

The Servant of India

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Topics of the Week.

Mr. Sastri's View.

Interviewed on Sir Samuel Hoare's statement, the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri said :

"The change of procedure goes to the root of the whole matter.

"If experts and people with specialised experience are alone to give evidence before a Joint Committee of Parliament, dominated as it must be by Conservatives, the new constitution will be an imposed one, and not one to which progressive parties in India will have previously agreed.

"All the conditions necessary to perpetuate the present conflict will thus be maintained. The present decision of His Majesty's Government humiliates the non-Congress Nationalist elements in the extreme. They must now consider what their future attitude should be.

"The position at the moment is so exasperating that no wise decision can be taken until more information is available and things become clearer."

* * *

Siam.

THOSE who still hug to their bosom the theory that the East moves slow will have had the surprise of their life when they heard of the *coup d'etat* in Siam. The revolution in that country was as sudden as it was, fortunately, bloodless, thanks to the good sense of the King, who gracefully bowed before the will of the people and readily promised to replace autocracy by limited monarchy and constitutional government. He had left the Capital for the seaside as

an autocrat; he returned to it as a constitutional monarch, amidst the acclamations of his people. It would have been surprising if the people of Siam were proof against the prevailing political urge towards democracy that has swept over the rest of the world, and remained unaffected by the happenings in China and India, their neighbours. Siam is an independent State, with full legal equality of status with the other States and is a member of the League of Nations. It has an area of over 200,000 sq. miles, and a population of over 11,000,000. The present King was educated in England and had to some extent liberalised the government of the State. He had restored the Supreme Council of State, which, however, is a nominated body of Ministers and Princes. And now he has consented to go the whole hog and agreed to bring his government into line with modern requirements.

Would that the Princes in India took a lesson from Siam and gracefully and voluntarily anticipated the inevitable!

* * *

Railwaymen.

MESSRS JAMNADAS MEHTA and Giri, the President and the Secretary of the Railwaymen's Federation, have issued a statement regarding the interview they had with the Railway Board in Simla a few days ago. The bone of contention was the retrenchment of 40,000 men and the contemplated retrenchment of some 8,000 more. The Railway Board and the Government of India defend the measure on the ground of financial economy. The Federation is dead opposed to it on the ground that the dismissal of these men meant unemployment and hardship to them and their families. They, therefore, insist on the reinstatement of the retrenched men and the stoppage of further retrenchment. There was yet another grievance. The Government left it to the Agents to send out men, at their discretion, on the ground of inefficiency. The Federation suspect that the discretion was used to penalise and victimise prominent members of the Federation inconvenient to the employers.

THE Federation made several suggestions to effectuate their wishes. Surplus staff, if any, might be reduced, not by dismissal of men in the service, but by the stoppage of recruitment at one end and the encouragement of voluntary retirement with compensation, in addition to the natural wastage, at the other. Another suggestion was the shortening of the hours of work. A third was that the Railway Depreciation Fund, which, the Federation contended, was larger than it need be, should be drawn upon to keep these men in employment. All these suggestions, whatever be their other merits, are not calculated to reduce the expenditure appreciably in the immediate future. At the same time, the dismissal of 48,000 men would cause much hardship. A more hopeful suggestion was that every railwayman should be

given compulsory leave for one month every year without pay. In which case, every railwayman will get work and wages for 11 months in the year, which is certainly a lesser evil than being thrown out of employment altogether. The Railway Board seem to have advanced certain administrative difficulties, which, however, have not been mentioned or detailed. We hope they will not be insuperable, and that Government will accept a proposal of voluntary self-sacrifice made by the Railwaymen themselves.

* * *

Women's Education.

THE Address delivered by Babu Ramananda Chatterjee, the veteran and venerable journalist of Calcutta and Editor of the "Modern Review," at the Convocation of the Indian Women's University in Bombay last week, was full of stimulating observations on women's education in India. He did not share the prejudice against "Western" education for Indian girls; knowledge was universal and was neither of the East nor of the West. The bulk of his address was however concerned with the interesting question of co-education vs. separate education. Should boys and girls attend the same school? He thought it "economical and mutually advantageous for boys and girls to be taught those subjects together which both require to know." After saying this, he went on to say. "Whilst I think that girls should be accommodated in boys' institutions, in all those places where separate institutions for girls alone cannot be founded and conducted, I think it is necessary to start and maintain additional educational institutions for girls wherever possible." He was not unmindful of the criticism of the students of the Bethune College, a women's college in Calcutta, that an inferiority complex attached to separate institutions for women, but wished it eliminated. To our mind, co-education all along the line, from the primary to the university stage, is the best course, for reasons educational, financial and administrative. If we must permit a departure from it, it is because, with Babu Ramananda Chatterjee, we recognise that public opinion in India is not quite ready for it. We have a striking example in Madras. The number of girls in colleges in Madras before separate women's colleges were started was a fraction of the number since: the two existing colleges are inadequate to accommodate all the girls that seek admission. The better policy, therefore, seems to be: co-education if possible and separate education if necessary.

* * *

Sir Vithaldas's Gift.

BABU RAMANAND CHATTERJEE also referred in his speech to the stoppage of the annual grant of Rs. 52,500 that was being made to the University till recently out of the late Sir Vithaldas D. Thackersey's gift of 15 lakhs of rupees. This gift, which is one of the largest of its kind, was made on condition that the whole amount would be handed over to the University after the University succeeded in receiving a charter or some other form of recognition from Government. This condition was laid down with a view to ensuring the permanence of the University. But Sir Vithaldas also provided an alternative to this condition. If he or his trustees were satisfied that the University was "very popular and useful to the public" they could waive the condition of a Government charter. The test of this necessary measure of popularity and usefulness was made to consist in the University being able to add another half a lakh of rupees to its yearly income from public subscriptions. It is true that neither of these alternative conditions has been fulfilled. A charter has not been obtained, nor have donations been secured from the

public to such an amount as to yield interest of half a lakh. But if other evidences of the public appreciation of the University's work are admissible, there is no question as to its being "very popular and useful." There are not half a dozen other institutions in the whole country which have obtained such a firm foothold on the people's affections and sense of indebtedness as this University.

But the conditions referred to above were attached to the transfer of the corpus of the gift to the University. If they were not fulfilled the donor and his trustees undertook to pay to the University whatever interest accrued on the amount at the rate of 3½ per cent. per annum. The sum of Rs. 52,500 which was being paid to the University every year ever since the endowment was made, represented in fact the interest on the gift, and on our inexperienced but unprejudiced reading of Sir Vithaldas's will, it appears to us that the payment of interest cannot be withheld in any circumstances, or rather except in the circumstances specified in the will, and we do not believe that it is the contention of the trustees that any of these circumstances have arisen. In stopping payment of interest the trustees have not even mentioned in detail the reasons which led them to take this extreme step, fraught with such far-reaching consequences to the future of the University. We should not however like to stress the legal requirements which flow from the undertakings entered into on both sides. We would rather appeal to the trustees of the late Sir Vithaldas's estate, in the interest of public service, to look with a somewhat indulgent eye upon an institution which is so unique in our country and which is being conducted with such an unparalleled self-devotion by Professor Karve and his colleagues. He will take a grave moral responsibility upon himself who will consciously do anything to impede its growth.

* * *

A Double Wrong.

AMONG the comments on the Franchise Report the most amazing were those of Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi which have since been adopted by the Central National Muhammadan Association in Calcutta. This gallant gentleman strongly opposed the recommendations of the Committee regarding the enfranchisement of women on the ground, among others, that "an enormous number of women of ill-fame—their number according to the latest Census stands at the modest figure of 30,000 in Calcutta alone—is let loose on the unfortunate candidate!" He apprehended that it would lead to the pollution, from the very outset, of the springs of public life in India and concluded that "women of ill-fame should in any case be disqualified." Now Mr. Ghuznavi could not have been unaware that there could not be women of ill-fame without men being privy to it, the exclusion of whom he does not propose. The discrimination that he proposes is absolutely unwarranted, and, if anything insulting. Are the women of ill-fame to blame for their condition, and do they deserve to be penalised by being denied the franchise? Whatever be the condition in other parts of the world, in India where the caste system prevails, certain persons are born to the profession; in their case, it is not moral iniquity or individual volition that led them to it, but it is their inheritance and tradition, with its own code of honour. For this system, which is now universally regretted, it is the men that were responsible, for they have been the law-givers all these ages. The women were innocent: they were not responsible for the system, and it is certain that if they had been partners in law-making, they would not have allowed the system to grow up. To condemn these women for the fault of men and then deny them the power to

redeem themselves is a double wrong, totally unworthy of men.

Satan reproving Sin.

KHAN BAHADUR MIAN AHMAE YAR KHAN DOULTANA, Member of the Punjab Legislative Council, waxed indignant that some of the Executive Officers appointed by the Government to certain Municipalities in the Punjab were Hindus and argued that the selection of these Hindus was not unrelated to the fact that the Minister of Local Self-Government, Dr. Gokul Chand Narang, was a Hindu, and lamented that, as things stood in the Punjab, the Ministers were not responsible to the legislature, but depended on Government votes for

their retention in office. "Unfortunately our Ministers are not responsible to the legislatures as they should have been. They consider themselves responsible to the community which has been the cause of their presence in the Council and incidently, in the Cabinet. Therefore if they are able to satisfy the wishes of that particular community, and please the Government as well, they are content and think that they have done their job, even if that contentment were to be achieved at the cost of others." The argument against separate electorates could not have been more forcibly put than it was by the Khan Bahadur. And yet he does not condemn separate electorates, nor advise the Muslim community, the most uncompromising protagonist of separate electorates, to abandon them. Verily, it is Satan reproving sin!

THE NEW POLICY.

By PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU.

SINCERE well-wishers of both India and England have repeatedly urged two courses on His Majesty's Government for dealing with the growing political unrest in this country, the creation of an atmosphere of peace and goodwill and the settlement of the constitutional question by the method of cooperative consultation. These wise and earnest counsels would have received the sympathetic consideration of any Government which wished to rely for support on Indian opinion, but the decision of His Majesty's Government as announced by the Secretary of State in the Indian debate will intensify bitterness and deepen suspicion of their motives.

The ordinances will soon expire by efflux of time. It may be stated with some confidence that even some of those in high places regretted at the time they were promulgated that no chance was given to a policy of conciliation before drastic measures were resorted to. Perhaps, more tact and patience would have been exercised had the Viceroy been not in Calcutta but in Delhi, and the subsequent course of events might have completely altered thereby. Foreign visitors to India during the last six months have been almost unanimous in drawing attention to the serious discontent and bitterness of which the existing regime has been productive and in asking that speedy steps should be taken to bring about a better understanding.

Miss Rathbone is not a sloppy sentimentalist but she was so impressed during her visit to India with the growing estrangement between Government and the people that she asked the Secretary of State in the Indian debate in April last: "Granted that they were necessary in the beginning, when are they coming to an end?" From the point of view of law and order also, as pointed out in these columns last week, the position has changed materially during the last six months, especially in the U. P. and N. W. F. P. Besides Government have given ample proof of their power to deal with the civil disobedience movement should it raise its head again. The Congress too, one hopes, is wiser for the experience of the last six months. It has not been conquered, but it has failed to cause serious embarrassment to Government. The letter of

Mr. Gandhi to some members of the Society of Friends holds out the hope that he will not be slow to grasp the hand of friendship. One might well have expected in these circumstances that Government would come to the conclusion that it could without loss of prestige seize the opportunity provided by the expiry of the ordinances to make a fresh start, and to enable all parties to make their contribution to the solution of the problems on which the future of the country depends, but they have in their wisdom chosen to act differently. The decision of His Majesty's Government to consolidate the ordinances and renew them though in a modified form will be received with profound dissatisfaction throughout the country. It shows that their ideas are not cast in a large mould. The Secretary of State admits that the civil disobedience movement has been brought under control, but says that it has not been abandoned by the Congress. "The Government would not be content," he says, "with a drawn result. We were determined to take every action in our power to suppress this challenge to our authority." In other words, it is not enough that the forces of law and order should be victorious. The vanquished must sue for mercy before Government will relinquish their present policy initiated by Lord Irwin. Lord Irwin and the Labour Government did not think it derogatory to their national honour to release Congressmen last year and to create a new atmosphere before they had repented of their evil ways, but the new authorities refuse to parley with the rebels till they humbly say, "We have sinned." The outlook is dark indeed if Government cannot have faith in the future. Their mentality is a veritable danger to the cause of reconciliation.

It is well known that the ordinances have created a revulsion of feeling against Government even among those persons who were opposed to Congress methods. This has caused the greatest uneasiness both among Indians and impartial British observers; but Sir Samuel Hoare dismisses those who have been alienated by the policy of Government as men who are in secret sympathy with the Congress. He is bravely prepared to govern in total disregard of Indian opinion. "The dogs bark but the

caravan passes on". Mr. Sastri observed during the Rowlatt Bill discussions that the tragedy of the Government was that it governed in isolation. This tragedy will continue so long as real power rests in the hands of an alien Government. If the situation is so serious that extraordinary powers cannot be dispensed with the sooner the legislature is invited to consider it the better. The executive cannot be allowed to violate the spirit of the constitution by governing the country indefinitely by means of their own decrees.

It is true that the ordinances which will be consolidated will be modified. Some of the special powers will not be renewed, and the new ordinance will apply to those provinces, and in provinces only to those districts in which they cannot be dispensed with, but this will not bring about the psychological change which the situation calls for. Had the introduction of special measures in January last been left to the provinces, as in 1921, the discontent might not have been as general as it is to-day, but in the existing circumstances a change in procedure will not suffice to restore calm and give a new orientation to men's minds.

No small part of the trouble in India is due to doubts regarding the intentions of the British Government about constitutional reforms. The first part of Sir Samuel Hoare's statement will dispel the uneasiness that existed on this score. One Bill will be introduced into Parliament dealing with both the Provinces and the Federal Government. As the proposals regarding federation will be laid before Parliament only when they are "complete in all essentials" it is to be hoped that there will be no long interval between the functioning of the provincial and federal constitutions. The federation however will materialise only if the units concerned are actually prepared to federate. If this means that every Province that so desires may stand out of the federation it will break up the unity of India and postpone federation indefinitely. While it is a matter for satisfaction that it has been finally settled that one statute will cover both the Centre and the Provinces, the procedure for securing co-operative consultation with regard to the provisions to be embodied in the Bill has been radically altered to our disadvantage. There exist at present three agencies for the discussion of proposals relating to the future constitution: the Consultative Committee, the Federal Structure Sub-Committee and the Round Table Conference. To save time it is proposed that the last two bodies should meet no more. Only the Consultative Committee, which is the least important of these bodies and which will contain no representatives of the British parties, will remain in being in future, and it will continue its work only on condition that the communal award, which will be given by His Majesty's Government some time during the present summer, "removes the obstacles which have been impeding progress." Even if the Committee meets, a question like that of financial safeguards will be outside its purview. Such questions which will probably cover the general problem of safeguards will

form the subject of informal consultation with a few experts who will be invited to London for the purpose. The conclusion of the Consultative Committee's work will be followed by an investigation by a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament. This Committee which is to be got "up in the belief that this course will commend itself to Indian opinion" will receive the proposals of Government for the revision of the constitution and confer with representatives of Indian opinion. This virtually amounts to the abandonment of the Conference method in spite of the assurances given by the Prime Minister both in the R. T. C. and in Parliament that it will not be departed from and that the delegates would meet again "to review the whole scheme." The Princes, it appears, were consulted about the change in procedure, but so far as is known, British India was kept absolutely in the dark regarding Government's future plans. It is well known that the main difficulty that England has to contend against at present is a widespread and deep-seated distrust of her policy. The British Government, instead of bending all their energies to the removal of this obstacle, have taken a step which is bound to increase suspicion and be regarded as symptomatic of a vital change in their attitude. It will be treated as a Tory manoeuvre to sabotage the R. T. C. It is plain that neither the Consultative Committee nor the Joint Select Committee can be a substitute for the Federal Structure Sub-Committee. The Federal Structure Sub-Committee which contained representatives of India and all the British parties could arrive at definite conclusions by the method of mutual agreement on which the Government's legislative proposals were to be based; it could enable India, in Lord Irwin's words, to feel in some measure that she was the architect of her own constitution, but the Consultative Committee which appears to be wholly superfluous can voice Indian opinion only. It provides no opportunity for an exchange of British and Indian views or for a settlement of outstanding questions by mutual consent. The Round Table Conference would have been barren of results and would have made no appeal to any political party in India if it had from the outset been treated simply as a committee of consultation. The die-hards tried last year to bring about the dissolution of the R. T. C. before it came to grips with questions relating to the transfer of power at the centre. They failed then, but they have achieved their real purpose now. The suspension of the Conference by the Consultative Committee will leave the British Government free to deal with the vital problems connected with central responsibility in any manner they like.

The Joint Select Committee may not seem to be open to the same criticism as the Consultative Committee. In theory it may enable Indians to discuss all matters on terms of equality with Britishers, but while the Federal Structure Sub-Committee brings together Indians and Englishmen at the formative stage, the Joint Select Committee will deal only with questions on which Government have more or less made up

their mind. Besides, the scope of the Joint Select Committee's deliberations will presumably be limited to the discussion of proposals which can be embodied in legislation. The discussion of large questions of policy which has taken place in the Federal Structure Committee, e. g. with regard to the Indianisation of the higher ranks in the Indian army, will probably be out of court in the Select Committee. Apart from this, the Committee's consultations with Indian representatives will no more be in the nature of a "joint, free and equal conference" than were the consultations of the Indian Statutory Commission with the Indian Central Committee. The Indians with whom the Committee confers will be like witnesses before a Commission. Past experience seems to have been entirely lost on His Majesty's Government. A Joint Select Committee was promised when the Simon Commission was appointed and Indians were to be invited "to attend and confer with the Joint Committee." Referring to this proposal Mr. MacDonald said in the House of Commons on the 2nd December last that the Indians would have "come over here practically in the position of witnesses. They would not be co-operators in consultation." The present Government is now reverting to the procedure associated with the Simon Commission, the passionate repudiation of which by Indians led to the convocation of the Round Table Conference. The Birkenhead spirit which, Mr. Wedgwood Benn said had been banished, is in the ascendant again.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has probably not been able to devote enough attention to the Indian question owing to his illness and his pre-occupation with the Lausanne Conference. Perhaps he had to yield to his colleagues in the matter of procedure in order to induce them to agree to the inclusion of proposals for federal and provincial responsibility in one and the same measure, but if the plan detailed by Sir Samuel Hoare is adhered to it will produce a disastrous effect on Indian public opinion. Agreement is no longer desired. England now wants to impose its will on India.

The only ground for hoping that His Majesty's Government will not antagonise the whole of India lies in the proposal for summoning a small and select body to England if the Consultative Committee is unable to formulate definite conclusions for the consideration of the Joint Select Committee "without further consultation of a more formal character." This concession is supposed to have been made in consequence of strong protests from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar against any departure from the Conference method. We do not know the exact significance of this eleventh hour change. If it is desired that consultation in England should be strictly dependent on the course of discussion in the Consultative Committee and that it should be limited to subjects not disposed of by it and to persons chosen by His Majesty's Government, the promise that has been made will fail to satisfy Indian opinion, which will demand that the Consultative Committee should be scrapped and not the Conference. If, however, it is intended that a Committee analogous

to the Federal Structure Sub-Committee should be convened to reach agreement on the undecided questions, the Conference method will continue to the end. There is not much hope that this wise course will be followed, but Government should lose no time in explaining the full import of their proposal in order to enable the country to make up its mind.

DISARMAMENT.

AT last, thanks to Mr. Hoover's drive, the Disarmament Conference seems to be getting its teeth into its job. The Conference has been in session from 2nd February, and yet it had not gone much farther than paying obeisances to the ideal of peace and making general declarations about disarmament when suddenly Mr. Hoover made a definite proposal asking all countries represented at the Conference to cut down their armaments by about one-third. The one fruitful idea that had made some headway before was that of abolishing by a general convention the use of all such weapons as were agreed to be of a primarily offensive character. But no agreement had been arrived at as to what weapons answered to that description. The question had been referred to experts' committees who have yet to make a report. Mr. Hoover's intervention however will now call for an immediate answer from European nations because he has made it plain that there will be no hope of a remission of war debt payment until they agreed to a drastic reduction of their military expenditure. The weapons most effective in breaking down national defences and increasing the power of aggressive attack are also the weapons that are most expensive, and this fact will not fail eventually to appeal to countries which are now on the verge of financial ruin.

Dealing only with land warfare, the United States representative, Mr. Hugh Gibson, proposed the elimination of the use of tanks, heavy mobile guns and gases in war. A heavy mobile gun costs nearly 450,000 dollars and a large tank 45,000 dollars. The United States itself has 800 tanks and 600 more building. But predominantly offensive weapons are used in other warfare also, and they should be equally outlawed. If, e. g., heavy bombardment from the mouth of a mobile land gun is to be interdicted it follows that the dropping of bombs from the air must be similarly interdicted. The Foreign Minister of Italy, Sgr. Grandi, made the most comprehensive proposals of this kind of what has come to be called a qualitative limitation of armaments. For his plan included the abolition of tanks, heavy land guns, bombing aircraft, weapons of chemical and bacteriological warfare (all of which are included in Mr. Hoover's proposal too), and also the abolition of capital ships and submarines. These two latter however Mr. Hoover does not propose, and probably will not even agree, to scrap entirely, but only to reduce in quantity.

On this question the United States Government is not as progressive as some other Govern-

ments. Even in 1930, at the London Naval Conference, while the British Government favoured the eventual abolition of the capital ship and the immediate abolition of the submarine, the U. S. Government could not be persuaded to commit itself to anything more than a reduction of battleships and some kind of "humanisation" of submarine warfare. The British Memorandum of 1930 stated that the battleship, "in view of its tremendous size and cost, is of doubtful utility and the Government would wish to see an agreement by which the battleship would in due time disappear altogether from the fleets of the world. As regards no other category of ships is there a better opportunity of meeting peace requirements or of effecting economies." Battleships of over 10,000 tons displacement were under the Versailles Treaty prohibited to Germany on the very ground that they were then "regarded as weapons which would have enabled Germany, had she been so minded, to undertake operations of offence." Mr. Hoover however now proposes that both the number and tonnage of battleships should be reduced by one-third. The British Government at Geneva Conference was very emphatic in asking for the abolition of the submarine. As Sir John Simon said: "There is abundant experience in the late war to show that the effective use of the submarine almost invariably involves, however involuntarily, perhaps a greater degree of inhumanity than is to be found in almost any other type of warfare." That is the traditional view of the British Government. Lord Balfour's view is well-known that the submarine is an instrument "inconsistent with the laws of war and the dictates of humanity." The treaty tonnage of submarines allowed to the U. S., England and Japan is 52,700, which Mr. Hoover now proposes should be reduced by one-third; that is, if this proposal is accepted it would be 35,000. But in the matter of submarines the chief country to consider is France, which has 97,875 tonnage displacement in this category, and the maximum that will be allowed to her too, under Mr. Hoover's proposal, would be 35,000 tons. Thus, France will have to reduce her submarines twice as much as England and the United States. Aircraft carriers, cruisers and destroyers are proposed, under the Hoover proposal, to be reduced by one-fourth and land forces by one-third.

This rough and ready method of reducing the armaments of all countries by a certain proportion, without regard to their geographical and political situation, which was the method advocated by M. Maxime Litvinoff, Commissar for Foreign Affairs in the U. S. S. R., has obviously many defects, and the consensus of opinion at the Conference was that an individual study of the peculiar circumstances would have to be gone into before the quantitative method of limitation could be applied. The qualitative method has this great advantage over the other method, viz., that in applying it no regard need be paid to the necessities of any country, but that an objective rule is to be applied to all countries, and certain prohibitions are to be imposed in all nations upon practices which shock our common humanity. But the method of automatic uniform reduction, when

applied indiscriminately to countries, is bound to lead to injustice, and yet this is now proposed by Mr. Hoover, for the obvious reason that the individual and subjective method would have caused intolerable delay. When the principle of reduction is once accepted, the exceptions that have to be made in giving effect to it can be considered later, and Mr. Hoover will certainly be willing to make such exceptions. Mr. Hoover says that if his proposal is accepted the nations of the world will be able to save from 10 to 15 billions (in the American sense of milliards) of dollars in the next ten years. It is no wonder that such a saving should be possible, for the total military expenditure of the world at present exceeds 4,000 million dollars a year. That is, in ten years the military expenditure of the world of 2½ to 4 years would be saved.

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BOMBAY PRESIDENCY.

I.

THE recent resolution of the Government of Bombay on the administration of Local Boards in the Presidency refers prominently to the deterioration of Primary Education under popular control and similar complaints are often heard about the state of education in municipal areas also. Party factions are rampant and communal considerations prevail over considerations of efficiency. Teachers are engaged in currying favour with members of the School Boards and trying to obtain transfers to desirable schools or promotions to places carrying a high attendance allowance. Members of the School Boards are often illiterate or at least unable to form a rational judgment on educational questions. Administrative and other supervising and executive officers of the Boards feel it more their duty to frequent the houses of influential members of the Boards rather than to perform their legitimate work properly. All these and other complaints are no doubt well founded, and it is worth while considering whether the system requires radical alteration or whether a tightening of the machinery of control from top downwards will be able to remove a good many of the evils complained of.

It must be remembered that the transfer of primary education to popular control was made as an essential part of the scheme to introduce compulsory education at an early date throughout the Presidency. It was felt, and it was recommended by the Chandavarkar Committee, that the introduction of the principle of compulsion cannot be carried out with the help of the departmental agency alone which till then was in administrative charge of primary education in the Local Board areas, the Boards contributing only the proceeds of the annucess. The Department carried out its work with a fair amount of efficiency and the standard of the village schools was on the whole somewhat higher than that of the schools in municipal areas which were under the control of municipalities. It was recognised at the time of the passing of the Compulsory Education Act that for a time there may be some

lowering of efficiency, but the risk was deliberately taken in order to secure a great move forward. But the actual experience of the last eight or nine years has been that while the apprehended lowering of efficiency has been achieved in the fullest measure, not an inch of progress has been made in enforcing the principle of compulsion, and there has been during one or two years even a slight going back in the quantitative results.

"As is the king, so are the subjects." This saying is amply verified in the case of the administration of education at the headquarters. While I know that it is ungracious of me to criticise my successors in the ministership of education, it is the generally accepted opinion throughout the Presidency that the portfolio of education has been held during most of this period by men who have been elected on a communal ticket and who frankly put the claims of their own community above the cause of progress of the province as a whole. I am not one of those who hold that the educationally backward classes do not require some special help on the part of Government. I would not have objected if their communal zeal had taken the form of opening new schools in backward areas which would have specially benefitted their own communities or had first applied the principle of compulsion to such areas. But I have yet to hear that they have done these things in any appreciable measure. Their communal zeal has been entirely expended in manipulating Government patronage, in making appointments to posts under Government from the lowest to the highest on communal considerations, and not on considerations of fitness for any particular job. To my mind the less a Minister has to do with actual appointments on his own initiative the better. He should leave the selection of new men to independent bodies like the Public Service Commission or selection boards appointed *ad hoc* and in other cases to the heads of departments, keeping a watchful eye on any appointment or recommendation made on grounds other than that of fitness. He will be capable of exercising tight control over his subordinates or over semi-independent local bodies only if he is not heavily tarred with the brush of unfair patronage. For one job that he can perpetrate to serve his friends or caste fellows, his subordinates will perpetrate fifty and the Minister will be unable to utter a word of effective protest. The whole prestige of the Minister vanishes in such a case and he will be reduced to initialling blindly whatever his department proposes and the whole tone of the administration inevitably suffers. If some of the higher officers in the Department have kept a record of recommendations for jobs that they have personally received from the various Ministers under whom they have served, it would serve as an effective eye-opener to the evils of communalism run mad. "Make adequate rules for efficiency and see that they are obeyed", should be the uniform motto of a Minister if he is to succeed.

When the control of primary education was transferred by the Compulsory Education Act to the local bodies, it was my idea at any rate that the supervision of the Department, as distinguished from actual

administration, should in no way be relaxed and should be, if possible, even stricter than before. With the actual administration transferred to local bodies it was anticipated that some of the inspecting officers of the Department might be found to be superfluous and might have to be lent to the local bodies as part of their administrative staff. But I understand that there has been now a wholesale scrapping of Government inspecting personnel and in some districts it is actually the case that a man who was in the older system an assistant deputy educational inspector is now the sole educational representative of the department in a district whose administrative officer is supposed to be of the rank of a deputy educational inspector. In such circumstances the Government representative can exercise no useful control and can serve only as a post office between the School Board and Government. Being only one man in the district he cannot inspect many schools as he is tied to his desk at headquarters. Effective independent supervision from above being absent, the administrative officer of the School Board is reduced to simply pleasing his immediate masters, the members of the School board, and provided they are kept *khush* and provided that his formal accounts do not provoke any criticism from the auditing officers of Government he need fear no unpleasant remarks from any Government inspecting officer. What is more, Government spends about a crore of its own money on elementary education and it is its duty to see that the taxpayer gets adequate return for all this amount. Competent inspecting officers will more than earn their salaries if they see to it that this money is properly utilised for the advancement of education in the Presidency.

My insistence on the need for competent inspection and supervision is not due to any bureaucratic spirit that I may be supposed to have imbibed in the course of my career. When any new machinery is set up, one should err on the side of excessive safeguards rather than of none. It does not mean that these safeguards should be continually, or even at any time, used. That would only reduce the sense of responsibility on the part of those in immediate charge of the machinery. If everything is going on reasonably smoothly, they should not be used at all. Even in democratic England the Local Government Board and the Board of Education are continually keeping the local bodies up to the mark. With their competent and highly paid experts they are able to advise these bodies and their advice is never resented. The Government inspectors of various kinds are further able to see that the large grants from taxpayers' money made to the local bodies are being utilised in the best way. If Government inspectors had been kept up and had been made to understand the difference between inspection and administration, between helpful advice and officious interference, these inspectors would have done a world of good and would have prevented a good deal of the deterioration that the Government has had to chronicle in the course of their resolution.

R. P. PARANJPYE.

Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

LONDON, June 18.

THE LATE SIR DONALD MACLEAN.

I LEARNT of his sudden death from heart-failure shortly after the event, when at the House of Commons Wednesday afternoon. The news had rapidly circulated, and the general feeling, formally recorded in the memorial speeches of Mr. Baldwin the Leader of the House, Mr. Lansbury, for the Opposition, Sir Percy Harris, on behalf of the entire body of Liberals and in the absence of Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. Maxton, for the Independent Labour Party, was that a very great gentleman, if not exactly a great leader, had passed away, whose sympathetic and understanding personality was affectionately appreciated by a large circle of friends in all parts of the House and in wide circles outside it. The late Liberal Minister was one of the four Liberals who joined Mr. MacDonald's National Government and he was among those Liberal Ministers who made a public declaration at the beginning of the year in which he claimed and successfully asserted the right to differ from and vote against the other members of the Government in matters, of to them, vital principle.

It is still uncertain how the Prime Minister will fill the vacant place in the Cabinet. If he decides to put in another National Liberal, the choice will probably fall upon Mr. Isaac Foot, whose tenure of the Secretaryship of Mines, though most arduous, has been brilliantly successful. On the other hand, the Tories may clamour for another office of profit. I imagine, however, that Mr. MacDonald's desires will prevail.

THE FREE STATE QUESTION.

Mr. De Valera has replied to the British proposals for further negotiations on the question of the Oath and that of the annuities. The latter is a justiciable question. The British Government had suggested that it should be referred to an Empire Tribunal such as had been recommended at the last Imperial Conference. Mr. De Valera's reply on this point is that he is willing to have the matter submitted to such a Tribunal provided that its personnel is not such as was agreed to at the Imperial Conference; in other words, that the personnel is not entirely restricted to citizens of the States composing the British Commonwealth. He will have no reference, he says, to a tribunal which will have the dice loaded against the Free State. If what he wants is to admit foreign States to the adjudication of a domestic dispute, obviously no British Government could ever give its assent to such a far-reaching proposal, whose adoption would be tantamount to a recognition that for all practical purposes, the Commonwealth consists of a congeries of foreign countries associated together for certain purposes only. If the Free State desires to assert her complete independence, as Mr. Lloyd George, who signalled his return to his Parliamentary duties yesterday by intervention in the debate, declared she evidently wanted to do — if Mr. De Valera is to be believed — then it will clearly have to be done in some other manner than this. As to the Oath question, this Mr. De Valera declines to discuss at all. For him, it is entirely a matter for the Irish Parliament to decide. So far, the Senate has defeated his attempt at a unilateral tearing up of the Treaty, and the matter is not likely to be finally decided for another eighteen months, unless he determines to go to the country at an earlier date and secure a majority decision on this sole question.

In the meantime, he may be defeated not only in the country, but by the economic factors of the case. Ireland cannot do without this market for her goods for a very long time to come, and her citizens, whether of Republican proclivities or not, may be unwilling to jeopardise their best market for the sake of a theory. For the present, therefore, the position appears to be slightly worse than it was before the recent mutual visits of Free State and British Ministers. There is nothing in life so awkward as an individual who obstinately insists that the earth is flat in the face of all the evidence to the contrary.

THE JUNIOR MAHARANEE OF TRAVANCORE.

There is no doubt that Her Highness the Junior Maharanee of Travancore has made a hit here. Her intelligence, her vivacious personal, the seriousness with which she studies and discusses problems affecting the position of women, her knowledge of the status of her people and her solicitude for their welfare, and her ready adaptability to new ideas qualified by a lively recognition of the difficulties of adapting them to the needs of a conservative State, have appealed to the sympathies and intelligence of the public. She has maintained a suitable reserve qualified by an accessibility to representative men and women that has gained public respect and appreciation, which was expressed in suitable terms at a social gathering on Thursday night at Garden Club, Chesterfield Gardens, under the auspices of the London Branch of the Women's Indian Association, to which representatives of various public bodies largely concerned with the welfare of women throughout the world were specially invited. All of these groups through their spokesmen tendered to her Highness a very hearty and respectful welcome to the west and an appreciation of what she and her State stood for in the history of women's freedom and self-respect. Her Highness is a very ardent feminist. That is clear from all she says and does, and in addition she enjoys the status that gives her unique opportunity for impressing public opinion abroad on the qualifications and capacities of Indian women and at home for the progress of the progressive State over which her son now rules. A dynamic personality like the Maharanee is capable of creating, as she has done, and employing very valuable influences on behalf of India as a whole.

AT LAUSANNE.

The interest focused upon Geneva where the Disarmament Conference has been sitting has for the time being been transferred to the Reparations Conference that is now meeting at Lausanne. The two conferences are in fact indissolubly interlinked. Unless international confidence can be restored, unless world views can be applied to the solution of problems of universal application, unless the peoples of the world all together recognise their inevitable mutual interdependence, there can be no solution of the armaments problem or of that of reparations, and the nations together will be heading rapidly for the precipice over which they will hurl themselves to destruction like the Gaderene Swine of old. The fact seems to be that for the time being the people have taken leave of their senses. They are allowing themselves to be possessed by mass fears and to be moved by mob terror. Leadership is singularly absent and one has an extraordinary instance of it in the case of America, where defeatism, emotionalism and panic seem to have swept away the capacity of the American people to throw up sound leadership and to think coolly in the midst of fear. It may well be that if these Conferences should, God forbid, end in failure and the inevitable moral and material debacle arise, this country, though involved in the general collapse

will be able to stand most steadily, or least unsteadily, against the cataract of an entire civilisation in flux. That increasingly large groups of people are more and more insistent in their demand for a real and effectual beginning to be made in disarmament is clear from such demonstrations as that held this week in London under the auspices of the League of Nations Union, which is spending itself in great efforts throughout the whole country to bring home to its people the gravity of the danger and the necessity for concerted effort. Nor is there any reason to believe that even in France there is the same indifference to realities as there was until not long ago grave reason to fear existed in the matter of reparations and war debts. It is useless at the present time when America is passing through its presidential campaign with all its artificial and childish preliminaries to expect her seriously to entertain fresh proposals on the subject of the mutual forgiveness of war debts. Besides, hard hit as she is economically and industrially, this is not the time when she may be expected to respond in the spirit of friendliness and understanding to any such appeal. That she will do so ultimately is beyond doubt, for there is no such teacher as the compulsion of events.

INDIAN AFFAIRS: MODERATES AND OTHERS.

You will have received a telegraphic summary of Sir Selwyn Fremantle's article in the "Times" on the position of the Indian Moderate leaders, and by this mail the full text of the article will be reaching you. It is quite clear that Sir Selwyn, whose goodwill towards the Moderates no one doubts, whilst recognising some of the causes making for the neutrality that he complains of of the moderate attitude towards the Government on the one hand and the Congress on the other, is speaking in terms of human perfection and therefore of theory and unreality in advising the Moderates on the constructive programme that in his opinion they should place before the country and in speculating as he does upon the nature of the response of young India to such a programme. I have reason to believe that a suitable reply has been sent to the "Times" by a well-known friend of India, who has more than once sought to explain the Moderate point of view, and to give it some plausible justification.

Why the Moderates should be expected to come to the rescue of the Government when they do not even know the lines upon which a constitutional solution is being sought, it is a little difficult to say. One thing appears, however, to be certain. There is no longer any doubt in the highest quarters that a single Bill combining provincial and federal arrangements will be drafted. There are, however, apart from the communal solution, which is not in well informed quarters expected before the end of July, two major matters that have to be decided upon. One is as to the nature of the safeguards during the period to elapse before Dominion Status, in its full sense, and with the background of the Statute of Westminster, has been reached. Unless and until the national leaders can be satisfied that these are reasonable and primarily in the interests of India no constitution would prove to be acceptable. The other point is as to the extent of the hiatus between the two parts of the Bill. There are conflicting opinions as to the extent of the duration of this hiatus but there is no dispute in the best informed moderate circles as to the consequences of any prolonged delay in bringing into force the federal provisions. Curiously enough the feeling seems to be growing here, even in influential Conservative circles, that in order not to stultify the new constitution at the outset and having regard to the possibility

of unexpected delay in the entering into the federation of sufficient of the States, it may be necessary to make provision for responsible government at the centre for British India alone to come into operation simultaneously with provincial autonomy until such time as this is replaced by federal central responsibility. If this in fact be the case it would indicate a very considerable change in Conservative opinion here, and it might result in a different kind of timetable and a different concatenation of events.

The Simla correspondent of "The Times" to-day intimates, or purports to intimate, an important difference of opinion between two groups among the members of the Consultative Committee. The majority group said to be led by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Mr. Jayakar is stated to be of the opinion that no useful purpose is to be served by convening a third session of the Round Table Conference. The minority group which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru is supposed to head are reported to dislike the idea of a small picked body going to London only to cooperate with the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, and who wish both the Federal Structure Committee and a Plenary Session to meet. It is added that some of those who oppose the holding of a Plenary Session nevertheless hope that the whole of the Federal Structure Committee will go to London on the grounds that a smaller body could not be representative and they seem to fear that if the smaller body met the Joint Select Committee only, it would be in the position of petitioners rather than co-operators in the search for agreement. What truth there is in this report it is of course difficult at this distance and with no further information available to know. I am in a position, however, to state that the general view of the Labour Party here would be in favour of the third Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference. On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a great deal to be said for the view that a small group of men who know their own minds can do business much more effectively with a small group on this side similarly composed than a large unwieldy and somewhat inchoate body such as the Plenary Conference. The real question would be what would be the true relation between the negotiators on both sides.

This, of course, leaves out of account for the time being the Congress and that is making a very large assumption. Sir Samuel Hoare, I have the best reason to know, remains of the opinion that the pessimistic views that are being impressed upon him by well-known friends of India who are in close touch with the Indian political parties and leaders, have no basis in fact, and that they are contradicted radically by the facts of the situation as reported to him by his official advisers and by non-official correspondents upon whose judgment he prefers to rely since they support his own preconceived opinion. He is obviously afraid, if not indeed unable, to do the big thing lest thereby he should offend the delicate susceptibilities of certain groups in India and his own Parliamentary and Party colleagues here. I am sure, for instance, that he has no intention of considering favourably any suggestion made to him at the present time (and such suggestions I have the best means of knowing have been made to him by very influential personages) for the enlargement of Mahatma Gandhi, who is regarded in many quarters here as a diabolical figure incarnating the very spirit of anti-British mischief. Any more stupid caricature of the great Indian leader could hardly be imagined, but one has to deal with facts as they are. When people are anxious or afraid they make a bogey of their chief opponent. It is characteristic war mentality, and have no doubt that much the

same sort of psychology prevails in the opposite direction in Congress circles. By the way I hear on good authority that the reply has been received from Mahatma Gandhi by the friends who presented to him the draft of Dr. Tagore's appeal for peace and reconciliation. It has taken two months for a reply to reach them, and the true chronology of events will be a matter of interest. Though the letter has so far been withheld from publication, it is expected that it will shortly be circulated to the Press in much the same manner as that adopted in the case of the Tagore appeal. I shall be very much surprised if it is not found that the Mahatma emphasises with characteristic energy his readiness and ardent desire for peace and reconciliation consistently with the national honour, but that he will feel precluded from discussing the matter in detail so long as he is denied his freedom. If this be so it would seem that Sir Samuel Hoare is missing a unique opportunity of securing the Mahatma's hearty cooperation in a task to which he himself claims to have set his hand unremittingly.

SHORT NOTICE.

TALES OF ALL COUNTRIES. 1st Series. By ANTHONY TROLLOPE. (Oxford University Press.) 1931. 15cm. 270 p. 2/-

"A TALE that holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner." So Sir Philip Sidney described a good story. These *Tales* are unlikely to hold any but abnormal and precocious children from their play, but they are almost certain to keep old men from the chimney-corner.

It is an encouraging sign of the times that Anthony Trollope is coming to be read by many with considerable interest, and that he is able to hold his own with his youthful successors of the present day, with their psychological, soul-dissecting, self-revelatory tendencies. These short stories, like the author's novels, are concerned chiefly with ordinary people of the well-to-do classes, with their superficial joys and sorrows, troubles and trivialities, pleasures and perplexities, all of which are delineated with truth and kindly humour. The scenes are laid in widely different countries of the world ranging from Spain to Egypt and from Jamaica to Ireland, but the author is equally at home in laying bare the iniquities of Arab dragomen and the amours of Spanish sweethearts, in sketching Egyptian pyramids and French *chateaux*.

The best story from the standpoint of the interest of human emotions is that of *La Mere Bauche*, but the most out-of-the-way is that entitled *John Bull on the Guadalquivir* in which two Englishmen are covered with ridicule by a gracious Spanish duke with a perfect command of English whom they had believed to be and treated as a bull-fighter, not entirely without excuse. One so often reads anecdotes and jokes at the expense of members of non-English races that it is deliciously refreshing to come across a story in which the 'strong silent Anglo-Saxon' meets his match! That the story is told by an Englishman himself only adds zest to it and credit to himself.

DAVID CHELLAPPA.

Miscellaneous.

INDIAN HOPES AND FEARS.

The following article by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru appeared in *Spectator* of 17th June.

The committees that came out from England have returned to England, and presumably their

reports are in the hands of the Secretary of State. The Consultative Committee which was again to have met on May 23 has been adjourned apparently because it cannot make any headway until the decision on the communal issue is given by the Prime Minister. The Princes have since March last met twice and reaffirmed their support of all-India Federation, subject to certain safeguards, none of which is new or impossible, leaving it to unfriendly critics to belittle the measure of their support. Meanwhile, conflicting rumours as to actual steps to be taken towards establishing the new constitution continue to exercise their unsettling effect on public mind. It has all along been felt, not wholly without reason, that what the bureaucracy in India—minus the Viceroy—want is Provincial Autonomy and this fits in with the views of the Conservatives who form the more influential part of the 'National Government' in England. Once Provincial Autonomy is established—so it is argued in certain high quarters—people's mind will begin to run in different channels, politicians will form themselves into parties or groups for the acquisition of political power in the provinces, and forget all about the centre. At any rate the question of the centre will, it is supposed, recede into the background and may not for some time come to the fore, and thus the evil day may be warded off. As against this rumour, one hears of the conversion of some of the high and mighty in England to the idea of an All-India Federation. It may be hoped that this conversion is genuine and has been helped by the reaffirmation the Princes of their adherence to the principle of federation. But even in converted quarters it is felt—so we are told—that though there should be a single Bill dealing with both the centre and the provinces, the provisions as to the former should not come into operation at once but might follow provincial autonomy at a distance of eighteen months, if not longer. Apparently the justification for this proposed gap is sought in the necessity of the working out of details and readjustments. There are others again, both English and Indian, who would advise us to press for central responsibility independently of an All-India Federation. They, however, forget that British consent to responsibility at the centre has been conditioned by the willingness of the Princes to join the federation and the advocates of this view-point have no means of assuring us that British opinion, particularly such as is reflected in the present House of Commons, can be persuaded to agree to responsibility at the centre if the Princes keep out. All this has tended to multiply tenfold doubts and suspicions in the Indian mind and the average Indian assumes that England does not mean business and that the Conservatives are only manoeuvring for position, at one time taking shelter behind the real or fancied opposition of the Princes, at others behind the unwillingness of the minorities and the depressed classes.

If the average Indian has not dispassionately thought over the problems or issues arising out of the discussions at the Round Table Conference, it is mainly because he has been left no time to give to those problems or issues. The immediate issues arising from the day to day administration of the Ordinances are enough, and indeed more than enough, to divert his mind and interest from the constitutional issue.

The Indian problem then is essentially a psychological problem. It is psychological in its reactions to the present policy of the Government and in its deductions from it as to the future. If, therefore, the present distrust is to be replaced by a feeling of trust and confidence certain things must be done and done without delay. The *raison d'être* of the Round Table Conference was the desire to seek the maximum

amount of agreement and not to impose a constitution which is not acceptable to the majority of the elements composing that Conference. To give India Provincial Autonomy when Indians are stressing responsibility at the centre would be to impose a constitution which it does not want. To tell them the federation must wait until autonomous units have been created and have been allowed sufficient time to function and to grow provincial consciousness is to misread the constitutional history of Canada and Australia, neither of which had a central government like ours at the time when federations were created there. Even if it is not that, it is difficult to see how frequent friction can be avoided between an irresponsible centre and responsible provincial units, if the latter are to be genuinely responsible. Further, however much you may trim the central government to suit autonomous responsible provinces, in essence the centre must continue to remain irresponsible and friction between the two in actual practice will be inevitable. To provide for a gap of several years or even eighteen months between the change in the provinces and that at the centre is to invite fresh agitation, to create new forces in the provinces which will wreck all the chances of the federation. In any case India will not settle down to constructive work, agitation as to the centre will continue unabated, the new provincial governments will start in the midst of an opposition and hostility which may well nigh wreck them. Above all, it will not be an agreed constitution but one imposed by England which could be done if England was so minded without holding the Round Table Conferences and Committees.

Delay is said to be dangerous and it is therefore urged that provincial autonomy must come in first and as soon as possible. But why should there be delay—at any rate a delay of several years or even of eighteen months? So many committees have met and reported, so much ground has already been explored that it is difficult to conceive that there must needs be a delay of several years before we can see the birth of the federation. It is no longer a secret that Lord Sankey has given the best part of the last two years to examination of the problem, the points of agreement and disagreement are pretty well known, the final agreement as to safeguards remains to be arrived at. The case of the minorities and the depressed classes is well-known. The Prime Minister is expected to give his decision or award on it in June or July; there must be a working basis of settlement arrived at. It is true Indians have failed so far to arrive at a settlement. This is regrettable, but what then? You cannot for that reason let things remain where they are or allow the situation to deteriorate from day to day. Advance is inevitable, but you cannot reasonably establish responsibility in the provinces and refuse to establish it at the centre because amicable settlement has not been arrived at. Once the communal issue is settled to the degree of allowing you to establish responsibility in the provinces it is practically settled for the centre also; the adjustments necessary for the centre will neither be many nor insoluble.

How then is the Indian situation to be improved? I think the first need is a different outlook. There need be no apology or regret on the Indian side for asking for the Federation or on the British side for agreeing to it. British statesmen must make up their minds to go ahead with the policy of the Prime Minister in all earnestness and seriousness and concentrate upon the elucidation and determination of safeguards for the period of transition. A single Bill seeking to establish responsibility at the centre and in the provinces should be introduced in Parliament next cold weather. Let there be no mistake about it.

I am not contemplating a gap of several years or even eighteen months between the two. The substantial simultaneity of the two however will not in my opinion be affected by a gap of a few months, if the proved necessity of the situation requires it to enable adjustments being made. Meanwhile the Indian mind must be drawn back to the constitutional issue; the bitterness caused by the administration of Ordinances must be removed, the sullenness and scepticism which have been produced in the Indian mind must be replaced by a feeling of hopefulness and a desire to discuss things on their merits. The self-respect of India must be restored. I am a confirmed disbeliever in civil disobedience and need not be reminded of its effects and consequences, but I have not yet been convinced that there is no alternative at present in India to government by Ordinances. To rule from month to month by Ordinances is to confess failure before the world if not before Parliament. It has certainly not added to the number of friends of the Government; it has undoubtedly increased the number of its enemies, open and secret. Is it too late even now to remove soreness and bitterness and to bring back the Indian mind to a consideration of the constitutional issue? Is it wholly impossible even now for British statesmen to make up their mind and to declare it unequivocally?

BOMBAY LIBERALS.

The following statement has been issued by the Council of the Western India National Liberal Association, Bombay, on the 24th inst. :—

"The Council of the Western India National Liberal Association is deeply concerned at the report that His Majesty's Government contemplates no further meetings of the Round Table Conference or the Federal Structure Committee but intends to draft a Bill for the new Constitution and invite some Indians for informal consultation and later for appearing before the Joint Parliamentary Committee.

The Council represents that if this is true, it means a complete abandonment of the Conference plan of co-operative consultation between British representatives, Indian representatives and the Princes for the purpose of arriving at agreed conclusions to form the basis of a Bill.

Lord Irwin in his address to the Indian Legislative Assembly on 9th July, 1930, said :—

"It is the belief of His Majesty's Government that by way of Conference it should be possible to reach solution that both countries and all parties and interests in them can honourably accept, and any such agreement at which the Conference is able to arrive will form the basis of the proposals which His Majesty's Government will later submit to Parliament."

He further described the Conference as a joint assembly of representatives of both countries on whose agreement precise proposals to Parliament may be founded. The Prime Minister in his speech in the House of Commons on 2nd December 1931, said :—

"I want to tell the House without any reserve that I am perfectly convinced that the work which has been done could never have been done by any method except the method of co-operative consultation and I say further that if any Government here were to try to change that now it would destroy all chance of continuing agreement and co-operation with India itself. The method by which the Round Table Conference has been handled is the only method that will enable India and ourselves to come to an agreement, to work that agreement in harmony, and to use that agreement for the benefit of India itself, and also for

the honour and good of the whole community to which we belong."

The Council emphasises that the Indian public and the representatives invited to the Round Table Conference accepted the Conference plan as the only satisfactory way of dealing with the Indian problem and on that understanding alone they offered and continued co-operation.

The Council thinks that any grave departure from the Conference method would not be acceptable and will necessitate reconsideration of their position on the part of those who have so far co-operated. What ever may be urged as regards limiting the size or the summoning of the Round Table Conference on plausible grounds of expedition and economy, no such considerations can possibly apply to the continuance of the work of the Federal Structure Committee which consists of only 40 members.

The Council strongly urges that the essence of the Conference plan, namely, free consultative co-operation between British and Indian representatives and the Princes on equal terms for the purpose of arriving at an agreed solution to form the basis of the Bill should on no account be departed from."

Correspondence:

"THE PRINCES' TERMS."

TO THE EDITOR, "THE SERVANT OF INDIA."

SIR,—In your leader on "The Princes' Terms" in your issue of May 5th, you regret the continued existence of States' rights in the Federation of the United States, and speak of their recognition as an "initial defect". It would, I am sure, be very interesting to many readers if you would develop your views at greater length. I myself considered the matter on the spot in a tour of the United States which I made soon after my retirement; and I confess that I came to the opposite conclusion. My view tended to be that what had saved the people of the United States from complete economic enslavement and from further moral and intellectual stagnation was the autonomy of the separate States. The best elements of the population were found in States like California in the West, and in Maryland, Virginia, Carolina, and Louisiana in the South. But these States would never have preserved their "souls", if they had been swamped in a uniform federal government and had not retained their separate civil and criminal laws. On the other hand, the federal government is to a large extent controlled by those States which contain the basest and least civilised elements in the country. Further, it is notorious that, while the States' governments are to some extent responsive to genuine popular needs and feelings, the federal government is invariably exploited in their own interest by the great trans-continental industrial magnates, to the oppression of the general American people. Incidentally, it seems to me almost impossible to avoid similar exploitation by the powerful business class in India, if the Central Government is left with too much residual power or control. Finally, as far as the United States are concerned, it must not be forgotten that the Prohibition law, that astounding monument of moneyed selfishness and human imbecility, was passed by a Federal Government, and imposed by it upon the States. There is no instance in living memory of any other law with a similar devastating effect. It was introduced chiefly

in order further to enslave the working men and to extract more labour out of them for lower wages, but Prohibition has in fact increased drunkenness in the middle and plutocratic classes to a terrifying extent; it has multiplied crimes both of violence and fraud in a way incredible to any one who has not travelled in the country; it has induced a general contempt and derision for the law; and it has lowered and corrupted the whole idea of human freedom. I must confess that, were I an American, I should vote Democrat and support State autonomy.—Yours, etc.

OTTO ROTHFIELD.

[The immediate purpose of our article was not so much to plead for a larger area of governmental functions being left to the federal government than is proposed in the federal scheme as to challenge the plea which is continually being put forward, viz. that even if this area be initially smaller than it is on all hands agreed that it should be, it will inevitably be quite as large in the end as may be wished, and that therefore there is no reason to quarrel with the scheme as it is. We referred to the United States only to show how extremely difficult it becomes to add to the list of federal subjects after the constitution is once passed in a cast-iron form. We have no personal knowledge of the conditions that prevail in the United States and cannot say whether the better elements predominate there or the worse. This much however is certain, that there is no end of constitutional writers in that country, W. W. Willoughby, to give but one instance, who bitterly lament the fact that civil and criminal law is in the United States a local instead of a national concern. In India at any rate no danger is apprehended of "the basest and least civilised elements" dominating the federal government and there is therefore no reason to make that government as weak as possible.—Editor.]

BOOKS RECEIVED.

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