on that account inferior to a scheme which provides for responsible government. "Why should you ask," he says, "that the executive should be removed? Once the bureaucracy understands that they are responsible to the legislative councils, they are wise enough, intelligent enough to shape their future conduct accordingly; they are not fools. The executive are held responsible and they must take their orders from elected Legislative Councils." In other words, he considers that the Swiss constitution is the proper model for us to adopt in the present circumstances of the country. In order perhaps to show that he is not less radical than any in wishing for a complete control of the executive by the legislature, he said in one passage in the last Calcutta Congress, "I go so far as to say that even Governors and Lieutenant Governors must be elected by legislative bodies," and in answering the usual argument against the Congress-League scheme, that there will be frequent deadlocks, he could envisaged the deadlocks between the nominated and elected members of executive councils, but not those between the legislature and the executive. The publishers are to be congratulated on making the scattered speeches of Mr. Tilak available to the public, but one wishes that the speeches on home rule, delivered at Belgaum and Ahmednagar, which are here published as they were reported by the C. I. D., had been edited.

S. G. V.

## PROVINCIAL LETTERS.

### BIHAR.

#### THE WORK OF MR. GANDHI'S VOLUNTEERS.

THE Champaran Agrarian Bill having passed, it would not be out of place to review the activities of Mr. Gandhi's volunteers in Champaran. The volunteers are divided into two groups, one stationed at the headquarters in Motibari and the other working in the *dehat* (mofussil). This latter group of volunteers concerns itself solely with the education of the people and the sanitation of the villages. So far, only at three places have schools been started. As a result of the semi-servitude in which the people had been living for several generations past, their moral calibre has deteriorated to an extent beyond all conception. Want of truthfulness, and absence of self-confidence and mutual trust are characteristics which are met with everywhere. Mr. Gandhi felt that unless the rayats' ignorance was dispelled and measures taken to give a healthy tone to their character, no amount of favourable legislation would be of any immediate use. The schools have been in charge of very capable persons, who by their conduct have been able to infuse a new life into those with whom they came in contact. It is evident that the people have become more self-respecting and have begun to understand how their interests could be secured. The non-interference of the mofussil volunteers in any sort of agrarian complaints has facilitated the work considerably.

To every centre of work in the mofussil from three to five volunteers are attached, varying according to the number of students that attend the school. One of these is invariably a lady volunteer. The sight of lady volunteers opens out to the women of Bihar an entirely new vision. Having passed all their lives in *parda*, they are astonished to find ladies moving freely among men and working with them. These approach the womenfolk of Bihar and talk to them about personal cleanliness. They often show how to give baths to children and how to comb and dress the hair of girls. This part of the work of Mr. Gandhi's volunteers has been very valuable indeed. In addition to this work of personal cleanliness, at two centres girls' schools have been opened at which about 50 girls, of ages from 7 to 20, receive instruction. The gentlemen volunteers attend to the instruction of the boys, who number about 300, and move about in the *Dehat* with the lady volunteers, advising people how to attain cleanliness. These volunteers often clean wells in villages and clean the surroundings or ponds of filth of every description. This has given to the people of Champaran an idea of social service, which, thanks to the activities of the Social Service League, has become widely known in Bombay.

It is a sight to the people of Bihar to see men and women of position engage themselves in work, which many from among themselves would consider to be beneath them. The work of sanitation is conducted under the general supervision of a graduate of Medicine from Bombay. In addition to looking after sanitation, this gentleman has been attending to the sickness in the *dehat*. In Nepal Saria malaria is very rampant every year in the months of November, December, and January. This year the epidemic was particularly bad. The medical assistance that was rendered was highly appreciated. People in the Bombay Presidency can have no idea of the severity of malaria that prevails in these parts. In a few instances people are carried away after an illness of 24 hours. If medical gentlemen from Bihar with missionary spirit would start a few dispensaries in these parts they would confer a boon upon the poor rayats. Mr. Gandhi's volunteers are working with admirable devotion, but when it is remembered that the population of the district is 18 lacs and the number of villages is somewhere near of 2500, one can understand how comparatively limited is the extent of their work. Biharis must themselves carry on and extend the work which the volunteers have been doing.

## UNITED PROVINCES.

### THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE.

ON the 24th of March last the annual general meeting of the U. P. Congress Committee was held at Allahabad for the election of the office-bearers and the executive committee and also the eleven additional members to the All-India Congress Committee. After the unseemly strife which was witnessed at the Calcutta Congress, the older Congressmen decided not to participate in any tug-of-war with the young Home Rule party. The result was that the Hon. Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Hon. Mr. Chintamani could not be persuaded to accept any office or serve on the executive Committee. Now that the critics have assumed the responsibility of office, it may be hoped that the campaign of misrepresentation and vilification which has been going on for some time past will cease and the dust of controversy subside. As all the leading gentlemen of Allahabad and Lucknow were already represented on the All-India Congress Committee, it was hoped that the additional eleven seats would be reserved for mofussil gentlemen who have a just grievance in the matter. It is therefore regrettable that more than two-thirds of the new seats should have been distributed among Allahabad, Lucknow and Cawnpore.

### THE SEVA SAMITI.

THE Seva Samiti, Allahabad, is again busy doing commendable work among the people. The outbreak of the Plague is unusually severe this year throughout the Provinces, and Allahabad is no exception. Many parts of the city are badly affected and people are dying by hundreds every week. The Seva Samiti has organised measures for giving free medical relief to the poor and helpless. About a dozen depots for the distribution of medicine have been opened in different quarters of the city and volunteers appointed to procure medical advice, wherever available. Several private medical practitioners have agreed to visit the poor patients without charging any fees. Besides, the Samiti volunteers are rendering invaluable help in removing the dead bodies of the plague-stricken to the burning ghats, at considerable risk and inconvenience to themselves. The poor people are very grateful for the services rendered by the Seva Samiti at this time of trial and tribulation.

### A SENSATION.

Mr. Wright, Superintendent of Police, Babraich, has filed a criminal complaint of libel in the court of the city magistrate, Lucknow, against the Editor of the *Advocate*, which has caused a mild sensation in political circles at Lucknow.

## BOMBAY.

### THE HOLIKA SAMMELAN.

THE movement of the Holika Sammelan is annually started to check the evil practices in which some sections of the Hindu population, especially the backward classes, indulge in the Hindu month of Falguna. The programme of counter-attractions provided consists of lantern lectures, Kirtans, Bhajans, singing of purity songs by boys, open air sports and other healthy means of recreation and amusement. The effect of this movement, which was started in Bombay seven years back by the members of the Servants of India Society, can be seen now appreciably by any one who has been watching the life of the habits of the labouring classes in Bombay. have seen some localities entirely purged of *tamasha*

where only lewd songs were sung with vulgar gestures. The custom of getting the clothes bedaubed with red colour is also fast disappearing, except from amongst the *bhayyas* who come from Northern India as watchmen and milkmen. This class of the population being foreign to the province is not affected by the marks of civilisation which are seen around them, and they also remain much behind the brethren of their native province, being cut off from them practically for generations. The Holika Sammelan movement has perhaps lost a little of its original enthusiasm, but it goes on from year to year with its regular programmes and activities, producing a civilizing effect steadily and surely.

#### CONTROL OF COTTON SPECULATION.

The question of the abnormal rise in rents having been settled to a large extent by the passing of the Rent Bill, the attention of the Controller has now naturally turned to the equally abnormal rise in the price of cloth, which is an important necessity of life. In this case also the excessive rise is due to the action of those who are cornering imported English piece-goods and of those who are speculating in cotton. The prices of country-made piece-goods depend upon the prices of cotton. But the cotton markets in Bombay and some other places have now become gambling houses, making honest dealing in the commodity impossible. To check speculation in cotton in order to bring the prices of piece-goods to a reasonable level, Government have issued orders under the Defence of India Act making the registration of all cotton transactions in Bombay compulsory. It is hoped that this measure will have the desired effect of giving relief to the poor and the middle class people by bringing down the prices of cloth to some extent at least.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### THE MADRAS MAIL AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

SIR,—In your leader of March 14th you make what is in effect an appeal to "the loyal and patriotic section of the European community" to repudiate the policy of the *Madras Mail*. To that appeal I feel I must respond, though you must not assume that I speak for any one but myself.

If Europeans do not repudiate the *Madras Mail*, it is not always because they agree with its policy; much less is it because they are in love with its style. On the contrary, both its policy and its style seem to me, at least, so outrageous that I find it hard to believe that any one takes them quite seriously. You must remember the British tradition to make allowances for newspapers. An editor, you know, often has his tongue in his cheek.

At the same time we are busy people; political activity does not seem to be our first duty; and we know just enough about Indian politics to realize how little knowledge we possess and how complicated the problem is.

Further—and your leader of March 21st makes one think you will agree with me here—*New India* is a paper hardly calculated to produce an atmosphere of unimpassioned investigation; and we live in an atmosphere influenced at present far more by *New India* than by the *Servant of India*.

I am not trying to excuse; I merely suggest an explanation. It may well be that we ought to speak out more loudly, though I am not sure that the loudest voices are most clearly heard. My main purpose in writing, however, is to express the hope that you will be able to do something to shape our opinions and form our convictions. The tone of your first five issues—if I may say so—makes one think that hope may be fulfilled.—Yours, &c.

C. KINGSLEY WILLIAMS.

Wesley College Hostel,  
Madras, March 28, 1918.

#### DISCRETION OF THE PRINCIPALS.

SIR,—A perusal of the Hon'ble Mr. Stone's speech (which is now reported *in extenso* in the Government Gazette) on the occasion of the resolution *re* students and public meetings in the Madras Legislative Council, leaves one in doubt whether the discretion, which is said to have been restored by a recent order to principals of colleges in the matter of allowing undergraduates to attend political meetings, is at all so unfettered as it at first appeared. The Director of Public Instruction said: "The order (G. O. No. 1531) leaves to the principals, in their discretion, the enforcement of the previous order (G. O. No. 559). They will exercise their discretion in the circumstances of their respective institutions. Further, the Government state that, in doing so, they believe that these authorities will loyally carry out the wishes of the Government. The Government have declar-

ed that it is their conviction that it is undesirable for students to attend public meetings. They have told the principals that it is so and that it is their considered and fixed opinion, and they now say, 'that being our opinion, we consider that you ought to do all you can to keep away students from public meetings'." The previous order, prohibiting students from attending public meetings thus remains; what is left to the principals seems only to be the enforcement of this order, the devising of effectual measures to carry it out. If this is the meaning of Mr. Stone's remarks, the discretion left to principal is very much circumscribed indeed.

Does not the Madras Government's order, construed in the way in which the Director of Public Instruction has construed it, go much beyond the sphere marked out by the Risley circular of 1907 for Local Governments' action? That circular lays down, in the words of the Bihar and Orissa Government's order, dated 22nd October 1914, "that school boys may not attend political meetings whilst, though *colleges students may attend such meetings as a general rule* (italics mine) and provided that they so conduct themselves as not to bring themselves into undesirable notoriety, they may not take any active part in their proceedings. Discretionary power to prohibit attendance is thus left with the principals of colleges." The difference between the Risley circular and the Madras Government's order is thus plain. While the former allows college students ordinarily to attend political meetings, empowering the heads of colleges to restrict this general freedom when they find it necessary, the latter forbids such attendance as a general rule, leaving it to principals to give effect to the prohibition and perhaps to relax in a few exceptional cases. It is no wonder that the original order No. 559, followed by the subsequent amending order No. 1531, with the gloss of the D. P. I., have produced a confusing effect on men's minds, and well may the *Madras Mail* exclaim that students "are neither allowed to attend political meetings nor prevented from doing so."—Yours, &c.

A TEACHER.

#### THE SUPPRESSION OF ABWAB.

SIR,—One doubts whether it was entirely wise to leave the law as regards *abwab* in the same condition in which it has been since 1885. If it is a fact, as admittedly it is, that "though the Acts of 1859, 1869, and 1885 all declared *abwab* to be illegal and all stipulations and reservations for the payment of them to be void, the exaction of heavy *abwab* is general," it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the present law needs strengthening. Section 75 of the Bengal Tenancy Act leaves it to the rayat, from whom amounts in excess of rents are realised, to institute a civil suit to recover the *abwab* and a penalty, but not a single suit has so far been lodged. It clearly proves that the legal remedy here provided is hopelessly inadequate to protect the rayats of Champaran. Why should not then the present law be amended, on the analogy of the amendment introduced in 1907 in section 58 of the Bengal Tenancy Act as regards rent receipts, so as to empower the Collector to proceed against offending landlords of his own motion? It is feared that the subsection which threatens a rayat with fine if his complaint against the landlord is found to be false or vexatious will prove an engine of oppression in the hands of an unsympathetic Collector; but the fact that no complaint has at all been filed in court for the last 120 years shows that the remedy is to be looked for not from the rayat but from the Collector. If he is sympathetic or just, the redress will be effectual; where he is the reverse, the law against *abwab* will remain a dead letter as it has remained so long, but the rayat will hardly suffer, for he will not complain at all, as he has not till now. At any rate, the balance of good seems to me to lie on the side of the amendment, and I therefore regret that it was not carried. The official members, Messrs. Tanner and Macpherson, appear on the whole to have made a strong case for tightening the present law, in the direction indicated by clause 6 of the Bill. At the present time, officials and European planters are ranged on opposite sides, and why should it be supposed that the Collector, when he has the power, will not use it at least occasionally in the interest of the poor rayat? The net result of the combined opposition of planters and popular leaders is that the suppression of *abwab* will be as far from accomplishment as ever.—Yours, &c.

V. G. S.

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