

The Servant of India

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Topics of the Week.

Seeks Peace and Ensue it.

LORD SANKEY'S appeal to Mahatma Gandhi in his "Letter to an Indian Friend" to abandon civil disobedience and co-operate in the common task of hammering out a constitution may be taken as an earnest that Government will not impose any humiliating conditions upon the Mahatma if the latter is now prepared to revise his programme. But it would appear that Government would insist upon one condition, viz. that the abandonment of civil disobedience and adoption of co-operation must be the act not of the Mahatma alone, but of his followers too. "If Mr. Gandhi made a great gesture and dropped the weapon of civil disobedience and with his followers offered to co-operate," says Lord Sankey, "the whole situation would be transformed". It is possible that he wished to underline and emphasise the words 'with his followers.' If he did, as is likely, the reason for it must be the feeling that though the Mahatma is accommodating and reasonable, not so are all his lieutenants. But we do not believe that the Mahatma would find too much difficulty in getting his lieutenants, whatever their personal opinions may be, to give an undertaking that they shall loyally support the Mahatma if he should think that circumstances now make it expedient for the Congress to change its policy. Whatever Mahatmajji accepts will be accepted by the Congress as a body. That being our belief, we do not see why a move should not be made immediately to set the Mahatma at liberty and secure his presence at the session of the Round Table Conference which will open next Monday. It is hard to believe that the Mahatma is not at least as anxious to end the present stalemate as the British Government is, judging from the Lord Chancellor's article.

Labour Representation.

OUR London correspondent mentions in his dispatch published on a later page a rumour that was then current in London to the effect that the representatives of women and labour, who were appointed to the third R. T. C. as an after-thought, apparently on pressure being brought to bear on Sir Samuel Hoare by persons and bodies of weight in London, were in the warrant of appointment placed on a lower footing than other members; that while others, originally intended to represent one interest or another, were expected to take part in discussions relating to all subjects, Mrs. Shah Nawaz and Mr. Joshi were restricted to subjects affecting women and labour respectively. In this country, too, there was not only a like rumour, but the press agencies known to be very close to Government, in announcing Government's intention to add the representatives of labour and women, used language which lent colour to the rumour that these would not be permitted to express views on any subject which was not specially entrusted to their charge. But if Government had contemplated placing any such limitation on their range of action, it will not be in force. At any rate we are in a position to make this statement for Mr. Joshi, for he made it clear to the authorities concerned when an invitation to attend the Conference was sent to him that he could not accept it subject to any condition limiting his right to participate in the work of the Conference, and it was only when an assurance was given that he was at liberty to speak on every question which might interest him, whether it concerned labour or not, that he consented to attend the Conference. We believe that Mrs. Shah Nawaz also will similarly be free to take part in the discussion of any subject she likes. Both Mr. Joshi and she will be full members of the Conference; they will not be in the position of experts called in to advise only on particular questions.

* * *

Ottawa in the Assembly.

DISCUSSIONS took place for three days in the Assembly on a resolution tabled by the Commerce Member in support of the Ottawa trade agreement between India and Great Britain. The A. P. I. reports of the proceedings have been, as usual, so bad and meagre that we must confess to our inability to assess at their proper worth the speeches made by the official and non-official protagonists of the agreement. Fortunately, however, there is no urgent need for any comment upon our part on their performance, for, at the instance of non-official members, the agreement has been referred for a fortnight's examination by a committee of members assisted by evidence *pro* and *con* from experts. A request for such a reference had to be agreed to by Government because Sir Joseph Bhide made a surprising statement in his speech that the agreement did not need affirmative ratification at the hands of the House for it to come into effect;

that it would automatically come into force on 15th November and thus secure for Indian goods exported to Great Britain continuance of the immunity from the 10 per cent. *ad valorem* import duty which the country was now enjoying; and that all that the House could do to the agreement was to repudiate it, if it so chose, in which case it would cease to be operative six months after the repudiation. If legally the question stood in that posture, there was no reason why the whole agreement should not undergo detailed expert examination by a Tariff Board such as the Fiscal Commission has recommended before the adoption of a system of imperial preference. To this Government would not agree, but they could not decently refuse the exceedingly modest request of a rapid general review of the agreement by a committee of the Assembly to be finished within two weeks. The committee have already entered upon their labours, and it is very much to be hoped that all those who have bestowed careful study on the subject—and from the number of contributions that appear in the Press and in book form they would appear to be a legion—would lend all the assistance they can to the committee in coming to a right decision on this important and rather intricate subject.

* * *

India Delegation's Impressions.

THE Indian League delegation which spent a busy three months in this country sailed for England on Monday before last. As will be recalled, the delegation visited India in order to study the situation here at first hand, considerable difficulty being experienced in England in getting authentic Indian news, thanks mainly to the existence of the censorship and the working of the Ordinances. From the statement issued by the delegation prior to its embarkation, the Indian situation would appear to have made the same impression on its members as it would make on any body of sympathetic and unbiassed observers. Despite communal differences which had really to do with the distribution of powers among the different sections under swaraj, the delegation found the country united in its desire for self-government and in its opposition to the rule by ordinances. The distrust of the bona fides of the British Government was general and extended even to the moderate sections of Indian politicians.

With regard to the constitution-building now in progress, the delegation believes with progressive Indian opinion that with a view to ensuring the acceptability of the prospective Indian constitution to the people and its harmonious working, it was necessary to secure the effective co-operation of the Congress, "the strongest political party," in the work of hammering out the constitutional details. The stories about the Indian villager being perfectly unconcerned about the political future of his motherland or unaffected by the present ordinance regime, the delegation found on personal inquiries to have been a myth. Not only that. "He is fully aware of his plight and its economic and political causes. He is no admirer of the 'British Raj' . . . He looks on the Congressman as his friend." The delegation's observation had led it to the conclusion that in the fight for freedom Indian womanhood was playing a glorious part.

Amazing as it may strike many in India, the delegation endorses the British die-hards' demand for higher pay and better conditions for the police in its rank and file. "Indeed", says the delegation in justification, "it is one of the most disturbing factors of the present situation that they are an ill-paid, ill-disciplined and ill-educated body of men holding in their hands (even in

the lower ranks) very wide powers which place the liberty, property and self-respect of innocent people at their mercy." The delegation made it a point to investigate complaints of ill-treatment in jails but were handicapped by want of facilities. It was however able to visit eight jails and interview a number of ex-prisoners in different parts of the country. These inquiries have driven the delegation to the conclusion that "ill-treatment of political prisoners is widely prevalent".

The delegation did not for reasons which can be easily appreciated neglect the official world altogether. The impression left on its mind by its contact with officials, both British and Indian, was that they were out of touch and out of sympathy with the masses. The situation in the North-West Frontier Province also claimed the delegation's attention. Its general impression formed after a visit to that province is that "repression has been, and is, so severe that bitter and passionate resentment is felt throughout the villages of this area."

* * *

Walk-out in the Punjab.

LAST week the Hindu and Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council walked out of the Council in order to express their sense of keen dissatisfaction with the communal award of the British Government. This had already found so repeated and emphatic an expression that one may be permitted to doubt whether in the absence of this fresh protest there was any danger of the British Government being left in the dark as to the state of public feeling in the province on the subject. This is not to say that any more expressions of disapproval of the award are superfluous. Repeated protests doubtless have their own value in politics. Only they should be organised in a manner which will not react on ourselves. Walk-out unfortunately is a form of protest which harms our own cause more than it hits the Government, as the Indian public knows to its cost; and if the participants in the Punjab walk-out had not turned a blind eye to past experience, it is more than doubtful whether they would have resorted to this most infructuous way of registering their protest.

The demonstration would perhaps have gained in spectacular effect if all the elected members belonging to the two minority communities in the province including even the Non-Muslim Ministers had joined in the walk-out. But they did not. That the Ministers and the Deputy President were not asked by the organisers of the protest to do so is a lame excuse for their uninterrupted continuance in their seats in the Council, if, as we are asked to believe, their resentment against the award was not less deep-seated than that of those who actually left the Council. Apart from this, the fact was that only 28 out of a total of 37 Hindu and Sikh elected members attended on the day marked out for the demonstration and of these not more than 18 saw fit to withdraw from the Council as a mark of protest. It would of course be wrong to infer from these figures, as the defenders of the award would be inclined to do, that the public dis-satisfaction with the award was after all not very widespread. As Chaudhari Obhotu-Ram, himself an opponent of the walk-out, points out in his letter to the press, "this low percentage is no index of the universal sense of injustice and resentment caused by the Premier's award". Thus even from the spectacular point of view the demonstration can hardly be said to have served its purpose.

Raja Narendranath, leader of the protesters, wanted to make a statement in justification of the proposed step and in explanation of its nature, but was prevented from doing so by the ruling of the

President. Had he been given an opportunity, the statement would have set out the reasons why the Hindu and Sikh communities in Punjab are so deeply incensed by the award with which everybody in India has by now been familiarised and would have made it clear that the seceders were not indulging in a permanent withdrawal from the Council but fully reserved to themselves the liberty of returning to it with a view to taking part in its deliberations "on special occasions."

Whenever they may deem fit to attend the Council in the future, the immediate effect of their absence was felt in full force by the non-Muslim ministers whose demands for grants amounting to several lakhs of rupees were turned down by very small majorities by a combination of their Muslim opponents and the Sikh and Hindu opponents of the walk-out. They showed no inclination to consider the demands on their merits but seemed determined to take an unfair advantage of the situation in which the ministers were left owing to the voluntary absence of their supporters. To impartial observers, the rejection of the demands made possible by the walk-out would appear as wanton.

Band and Body-guard.

THE Bengal Retrenchment Committee has suggested economies which, if given effect to, would effect a saving of nearly Rs. 2 crores. But it is difficult to believe that its recommendations exhaust all scope for further reduction in public expenditure. Take the case of the Divisional Commissioners. These officers are generally looked upon as a fifth wheel in the coach, the disappearance of which will hardly affect administrative efficiency. One wonders why the Committee could not persuade itself to recommend their total abolition instead of a mere reduction in their number. It is a matter for satisfaction that the Governor's Household received the Committee's attention. There is a general tendency to look upon this head of expenditure as sacrosanct—to suggest any reduction in which would almost amount to a sacrilege. The Bengal Committee's recommendations in this behalf, though by no means thorough-going, would go far to remove this illusion. Looking into the Governor's expenses, the Committee has come to the conclusion that some reduction in the Band and Bodyguard establishments and His Excellency's tour expenses was quite possible. We cannot help thinking that it might as well have recommended the total abolition of the Band and Bodyguard establishments.

The latter is a relic of less peaceful times when the Governor travelled by road and was exposed to the risk of personal assault. The times have changed and the means of locomotion have been revolutionised, so much so that the time does not seem to be far distant when even the heads of provinces would copy the example of the present Viceroy and would be doing their touring in aeroplanes. Even as things are, the bodyguard is without work for a large part of the year and would continue to have less and less of it, as the provinces come to enjoy autonomy. To allow its continuance in these circumstances is to tolerate a wanton waste of public money, which would be inexcusable at all times, but is more so now. The same may be said about the Governor's Band.

Our views derive added strength from the expression of identical sentiments by no less a person than a former Commander-in-Chief, Sir O'Moore Creagh. In one of his books, after explaining how the military value of the Bodyguards was, owing to their insufficient training, practically nil, he says: "It seems curious that when such energetic

demands were perpetually made for the reduction of military expenditure, these bodyguards have been allowed to continue." About the band establishments also he is no less explicit. "They (the body-guards) are not the only pseudo-military bodies attached to the households of these satraps (the Viceroy and Governors) who also keep up strong bands composed of ex-British soldiers. *This is an extravagance for which there is no excuse*; if these officials require bands and body-guards for ceremonial occasions they could get them temporarily, when required, from the nearest garrison." (Italics ours.) If even the present financial crisis cannot serve as a justification for the abolition of these expensive superfluities wherever they exist, one wonders what will.

Kolhapur in 1930-1931.

THE administration report of Kolhapur State for 1930-31 shows that its net revenue was a little in excess of Rs. 49 lakhs, out of which the palace expenses consumed nearly Rs. 11¼ lakhs or more than three times the net expenditure on education and medical relief. Assuming that the usual subterfuge of debiting a part of expenses which, being really incurred for the comfort of the ruler and his family, instead of being included in palace expenses, are debited to different heads of State expenditure is not resorted to in the present case, the proportion which the palace expenses bear to the net revenue is, as will be easily seen, not very much below 25 per cent. And yet we are asked to believe that "the budget assigns most of the income of the year to the well-being of the people"! The proportion will doubtless strike right-thinking people as unduly high. Cannot His Highness the Maharaja be prevailed upon to see the desirability of reducing his personal expenses on a considerable scale so that they should bear some reasonable relation to the income of his State?

During the year under report education seems to have made only a slight advance. The number of educational institutions increased by 14 from 643 to 657, while the number of students went up from 36,400 to 38,000. With a total population of over 9½ lakhs, the State has a school-age population of 143,500. In other words, the number at present in receipt of instruction is only about one-fourth of that to be brought to school if the State is to be blessed with universal literacy. Though the report does not specially mention it, compulsory primary education has been for years in operation in some parts of the State but does not appear to have very much accelerated the pace of its educational progress. In this connection it may be suggested to the State authorities that the administration report should every year give detailed information as to the working of compulsory education, for it is an experiment in which even people outside are interested. It will be a source of considerable satisfaction to the educationists in Poona who devised what is known as the shift system in the primary education controversy of 1920 that while the system is virtually condemned by the Education Department in Bombay, it has been found useful by the Kolhapur State as facilitating the expansion of education with not much additional cost. We are pleased to note that special attention is paid to the education of the depressed classes. This is not surprising in a State whose general outlook towards these classes as exemplified in its recent manifesto opening the doors of temples to them is liberal. The students of this class are, we read, allowed to mix freely with students of the touchable classes with the result that no separate schools are maintained for them. While all this is to be welcomed, the State

authorities would do well never to lose sight of the fact that what has been accomplished so far in regard to the spread of literacy, is but a small part of what remains to be achieved.

Lastly, we would like to take this opportunity to impress on the ruler the extreme desirability of taking early steps to associate the people with the administration. The rights of local self-government were conferred upon them more than five years ago with a view apparently to training them for self-government in a higher sphere. This experiment has been favourably commented upon and the people seem to have acquitted themselves well of the responsibilities entrusted to them. Their fitness for self-government has thus been proved beyond doubt. Why should not further opportunities of service be now opened out to them by the establishment of a representative assembly on the lines of the provincial councils in British India? It need hardly be pointed out that such a step will be in accord with the democratic spirit of the time and is urgently needed to satisfy the aspirations of His Highness's subjects. It looks odd that while smaller States in this part of the country should vie with one another in establishing Legislative Councils and thus associating the people with the administration, the premier one, Kolhapur, should show no activity whatever in that direction.

Articles.

AGREEMENT ON SIND ?

GREAT jubilation was said to prevail at the Unity Conference in Allahabad on the evening of the 13th instant, when we are assured a satisfactory solution of a well-nigh insoluble problem, to wit Sind, was reached. The text of this agreed solution is now available, and one can judge for oneself what ground exists in it for the congratulations so enthusiastically and universally exchanged at the Conference. It may be that in matters in which sentiment enters as a chief factor reason should not obtrude itself too much, but we must own to an utter inability on our part to comprehend what precisely is the content of the solution that this Conference purports to make to the solution of this question.

As we have always envisaged the problem of Sind since the first Round Table Conference, there is general agreement that Sind should be constituted a separate province provided it can shift for itself without making a raid on the revenues of the Central Government. The chief difficulty has been to find out what would be the size of its deficit and how Sind would be able to meet it. On this financial aspect of the question, which every one thought was the only one on which there were differences outstanding, investigations have been made by R. T. C. Committees, and the subject as reported upon by these Committees will come up before the third Round Table Conference. Has the Unity Conference secured an agreement on this vexed question? Not yet. At the end of this month a conference of leaders will be held—for what? For “considering the question of appointing a committee . . . and of placing the report of the committee before the people.” It may be that

this is the most satisfactory way of dealing with the matter. But since the committee is yet to find a solution which will be acceptable to the people, is there not some risk of the joy and satisfaction expressed at the Conference turning out a little premature?

The Unity Conference has no doubt tackled other aspects of the question, but they are aspects which one would have thought might have better been left alone till the principal difficulty was got out of the way. Of course the financial is not the only difficulty; others will arise thereafter. But no one thought that they would be insoluble. They would be of a piece with the difficulties encountered in handling all minority questions. They hardly required any separate treatment. But it is precisely these which the Unity Conference tried to surmount immediately. They have decided upon joint electorates with reservation of seats, but we do not know whether with or without the Mahomed Ali qualification. We cannot believe that much difficulty was experienced in arriving at this decision. Opposition to joint electorates has proceeded from Muslims. But in Sind the minority community is Hindus, who have never offered any serious opposition to joint electorates. At any rate it is unthinkable that when Muslims have agreed to joint electorates (and it is upon this footing that the Sind question was apparently considered) Hindus will stick out for communal electorates. Hindus are also offered weightage: Muslims could not possibly withhold it in a province where there is no danger of weightage given to a minority converting it into a majority. The Conference has also agreed to a certain proportion being reserved for Hindus in the Cabinet. Muslims could not possibly oppose such demands, seeing that they themselves put them forward in provinces in which they are in a minority. But the question is whether Hindus by exacting this concession from Muslims should agree to similar proportions being reserved for Muslims in other provinces. We for our part cannot see any reason to congratulate the Conference upon this part of the decision. It is wholly retrograde and ought to be resisted, in its application to Hindus in Sind or to Muslims in other provinces.

We have no desire to comment upon the amount of weightage given to Hindus. They form 26 per cent. of the population in Sind, but are to be guaranteed 37 per cent. of the total number of seats in the House (including special constituencies). Perhaps they would form something like 40 per cent. of the seats allotted to general territorial constituencies. Compromises on the amount of weightage are inevitable, and even this large weightage may be desirable and legitimate, though we are not in a position to express an opinion thereon. Another matter which has been exercising the minds of the Hindus in Sind is the possibility of racial or communal legislation on the lines of the Punjab Land Alienation Act being introduced into the new Council. On this, however, no definite agreement has been reached, but it is left to Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto and Professor Chabliani between them to arrive at a definition of

"agriculturist" which will be free from the objection of being based upon communal distinctions. The Hindus apparently set much store by an admission secured from the Muslims who were present at the Conference that the separation of Sind is made contingent upon central responsibility being conferred upon India. Frankly, we do not attach much importance to this. No compromise has the least chance of acceptance in India which will not provide for central responsibility, and even without an express stipulation to the above effect the proposed arrangement with regard to Sind and everything else will in effect come

to be held up, if the new constitution stops at provincial autonomy.

We go back to our original point, viz. that with the financial question still unsolved, the Sind question cannot be said to have been solved. It is possible that the Conference has brought the solution of the former nearer and that the next Conference to be convened for this special purpose will effect a complete solution of it. We hope so; but it would be the part of prudence to reserve one's congratulations for the day when the task will be brought to a definitive conclusion.

A RING-FENCE EMPIRE.

THE inclusion of the non-self-governing colonies within the ambit of preferential tariffs is claimed by "imperial statesmen" as the most outstanding merit of the Ottawa agreements. That, however, from the point of view of principle, forms the most vicious part of this bargain. It was Great Britain's boast so long that her colonial empire was governed in such a manner that in its administration she did not seek any direct profit or exclusive privileges for herself; that her rule was scrupulously disinterested; that she studied the well-being of the natives; and that in fact her practices always conformed to the practices which the League of Nations had now prescribed to the mandatory powers in regard to the mandated countries. Whatever justification there was for such a claim previously will now wholly disappear.

For one of the most important provisions embodied in the A and B class mandates is that which establishes an Open Door or complete equality of opportunity in the economic sphere. The open door policy enjoined by the League upon all mandatory powers debars them from receiving preferential treatment in the matter of tariffs from the countries committed to their charge. This of course is undoubted. The Indian delegation admits it unreservedly in Chapter V of its report, wherein it tries to justify its recommendation that although mandated territories which Great Britain administers for the League are precluded by the terms of the mandates from giving a preference to India, nevertheless India should give a preference to them along with other colonies. It may be, as the delegation says, that in this way India will give a trifle but receive much in return. This may be good from India's stand-point, but if so, is it not clearly to the disadvantage of the colonies? Does it not mean that Great Britain will make her colonies pay at least in part for the advantages she will receive from this country? One of the most objectionable features of imperialism which the League attempted to remedy in its mandate system was that the Powers often claimed the exclusive right to exploit the subject country's raw materials and imposed upon it a preferential tariff system in order to provide a sure market for their surplus manufactured goods. The mandates therefore rigidly forbid every kind of discrimination, whether in fact it is calculated to favour the mandatory powers or not

By her Ottawa agreements Great Britain has declared in a flagrant manner that she will not respect such prohibitions.

Indeed, even before the mandate system came into operation it was generally recognised that the fiscal systems of all countries possessing colonies must be free from discrimination in favour of themselves. Great Britain herself, when she transferred control of Papua to Australia in 1887, incorporated in the Papuan charter not only provisions safeguarding the interests of the natives, similar to those contained in the mandates, but an explicit prohibition against differential customs duties. The Convention of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, referred to by the Indian delegation itself, does the same. In article 2 it says: "No differential treatment shall be imposed upon the said merchandise on importation or exportation, the transit remaining free from all duties, taxes or dues, other than those collected for services rendered." Every kind of customs discrimination was thus prohibited in the treatment of goods, whether as regards origin or destination, and commercial equality was prescribed in every respect. No country accepted this rule more readily than Great Britain, and she did so to put herself beyond the reach of suspicion that she was using her colonies in order to extract economic advantages for herself from her political control. The point was well put by Lord Milner in 1892. He said, with reference to the administration of Egypt: "So far from unduly favouring the commercial interests of their own countrymen, the British administrators in Egypt err, if anything, on the other side; so intense is the anxiety, that in the position of trust which they occupy they should be above the least suspicion of partiality. Neither directly nor indirectly has Great Britain drawn from her predominant position any profit at the expense of other nations." This principle of non-discrimination must be rigidly observed so long as the colonies are not free to arrange their own tariffs; but now Great Britain has decided to discard it, even at the risk of incurring the grave suspicion of enriching herself and now her Dominions, at their expense.

In Parliament this aspect of the Ottawa agreement was severely animadverted upon by Sir Herbert Samuel and Lord Arnold; and outside Parliament too it is being fiercely criticised by men like Sir Arthur Salter. The latter says that Ottawa agreements have

taken the first step towards making the Empire "a closed preserve" as regards the outside world, or "an exploited possession" as against the natives. Lord Arnold pointed out that British colonial policy would become, after Ottawa, the same as French policy, which Great Britain prided itself so long upon eschewing. Except where international agreements compelled it to establish equality of trade for all nations as in the Conventional Congo Basin, the French Government pursues two kinds of fiscal policies towards its colonies: either it enforces in the colonies the same protective system as obtains in the home country (the same system is followed by the United States in respect of the Philippines and Hawaii) or it gives tariff freedom to the colonies, subject however to the condition that they grant preferential treatment to French goods by levying a surtax on foreign goods. Under either system the French Government sees to it that trade flows into France. This policy of colonial exploitation, however, is found by actual experience to be less paying than the traditional policy of Britain, viz. of the open door. Britain, however, is now abandoning the open door in favour of making exclusive trade agreements between the mother country and the colonies, which, when carried to its extreme, becomes the French policy. As Lord Arnold pointed out, the evil effects of this exclusive policy are best seen by comparing the state of commerce in the French island of Reunion and Great Britain's colony of Mauritius. "These islands are close together, are similar in extent and fertility and yet the overseas trade of Mauritius is about three times as large as the overseas trade of Reunion." The Ottawa policy would thus be, as Lord Arnold observed, as unfair to the colonies as to foreign countries.

It must also be noted that the mandate system, which Great Britain has now publicly decided not to follow in its own colonies, requires not only that absolute equality of commercial treatment be established, but that the nationals of all member states of the League should enjoy, under the protection of the World Court, the same rights as the nationals of the mandatory power in respect to "entry, residence, protection, acquisition of property and the exercise of their profession and trade." What is insisted upon in the larger League is not yet possible in the smaller League of the British Commonwealth. While Great Britain has no hesitation in imposing upon her colonies a protective schedule in her own interests, she refuses to throw open to citizens and subjects of the Empire the elementary civic rights which the League throws open virtually to the whole world. There is thus greater justification than would appear at first sight in the demand of Mr. B. Das in the Legislative Assembly that until at least equal treatment is ensured to Indians in the British colonies, India should refuse to entertain the proposal of granting preferential tariff treatment to Empire countries.

UNDESIRABILITY OF SECOND CHAMBERS.

IT will be remembered that the desirability or otherwise of second chambers in the future constitution of the provinces was one of the points upon which the Indian Franchise Committee was expected to pronounce a decisive opinion. But being pressed for time and also holding the view that the issue being really a constitutional one was beyond its competence, that Committee refrained from putting forward any proposals on the subject. In view, however, of the urgent necessity of filling in the details of the constitutional picture which is to commence in right earnest next week in London and to be proceeded with thereafter with as much expedition as possible, the matter could obviously not be allowed to rest there. Steps had to be taken without delay to ascertain local opinion in the provinces as to whether it favoured the establishment of bi-cameral legislatures. This was in a way made inevitable by the clear warning given by the Provincial Constitution Sub-committee of the first R. T. C. It made it clear to all concerned that "the decision to incorporate a second chamber in the new constitution of any province other than Bengal, the U. P. and Bihar and Orissa, where opinion in favour of a second chamber has already been expressed should not be taken until opinion in the province definitely favours this course." Thus if its wishes are to be respected, a second chamber cannot be thrust on any province unless it expressly asks for it. The debates on their desirability or otherwise that were raised during the last few days presumably under instructions from the Central Government, in the Legislative Councils of the Punjab, Madras, N. W. F. P. and the U. P. were arranged with a view to eliciting non-official opinion on the subject, as the neutral attitude adopted by the reserved half and the nominated officials in all of them indicates. This was as it should be in view of the increasing popularity of second chambers with provincial governments. Originally only three provinces—Bengal, the U. P. and Bihar and Orissa—were in favour of the establishment of upper houses. But their number went on increasing with the result that by the time the report of the Franchise Committee was written all provinces except two, viz. Punjab and C. P., had become firm advocates of second chambers. The results of the debates referred to above prove how widely non-official opinion differs from the official, at any rate in three provinces. This is not the place to examine the arguments in favour of or against second chambers. These will be found admirably summed up in the report of the Franchise Committee and were in fact more or less repeated in these discussions. The consideration cited by those who stood for second chambers that a second chamber often acted as a check on hasty or ill-considered legislation on the part of the lower house did not put out much ice with unofficial opinion, seeing that this control not infrequently degenerates into a brake on all progressive legislation. In the absence of any definite information as to the nature of the provincial autonomy to be expected as

result of the London confabulations, the establishment of second chambers was feared to be likely to have the effect of taking away with one hand what was given with the other, assuming the grant of autonomy was conceived in a liberal spirit or of reducing it to a farce in case it was not of a substantial nature. There was also the financial aspect of the question which in the present depleted state of the provincial finances was by no means unimportant. With such weighty considerations pointing to the undesirability of second chambers, the manner in which the question was disposed of in three out of the four provinces need cause no surprise.

THE PROBLEM OF CRIMINAL TRIBES.

V.*

CRIMINAL TRIBES SETTLEMENTS.

WITH the object of reclaiming the Criminal Tribes and making their members useful and peace-loving citizens of society, the local Governments of some of the provinces and presidencies have established Settlements for them in which their members who show distinct criminal tendencies are interned. In the Bombay Presidency registered members of criminal tribes, who have committed four or more than four offences or who have been convicted of one offence or more than one, for which they have been sent to jail for a period of four years, are sent to the Settlements after their release from jail. The term for internment in the Settlement is generally six years, after which period the settler is released on probation, provided he shows signs of reform and a clean record during the period of his stay in the Settlement.

The Settlements are barbed wire enclosures where the inmates are given land upon which to build their huts, and where they live with their families. Such Settlements are generally started in big cities and industrial centres, so that it may not be found difficult to secure employment for the inmates. For instance, in the Bombay Presidency the biggest industrial settlement with a population of 2,107 inmates is situated at Sholapur where there are a number of textile mills that give employment to most of the inmates of the Settlement. In other places where there are no factories, railway workshops, or such other places where the inmates could be employed, the same has to be found in other professions such as weaving, tailoring, shoe-making, or in works of manual labour, such as road repairs, quarrying of stones, cutting of fuel wood, breaking of road metal, carpentry, masonry, etc.

In the Punjab there are Agricultural Settlements for Criminal Tribes, where with a unit of ten acres the settled man of the tribe has to maintain his family. During the last year the average yield per holding ranged from Rs. 150 to Rs. 329 and these tenants paid Rs. 95,406 towards the demand for revenue and water rates, and Rs. 32,195 towards their own liabilities. In the Madras Presidency out of seven settlements four are chiefly agricultural with subsidiary industries and about 1500 acres of dry and wet land are under the cultivation of the settlers. In the remaining three settlements employment is provided by work in a Tobacco Factory, quarrying work, contracts of local bodias, manufacture of leather goods and Railway Remodelling works.

All registered persons in the settlement have to

*Previous articles in this series appeared in our issues of October 8 and 20 and November 3 and 10.

attend a daily roll-call held every night at about 9, and they are required to remain within the Settlement limits from 8 P. M. to 6-0 A. M. In the day time they go to attend to their work in the Mills or fields or elsewhere, and with the wages they receive they buy their food and supply the needs of the family. If the record of an inmate of a Settlement is found to be good, he is generally exempted from giving daily roll-call and is required to do so only once a week. A further step is taken when he is exempted from giving roll-call entirely. In this case the only restraint upon the person is that he must ask for a permit or pass when and if he wishes to leave the Settlement. The final step in the emancipation of a Criminal Tribe Settler is the cancellation of his registration. He then no longer stays in the Settlement but is allowed to go wherever he likes. It is, however, a common experience that whenever a settler is thus set free, he does not like to go away to his village, but prefers to continue the work which he was doing while in the Settlement. Many persons whose character thus seems to be reformed and whose records are good are permitted to live outside the Settlement limits but on adjacent land belonging to Government. The temptation to run away from the Settlement and to resume a wandering and criminal life is, however, irresistible to some inmates. There were 163 such cases in the Bombay Presidency, 370 in the U. P., 48 in the Punjab during the last year and 213 in Madras. The number of persons convicted for offences committed while in the settlement during the same period was 162 in Bombay, 141 in the Punjab and 300 in U. P.

The new colony of freed persons is called a Free Colony. A registered Settler thus discharged from the settlement is placed in the Free Colony on probation for a period not exceeding six years, and during this period is under the supervision of the Criminal Tribes Settlement Officer or a person appointed by him. A Free Colony exerts a very beneficial influence on the inmates of the restrictive Settlements inasmuch as every inmate of the Settlement looks forward to his being freed one day and joining the inmates of the Free Colony. The total population of free colonies in the Bombay Presidency during the last four years (1928-1932) has steadily risen from 3,261 to 5,752 (consisting of 1,445 men, 1,602 women and 2,705 children). The inmates of free colonies receive all the benefits and advantages which persons residing in the Settlements receive. Their children are educated free and matters concerning their health, hygiene, sanitation and general welfare are looked after and supervised by the Settlement Staff. They can be members of the Settlement Co-operative Societies and get loans from them. Much difference is noticed between the housing conditions in the Settlements and those in the Free Colonies. The people in the Settlements build small huts to give them shelter at night. They mostly belong to wandering tribes and are accustomed to live in the open air day and night. The hut is to them mainly a place in which their articles are stored. The material with which the huts are built is not worth more than fifteen or twenty Rupees. But in the Free Colony conditions are different. There one finds fairly substantial houses with brick and mud walls and thatched roofs. The reasons for this difference are not far to find. The Settler in the Free Colony has a sense of security which leads him to spend a decent amount of money on his house. This is not the case with the inmate of the Settlement, for he is anxious to get away from the Settlement as quickly as he can. Each settlement is managed by a staff consisting of a Manager, Assistant Manager, Settlement Inspector, and a number of guards.

Some Settlements are handed over for management to Missionary bodies like Christian Missions and the Salvation Army, Dalitoddhar Sabha, Arya Samaj, Social Service League, etc. In the United Provinces out of the six Settlements with a total population of 3,752 persons the five settlements at Fazalpur, Kantha, Rajabad, Sahebganj and Gorakhpur are under the management of the Salvation Army, while the one at Kalianpur is under direct Government management. In the Bombay Presidency out of the 16 Settlements with a total population of 8,842 persons, the Settlement at Sholapur, is under the management of the American Marathi Mission, the one at Hubli is under the management of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the one at Baramati is under the management of the Australian Disciples of Christ Mission and the one at Belgaum is under the management of the Social Service League of Bombay and the rest at Indri, Bijapur, Bagalkot, Kerur, Gadag, Dandeli, Khanapur, Nira project, Ambernath, Gherdi and Dohad are under direct Government management. In the Madras Presidency out of the seven Settlements with a total population of 6,246 the three Settlements at Pallavaram, Sitanagaram and Stuartpuram are managed by the Salvation Army, the Reformatory Settlement at Kavali with its branches is managed by the American Baptist Mission and the rest at Aziznagar, Sidhapuram and Sembiam are under direct Government control. In the Punjab there are 28 Settlements with a total population of 11,731 persons but the Official Report does not give any particulars about their management.

Education is compulsory in all Settlements and Free Colonies for boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 13. For the absence of the child from school the parents are held responsible and punished. In Settlements from where boys and girls go to work in the mills as half-timers, separate classes of two and a half to three hours' duration are conducted for them. In many settlements the children are bathed twice a week and the girls are taught how to dress their hair. Lessons in home nursing, hygiene and first aid are also given. The girls learn sewing and repairing of clothes. Vocational education is given to the elderly boys, who are taught carpentry, weaving, tailoring, etc. in the Settlement Workshops. There were 209 boys in Bombay, 245 in the Punjab and 5 in U. P., receiving vocational education in the Settlement Industrial Schools and Workshops during the last year. The children are cared for not only during school time, but also out of the school hours. In the evening they are sometimes made to play open door games and are frequently taken for half-day or day outings. Night Schools are conducted for adults, who are engaged in work throughout the day. In the Bombay Presidency 2,722 boys and girls attend the day-schools and 455 boys the night schools. In the Punjab 1,861 boys and girls attend the day schools and 612 boys the night schools. Three Reformatory Schools are also conducted in the province and they are attended by 245 boys. In U. P. about 500 boys and girls attend the Settlement Schools and in addition to this two residential Schools, one for boys and one for girls, are conducted and they are attended by 59 boys and 37 girls. In the Madras Presidency 1177 boys and girls attend the Settlement Schools. The result of this educational work done among the Criminal Tribes has been that some of the boys have taken Teachers' Certificates and are now working as Teachers in Settlement Schools, while some have gone to the High Schools for secondary education. They are found in no way inferior in intelligence to students from other castes and communities. In some Settlements Boy Scout and Girl Guide Troops have been started.

At some places dispensaries and child-welfare centres are conducted for the benefit of the settlers, whose health is taken care of and looked after by the Settlement Medical Staff. Efforts are made to impart habits of cleanliness and thus the general level and standard of living is tried to be improved. With a view to brighten up life in the Settlements sports and other amusements are often organised in which the Settlers freely take part. Magic lantern lectures are also occasionally arranged. Disputes relating to home-life or proposed changes in caste customs are decided by the caste Panchayets. The Panchas are heads or leaders of the tribe and command great influence over all its members. The value of these Panchayets cannot be overestimated. Most of the troubles that are referred to the Panchas for their decision arise out of giving and taking of girls in marriage. Amongst several of the tribes there is a custom in which a girl is only given in marriage to another family when the second family gives a girl back in marriage in exchange. This works well at times, but trouble arises when there are not equal numbers of boys and girls in the family. Many of these criminal tribe women lead a life of shame and immorality when their husbands are in jail. The husband on release complains about the immorality of the wife to the Caste Panchayet, who sit in judgment over her. If they find her guilty, she is fined or the husband is allowed to give her a divorce and marry again. The fine levied by the Panchayet goes to the common fund of the caste and sometimes the expenses of caste dinners are met out of it.

Many of the Criminal Tribes families are in debt head above ears. The debts are generally incurred for marriage expenses, funeral rites, etc. The money-lenders charge them interest at a heavy rate, so that for ever they are paying the interest and never reaching the principal. In all the Settlements in the Bombay Presidency there are co-operative societies and they are finding favour with the inmates. In the Bombay Presidency since 1919 the Settlement Co-operative Societies have made much progress. The reserve fund, the total capital and the loans advanced have gone up from Rs. 2,918 to Rs. 21,065, from Rs. 8491 to Rs. 34,308 and from Rs. 16,831 to 42,421 respectively. In the Punjab there are in the Settlements 14 Co-operative Societies, 22 Supply Societies and 6 Better Farming Societies, the assets of which total upto Rs. 1,81,296.

Inmates of Settlements are not allowed to drink and temperance is strictly enforced. An exception is made on the occasion of caste holidays, marriage, death, etc. when the settlers are allowed to visit liquor shops with the special permission of the Manager. If any liquor vendor is found selling liquor to an inmate of a Settlement who does not hold a permit he can be punished by the Settlement Officer. No inmate of a Settlement is allowed to beg. For if it were not so, many would prefer to earn their livelihood by begging.

In addition to members of criminal tribes who are interned in Settlements, there are in the Bombay Presidency 21,902, in the Punjab 18,445, and in the U. P. 37,294 members of Criminal Tribes whose names are entered by the police on registers. Under the Criminal Tribes Act they are required to give a Hazari every day in the morning and in the evening or at other regular intervals and are also under obligation to report to the police their movements. The names of persons, whose record is found good, are removed from the registers. During the last year the names of 472 persons in Bombay, 550 in the U. P. and 769 in the Punjab were thus removed from Police Registers. The restrictions imposed on members of criminal tribes in this way effectively reduce the opportunities of their indulging in crime.

Humanitarian work of the kind described above goes a great way towards the amelioration of the conditions of the Criminal Tribes. Many of their families have been completely reclaimed and are now leading lives as peaceful citizens. In the Bombay Presidency during the last six years as many as 4,644 persons were released from settlements for improvement of character. Out of these only 271 were required to be recalled to Settlements, either for reverting to a life of crime or breaking the conditions on which they were released. It is gratifying to note that such a large number have completely given up their criminal habits and have been reclaimed. This kind of work has a high social value and demands an amount of love, devotion and self-sacrifice on the part of those who undertake it. At the same time it gives promise that if it be continued on the same lines, a time may soon come when all the tribes and gangs will be completely cured of their criminal tendencies and they will be useful and peace-loving members of society.

K. G. SHARANGPANI.

(Concluded.)

Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

(From Our Correspondent.)

LONDON, 4th November.

THE THIRD R. T. C.

AFTER all the Government have had the wisdom to invite to London representatives of Indian women and of Labour. Mr. Joshi's presence here will be greatly welcomed. Begum Shah Nawaz made many friends for herself and for Indian women in general on her previous visits to this country. This time perhaps she will be freer to strike a more individual note than on previous occasions, first because she will be the only woman representative at the Conference, and secondly because she will be no longer preoccupied by the duties that she assumed as Secretary to her father, whose absence from this Conference will be felt. It is to be hoped that the rumours that I have heard that both Mr. Joshi and she will be appointed only to those committees in which their special interests lie are groundless. Both Labour and women ought to be, and indeed are, interested in every question generally affecting Indian welfare, and it would be quite wrong for them to be excluded because of their special interests from other committees to which they could usefully contribute by their special knowledge and experience. It is to be hoped that if any attempt is made officially to limit their opportunities for service, their Indian colleagues will make an immediate and united protest which would be bound to prove effective.

As I hinted in my last letter, the Parliamentary Labour Party has decided to withhold participation in this Conference. The invitation of the Government was extended to the Opposition Parliamentary Parties as it was held that on the British side only a Parliamentary delegation could accept responsibility for such proposals as it was hoped would result from the Conference. This, of course, ruled out all the Labour representatives at the previous Conferences except Lord Snell, and certainly imposed a heavy obligation upon the restricted Labour membership of the House of Commons. But this difficulty was not overwhelming since it is unlikely that Labour would have been able to appoint more than two

delegates, of whom Lord Snell was already available. Either Mr. Morgan Jones or Sir Stafford Cripps might have represented the House of Commons element, and if neither of these could have been made available there was always Mr. David Grenfell who is a doughty fighter and well-informed.

The Parliamentary Labour Party has, however, decided to abstain on other than technical grounds. The primary reason is that in the absence of Congress delegates and the truncated character of the British-Indian delegation they might be held, had they participated, to have shared in the responsibility for the dual policy for which the Government stands so firmly, and with which the Labour Party, both in and out of Parliament, wholly disagrees. I understand that the decision of the Parliamentary Labour Party on the question was a unanimous one, but I have the best reason to believe that it was taken without reference to the Labour Party Executive Committee, or, with the exception of Mr. Wedgwood Benn to any of the previous Labour representatives at the Conference. Indeed, to some of these the decision came as a very great and unwelcome surprise, and I have reason to know that it is for a number of sound reasons strongly dissented from by responsible members of the Party, with considerable and varied experience, who do not happen to be in the present House of Commons. I am, of course, not able to reveal names, but I am aware that a strong protest has been registered by some of these at the Labour Party headquarters. In my opinion the decision is most unfortunate, and it is held by a number of those with whom I have been able to consult to be calculated to defeat the very objects that it is sought to serve by the Parliamentary Party. I can imagine with what intense disappointment the decision will have been read by the small progressive element now travelling to this country to attend the Conference less than a fortnight hence, and who will be deprived of the valuable assistance of British Labour colleagues at a time when their advice and help might have been of the greatest use within the Conference. I have met nobody of significance outside the Labour Party that does not regard the Parliamentary Party's decision as a disastrous error. One might have understood it had the Party come with an entirely unspotted record in the matter of repression. It is to be remembered, however, that under a Labour Government there was both repressive legislation and repressive treatment resulting in large numbers of imprisonment and other unpleasant events, whilst the first Conference was convened notwithstanding the absence of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress. It seems a pity that in the absence of an immaculate record and notwithstanding the constant adjuration to Indian politicians not to boycott and non-co-operate but to participate in every effort to put Indian affairs upon a constitutional basis in order to vest the maximum of power in the Indian people themselves the Parliamentary Labour Party should now have gone away from its own advice and adopted, at least in appearance, Congress methods and even appear to back Congress as distinguished from other elements in Indian political life. This seeming departure from political neutrality is bound to involve for Labour a serious moral setback.

The Times AND SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.

Last Saturday *The Times* published, on the eve of the departure of a number of the British-Indian delegates to England, the substance of the joint statement issued by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar expressing the grounds upon which they were attending the third Round Table Conference and the spirit in which they were participating in it.

One would have thought that that was enough. *The Times'* Special Correspondent in India, however, seems to have thought otherwise, for on Sunday he sent a telegram from Bombay containing the following extraordinary paragraph: "Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru made to me the astonishing statement that the third Conference should never have been convened and that 'the India Office should have assumed the responsibility of drafting the Bill instead of sheltering behind the delegates.' The only comment to be made on this is that if His Majesty's Government had expressed such a view three months ago, thus repudiating the Prime Minister's pledge, there would have been a wave of protest from one end of India to the other, with the Liberals hottest in revolt."

With the recollection of the special part that Sir Tej Bahadur himself had taken in the protests earlier in the year against the Cabinet's attempt to kill the Conference by the substitution of a method to which no self-respecting Indian leader would have been a party, the Correspondent's allegation aroused blank amazement in the minds of responsible people here, who had looked to Sir Tej Bahadur for wise and statesmanlike guidance during the next few weeks. Accordingly a very intimate friend anxious for his reputation for consistency, and realising that serious misunderstanding was likely to be created by what was in all likelihood a misrepresentation of his real views, telegraphed to him on board the "Rawalpindi" asking for confirmation or denial of the Correspondent's statement. In reply Sir Tej Bahadur has sent the following repudiation and explanation: "*Times* Correspondent's version is wholly misleading. He said that Conservatives would not probably agree to anything more than provincial autonomy. I said that if that were so, calling the Conference and taking shelter behind the name of the delegates was useless, and if such were the situation the Government must take undivided responsibility for their measure. Altogether his account of the English attitude was most disappointing."

I understand that steps have been taken to correct the matter and to prevent the further spread of a mischievous and misleading report.

OTTAWA IN PARLIAMENT.

Last night the House of Commons passed the third reading of the Ottawa Agreements Bill, by a thumping majority, and now all that is necessary is for the best or the worst to happen according to the predilections or the Party affiliations of the British citizen. One thing has emerged, namely, the admission that in principle Sir Herbert Samuel was right in insisting that this Parliament and Government cannot bind their successors. On the other hand, there are moral obligations that are as binding as any legal ones, and five years is a long time in which a situation can become crystallised. Mr. MacDonald's health has caused anxiety not only to his friends but to wider political circles where it is felt that far too great a strain and responsibility have been placed upon him. Should he be compelled for this reason to resign, *The Spectator* thinks that, notwithstanding the adherence to the Government of a few Simonite Liberals and Mr. Thomas, there will be no National Government.

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF.

A substantial part of the time of Parliament has been occupied this week by discussions on the unemployed disturbances and to-day begins an important debate initiated by Mr. Lansbury on the general question of unemployment relief during the winter, which is to be treated as a non-Party occasion for all to pool their ideas on the subject. Whilst it is

true that the march of the unemployed to London in some numbers is the result of great economic and industrial distress in certain areas, it does not necessarily mean the demonstration of starving people. Indeed, those who are worse off have perforce to stay at home. The unemployed marchers were definitely organised by bodies having pronounced Communist affiliations and its object was, by violence or the threat of violence, to compel the Government to produce remedial measures forthwith. Even Mr. McGowan, the very left-wing Clydeside representative, expressed disgust and disappointment at the manner in which his orderly efforts at help had been rudely rejected by the marchers' leaders in favour of violent methods of compulsion. Some very ugly stories, well authenticated, have been published in the House of the weapons found on the persons of or in some of the vehicles accompanying the marchers. The latter phenomenon was probably without the knowledge or consent of the majority of the misled men and women who undertook this heavy ordeal, and the acts of violence, too, have been confined to a very small proportion of them whilst they have been participated in by the Communist element and the usual rowdy gangs to be found in and around London. The episodes have been greatly exaggerated in the foreign press and generally abroad.

Our Geneva Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

GENEVA, NOVEMBER 2.

MR. NORMAN DAVIS IN EUROPE.

ONE of the most important political developments of the week has been the conversations that Mr. Norman Davis has been having with the British and French Prime Ministers in London and Paris. Mr. Norman Davis is the leader of the American delegation to the Disarmament Conference and the special emissary of President Hoover. He is considered to be the probable occupant of the State Department at Washington in the event of a Democratic success at the impending presidential election and is as such in the fortunate position of being an authoritative spokesman of the American nation irrespective of party affiliations. The accounts of his conversations with Mr. MacDonald and M. Herriot which have reached the public so far indicate that if the primary object of his mission in Europe is to deal with the disarmament questions, he is also empowered to discuss with representatives of European powers the other problems bearing on the relations between the two continents.

The most urgent of the tasks which the European and American Governments have to undertake in common is the preparations for the World Economic and Monetary Conference. War debts may be formally excluded from the agenda of this Conference for political reasons, but that subject will undoubtedly form the shadowy background of the currency and tariff politics which will come up for discussion. The importance of Mr. Norman Davis's interviews seems to consist in clearly indicating to European statesmen that the United States have no intention of departing from their traditional policy of linking up war debts and disarmament; that any redress Europe desires to obtain from Washington in the matter of war debts can only be acquired by following a radical disarmament policy, such as the one envisaged in the Hoover proposals.

The Lausanne settlement admittedly marked a turning-point in post-war European politics in that it

enabled European Powers to come to an agreement on the reparations questions. But that agreement has from the outset been of a hypothetical nature and can be considered complete only when the cognate problem of war debts has been solved. The concession that the creditor European governments have shown to their debtors will become operative only if they become entitled to a similar concession in their turn from the United States.

Nevertheless, it is clear that for all practical purposes relief accorded to Germany and other Central Powers must be regarded as irrevocable. In fact if not in law, it is generally recognised that the Reparations question is virtually settled. Consequently, the war debts problem must henceforth be regarded as of direct concern to the United States on the one hand, and on the other principally to Great Britain and France. Neither of these two last mentioned Powers, judging from their budgetary situation, is in a position to take up an irreconcilable attitude vis-a-vis their creditor across the seas. France, with her peculiar economy, has in the best of days viewed with considerable reluctance the prospect of so much gold being shifted to the other side of the water and between tangible wealth and prestige, with characteristic realism, she has preferred the former. To-day the economic depression has touched her too and even if she would, she could hardly satisfy the requirements of her creditor without jeopardising her finance. Great Britain adhered to the policy of prestige and correct fulfilment of her financial obligations to the States as long as she could and avoided seeking any favours from America, leaving it to Washington to take a more sensible attitude towards war debts out of the compulsion of circumstances, if not out of generosity. That urgency is now there and it is doubtful whether Great Britain could wait much longer for the first step to come from the other side of the Atlantic. The fluctuations in the value of the sterling are a warning not to be lightly disposed of, and the British Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England have all dwelt on the gravity of the present situation, notwithstanding the praiseworthy efforts of the British Government and people to overcome the crisis. Both in France and England, therefore, there is evident anxiety to make the utmost of the visit of Mr. Norman Davis.

In reiterating the standpoint of the American people that if they should lose the money they had lent to European Governments it could only be on the assurance that such resources as Europe still possessed would not be spent on armaments. Mr. Norman Davis has done signal service to the course of disarmament. As a result of this reiteration, it has become impossible to repudiate the Hoover proposal or drown it in a sea of euphemism. The need to bridge the gulf between the Hoover and Simon proposals has been rendered apparent. The fundamental difference between the two is that while the British plan favours a reduction of naval armaments by tonnage, leaving the category to be reduced to the discretion of each Power, the American plan insists on a reduction by units. Naval disarmament has thus once more proved to be the key to the whole disarmament difficulty. France has just come out with a plan of her own and so has Japan. The details of either are not yet fully published, but it is clear they are both marked out with an eye to national advantage. Great Britain's objection to the Hoover proposal arises from the fact that, while she has agreed to parity with America, she still insists on a two-power standard, so far as the Continent is concerned, on account of the security of her trade routes and her oversea possessions. France, although willing to be Great Britain's inferior, cannot accommodate

herself to British exigencies or yield to Italy's demands in this respect, also because of her maritime empire. Great Britain's colonial empire may therefore be said to be at the root of the disarmament difficulty. If the economic depression has rendered disarmament desirable, it has also revealed to colonial peoples the burden of colonial empires. If the present crisis lasts or recurs, Great Britain, like other Powers, will have to consider the disarmament question from the point of view of economy and in that event it is not at all unlikely that the Dominions, which are impatient of all political restrictions, will be called upon to look after their own defence. The considerable volume of public opinion in England latterly in favour of the British Government divesting itself of the responsibility for the defence of Irak and Palestine is not without significance.

But that process of devolution, in accordance with the exigencies of the times, will involve injury to the parties concerned and risk to the peace of the world, unless the political unification of the country which is called upon to undertake its own defence is complete.

Review.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS OF CORNWALLIS.

CORNWALLIS IN BENGAL. By A. ASPINALL.
(Manchester University Press.) 1931. 23cm.
210p. 15/-

THIS book represents a piece of good earnest work. As the sub-title indicates, the author describes in it the administrative and judicial reforms of Lord Cornwallis in Bengal, together with accounts of the commercial expansion of the East India Company from 1786 to 1793, and of the foundation of Penang. The author has deliberately ignored the Permanent Revenue Settlement, for he feels that it is too vast to be treated in a short monograph. On the other hand, the administrative and judicial reforms, not being of a spectacular nature, have been either neglected, misunderstood or treated insufficiently. The book under review which contains an exhaustive account of the administrative and judicial reforms of Cornwallis is based on numerous records and publications. Of the number of the records and publications, some idea may be formed from the list of authorities printed in the book, but even the long list there given does not exhaust all the authorities which have been placed under contribution. In short, no Company's record or no work lately published seems to have escaped the author's attention.

The author points out how Cornwallis completed what Hastings had begun. Hastings had decided in 1772 to take full responsibility for the government of Bengal, abolishing Clive's Dual Government, and Cornwallis's judicial and police reforms completed this constitutional change. Hastings had favoured an increase in the salaries of the Company's servants and the abolition of private trade, and Cornwallis stopped private trade in the case of the members of the Supreme Council, and increased the emoluments of the Company's servants. Again, in the realm of criminal justice Cornwallis followed in the foot-steps of Hastings. In 1772 Hastings realised the danger of entrusting power to irresponsible Indian officials who were frequently corrupt and in 1781 he replaced Indian magistrates by English judges of the Civil Courts with magisterial powers. Cornwallis also replaced Indians by English officials. Again, Hastings took away revenue ad-

ministration from the judges of the Civil Courts. Cornwallis completed Hastings's work by separating revenue administration from civil jurisdiction in 1793. In the matter of substituting English criminal law for Muhammadan, Cornwallis went a little further than Hastings. Thus the foundations for his reforms were laid by Hastings, but while Hastings was hampered by a divided council and vexatious interference from home, Cornwallis's path was smooth.

The author rightly draws attention to the Anglicisation policy of Cornwallis but shows that not only Cornwallis, but Hastings, Cornwallis's expert advisers, Parliament, and the Court of Directors were responsible for it. In view of the fact that Indian talent is not recognised even by rulers of Indian States for the Dewanship, is it any wonder that Cornwallis displayed a certain suspicion of the capacity and integrity of Indian officials?

Cornwallis had no conception of self-government as the goal of British policy in India. He believed that prosperity would reconcile the Indians to alien rule and make them forget the loss of freedom. To quote his own words,

"When the landholders find themselves in the possession of profitable estates, the merchants and manufacturers in the enjoyment of a lucrative commerce, and all descriptions of people protected in the free exercise of their religion, both the numerous race of the long oppressed Hindus, and their oppressors, the Muhammadans, will equally deprecate the change of a government under which they have acquired and under which alone they can hope to enjoy these inestimable advantages."

The author condemns the Cornwallis system which debased rather than improved the people who came under the Company's dominion:

"Was not the system of excluding them from all important posts in government service calculated to maintain the destruction of the people's self-respect? Was it sufficient to justify their degradation by asserting that Indians were necessarily corrupt and could not be trusted to act honourably? Were petty underpaid excise or customs officers in the 18th century England remarkable for their purity? Was it not true that the Company's servants were notoriously lax until Cornwallis thought it necessary to purchase their honesty by increasing their lawful emoluments? Was it not reasonable to expect that if the same policy were adopted for Indians the same beneficial results would follow?"

At the end of the book in appendices, the author deals with the Company's trade from 1786 to 1793 and the foundation of Penang.

We strongly recommend the book to all who wish to deepen their knowledge of the administrative and judicial reforms of Cornwallis in Bengal.

M. V. SUBRAHMANYAM.

Correspondence.

POSITION OF SIKHS IN THE FUTURE PUNJAB COUNCIL

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to an article on the "Punjab Provincial Council" by Mr. A. V. Thakkar and published in the issue of Oct. 27, 1932 of "The Servant of India". In the first three columns an honest attempt has been made to place the figures

of the three major communities side by side to give a fair view of their comparative strength in the Punjab Council. But it is not without a sting which is apparently visible in the last paragraph inasmuch as it wants to show that the Sikhs have already got too much and the Muslims are the real sufferers under the Communal decision (Award). I do not impute any motives to the writer of the above article, yet his pro-Muslim and anti-Sikh mentality could not be concealed. I am surprised at the way in which Mr. Thakkar has approached the problem. This is a very unfair criticism of the position of the Sikhs in the Punjab. The taxes are the backbone of an administration; mere numbers do not in any way improve the status thereof. One earning member in a family of dependents commands the highest position and gratitude of the other members and all honours of the family fit him the best. It is rightly admitted by Mr. Thakkar that our contribution to the land revenue and irrigation taxes is very much higher than that of any other community. Then, why feel jealous of the Sikhs' clamouring for their rights, which is no favour but their bare legitimate right? Persons who contributed more and more towards the war funds and the supply of recruits were the recipients of higher honours and superior titles; then is it too much to expect that the Sikhs, who during the last half a century played such an important part in shaping the destinies of this country, should be allowed their due share in the distribution of the loaves and fishes in their own home at least?

I wish Mr. Thakkar should have discussed the rights of the Muslims in other provinces and more especially in Madras, where notwithstanding the fact that Muslims constitute a negligible minority, they have been given 29 seats in the Council thereof. 'Fire' should always be called 'fire' under all circumstances; not given the name of 'Basantar Devta' when it burns the houses of others but 'damned fire' when it displays itself in one's own house. Yours, etc

NIHAL SINGH.

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