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Topics of the Week.

Parties Galore!

THE Nationalist Party has finally decided to close its doors upon all who do not belong to the Congress. It will consist exclusively of Congressmen and will fight from within the Congress organisation to win support for its anti-communal award attitude. It therefore calls itself very appropriately the Congress Nationalist Party, as the Das-Nehru Swaraj Party called itself the Congress Swaraj party, though when it was formed it was intended to fight certain policies of the Congress from the inside. The President of the Congress, Sardar Vallabhbhai, objects to the Nationalist Party prefixing "Congress" to its name; but this is a puerile objection. It only shows the President's irritation and concern at the rise of the party. He and the Mahatma himself have been at pains to tell Pandit Malaviya that his Party will have no right to run "Congress candidates," to which Panditji's reply is very simple, that he never intended to run them as Congress candidates; how could he when he wants his candidates to fight Congress candidates? Malaviyaji seems to be in dead earnest—this time.

IT is true that as a special case the Nationalist Party may admit to its membership a few non-Congressmen. This concession offered by the Party to non-Congressmen is just like the concession offered by Mahatmaji to the Nationalists. We will allow, the Mahatma had said, a few Nationalists to be selected as Congress candidates by the Congress Parliamentary Board, if the latter body thinks of selecting them. But Malaviyaji thought it demeaning to himself and

his followers to accept such an offer; so will, we guess, the non-Congressmen for whose benefit his own offer is meant. Like Malaviyaji himself, non-Congressmen too would like to be in any party not on sufferance, but by right, for it is just possible that they too are not entirely devoid of self-respect.

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INDEED, if the Nationalist Party is to be limited to Congressmen, where was the need of starting a fresh organisation, when the Democratic Swaraj Party was already in existence? The two Parties hold identical views even to the smallest detail. Both accept the goal of independence; both swear by civil disobedience; both reject the communal award along with the White Paper; and both even disown legislative interference in socio-religious matters. What further community of views is desired by Malaviyaji? Malaviyaji will naturally fall into the place of leader in the Democratic Swaraj Party too. We think Mr. Kelkar is quite right in holding the formation of the Nationalist Party entirely superfluous.

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UNITY is the supreme need of the moment. The Nationalist Party has shown, however, just like the Congress, that it too is oblivious of this supreme need. The *Leader* justly remarks in its issue of 23rd August,

The Congress having given up civil disobedience, it had before it a great opportunity of uniting all the nationalist forces in the country on one platform. It threw it away want only and unpatriotically and has thereby rendered one more public disservice which will be remembered against it. The primary responsibility for this, as for so many other Congress blunders, must rest upon the head of Mahatma Gandhi. When Malaviyaji after characteristic hesitation and wavering separated himself from the Mahatma and announced his Nationalist Conference and deliberately invited non-Congressmen to it, it was hoped that the mischief was going to be undone and that by far the greatest need for the country was about to be fulfilled at last under the honoured leadership of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. It must be sadly confessed that this hope has been cruelly blasted.

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A Little too Previous.

MIRABEN, as our London correspondent reported last week, is engaged just now in promoting a message of good-will to the Mahatma, to be signed by forward-looking politicians in England. The message welcomes the Constituent Assembly plan of the Congress and says that "a final, just and peaceful settlement between Great Britain and India's 350 millions ... cannot be reached except by honourable negotiation between elected representatives of our two countries."

* * *

MISS SLADE, in making this statement, assumes that the Constituent Assembly, which is to carry on negotiations with the British people on behalf of India, will be composed of the elected representatives of British India and the Indian States; that the Congress stands for self-determination of Indian India as well as British India; and that it will accept an all-India federation only if the people of the two Indias agree to it. We are afraid that Miss Slade is a little too previous in informing the British public that the Constituent Assembly will include the popularly elected representatives of the Indian States as well as of British India.

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FOR, recently, Mr. Patvardhan addressed a few pertinent questions in these columns to the Congress leaders on the point, and although the questions were brought, in a responsible way, to the attention of these leaders, the latter have not yet answered them. A reply should have been forthcoming immediately if there were no doubt in the leaders' minds. Then they would at once have said, "Of course; it could not be otherwise. If we want England to treat with the people and not with the Government in British India, we cannot stultify ourselves by refusing to treat with the people in Indian States. If we ask England not to impose upon British India a constitution which is not acceptable to its people, we cannot be consenting parties to the imposition upon the Indian States' people of a constitution which is not acceptable to them. Self-determination for British India and self-determination for Indian India. That goes without saying; there cannot be any question about it."

* * *

THE Congress leaders who are issuing at least a dozen statements every day would have lost no time in issuing such a statement if they were quite clear in their minds that what Mahatma Gandhi intended to do by proposing the Constituent Assembly project was to give to the people in the Indian States the same right to choose their own constitution as he claims for the people in British India. But the delay that has occurred in giving the reply shows that the Congress leaders are a little puzzled about it. Perhaps they are wondering what the Delphic Oracle will say to it, considering that his attitude at the Round Table Conference was a little dubious on the question of the States.

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HAS Miss Slade any authority for saying that the Indian people as a whole will be represented in the Constituent Assembly and that the Congress will fight to get the constitution framed conjointly by the people in the two halves of India accepted by the rulers of Indian States as it will fight to get it accepted by the British Government? We daresay she has none, and if so, she is clearly misleading the innocent British public. It is time she put herself right by issuing an explanatory statement to this effect: "The Congress certainly stands for the self-determination of the Indian people. That is decided; all that remains undecided for the moment is whether this right is to be limited to one section of the Indian people or whether it is to be extended to both sections. Just wait a little. The Congress is making up its mind about it."

* * *

The Temple Entry Bill.

THE Temple Entry Bill sponsored by Mr. Ranga Iyer has now been definitely withdrawn from the

consideration of the Assembly before which it was pending for the past year. The public hostility to the measure as brought out in the expressions of public opinion was too pronounced to agree the Government, to enable them, lend their support to it, and nothing which fails to receive the blessings of the Government has a chance of passing in the present Assembly. The withdrawal of the bill was thus a more tactical move than its defeat which would have been a certainty in view of the Government's opposition to it. Not that their mind was made up against the Bill from the very start. In fact they had no mind about it when the Bill was first brought forward and would have supported it if they had found that it had public opinion behind it. But the hostility encountered by it from all quarters, even including a section of depressed class opinion itself, left them no alternative but to come down strongly against the Bill.

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PROGRESSIVE opinion was no doubt in favour of the Bill; but the Government thought it represented a small minority. Even otherwise it could not be said to have a *locus standi* in a matter whose decision must, it was felt, be moulded according to the dictates of orthodox opinion—a viewpoint which can hardly be accepted as fair or correct. The opponents of the Bill also included most of the local Governments upon whom would fall the brunt of the burden of enforcing its provisions in case it was carried. They had serious doubts as to its practicability and were apprehensive of frequent breaches of peace as a result of its enforcement.

* * *

WE do not know if the fate of the Bill will be in the nature of a rude shock to Mahatma Gandhi. At one time he was in such dead earnest about the right of temple entry for the untouchables being statutorily recognised that unless our memory fails us, he went the length of threatening a fast unless the necessary legislation was passed by a particular date. The grim prospect led some legislators to introduce hurriedly drafted pieces of legislation in their respective legislatures and to ask for the grant of special facilities for their being placed on the statute book with equal haste. Unless the Mahatma's enthusiasm for securing to the depressed classes the legal right of worshipping in Hindu temples has in the meanwhile cooled down, his future course of action designed to that end will be keenly watched all over India.

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Sarda Act.

SO far as the Sarda Act is concerned, Government find themselves between two fires. While orthodox opinion wants them to have the legislation repealed, enlightened opinion is indefatigable in demanding that it should be more strictly enforced so that it may not, as now, become a dead letter. Curiously enough, the latter view found expression last week in the upper and less popular House of the central legislature, while the lower and more popular house very obligingly permitted Raja Bahadur Krishnamachari's bill seeking to repeal the Sarda Act to be kept alive, in view of the approaching dissolution of the Assembly. We hope the new Assembly will know its business better and not allow this reactionary measure to pass.

* * *

BUT it is difficult to see why so much keenness should be displayed by anybody upon the rescission

of the Act when its existence is not felt as a hardship by anybody, for, as pointed out by a speaker in the Council of State, it is observed more in the breach than in the observance. This is facilitated by the existence, alongside British Indian territory, of States in most of which early marriage is not banned. Thus those who want to commit a breach of the Sarda Act by the celebration of marriages of parties below the prescribed minimum age find themselves able to do so with impunity if only they take the precaution of having the ceremony performed within the limits of the adjoining State territory. As long as the States do not cooperate with the Indian Government in preventing such marriages, the purpose of the Sarda Act can thus be easily defeated. Cannot paramountcy be called into play for ensuring this co-operation?

* * *

OFFENDERS against the Act escape scot-free by reason of its own provision requiring a deposit before a prosecution of the offenders can be launched. This makes it almost impossible for private persons to take any active interest in bringing the culprits to book. The utmost that can be expected of private individuals is the supply of information of such contraventions to the police or whoever else may be the competent authority. It should then be their business to follow up this information with a prosecution so as to bring the offence home. If such prosecutions are made the responsibility of individuals, it is easy enough to see that all hope of a stricter operation of the Sarda Act has to be given up for a good long time. This would be really deplorable and must be avoided at all costs. While one can understand the desirability of Government not moving too much in advance of public opinion, it is up to them to see that the laws enacted by them are not brought into disrepute by their breaches escaping punishment. Wanton disobedience of law, whether by a Congressman or anybody else, must be equally reprehensible to any Government which has any respect for its own decrees.

* * *

Mettur.

THE Mettur Dam whose inaugural ceremony was performed last week by the Governor of Madras is officially described as the biggest block of masonry in the world, bigger even than the Assuan Dam in Egypt, which till now held the pride of place in the list of irrigation works. The dam has taken a hundred years to materialise since its first inception in 1834, and nine since its sanction in 1925 by the Secretary of State. But the actual work of construction was completed in close upon six years, the first concrete in the foundations having been laid in August 1928. Its length is 5,300 feet and height 215 feet above the deepest foundations and 176 above the river bed. The maximum width at foundations is stated to be 171 feet, while its width on top 20½%. The project provides for a 60 square mile lake containing 93,500 million cubic feet of water. Though the sanctioned cost of the dam was Rs. 737 lakhs, its actual cost is expected to be not much in excess of Rs. 680 lakhs, on which a return of 6 per cent. is hoped for. The additional area which the dam will irrigate has been put down at 3 lakhs of acres. It is hoped that the completion of the project will mean added prosperity to the Madras presidency.

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THE wisdom of the construction of such large irrigation works seems however to be doubted in some quarters; and the question is asked, as seems to have

been done in the present case, whether it is wise to encourage over-production which would be sure to result from the multiplication of such works. We do not know if those who indulge in such criticism mean to imply that the stage of over-production has been already reached. If not, the criticism has no more than academic interest and need not be seriously considered. But if otherwise, the figures of production given in the speech of the Revenue Member made on the occasion of the ceremony will not be without their lesson to such critics. He has proved that production in the southern presidency has failed to keep pace with the increase in population. This, as pointed out by him, has increased by 51 per cent. during the last half a century, while the area cultivated with irrigation by only about 43 per cent and that without it by about 29 per cent. It has also been ascertained by careful official inquiries that Madras is still far from being self-sufficient in the matter of the production of its staple food, viz. rice. In these circumstances it seems unnecessary for anybody to worry himself whether the additional area that would be brought under cultivation by the Mettur Dam will enhance production beyond requirements.

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Indians in Zanzibar.

THE Indian situation in Zanzibar is described as "seriously critical" by Mr. Andrews who returned to India on Saturday last after studying it personally on the spot. As expected, the recent anti-Indian legislation received strong condemnation at his hands. This, in his opinion, will drive many Indians out of the country and deals a heavy blow to their vested rights. It does not seem to be generally realised that the recent decrees which have aroused a storm of Indian indignation are of an emergency nature to be followed in due course by legislation of a more permanent nature embodying the better considered proposals of the Zanzibar Government for the relief of agricultural indebtedness.

* * *

ATTENTION may in this connection be drawn to the appointment of a Commission to which the problem of agricultural indebtedness in the island has been remitted for consideration. The Commission has for its president the Chief Justice of Zanzibar and its four other members include a representative of the Indian community in the person of Mr. Tayabali Rajabali, a practising barrister. Though in view of the Indian interests at stake fairness required more adequate representation to the Indian community on the Commission, Mr. Tayabali's selection seems to have been favourably received by it. The Commission is charged with the duty of suggesting measures for the relief of agriculturists from debt; but it has also been specially enjoined to pay "due regard to the interests of the creditors" as well. This special direction to the Commission is generally believed to ensure Indian interests receiving proper consideration at its hands. The proceedings of the Commission will be private or public at the discretion of the Chairman and its report is to be submitted before the end of the year. It is to be hoped that the Indian community in Zanzibar will by leading evidence before the Commission and by other means open to it try its best to influence the Commission into framing its recommendations in a manner which will not wantonly sacrifice Indian interests.

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TAKING STOCK OF OTTAWA.

II.

FIGURES for the total trade between India and the United Kingdom given in the official report on the working of the Ottawa Agreement during the year 1933-34 are incomplete. Owing to the undistinguished destination of a large quantity of goods sent in the first instance to the United Kingdom, and the absence of fuller information which has not been available for the present report, the share of the United Kingdom in India's foreign trade as stated therein has been exaggerated. Such figures cannot fairly be used to establish any conclusions. Still the report goes on to say: "The situation may be summarised in the statement that although after the Ottawa Trade Agreement the United Kingdom has improved her position in the Indian market, there is still a good deal of leeway for her to make up. On the other hand, she proved to be an increasingly important market for Indian goods." The authors of the official report are careful to say that these results have followed *after* the Trade Agreement; they have said nowhere that these are *due* to it. All the same the conclusion at which a large majority of lay readers, such as most members of the legislature, will arrive after the perusal of this statement is bound to be that as a result of the Ottawa Agreement India has benefitted more in the British market than England has in our own. In view of the inaccuracies and incompleteness of the figures of our exports to the United Kingdom and in view of the impossibility of isolating the effect of a single factor like tariff preference from that of other more potent influences, such as exchange variations and the world economic fluctuations, a favourable conclusion with regard to Ottawa would be unsound.

But even taking the figures as they are, it is necessary to analyse them much more carefully than has been attempted in the Report. It is noted that the actual value of British imports into India has fallen during 1933-34 to Rs. 47,59 lakhs, the figures for the two previous years being Rs. 48,80 lakhs in 1932-33, and Rs. 44,81 lakhs in 1931-32. On the other hand exports from India to the United Kingdom in 1933-34 were, according to the official report which has taken no account of actual final destination, Rs. 46,58 lakhs, as against Rs. 36,96 lakhs in 1932-33 and Rs. 42,88 lakhs in 1931-32. The swollen figure of Indian exports to the United Kingdom in 1933-34 is, of course, unreliable for the reason given. But even with this figure we will be guilty of unwarranted optimism if we do not take account of the relative position of the United Kingdom and India in each other's trade.

In 1933-34 British imports into India were 41.2 per cent. of the total import trade of our country. This was an improvement of 4.4 per cent. over the previous year. In the case of India's exports to the United Kingdom we find that in 1933-34 the United Kingdom took off 31.8 per cent. of our total exports. This was an improvement of 3.9 per cent. over the previous year. Thus it is clear that England's posi-

tion in our import trade has improved to an appreciably greater extent than her position in our exports. The percentage of increase in our purchases from the United Kingdom is greater than the increase in the United Kingdom's purchases from us. This is a clear indication of the direction in which the Agreement is working. Amongst the important parts of the Empire we believe India to be the only one which has in effect offered to take more off the hands of British producers than what it has prospects to sell to British consumers. The Dominions, since the Agreement, have sold a greater proportion of their produce to England but have not to that extent increased their purchases of British products. India, on the other hand, is purchasing, as a result of the Agreement, to a greater extent in British markets than what we are selling there. In so far as these figures, incomplete and unreliable as they are, can prove anything, they prove that England has benefitted more from the Agreement than India.

WHEAT.

We are not, however, inclined to lay much store by these generalised figures. We believe in watching the tendencies as they operate in individual items which are as free from disturbing influences as possible. The first item that is referred to in the Report is wheat. Significantly enough during the two years, 1932-33 and 1933-34, that the preference of 2 shillings per quarter granted by the Import Duties Act has been in operation, the export of wheat from India to the United Kingdom has been almost nil as against an export of about 17,000 tons in the previous year. The Report goes on to say that this preference was never expected to be immediately useful, that the local demand for wheat in India is great, that the internal prices are above the external parity, and that with an improved wheat acreage as a result of extensive irrigation schemes we might hope for better results. One vital factor in the situation has not, however, received from the authors of the Report the attention that it deserves.

The Report indeed mentions that the supply position in 1933 precluded any possibility of a considerable demand from the importing countries and that the importing countries, including the United Kingdom, had reaped the best crops attained in the post-war period. This, however is not the whole truth nor, so far as England is concerned, the real truth. The fact is that, under an intensely autarchic policy of national self-sufficiency, England itself is encouraging the growth of its agriculture. Much of the so-called complementary character of Empire trade depends upon England concentrating upon non-agricultural industries and the rest taking to the production of agricultural products for which they are better fitted by nature. Political individualism of nations even within the British Empire has, however, been too strong to enable these healthy tendencies of economic co-operation to operate naturally. Till recently it could be said that the

colonies, or rather the Dominions, were the principal factor in disturbing the course of the normal division of labour within the Empire. Latterly, however, England herself has taken to this course of developing England's resources in all articles of staple consumption, irrespective of the costs involved. The following figures for the wheat production of England and Wales will illuminate the position.

PRODUCTION OF WHEAT IN ENGLAND
AND WALES.

Year.	Acreage (Thousand Acres)	Produce (Thousand Quarts)
1929	1,330	5,650
1930	1,346	4,913
1931	1,197	4,418
1932	1,288	5,006
1933	1,660	7,013

The rise of a protectionist feeling in the Dominions has always been recognised as a circumstance militating against the prospects of any far-reaching scheme of Imperial economic consolidation. But the rise of protectionism in England itself, and particularly in agricultural and allied products, is bound to be the deathblow to all such schemes. The danger is that the comparatively unorganised and uninstructed forces of Indian nationalism will be inadequate to prevent unsuitable and unprofitable schemes being planted upon our not too progressive economy. The case of wheat is very instructive in this respect, as we believe that even with all the expansion of irrigation in India the facts of intensely self-sufficing economies in other parts of the world, including U. K., will always act as an insuperable obstacle in the way of our developing a brisk export trade in wheat.

LINSEED.

The exports of linseed to the United Kingdom during the last few years illustrate another important aspect of the preferential trade between India and that country. The Ottawa delegation had hoped for much in this respect and the following figures for linseed exports during the last four years might at first sight be construed as a vindication of the delegation's faith.

LINSEED EXPORTS OF INDIA.
(Thousand Tons.)

Year.	Total Exports.	U. K.	Empire countries.	Foreign countries.
1930-31	256.8	57.6	68.7	188.1
1931-32	120.3	14.1	24.4	95.9
1932-33	72.2	14.3	23.7	48.5
1933-34	378.9	175.2	187.2	191.7

In assessing the significance of figures given above several facts must be properly considered. In the first place it must be noted that linseed is a crop which has always shown great variation in

respect of its total production in and exports from India. In particular it might be noted that before the Great War the total production of linseed was as a rule greater than in the later years. In 1911 the total production of linseed in India was 645 thousand tons out of which as much as 522 thousands were exported. The area under one kind of oilseed is indeed no index of the condition of oilseed producers. But it is clear that the recent increase in the export of linseed to the United Kingdom is by no means a very unexpected or exceptionally significant feature of our economy. The fact that the figures for 1933-34 and those for 1932-33 given above vary so widely gives room for a belief that this is one of the cases in which final destination of exports is uncertain. That the increased exports to the United Kingdom and to other countries have had no appreciable significance on our producers as a whole will be clear from the fact that the acreage under linseed in 1932-33 and 1933-34 was less than that in 1931-32. The total acreage under oilseeds has increased, but that under linseed has fallen. Clearly there is a good deal of diversion of demand rather than an increase in demand in this case. The total acreage under oilseeds has varied during the last three years as follows.

AREA UNDER OIL SEEDS.
(Million Acres.)

Crop.	1930-31	1931-32	1932-33	1933-34
Linseed	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.26
Rape & Mustard	6.6	6.2	6.1	—
Sesamum	5.6	5.6	6.0	—
Caster	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6
Groundnut	6.6	5.5	7.4	8.1

It will be clear from these facts that no special significance can be attached to the increased exports of linseed to the United Kingdom recorded by the as yet uncorrected figures for 1933-34. The extensive failure of the American and Argentine linseed crops further reduces the significance of increased Indian exports to U. K.

(To be continued.)

WANTED A POLICY.

THE Bombay Government has shown by what it did in regard to the Trade Disputes Bill that it is capable of fussing about quite a great deal, only if it knew what it should fuss about and how.

It saw a serious danger in the growth of industrial strikes in Bombay and made up its mind that it must do something. The only trouble was that it did not know just what it should do.

Make the strike illegal? It must have played with the idea for some time, but probably recoiled at the thought that it would involve its giving up its conception of the traditional duty of a Government merely to keep the ring between the workpeople and the employers.

In its search for a remedy in consonance with this conception, it evidently hit upon the plan of an attempt at conciliation as necessitating the least amount of intervention. It had no time to lose; it had to get ready a draft bill for the Legislative Council session which was drawing near.

It ordered a bill to be prepared making it obligatory to start conciliation proceedings whenever a dispute had occurred or was apprehended. Accordingly a bill was prepared in this sense.

But Government found what any man of commonsense could have anticipated, that to institute an inquiry or conciliation for every dispute, irrespective of its seriousness or dimensions would not be quite the thing to do.

At once a change was made altering the whole nature of the bill. From a mandatory it became a permissive measure.

But there is already central legislation of this character. What then was the purpose of this measure?

Government members had again a brain-wave.

Our measure, they said, is permissive for us, but it must be compulsory for the workpeople.

We may or may not initiate conciliation proceedings, but when we choose to initiate them, the workpeople must not sabotage them.

But why not? If the final outcome of the proceedings may either be accepted or rejected, what harm if the proceedings themselves be boycotted? And if boycott must not be allowed, why did not the central legislation itself make it illegal?

The Bombay Government's only answer to it is: The situation is serious and we must do something. We must take drastic measures.

The drastic measure it thought of was making the picketing of conciliation proceedings a penal offence,

to be punished with two years' imprisonment and Rs. 5,000 fine.

In England the punishment provided for intimidation &c. with a view to organising a general strike is no more than three months or a fine of £20.

But our Government wanted to be drastic and nip in the bud the growing spirit of industrial unrest. It therefore wanted Indian workpeople to do several times more months in gaol than British workmen.

The labour representative in the Bombay Council met the situation adroitly. He gave the Government as long a rope as it had measured out for itself. Very well, he said, let it be three years. I will not have it reduced. I should like to see how you face it out.

Then Government apparently had a twinge of conscience. It had counted upon making a sort of big gesture at the end of the debate by reducing the scale of punishment. It had not, it must be inferred from the sequel, made an attempt to suit the punishment to the offence. It had left itself quite a large latitude for bargaining. But Mr. Bakhale balked them of this opportunity. He brought Government into a position where there could be no bargaining and Government for very shame was forced itself to move an amendment reducing the punishment.

From three years to six months! Punishment with Government does not seem to be a moral issue at all. It is just a matter of give and take. The civilised world, from fear of whose censure Government reduced the term, will censure it all the more when it knows what motives actuated Government to do so.

Lord Brabourne's Government wants to fuss about; do let some one tell it what to fuss about and how.

FREEZING AUTOCRACY.

A CONTRIBUTOR to the *Hindu* recently exhibited deep concern at the possibility of the units of the would-be all-India federation being allowed, in the India Act and the Instruments of Accession as they will be finally adopted, to secede at will. He is apparently a great constitutional lawyer and draws upon a large fund of constitutional lore in emphasising the mischiefs certain to result from a sort of companionate marriage between British India and the Indian States. The British Indian politicians, in their anxiety to bring in the States anyhow, have made so many unheard-of compromises heretofore that he fears that if only the States ask for the right being conferred upon them to leave the federation when they feel like it, it will be granted to them; and the likelihood is that the States will ask for it. "The representatives of Indian States," he says, "who have spoken about federation are so little convinced of the applicability of the truths deposited by federal experience to Indian federation that they may contemplate the possibility of Indian States getting out of the federation if federation does not come up to their expectations." The federal principles

have been so callously thrown to the winds so far in constitutional discussions by the British Indian politicians with a view to conciliating the States that it is not in the least impossible, the writer thinks, that they will carry their spirit of accommodation a little farther and even agree to secession on the part of the States. Already the proposed federation resembles a confederation in certain important respects; a concession on this point will make it a complete confederation in every respect—a change which appears to the writer as not at all unlikely.

He then refers to the recent demand made by Western Australia for secession from the Australian Commonwealth and shows how it is regarded with the gravest apprehension by all who at all understand the implications of a federal union. A federal union is and must always be, he emphasises, with a wealth of quotations from the texts of constitutional writers, permanent and indissoluble. All that he says on this point is a commonplace of constitutional law, which cannot be challenged. But there is one thing which he ignores in applying this maxim of constitutional morality to the proposed

Indian federation. As he himself says, the Australian federation was "demanded and framed by the Australian people"; that "although the Commonwealth of Australia Bill of 1900, which established the federal government of the Australian Commonwealth, was introduced in and passed by the British Parliament, it was made clear throughout the debate that the Imperial Parliament was only according legal sanction to the decisions of the people and statesmen of Australia, as the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain pointed out in the speech he made in introducing the Bill to the Government of the day and asked Parliament to accept 'without demur every point in the Bill, every word, every line, every clause which deals exclusively with the interests of Australia.'" Furthermore, the writer points out—and this is most important—that "there is provision in the constitution of the Australian Commonwealth for changes in the constitution." If the constitution made is initially such as meets with the hearty consent of the people in every State joining the federation, and if precaution is taken in advance to provide a machinery within the framework of the organic law itself to meet amicably any discontent that may subsequently arise in regard to any particular provision of the constitution, then surely there is every moral ground for ruling out secession for all time. All other federations too that have come into being so far have been based on the consent of the people and are capable of being modified in accordance with a change in the popular wishes; and it is but right therefore that these federations are of an interminable character.

But the federation that is contemplated in India does not fulfil these conditions: it is neither the result of a mutual agreement between the peoples in the various territories which are to form the component parts of the federation; nor is it susceptible of future modifications that may be desired by them. This being the case, would it be at all right to make such a federation indissoluble like the rest? Impermanence may be the only merit of a federation that is forced, as permanence is the crowning merit of a federation that is voluntary. It can therefore be argued that, in India, instead of the States being prevented from going out of the federation when they find it inconvenient to remain inside, the British Indian provinces too may well be given the right to do so. The *Hindu* correspondent sees insuperable objection to such a "federation-at-will." He says, the States "may hesitate and refuse to join the federation. But once they join the federation, they must stick to it, whatever happens." This of course is the orthodox theory about federation, but he is entirely wrong in calling the Indian federation a "federation-at-will." It is in fact a "federation-against-will" and being so, demands, as a corrective, "secession-at-will." Our politicians have been wrong in agreeing to violent departures from the normal type of federation in devising our federation; but they will be very wise, one may humbly suggest, in refusing to follow the normal type in this one particular and deliberately providing to each party, without reference to the consent of the other, an escape from a union which is admittedly forced.

It is not sufficiently recognised in India—or rather our politicians of set purpose ignore the point—that the federal constitution, as the proposals stand at present, when once adopted, will not be open to future amendment except with the individual consent of the innumerable States that will each form a constituent member of the federation. The significance of this must be properly appreciated. It is not as if no provision has been made in the proposals for a reasonably easy process of modifying the constitution in future; but it is provided that no modification will come into effect in any State unless that State agrees to it. The element of compulsion, implicit in all popular bodies where majority rule prevails, is totally excluded. However large the majority behind a decision concerning constitutional amendment in the federal legislature, it will have no binding force upon a State which does not of its own accord conform to it. The result of sealing the constitution in this way against amendment in future can be easily foreseen. When nomination of the States' representatives by the Princes is once agreed to, as has been agreed to even by Gandhiji, election can never be enforced in any State at any time to come. With a permanent constitution the defects too become permanent, and the initial injustices petrify. If autocracy is permitted at the start it freezes, and there is no liquefying it at any future time. In fact, our politicians ought not only to have protested against what amounts to a power of vetoing all future alterations of the constitution that is conceded to all the Princes, big and small, but they ought to have seen to it that a distinct provision exists in the constitution for its orderly revision as occasion may require.

Look at the Versailles Treaty of Peace, for instance. It was, of course, a dictated Treaty; in no former treaty did the victors impose, as Walter Lippmann has said, such humiliation, injustice, and exorbitant exactions upon the prostrate foe. But even these victors, terribly harsh as they were, provided in the treaty a machinery for its future revision. It is not pretended here that the machinery is at all satisfactory; the early idealism of the peace negotiators could not translate itself into reality. Still the fact remains that future alteration of the treaty is not only not blocked but definitely provided for. The treaty contains guarantees for the maintenance of territorial boundaries forever and requires the use of sanctions against aggressors, but it was clearly seen by those diplomats who took part in the Peace Conference that these clauses could not be inserted in the treaty unless at the same time provision was made for necessary adjustment and revision of its territorial sections. Lord Robert Cecil (as he then was) and President Wilson were particularly firm about this. They would not be instrumental in perpetuating, as would be the case if no clause about revision of the treaty was inserted, the injustices involved in the territorial distribution contemplated by the treaty. Wilson's instructions on this point were: that the treaty must provide for "political independence and territorial integrity plus later

alteration of terms and alteration of boundaries if it could be shown that injustice had been done or that conditions had changed." Lord Robert Cecil was not only for providing means for revision of boundaries but also for treating in a drastic manner parties unwilling to recognise the validity of such revision (*vide* Foreign Policy Association's Information Service, Vol. V, No. 8), for there were many at the time who held the treaty to be sacrosanct. Finally, Article 19 was inserted in the Covenant of the League of Nations, which runs as follows :

"The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world."

This indeed is a watered-down version of the original proposals, but even so it is valuable. The Allied Powers prided themselves upon it: they claimed that the treaty was a just settlement but, more than this, they could point to the fact, as they did in their reply to the German Delegation, that the treaty "creates the machinery for the peaceful adjustment of all international problems by discussion

and consent, whereby the settlement of 1919 itself can be modified from time to time to suit new facts and conditions as they arise." There is a difference of opinion as to whether the Assembly's decision is to be taken by a unanimous or a majority vote; but it is enough to point out that there are distinguished authorities who hold that a bare majority is enough, and the principal virtue that they see in Article 19 of the Covenant is that "interested parties would be unable to block action in the Assembly." But whatever the correct interpretation be, it has to be remembered that these are the terms that were imposed by the victors on the vanquished. Can there be any justification whatever for our politicians not only agreeing to unsatisfactory provisions to start with, but agreeing to retain them without a possibility of a change in future? This, undoubtedly, is the gravest defect in the constitution.

But if the constitution is to be unamendable, because the Princes want it so, the only course open to us British Indians is to take the Princes at their word and agree to the right which they ask for, viz. secession at will, and claim it for ourselves.

OBSERVER.

SETTLEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES.

THE Bill incorporating the proposals of the Bombay Government for the settlement of industrial disputes, particularly in the textile industry, in the city and suburbs of Bombay was passed this week by the Legislative Council in spite of the opposition offered by Mr. R. R. Bakhale on behalf of labour. The measure consists of two distinct parts, one providing machinery for inquiry and conciliation through a permanent Conciliator to be appointed by Government and the second providing for the creation of the post of a Labour Officer to watch the interests of labour by informally negotiating with the employers and generally to help in the settlement of disputes. The proceedings in the Council have made it abundantly clear that the Bombay Government had not given serious consideration to the problem and did not know their own mind. Being sure of the subservience of the Council they also omitted to go through the stage of a Select Committee. As there is very little likelihood of any serious labour unrest breaking out immediately, there was no justification for the haste and the lack of mature consideration and the omission to consult the opinion of the public and of the interests affected.

The Bill as published in the *Gazette* had imposed an obligation upon the Conciliator to start conciliation proceedings when he was convinced on the application of one of the parties to the dispute or upon a report of the Labour Officer that a dispute existed or was apprehended. It is true that the clause as it stood was too wide and would have covered very small and even flimsy complaints. This arose from the fact that the proposal was not given by Government the detailed consideration that it required. But this defect could have been easily removed by restricting the obligation to well-defined disputes involving

a stated number of workers. If the taking of conciliation proceedings had been made obligatory upon the conciliator, the obligation imposed upon the two parties to the dispute to take part in the proceedings by electing delegates to represent the two sides and even not to obstruct the proceedings in any manner might have been justified. But at the first reading stage the Government changed their intention and proposed an amendment placing it within the discretion of the Conciliator, to take the conciliation proceedings or not. This was a fundamental change and knocked the bottom out of the case for legislation different from the Trade Disputes Act of the Government of India which already provides for discretionary conciliation proceedings. The case for imposing an obligation to take conciliation proceedings was very strong as even the Royal Commission on Indian Labour had remarked that the Provincial Governments including the Bombay Government had shown great reluctance to use the Trade Disputes Act when the action was left to their discretion. As the obligation to take conciliation proceedings has been given up, the difference between the Trade Disputes Act of the Government of India and the new Bombay legislation is that in former the discretion to take proceedings is left to the Provincial Government and in the latter to the Conciliator. If the Conciliator turns out to be an independent and impartial person this change, small though it is, may prove to be an improvement in this one respect as the Bombay Government who have assumed the role of a handmaid to the Millowners' Association have shown themselves incapable of acting impartially in an industrial dispute.

Unfortunately even this small improvement is neutralised from the point of view of labour. If the

taking of the conciliation proceedings is left to the discretion of the Conciliator, taking part in the proceedings should have also been left to the discretion of the two parties to the dispute. But the Bombay legislation provides that if the workers do not appoint delegates to take part in the conciliation proceedings, the Labour Officer shall act as their representative and has made it a penal offence to preach a boycott of the proceedings before a conciliator. Both these provisions are unjustified. Moreover, in compelling parties to the dispute to take part in proceedings, the Bombay Government seem to have forgotten that they are not providing for a compulsory arbitration where the award of the Arbitrator is binding on both parties, but that their legislation is providing only for conciliation, which means merely that an effort will be made to bring about voluntary agreement, and such a voluntary agreement surely cannot be brought about by compelling parties to take part in Conciliation proceedings. You can take a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink it. If the proceedings are to end only in an inquiry, the provision made to compel the attendance of witnesses is sufficient. Similarly the provision made to invest the Labour Officer with the capacity of the delegate of the workers against their wishes is futile as they will certainly refuse to give effect to any agreement which he may make with the employers, as such agreement is voluntary and not an award by an Arbitrator to be imposed upon disputing parties.

Another aspect lost sight of by the Bombay Government in making provision to disqualify a delegate appointed by the workers and to give the Labour Officer the power to act as a labour delegate where workers decline to appoint delegates, is that where conciliation proceedings fail to bring about an agreement the report of the inquiry should give some guidance to public opinion as to the merits of the dispute and the part played by both parties so that pressure of public opinion may be exercised to bring round the recalcitrant party to a reasonable attitude. But if the Labour Officer is to put labour's case before the Conciliator against its wishes, the public will not be satisfied with his presentation of the case as proper guidance. The sub-section laying down conviction for an offence punishable with imprisonment for six months as a disqualification to be a delegate has been deleted and the general power given to the Conciliator to disqualify any one whom he thinks fit is to be exercised after the proceedings are started, presumably if he shows unwillingness to come to an agreement. The savage sentence of imprisonment for two years and a fine up to five thousand rupees has been considerably reduced. But these improvements do not alter the vicious principle underlying these clauses and objection to them still remains. The clause making the preaching of a boycott of the conciliation proceedings a penal offence is nominally applicable to both workers and their employers. But in most of the industrial disputes while the number of workers involved is large

and consequently open propaganda is unavoidable in their case, the employer is generally one person or a company and so no propaganda is necessary in the case of the employers. Even in the rare cases where the employing party consists of several persons or companies they can communicate with each other privately and secretly and thus avoid the consequences of instigation to boycott the proceedings. Moreover, to impose a sentence of imprisonment for actions which are not in themselves offences but are created as such for special purposes is inconsistent with the policy so far followed by Government in the Factories Act where breaches of law involving even danger to human life are punished with only fines. This leads one to suspect that Government is not willing to impose imprisonment upon employers for even serious offences committed by them, but is willing to let them off with fines which they can easily pay. One can even understand this discrimination on the ground that the workers do not have money to pay fines, but, curiously enough, the workers have to undergo imprisonment without escaping fines.

The bias of Government in favour of employers is also observed in another clause where failure to appoint delegates by the employers is created an offence punishable with fine up to the limit of a hundred rupees per day. In industrial disputes where the employers are prepared to face large financial losses and especially where meeting the demand of the workers involves serious addition to their current expenditure, the employers can very easily defy the law and pay a fine of a hundred rupees a day, which in many cases will hardly exceed the amount of their stakes at bridge tables. Not only is the punishment intended for the employers for this offence so light as to enable them to defy the law, but Government during the Council discussion have now altered the clause so much that the compulsion on the employers to take part in conciliation proceedings is completely removed by taking away from the conciliator the power to try this offence and impose punishment, which seems to be the intention of the original provisions. The legislation as has emerged from the Council now provides that before any prosecution is launched for this offence previous sanction of the Government ought to be obtained and the offence can only be tried by the Presidency Magistrate or a Magistrate of First Class. A self-respecting conciliator will hesitate to take the risk of a refusal by Government to sanction prosecution and he will, therefore, be himself reluctant to start conciliation proceedings when the employers are unwilling and will either act upon the application of the workers after ascertaining the willingness of the employers or only upon the application of the employers or in each case of an application he will have first to consult the Government privately whether they will stand by him if the employers refuse to take part in the proceedings. The conciliator will thus be severely handicapped. Moreover taking the sanction of the Government and afterwards to carry on the pro-

secution will necessarily involve a long delay, which itself will serve the purpose of the unwilling employers. These amendments will thus practically take away the compulsion on the employers to take part in conciliation proceedings.

The discrimination made in imposing effective restrictions upon the workers and giving practical freedom to the employers is likely to have serious consequences and frustrate the very object underlying this legislation. In the first place, the machinery for conciliation is likely to be used only when there is a probability of the workers losing. Secondly, on account of the one-sided use of machinery the workers will begin to look upon the machinery with hostility and gradually the hostility will be transferred from the machinery to the conciliator himself. Thirdly, the workers will lose faith in the method of conciliation itself and will believe in fighting to the finish. Lastly, the workers will lose confidence in the impartiality of Government. This is directly and effectively playing into the hands of the communists.

The proposal to create the post of a Labour Officer to watch over the interests of and help the workers to secure the redress of their grievances is an experiment worth trying in the present unorganised state of the workers. In any case the Labour Officer will keep the Government better informed regarding the condition of the workers. As regards his usefulness in a more constructive field much will depend upon the personality of the officer selected. Mere knowledge of the language of the workers is not enough. What is needed is sympathy and a faith that the working classes have rights which must be recognised and aspirations for the fulfilment of which they must be given full opportunities and free scope. It must be frankly stated that work of the best of Labour Officers will not be successful unless he is allowed to work in a friendly atmosphere wherein he will be given full confidence by the workers. It is, therefore, necessary that the Government should not place this irritating piece of legislation on the statute book. The Trade Disputes Act of the Government of India provides quite a suitable machinery for conciliation if Government is not willing to take upon itself the obligation to enquire into and make efforts at conciliation in every serious industrial dispute. If legislation is necessary to equip the Labour Officer with sufficient authority to perform his functions separate legislation may be undertaken.

N. M. JOSHI.

Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)
(From Our Correspondent,)

LONDON, August 17.

A MAHASABHA DELEGATION ?

THE *Manchester Guardian* this week contains a report that Malaviyaji and Dr. Moonje are to lead a deputation to this country on behalf of

the Hindu Mahasabha, in order to oppose and secure the re-opening of the Communal Award. The news is somewhat surprising in view of the flat contradiction appearing in the Indian papers just to hand. Moreover it is extremely difficult to see what useful purpose could be served by the dispatch of such a delegation at this juncture. The Award rendered by the Prime Minister is surely the one part of the Government's proposals upon which there would be virtual unanimity among all the parties in this country, and even as between those who support and those who oppose the general principles of the White Paper. When the Award was announced it was clearly declared that the Government would in no circumstances contemplate any modification of it except as agreed to by the communities concerned. It was in pursuance of this declaration that the part of the Award relating to the depressed classes was modified after the Poona agreement.

But unless there is a similar agreement between Hindus and Mohamedans of which at present there appears to be not the slightest likelihood, it is difficult to see what useful purpose such a deputation as that above referred to could possibly hope to achieve. Almost certainly it would involve the dispatch of a counter-demonstration from the Muslim side and we should then have the unedifying spectacle of two groups of Indians, both of them purporting to be concerned with the national welfare, but squabbling in public, and each declaring the proposals of the other to be dangerous to the future of the country.

The position would be still more complicated and embarrassing if it were to be found that whilst the Mussalman delegation were supporting the White Paper proposals, the Mahasabha delegation were to condemn them, and were itself to be repudiated, as would be very probable, by other Indian nationalist bodies and organisations. The only possible consequence would be the alternative of an even weaker constitution than the maximum one upon which agreement can be found in the present state of public opinion here, or even no constitution at all. British friends in India, of all party affiliations or of none would regard such a display of disunity in London among Indian representatives as an unmixed evil, and as calculated to bring India into the most serious discredit, and those only in England would at all profit from it who seek to thrive upon a display of communal differences. The *Morning Post* would rejoice greatly thereat.

In saying this it is quite unnecessary to express any opinion upon the relative merits or demerits either of the Communal Award or of the various communal points of view. It is merely a plain statement of the way in which the matter would be bound to be regarded in England, where the message would of a certainty be given. Your communal disputes must be settled among yourselves and in India. When you are in agreement, let us know.

OF INTEREST TO INDIA.

This week six Members of Parliament left London by air on a visit to Uganda and Tanganyika where they are to study some of the local problems. These delegates of the Empire Parliamentary Association are Sir John Wardlaw-Milne (Chairman of the Delegation), Colonel J. Sandeman Allen, Mr. Clifford Glossop, Mr. A. T. Lennox-Boyd, Captain Peter MacDonald, and Mr. W. L. McEntee. Among other things they will study the system of native administration and they will investigate problems of production and marketing of cotton and coffee. Two members of the delegation will also proceed to Zanzibar at the invitation of the British Resident. It is to be hoped that the Indian communities of these places will, foresaking their usual attitude of indifference,

make a special point of seeking contact with the delegation and communicating to them their own particular problem.

Two letters from high ex-Public Health officials have appeared in this week's *Times*, strongly controverting an article appearing in that paper not long ago on the subject of improvements in public health secured in the Indian provinces since the transfer to responsible Indian Ministers under the Montagu Reforms. It would be interesting to see what sort of a controversy will be raised by this correspondence and what advantage will be taken of it by the diehard element here.

I understand that some friends of the Mahatma are anxious that primarily in the interests of health but also in order that he may be the better understood here, he should pay a further visit to this country. From what I know of him I should think that it would be extremely improbable that he should accept this point of view. Indeed, there are other friends who would strongly advise him not to come here unless he could assure them that he would do so in far different circumstances and under far different conditions than on the last occasion. Then he could hardly call his soul or his body his own. Every moment of his time was more than mortgaged and very often on behalf of causes and interests only secondarily concerned with himself, his welfare, and the cause that he represented. Unless he is able and permitted to live a life of severely restricted activity, permitting him to recuperate his strength and not to exhaust it still further, and to hold quiet converse with the few people whom it would be important for him to meet, I very much fear that but little practical utility would result from such a visit, which would add nothing to his strength or vigour, but only to his anxieties.

SHORT NOTICE.

FORWARD, OH TIME! By VALENTINE KATAEV. Trs. from the Russian by CHARLES MALAMUTH. (Gollancz.) 1934. 21cm. 432p. 8/6.

RUSSIAN literature such as is here flourished for review is as stormy, frothy and indeterminate as the violent agitation that gives it birth. Valentine Kataev wields a powerful literary brush; but so erratic and splashy are its touches that they give rise to as many interludes alive with passion as they betray disjointed shallows.

The gigantic operations of the Five-Year Plan are in progress; a seething mass of humanity is struggling hard to construct a socialist heaven. This is the lurid stage on which "flickering across the windows from left to right swirls the obelisk: Europe—Asia. Does that mean that we are in Asia?"

We are moving toward the East at a terrific speed and we carry the Revolution with us. Never again shall we be Asia".

Progressive energy such as this may possess an element of impatience, intolerance and "creeping empiricism," but without it there is neither a revolution nor the will to make the arid and forbidding steppe fruitful and populous with cities. "The Bolsheviks stand between two worlds—between two cultures", and they release "the anarchy of speeds, of rhythms" all for the economic glory of Russia. Men of contemplative natures there are like Mr. Ray Roupe of this novel who from mistrust of science attempt to stay the hand of time and who also write "venomous diatribes against the machine." They neither build, heal, nor raise harvests. But these others who do not have a single characteristic "indicative of religion", they spring marvellous surprises in the shape of new socialist cities for hundred

and fifty thousand workers and servicemen. With genuine heroism they declare, on their "firm, inviolate, Stalinist word," "We shall conquer nature and we shall bring back its lost paradise to humanity. We shall surround the Continents with warm streams. We shall compel the Arctic oceans to produce billions of kilowatts of electricity."

All is futurist high-tension in Russia; perilous regenerators of their country march past our view and become immortalised for their single-hearted devotion to a materialist ideal. On occasions Kataev catches fleeting glimpses of this vision and at other times he falls flat.

On page 164 there takes place a dialogue between two opposing propagandists, the Bolshie and the Yankee,—which reads like the nursery story of "walk into my parlour."

K. VENUGOPAL RAO.

Miscellaneous.

NATIONALIST CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS.

Following is the text of some of the resolutions passed by the Congress Nationalist Party Conference which met at Calcutta on August 18 and 19 under the presidency of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

THAT the party called the Congress Nationalist Party be constituted with the object of carrying on agitation against the Communal Award and the White Paper both in the Legislature and outside and setting up candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly for the promotion of that object. Every Congressman who subscribes to the party's object as defined above shall be eligible as member of the party. The candidates for election to the Legislature shall be selected from among the Congressmen who are members of the party. But in special cases, the party may support Nationalists as candidates for election to the Legislature who subscribe to the object of the party and agree to abide by its rules in the Legislature.

That, in view of the opinion which has been expressed in the country against the decision of the Working Committee in relation to the Communal Award, the Working Committee of the Congress be requested to convene a meeting of an All-India Congress Committee at an early date with a view to revise the said decision.

That this Conference considers the proposals for constitutional reform contained in the White Paper as wholly unsatisfactory and reactionary. The Conference is thoroughly opposed to the scheme as a whole.

That this Conference records its strong disapproval of the Government's decision on the Communal problem which has been wrongly called the Communal Award as it retains and extends the evil of separate communal class electorates; provides statutory majorities with separate electorates which are fatal to the development of representation upon national basis, on which alone the system of responsible government can possibly be rooted; is calculated to impede the growth of common national feeling and accentuate communal bitterness; is grossly unfair to the Hindus, particularly in the Central Legislature, and Hindu minorities in the Punjab, Bengal, Assam and Sind, where they have been allotted seats less than what their proportion entitles them to and gives to Europeans, particularly in Bengal and Assam, an excessive representation at the expense both of the Hindus and the Moslems. The Conference

is of opinion that the system of responsible government can be based only on joint electorates and not on the anti-national system of representation such as the Communal Award provides for.

MUSLIM UNITY BOARD'S MANIFESTO.

The following manifesto has been issued by the Muslim Unity Board under the signatures of Nawab Mohamed Ismail Khan, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman, Mr. Maswood Ahmed, and Syed Zakir Ali :—

THE Muslim Unity Board, which consists of almost all Muslim political organisations of India enjoying public confidence, hereby informs the Mussalmans that unity has been achieved among all such political groups who have been sincerely serving their community and the country and are their real well-wishers.

On December 17, 1933, the Muslim Unity Board was established according to an agreement arrived at between different Muslim organisations which command the membership of tried and selfless Muslim workers.

The manifesto after referring to the resolutions passed by the Unity Board regarding the Communal Award and the appeal for unity among the different communities by mutual settlement, says :

These resolutions brought about a happy change in the outlook of the country regarding communal matters and certain other organisations adopted the same attitude regarding the Communal Award as was taken by the Unity Board.

THE WHITE PAPER.

As regards the White Paper proposals the Muslim Unity Board shares the declared opinion of almost all responsible political organisations. The proposals fail to confer complete provincial autonomy, nor do they give the residuary powers to the Provinces. They are much below the demand and expectations of Muslims and are only a travesty of freedom and self-government. They are not at all in accordance with the principles enunciated in Clause 1 of the resolution of the Muslim Conference on this question and since the Mussalmans in this very resolution had made a solemn declaration that no constitution, by whomsoever framed, would be acceptable to them unless it conforms with the principles laid down in the said resolution, the Muslim Unity Board cannot accept the White Paper proposals and will strive to achieve for Indians the right to frame their own constitution.

COMMUNAL AWARD.

These representatives of the Board will not allow any change in the existing Communal Award till such time as an agreed settlement is arrived at, which alone can replace the Award. They will try to secure the political and economic freedom of the country. They will introduce or support such laws through which amicable relations could be created between capital and labour and landlord and tenant and which would remove unemployment.

REPRESSIVE LAWS.

The Board considers that all such "repressive" laws should be repealed which hamper the freedom of the Press and speech and the right to assemble

and which have robbed the citizens of their natural and fundamental rights.

It would be the duty of the representative of the Board to protect the Islamic Shariat and to oppose any interference with it. In case of any Bill coming before the Assembly which interferes with religion the representatives will be bound to advocate the correct religious point of view after consulting the Ulema.

The Board earnestly appeals to the Muslim voters to the Legislative Assembly to cast their votes only in favour of the candidates set up by it.

Correspondence.

THE CONGRESS STRADDLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—Your notes in last week's issue on the attitude of the Congress, or on the lack of any attitude, with regard to the Communal Award, could not have been more convincing. Not only is it necessary to harp upon this aspect in view of the potential danger of this equivocal position regarding the future constitution but also from the point of view of a none-too-experienced electorate in India which is likely to lose all faith in party-programmes if such a body as the Congress is obliged to straddle on this issue. The term 'straddle' is used in American politics to express an act of not holding a view clearly and positively divergent from others.

"It means, indeed, having a leg in each camp and not standing with both in your own; it means floating in the middle air because the camp has no firm soil." I think this description is not an incorrect estimate of the position of the Congress. Does it mean further that the Congress is driven to care more for the machine than for the political education of the average voter, who will not understand this vague and negative attitude? He would more easily follow the lead given by Pandit Malaviya and Mr. Aney than the official view of the Congress.—Yours, etc.

27th Aug.

A LOOKER-ON.

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