

The Servant of India

Editor : S. G. VAZE.

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Topics of the Week.

United Front.

MR. SASTRI in a speech in Madras appealed for the formation of a United Front between the Congress and other nationalist parties in the country. He did not contemplate a merging of the Liberal Party or any other party in the Congress, though he would like the Congress to relax some of its conditions of membership, which are irrational in themselves and have proved unworkable by actual experience. But even should they be maintained in their rigour he sees no reason why, given goodwill on both sides, a working arrangement among all the progressive parties should not be possible. "Nevertheless," he said, "an understanding is possible, both during and after the coming elections, between the Congress and the Liberals. Although the Congress may not remove the barriers, it is possible for it to throw the doors open in the outer court in order that no element that could be useful to it in its fight would be left out."

It is satisfactory to note that Babu Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, has responded well to Mr. Sastri's appeal. Although he has not given, as of course he could not immediately give, a definitive reply to some of the specific points raised by Mr. Sastri that keep the Congress and the Liberal Party divided, he declared himself pleased to read Mr. Sastri's speech. "We in India," he said, "need nothing more at present than a broad-minded appreciation of the points of view of those who differ from us and a certain charity in our judgment of others. This applies as much to Congressmen as to others, and I hope Mr. Sastri's view-point will be appreciated by all."

THE *Tribune* suggests that the terms of a common understanding between the Congress and other progressive parties should broadly be as follows :

(1) that the parties should not oppose each other's candidates at the election and should join their forces to keep out reactionaries ;

(2) that the best candidates of all these parties and organisations should, as far as possible, be accommodated with safe seats ;

(3) that whichever party may form the government it should, on the one hand, make it its principal business to carry out the common national programme with regard to the nation-building departments of the administration and, on the other, refuse to be a party to suppressing by force any organised attempt made by the others to bring about constitutional deadlocks with a view to expediting the removal of anti-national safeguards and reservations and the advent of complete and unfettered national freedom.

The Congress and the States.

MR. R. G. PRADHAN, who, after seceding from the Congress when it put an interdict upon entry into the Councils, has now rejoined it, invites the Congress leaders in the Congress Jubilee number of the *Bombay Chronicle*, "to give some earnest thought to the criticisms that are made against the Congress in some quarters" "in a spirit of deliberate introspection." He says, "Those criticisms should not be spurned as of no value, as though they come from malevolent enemies. Some of those are made even by those who are within the Congress organisation." Among the criticisms which he mentions with approval is the one directed against the Congress attitude towards the States.

HE says :

Another piece of criticism levelled against the Congress is that it is not fully alive to the claims and interests of the people in Indian States. I think, there is much substance in this criticism. We, the people in British India, are asked to federate, not with our countrymen in Indian States, but with their autocratic, irresponsible rulers. To my mind, this is one of the gravest defects of the new federal constitution, and it is enough, in itself, to make it unacceptable to us. This constitution gives no place whatever to the people in Indian States ; it treats them as if they are outside the pale of Indian policy.

Such being the case, is it not the duty of the Congress to espouse whole-heartedly their cause and to strive to secure for them their proper place? The policy adopted by the Congress in this respect is half-hearted, it lacks courage. It is time that this faint-heartedness, this temporising spirit should at once be given up, and that the Congress should make it plain to the Princes that it considers the interests of the people in British India and of those in Indian States as identical, and that, therefore, it

insists that, their subjects must be assigned their proper place, as progressive human beings and citizens, as much entitled to claim the rights of self-government as the people in British India, in any constitution devised or enacted for the whole of India.

The Bihar Black Bill.

THE Bihar and Orissa Public Safety Bill, or the Black Bill as it is popularly known, was introduced in the provincial legislature on the 9th inst. and has since been passed into law. The Bill as framed by Government sought to give the legislation a perpetual lease of life; but due to non-official pressure, this was subsequently limited to five years. As a fact, however, local opinion in Bihar sees no need for it and thinks the province might safely have been spared the humiliation of having such an obnoxious law on its statute book. But the enactment of similar legislation by the Viceroy in virtue of his special powers clearly shows how scant is the value the Government is inclined to attach to public opinion.

THE civil disobedience movement is virtually abandoned by the Congress. So the only excuse that was advanced by the Government in support of their demand for the continuance in their hands of the highly arbitrary powers of restraining personal liberty embodied in the Bill was the existence of the terrorist and communist movements. Admittedly, the former is practically non-existent, so far as Bihar and Orissa is concerned, nor can the latter be said to be very vigorous. But, vigorous or otherwise, its existence as a serious political portent is difficult to deny and if the Bihar Government, like other provincial Governments, is intent upon exploiting it for buttressing up a case for this legislation, it can only be said to be following the usual methods.

BUT why retain powers for whose use no occasion has arisen in the past? The legislation passed three years ago contained provisions designed to deal with the no-tax movement, though the movement was never very strong in Bihar. The result was that the powers vested in the local Government by relevant provisions of the law were never required to be invoked. This should have really suggested to Government the desirability of dropping from the legislation recently introduced what experience has proved to be perfectly superfluous clauses; but they are apparently unwilling to part with such powers, however unnecessary and uncalled-for. That these and similar other powers have so far been used with due restraint by the bureaucracy in Bihar is an argument which may or may not be true. But we cannot afford to place our liberties at the mercy of a Government which may on occasions be forbearing.

Unsatisfactory.

THE Bengal Government's attempt to make amends to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru cannot be said to be as unreserved and frank as the circumstances of the case demanded. He was charged with carrying on revolutionary activities under the cloak of Harijan work and with the aid of funds raised for that work. Such a grave charge has either to be substantiated or to be unreservedly withdrawn, if it cannot be brought home. Sir John Anderson's Government has withdrawn the charge, though the laboured explanation on which they have embarked deprives it of most of its grace. Once they were convinced that they had been instrumental in unwarrantedly wronging a public worker, they should

have tendered a full and frank apology to the aggrieved party.

THE administration report in which the charge appeared is issued, we are told, with the general authority of the Government, though their approval is not to be understood to extend to every single expression of opinion contained therein. But it is difficult to understand why if, as the Bengal Government claim, an administration report is to concern itself only with a statement of facts, the expression of any opinion by its author, however innocuous in itself, did not earn for him the Government's displeasure. The expression of opinion in the present case was clearly defamatory; nor have the Government in any way improved their position by letting the world know the author's view that the inference he drew was based on the Pandit's own utterances. Anyway, the public has a right to know whether and, if so how, the officer concerned has been departmentally dealt with for daring to cast wholly unmerited aspersions on the character of a public worker of such eminence as the Pandit.

Groundless Impression.

THE drastic Land Alienation Decree rushed through the Zanzibar legislature in June 1934 is designed, as is well known, to prevent the transfer of Arab and African land into the hands of people not belonging to those races. It has been repeatedly shown that though the mention of Indians as such is studiously avoided, the Decree is really directed against Indians. When the hated legislation was under discussion, the impression was sedulously fostered by Government spokesmen that African and Arab land was passing into Indian hands at an alarmingly rapid rate, and that, unless steps were urgently taken to put a curb on such transfer, the native communities stood in danger of being left without any land to call their own before very long. The statistics relating to such transfers during the last year at any rate do not bear out such an alarmist view. The figures were supplied by Government themselves in reply to a question by an Indian member of the legislature and their veracity is thus beyond dispute. During last year 148 agricultural properties of the aggregate value of about Rs. 1½ lakhs were alienated by Indians in favour of Arabs and Africans, while only 48 properties worth about Rs. 50,000 have come into Indian hands from Arabs and Africans. It will thus be seen that the balance in favour of the latter was about Rs. 75,000. This aspect of the matter was strongly stressed by the Indian member in the course of his budget speech, but his observations failed to draw any very considered reply from the British Resident.

ANOTHER point too urged by the same member failed to elicit any reply from the official side. It related to the activities of the Clove Growers' Association, whose report, it was complained, was not as full and exhaustive as might have been desired. But the other complaint made by the member was even more serious. It was to the effect that the Association sold cloves cheaper to London and New York than to Eastern markets. The latter purchase a lion's share of the cloves produced in Zanzibar and should, in the fitness of things, receive fair treatment at Zanzibar's hands. But, curiously enough, the Association shows favouritism to markets which consume not more than 20 per cent. of Zanzibar's production of cloves at the cost of markets which purchase not less than 80 per cent. of it. With a view to get such grievances promptly attended to by the Association,

It was suggested that one Arab plantation owner and one Indian clove exporter should be appointed as members of the Managing Board of the Association. The suggestion is an eminently reasonable one and ought to be given effect to as soon as possible.

Army and Rural Reconstruction.

So even the Indian army is to play its part in the work of rural reconstruction. The work is stupendous and we can never have too many agencies at work in the field. But why, it may be asked, were the army authorities of all people attracted by the work? The answer is obvious. The Indian soldier is mostly drawn from the countryside, where he retires on completion of his service, whether short term service of five years or long term one of thirty years. While with the colours, he is accustomed to a higher standard of life and is conversant with the fundamental laws of hygiene and public health. When however he settles down in his native village after retirement, more often than not he relapses into the old unhygienic ways of life and makes no attempt to make his fellow-villagers better posted in a knowledge of hygienic laws. It is in this way that the knowledge acquired by him while serving in the Army is turned to no practical use and virtually dies with him. This is clearly a waste of a valuable

asset, which must be put a stop to at the earliest possible date.

THERE is also another aspect of the matter which is not less important. It goes without saying that if the soldier's knowledge and experience of a better and healthier life were made available to the village community, it will surely go a considerable way in improving the aspect of things in our rural parts. The result would be that in course of time the Army head-quarters would have a far healthier class of people to select its recruits from, which would naturally lead to the improved health of the army.

It is needless for our present purpose to examine the details of the scheme. Suffice it to note that it is intended to interest the Indian soldier, while actually in service or even before he joins it, in the work of rural reconstruction. This would be done by the introduction of rural reconstruction as a subject in the educational training of the Indian army. A series of lectures will also be given to cadets at the Indian Military Academy and to boys at the Indian Military Schools so that even before they join the colours, they would have imbibed properly the principles and utility of the work of rural reconstruction. The move will, we hope, be cordially welcomed by Indian opinion.

THE OTTAWA AGREEMENT.

I.

THREE complete years have elapsed since the ratification by the Indian Legislative Assembly of the agreement arrived at by the Indian delegation at Ottawa. We have considerable statistical information at hand for the course of world trade for two years following the conclusion of the agreement and there are data enough for attempting to form a considered opinion regarding the efficacy of the Ottawa programme. The two documents which will be found most important in considering this problem are the two reports issued by the Government of India "on the working of the scheme of preferences" for the years 1933-34 and 1934-35. The two reports, though planned on identical lines, are yet notably different in character. The first is issued under the signature of Dr. Meek, the then Director of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, and is a document which embodies emphatically expressed opinions and definite conclusions. The second report is not signed by anybody and does not even purport to issue from the Department of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics; it gives a mass of information and statistics on the lines of Dr. Meek's report but is a comparatively colourless production containing a minimum of comment. It is not known why such a change has come over the report this year; but it is expected that the Government of India will issue a defence of the Ottawa policy in time for the meeting of the Assembly. We have in what follows not found it necessary to travel much beyond the statistical material officially sponsored in these two reports.

There are, as even Dr. Meek has pointed out, a great many difficulties to be met with in an attempt to elucidate the effects of the working of the Ottawa scheme. The course of international trade is affected by factors so numerous and so complex that the effects of a single factor like preferential tariff rates may easily be masked by other movements. It is, therefore, necessary to remember that even in spite of the fullest statistical information any judgment regarding the working of preferences is not likely to be more than a well-informed and well-reasoned guess. It may be pointed out at the outset that in the following analysis it is only the course of the trade of India with the United Kingdom that has been taken into account. The total measure of colonial preferences is so small that they may for all practical purposes be neglected.

We may begin with a consideration of the changes in the total volume of Indian trade with U. K. The volume of this trade has increased more than proportionately during the years 1933 and 1934. This is due to certain broad changes that have recently come about in the world distribution of trade. It is the currency and exchange policies of the different countries that have been most largely responsible for the changes. The biggest currency group in the world—the "sterling group"—has since 1932 distinctly gained in its percentage share of the total export and import trade of the world. Japan has forged ahead more than any other single country and so also U. S. A. in 1934. The increase in the trade of India with U. K. that has come about recently is, therefore, to be attributed not to any measures of trade policy but to general trade movements brought about

by other causes. This can be made most clear from the following statistics of the U. K. trade with India in preferential and non-preferential goods.

	1931-32	1932-33	1933-34	1934-35.
Index of the export trade of India with U. K. in articles enjoying preference	100	89.3	109.5	110.2
Ditto— in articles not enjoying preference	100	74.0	112.0	118.6
Index of U. K. imports into India in articles enjoying preference	100	105	118	134
Ditto—not enjoying preference	100	110.3	101.5	114.4

This table shows the comparative changes in the values of Indian exports to U. K. and of imports from U. K. into India of groups of articles enjoying preference and not enjoying preference. It clearly indicates that while the exports in that group of articles which enjoy preference increased from 1931-32 to 1934-35 by about 10 per cent. the increase in the group not enjoying preference is even greater. Hence the only conclusion possible on these figures is that the import trade of U. K. having expanded largely in recent years all kinds of Indian goods have found a widening market in that country irrespective of preferential treatment. It should be noted, on the other hand, that the imports into India of U. K. articles enjoying preference have increased much more than of those not having that advantage.

The general expansion of our trade with U. K., especially export trade, having thus no connection with the Ottawa arrangements we are left to examine each item of preference individually to ascertain what effect preferential treatment has had on its trade. We had followed this method of attack in our brochure on "Imperial Preference" published on the eve of the consideration of the Ottawa agreement by the Assembly, and we shall have occasion hereafter to refer to conclusions reached therein.

It is obvious that every measure of preference must, like any other measure of interference, have some effect on trade and prices. So that preferences accorded to any commodity in a market must tend to increase the sales of that commodity and additional duties levied must tend to increase the prices of commodities. Circumstances may, however, either minimise or conceal these effects. And our endeavour has to be to note the extent of the effect felt by any trade allowing for the conditioning circumstances.

We may before going on to discuss each item glance at certain calculations made by Dr. Meek and published in Appendix II of the reports on the working of the agreement. These are called "advantage on landed cost in the United Kingdom" and are arrived at by multiplying the declared values of the various exports from India to the United Kingdom by the rate of preference. It is curious that in neither of these reports is any explanation given as to why these calculations have been made and published and as to what it is that they are supposed to represent. They are, of course, meant to lead the unwary reader into believing that they represent the

real measure of the benefit secured by Indian trade as a result of the Ottawa agreement. Dr. Meek knew better than to say so categorically in the body of his report, but we find other officials, as for example Sir Thomas Ainscough, using the statistics in this sense. Now even a moment's reflection by anybody who has had some elementary training in economics would show that these figures are utterly meaningless. They represent no more than the result of a mechanical multiplication of two sets of figures. The benefits secured by the Indian trader or trade may be indicated by an increase in the trader's profits and/or by an expansion of the trade over the previous level. And the reactions of a preferential treatment from trade to trade would vary enormously. In the case of a perfectly inelastic trade the benefit or loss suffered by the trader would be nil and the only effect of an increase or decrease in customs duties would be reflected in a variation of the price to the consumer. With a highly elastic or sensitive trade the effects, beneficial or otherwise, would be very large indeed. Without studying the detailed conditions of each trade there is no means of saying offhand or determining mechanically what benefits have been received. The official calculations are thus meaningless and we would hardly have thought it necessary to notice them if it were not obvious that they are very likely to mislead many persons.

In considering trade in each individual commodity the figures of its general expansion or contraction by themselves will not suffice. A particular movement of trade with the country may be part of a general movement of trade with all countries or may be part of a special trend, due to other causes, of that trade in that particular country. In either case a contraction or expansion could not be described as a result of the special tariff measure. The contention put forward in the 1934-35 official report that a fall in the percentage of the exports to U. K. in a particular commodity is no necessary proof of the failure of the preference may be admitted and it may be agreed that the most important test is the increase in the proportionate share of India in the total imports into U. K. of the particular commodity. Of course, even if an increase is apparent the further question as to whether the increase is substantial enough and as to whether it is due directly to the preference or to other causes would still have to be asked.

D. R. GADGIL.

CURRENT COMMENTS.

"LIBERAL CONVERSION."

THE *Pioneer* writes:

It is one of the stock charges against the Liberals that, after swearing they will ne'er consent, they always end by consenting. We have no desire to rub it in, for it is better to be wise in time than never to be wise at all. We cannot, however, refrain from pointing out that, exactly a year ago, we were criticised by the SERVANT OF INDIA for suggesting that half a loaf was better than no bread and

that the Liberal politician in India who was prepared to surrender a substantial and immediate increase in self-government for undefined benefits which he might or might not secure from the British Labour Party, which might or might not come into power within the next ten years, was the human counterpart of the dog in Aesop's fable who abandoned his bone for its image in the water. "We do not want the reforms: take them back!" was the title of the leading article in the same issue, which also included a report of Mr. Sastri's denunciation of the Joint Select Committee's proposals.

We congratulate the *Pioneer* on remembering so precisely what we wrote a year ago. It has a feeling, however, that we would now like people to forget what we had written then, for it seems to think that we have executed a complete somersault since that time; while we were hostile to the reforms scheme at the J. S. C. Report stage, we have become friendly to it now; that while we refused to accept it then, we are only too glad to accept it at the present time. We should like to know in which article our contemporary has discerned this change of front on our part. If it has seen any signs of alteration in our year-old policy, the alteration could only be in the stiffening of our attitude of opposition due to the fact that the J. S. C. proposals have been adopted in a much worse form in the Act. We would ask the *Pioneer's* attention to our last week's article: "Get the Reforms Act on its Back!" and we would invite our contemporary to say whether we could be counted among people who give consent to the Act. We are afraid it would come to the conclusion that nothing would ever succeed in teaching us wisdom.

Incurably unwise as we are, we shall not feel embarrassed in the least if the *Pioneer* calls attention to any of our past articles on the reforms, but we are not so sure that the *Pioneer* itself would not feel embarrassed if we referred to some of its own previous writings. For instance, it advised the Liberal Party not to greet the reforms scheme by expressions of utter hostility, of flat non-acceptance. It urged on the contrary that the Party should give conditional acceptance to the scheme, the condition being the loosening of some of the more stringent safeguards imposed. Suppose the Liberal Party had accepted its sapient advice. What would have been the position of the Party now? Instead of relaxing the safeguards then contemplated, they have been strengthened and some more have been added. This the *Pioneer*, we are sure, will not deny. Would it have now supported the Liberal Party for not accepting the scheme on the ground that the conditions under which alone, according to the *Pioneer*, acceptance would have been justifiable have not been fulfilled, but that on the contrary retrograde changes have been made? We feel certain it would have pressed the Liberal Party even then to accept the reforms as Sir Samuel Hoare pressed the Negus to accept the Paris proposals, and for the same reason: "The reforms measure is not good; it is bad. Yet it is the best available in the circumstances. Therefore accept it; otherwise your position will be even worse. In politics there is no minimum. We were foolish in advising you to put forward a minimum". Sir Samuel said much the same thing to the Ethio-

pian Emperor. "I do not like some features of the peace proposals myself. But to M. Laval this is the minimum basis of negotiation, His help is indispensable. If you do not accept this you will be crushed in the war. Therefore welcome these proposals and save yourself." The *Pioneer* does not accept Sir Samuel's reasoning in regard to Abyssinia. But in regard to India it accepts it in full. The Liberal Party has never believed in this reasoning and does not believe in it now.

Perhaps the *Pioneer* finds inconsistency in the Liberal Party not accepting the reforms and yet being willing to work them. We can quite understand popular orators indulging in such a cheap jibe against the Liberal Party, but the *Pioneer* should know better. The Liberal Party no doubt admits that it must recognise the existence of the Reforms Act; that it cannot ignore it. In that sense, of course, it is prepared to work the Act. But it cannot and will not work it in a spirit of friendliness, goodwill, contentment or co-operation. It will manifest in its working, as it must, a spirit of opposition that it has never made any secret that it feels. No one has emphasised more clearly the difference in the methods that the country will adopt in working a scheme that it accepts and a scheme that it does not accept than Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, and we would like the *Pioneer*, since it is in a reminiscent mood, to refresh its memory about his utterances on the subject. The *Pioneer* may think that it is not good policy for the Liberal Party to keep up its opposition now, but surely it cannot jump from the fact that the Liberal Party will work the Act to the conclusion that it will drop its opposition to it.

MORE LIGHT NEEDED.

We must confess that the attitude of the *Tribune* towards the new constitution is a little puzzling to us. It advises the Congress and other progressive parties in the country not to accept office; it advises them deliberately to produce deadlocks in the constitution.

One would have thought, therefore, that the line of action recommended by it is much the same as that recommended by Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, whose advice is that "wherever the Congress secures a majority it should force the Governor to suspend the constitution by refusing to form a government and to allow any other government to function with legislative support, and should utilise the floor of the Legislature for purposes of obstruction and propaganda."

To this, however, the *Tribune* answers with a resounding no. It would not like the government machinery to be brought to a dead stop even where it is possible to do so. This would only give, in its opinion, an opportunity to the Governor to resume the government, and then "while running that part of the administration which corresponds to the present reserved half very much in the way in which it is run now, he will deliberately starve the other half and throw upon the majority in the Legislature and the electorate the responsibility for that grave step."

This, the *Tribune* thinks, must be avoided. Therefore some people must be found to form a Ministry and to run the government. A Ministry must be formed in order to prevent "suspension or curtailment of the nation-building activities" and in order "to enable the country to extract from the new constitution the maximum good it is capable of yielding." But the people to form a Ministry must not be members of the Congress or any other popular party. For them to accept office would be to undermine the forces of opposition; they must be free from shackles of office so that they may maintain an "attitude of stern and uncompromising opposition to the safeguards and reservations."

How then is a Ministry to be formed? The Congress and other progressive parties should stand back. Instead of forming a government themselves, they should "permit some other party to form the government which will, on the one hand, carry on the administration of the nation-building departments in accordance with the will of people as expressed in the election results, and, on the other, will undertake not to make itself an instrument in the hands of the Governor or any other authority for suppressing by force the organisation or manifestation of popular resistance to the anti-national reservations or safeguards incorporated in the constitution."

We have only two questions to ask on this. First, if the Congress and other progressive parties are not to accept office, where are men to be found who can be entrusted with office who will carry on the double task expected of them with full efficiency, viz. of "carrying on the beneficent part of the administration" and, if we may so put it, of resisting the oppressive part of the administration? Those who can and will do this are necessarily progressive, and they must *ex hypothesi* remain aloof from office. By the very statement of the case it is only the reactionaries who will be free, under the *Tribune's* tabu, to form a Ministry, and they will neither do full justice to nation-building activities nor offer a sufficiently stern front to the reservations and safeguards.

Second, if even the non-progressive parties, who, according to the *Tribune*, may be permitted and must indeed be entreated to hold office in order to prevent damage being done to "the beneficent part of the administration," can be trusted to resist the safeguards and reservations, what harm will possibly result from the Congress and other progressive parties holding office themselves? They will presumably resist the safeguards and reservations with still greater energy, strength and determination. How then will "the Congress or any other popular majority" "weaken materially, and eventually undermine, the forces of opposition to the new constitution" if they accept office?

Surely, the *Tribune* must needs clarify its attitude a little further. As it has put it, it is past our comprehension.

THE PRINCES' VETO POWER.

Advance questions our statement that under the new Reforms Act the Princes have obtained the power of vetoing constitutional amendments.

Our argument may be briefly put thus. The Princes enter into the federation on the basis of a treaty with the British Government. In the treaty they do not give to the British Government the power of altering the terms of the treaty as it likes. On the contrary they specifically withhold it. They say: "We are bound to these mutually agreed terms. If the terms are to be changed they must be changed with our consent. If you make any change without our consent we shall be entitled to denounce the present treaty. In other words we shall acquire the right to leave the federation." This position is accepted by the British Government.

The Act, however, makes no provision for the secession of any State that has once joined the federation. Therefore, the position amounts to this: in order that no State will be enabled to claim secession the British Government must refrain from introducing a change in the Act which is not acceptable to the Princes—not only to a majority of Princes, but even to a single Prince. The British Government's power of altering the Act is thus drastically curtailed.

In other countries the component units of federation not only give up certain specified sovereign rights to the federal government which they form, but they also give up the further right to hold up constitutional amendment in future by refusing their individual consent to it. They agree that if a proportion of the federating units, say two-thirds, agree to any constitutional amendment it shall take effect whether they themselves agree to it or not. In our federation, however, the States have not given up this right. The unanimous consent of all the federating States is thus required to every constitutional amendment that is proposed. They therefore have a power of veto as in the old days in Poland.

It is of course obvious that the Princes' veto power does not extend to any but the federal part of the constitution; it does not extend, for instance, to the provincial sphere, nor to the sphere of paramountcy which falls outside the scope of the Act. Even in the federal sphere an exception has to be made in favour of matters included in Schedule 2. *Advance* draws our attention to Section 6 (5) of the Act which refers to this Schedule, but our observations were obviously limited to matters not included in the Schedule, and if *Advance* will take the trouble to go over the Schedule it will find that all the vital matters in connection with the federation are excepted from the Schedule. It is admitted on all hands that exceptions are far more important in this case. Section 6 (5) of the Act itself, to which reference is made, thus proves our case.

If our interpretation is wrong we would like *Advance* to tell us how. We shall say this much at present. *Advance* is the only paper which to our knowledge takes a different view of the matter. It is

true that our leading journals are reluctant to emphasise the plain meaning of the tremendous veto power given to the Princes by the Act, but their reluctance is solely due to their anxiety to blame everything evil in the Act upon the British Government and to their excessive tenderness for the Princes,

But no one has yet questioned the fact that the Princes have the veto power. *Advance* does so for the first time, but we believe from an entirely wrong reading of the Act. We shall be very much interested to see how it justifies the position which it has pleased this organ of radical opinion to take up.

BRITISH LEAGUE POLICIES.

I. PERSONALITIES AT HOME.

INTERNATIONAL events centering around the League of Nations have followed so closely, one upon the heels of another, that it is none too easy not to get confused by all the cross purposes of the principal players of the international game and by the many red herrings purposely trailed across the scent which public opinion is intent upon following.

To classify the position, I think it is of first importance to tabulate, however roughly, the different English attitudes towards the League. There are first of all two fundamentalist attitudes which consider that the League can fulfil its purpose and make all further war impossible. One section (let us call it Mr. George Lausbury's) rejoices at its capability and invites all and sundry to persevere in the sacred dance round the Genevan mulberry bush, frantically reciting the *mantram* "Peace! Peace!", whereby peace itself will be realized. The other section, which we shall label Lord Beaverbrook's, likewise believes that the League is quite capable of such a result, but that for that very reason the League must be done away with: for they perceive that a successful League means the end of national sovereignty and of all imperialist domination, not only other people's, but also Britain's.

The bulk of the people however are not fundamentalists, but opportunists. They do not believe that the League, as constituted, can really guarantee world peace, but they do attribute to it a certain usefulness: though there again opinions rather differ as to the degree of that usefulness. First of all there is the section (shall we be wrong to call it after Sir Samuel Hoare?) which will use the League as a counter in the imperialist game. There is another section (let us hope that Mr. A. Eden belongs to it) which is not out for new imperialist exploits and which sees in the League the only existing means of stopping the Gadarene rush to self-destruction. Finally, there is the official Labour point of view, which would use the League for bringing about a new international order.

Hoare-Eden-Attlee-Lansbury are therefore all for the League: but in very different ways; Beaverbrook and Hoare are both against the League idea, though popularly they are deemed to be adversaries to each other. As a matter of fact, Sir Samuel Hoare has a foot in both camps and, as usual, therefore, has to play an audacious game. As he seemed to be opposed to Lord Lloyd over the Misgovernment of India Bill, so now he seems to be opposed to Lord Beaverbrook over British League policy,

As Sir Samuel Hoare had dual affinities he necessarily had to pursue a dual method. On the one hand, he employed the old diplomatic method to drive as hard a bargain as possible with the rest of the imperialist powers for all the world as if the League did not exist at all; on the other hand, there was the platform method, which paid lip-service to the League and in fact was pushing it to such extremes that in the end the League would become popularly discredited. Sir Samuel Hoare is a most skilful ice-skater; but, as all the world knows now, he fell on his nose all the same one fine day.

But observe his superb skill, even in this disagreeable misadventure: his nose was broken, but it was not put out of joint. He resigned his post, but stuck to his guns; making his "personal explanation" in the House on Dec. 19th, he concluded—perfect sportsman that he is—by wishing to his successor, "whoever he may be, every kind of success in the difficult task before him and better luck than I have had." The "loud and prolonged cheers" that greeted this peroration told him what not a few members put into so many words—that "there goes the future leader of the Conservative Party." His very defeat he had turned into a triumph.

For the time being it is Mr. Baldwin who receives all the obloquy for having thrown Sir Samuel to the wolves and who stands thoroughly discredited. It is difficult to believe that he too will not soon disappear from the scene. With him will disappear the last of the MacDonald-Baldwin regime and his place no doubt will be taken by Mr. Neville Chamberlain, who thus luckily obtains the coveted reversion of the premiership, for which Sir Samuel Hoare had been preparing himself.

As regards his attitude to the League, Mr. Chamberlain of course belongs to the Hoare section: almost, one had said, to the Beaverbrook clan. If Mr. Eden remains his Foreign Secretary—as no doubt he will—it will be for the same reason that Mr. Baldwin has now chosen him: viz., to appease public opinion in England and to use him for working the platform method.

II. REALITIES ABROAD.

Having considered the leading personalities at home, we may now turn to the main realities abroad: and first of all to the question of sanctions.

1. Sanctions.

Mr. Attlee, replying to Sir Samuel Hoare in the House on Dec. 19, observed that, if one thing stood out more than any other in that speech, "it was the

fear lest the League should be too successful." In fact Sir Samuel had just said: "It was a moment of great urgency. Within five days the question of the oil embargo was to come up at Geneva, and I did not feel myself justified in proposing any postponement of the embargo unless it could be shown to the League that negotiations had actually started." Mr. Baldwin afterwards told the House exactly the same thing. "We have passed away from platitudes," he said, "to an area of stark reality: and we have been in this area from the moment the League began punishments."

In plain English, the whole sanction business was meant for the platform only, to assure the British elector and other Innocents Abroad that England's sole objective was to see international justice being done by the League. Perhaps it was also hoped thereby to frighten Mussolini and thus Sanctions, besides being a mere Baldwinesque "platitude," were meant also as a bluff. But Mussolini is the better poker player. He did not bluff; he saw his British opponents. In this connection I cannot do better, than quote from Lord Lothian's excellent speech of the same 19th of Dec. in the House of Lords:

Mussolini was not a bluffer. He might feel that if sanctions were to be imposed which would be decisive in causing his defeat he would prefer to go down fighting against us and France or against us alone rather than ultimately to retreat. Having embarked 250,000 men on his African crusade, he would rather yield to overwhelming force than go to a lingering death or risk another Adowa. He would rather end it quickly by a smashing blow from the air at our fleet which might give him Egypt and the Suez than yield to the necessity of an armistice on League terms to save his East African army from disaster once it was bottled up in East Africa and deprived of supplies.

It was because of this removal "into an area of stark reality" that sanctions were never meant to be really effective.

Their ineffectiveness of course is notorious. The Anglo-Persian Petroleum Co. (of which the British Government are the dominant shareholders) still exports direct to Italian Somaliland most of the oil wanted there; Italian planes, flying from Eritrea to Italian Somaliland, are still refuelled in British Somaliland. (Cf. Dr. Dalton in the House of Commons, on Dec. 5th.) A more damning piece of evidence of British double dealing could hardly be adduced. Again, the bulk of Italian requirements of petroleum comes from Rumanian, and the majority of the capital invested in Rumania oil-wells is British (private) capital. Now, the Rumanian oil exporters have obtained from their Government a declaration that Rumania will not place an embargo on exports of petroleum to Italy, until the United States has actually legislated to a similar effect. Which of course is a most unlikely thing to happen, seeing what the American Senate is. Besides, has not a Standard Oil Vice-President recently said (v. Reuter, Dec. 21) "that Italy will be able to obtain sufficient oil for military purposes, even if the League imposes oil sanctions—either by traushipment or by other means"? In the mean-

time U. S. A. sent in November 1935 \$1,252,000 worth of oil to Italy, against only \$447,000 in November 1934; and to Italian East Africa \$451,000 as against \$12 in November 1934. Why, we have got the word of honest Mr. Stanley Baldwin himself for it (House of Commons, Dec. 10.):

We shall have to consider again the whole question of how far sanctions may go. The hon. Lady (Miss Rathbone) spoke as though it were the simplest thing to stop oil going into Italy. It really is not. It is extraordinarily complicated. If you are going to do it you must be sure that your prohibition is effective.

I say frankly, and I assure the House, that there is no cynicism in it, that we are learning and have learned a great deal in the last three months as to what is possible at present in the world and what is not.

What charming innocence! But will anybody believe it? And if true, what qualification for a statesman guiding the destinies of the Great British Empire!

Leaving alone oil, let us remember that the sanctions list does not contain copper, lead nor spelter. It contains iron, but not steel; it contains chromium, manganese, tungsten and vanadium but not the steel alloys made of these rare metals! On the other hand, the sanctions are draconic in the case of aluminium exports to Italy: alas, Italy is a great aluminium producing country herself and in 1934 only imported a total of seven tons! Another illuminating item of interest I cull from a Singapore paper of Nov. 21.:

To-day the full range of sanctions comes into force in Malaya. In addition to the ban on munitions and credits, which has been in force for some days, we must now cease to receive imports from Italy and to supply her with certain key materials, notably tin and rubber.

What difference will this make to Malaya? Theoretically we shall lose twenty million dollars' worth of export business, if sanctions continue a year, but in practice we may lose very little.

Is there anything to stop export firms buying all the tin and rubber they can lay hands on and consigning the goods to associates in Germany or Austria there to be forwarded to Italy?

British and French firms which do this will be attempting to defeat the policy of their own governments, but no such scruples need trouble German, American, and certain other firms. How then are sanctions going to be effective in respect of rubber and tin?

The imposition of Sanctions, it is safe to say, has so far not only not hampered Signor Mussolini, it has actually assisted him.

How?

By presenting him with a most convenient lightning conductor against popular discontents. Whatever goes wrong now-a-days in Italy, whatever privations are being demanded from the Italian people, the wicked ones responsible for it all are the "Sanctionists", those abominable foreigners, who are envious of Italy's greatness and who would turn an Italian civilizatory mission in Africa into a general war in Europe!

By this means the obvious fact, that money spent in exploding shells in Africa is no longer available for buying foodstuffs in Italy, is very conveniently being obscured. That this is no fancy picture can be proved by the actual state of Germany:

which likewise is spending on armaments what otherwise could be spent on food. The dearth of fats in Germany is notorious: even the introduction of the war-time ration-cards for butter is imminent there. The whole German nation is being undernourished and generally subjected to great privations: yet, poor Herr Hitler has got no ready excuse for it in any sanctions imposed on the Fatherland by foreign foes, but is reduced to the lame excuse, that butter is very scarce just now in all countries. Compare the propaganda value of this with Mussolini's fiery orations against sanctions, and you will understand me when I maintain that sanctions do not hinder, but actually help Mussolini.

The whole drive for gold would also have been difficult without them; the devalorisation of the lira from 55 to 82 for £1 has, thanks to the "Sanctions", passed almost unperceived in Italy or has only called forth an even greater patriotic frenzy. Well might Signor Mussolini say that if there were no sanctions, one would have to invent them!

2. War?

Let us now move out of this shadow-land of economic sanctions "and other platitudes" into the area of "stark reality", i. e. brute force.

As will be remembered, Sir Samuel Hoare took over from Sir John Simon at the Foreign Office on June 8 1935. Before the month was not out, Mr. Eden had been sent to Rome, to find out whether *Il Duce* really meant to go to war in Ethiopia. The answer being in the affirmative, Hoare and Laval got busy with a deal on the basis of the 1906 Treaty between Italy, France and England, which gave Mussolini pretty well most he could reasonably ask. Submitted in August, the proposals were disdainfully turned down by the Italian Dictator, whose prestige demanded the gory laurels of a successful war.

Thereupon followed the melodrama of mobilizing the British fleet in the Mediterranean. Was it sheer bluff in order to coerce Mussolini to be satisfied with the crumbs of imperialist comfort, which his Anglo-French fellow-imperialists had offered him? If so, the bluff miscarried lamentably. Mussolini moved his forces in Libya and threatened the Western frontier of Egypt, which was a master-stroke. For, however much everybody may *talk* about Ethiopia, what everybody really *thinks* of is Egypt. Mussolini may go on giving his most solemn assurances that he will leave intact all British interests and that he only means to settle down in Ethiopian highlands, as the British have done in Kenya: the obvious fact is, that an Italy, safely installed in Ethiopia as it is in Libya, has the Egyptian Sudan and Egypt itself as in a nutcracker, which it can work at will, whenever it means to have the lands of the Nile.

Now the British reply to that threat was a frantic military activity in Alexandria and to the south of it—to be seconded by the guns of the British fleet concentrated in Alexandria. Would the guns go off? Mussolini was quite ready for

it, and his chances for success were not at all bad. The Italian air-force is notoriously strong, and swift action on their part might prove decisive, in Alexandria, in Malta, in Suez. Obviously in a war between Italy and Great Britain, Italy would be sure to be beaten hollow—in the end. But once initial successes had been gained by Italy, would she have to face England alone for the later stages of the war? It is almost inconceivable that such a powder-magazine could explode in Europe, without setting the whole world ablaze.

Hence England, very prudently, tried to tie down France to an alliance in case of such a war. France was agreeable, but not enthusiastic. M. Laval's government gave the assurances asked for, and gave them repeatedly—on Oct. 26, Nov. 2 and Nov. 27: but it refused at the same time to let it come to that war, and insisted on fresh proposals for a compromise being submitted to Signor Mussolini.

Hence the despatch of Mr. Maurice Peterson of the Foreign Office to Paris on Nov. 20 and his instructions to work out such a plan with his French colleagues. Sir Robert Vansittart went over to Paris on Dec. 6. In the end, the Vansittart-St. Quentin plan was ready and all Sir Samuel Hoare had to do was to sign it, as he passed through Paris on his way to Switzerland. This happened on Sunday, Dec. 8, 1935—a mere formality, after all the hard work previously done by the permanent staff of the two Foreign Offices. *Il Duce* was on the point of accepting the plan and asking for more of the same sort: when the "platitudes" suddenly obtruded themselves in a House of Commons, just freshly elected and pledged to them. Sir Samuel Hoare had to be thrown to the wolves, with every chance of Mr. Baldwin too presently going Jonah-like overboard.

"The real crime of the Foreign Secretary," as Sir Stafford Cripps remarked in the House on Dec. 19, "was that the Cabinet miscalculated the effect of public opinion." Lord Halifax in the Lords admitted as much, the same day. "Our mistake was," said he, "of not appreciating the damage that these terms would be held by public opinion to inflict upon the cause, that we are pledged to."

3. Public Opinion.

"Public opinion," even Lord Winterton had to avow on that occasion, "in the House and outside it, has driven within the last six months two Foreign Secretaries from office. That shows the strength, but not necessarily the wisdom, of democracy." The sneer at the wisdom of those who, *inter alios*, elected the noble lord to represent them at Westminster, is of course gratuitous: had the British public not been fed on propaganda lies about the Government's faith in the League, and had it been given the facts of "stark reality", there is no doubt that it would not only have driven two Foreign Secretaries, but the whole Tory Government, from office.

The ineluctable facts are those so trenchantly put by Mr. F. W. Hirst in a remarkable letter which on Dec. 12 he addressed to the *Manchester Guardian*:

If, instead of telling us that Englishmen hate dictators and tyrants and that the League of Nations is the mainstay of British policy, and if, instead of making the whole country believe that he would support the League in resisting the deliberate aggression of one member upon another, Mr. Baldwin had announced on the eve of the elections that he was about to surrender to Mussolini and propose the partition of Abyssinia, would he have won the elections or secured (with 54 per cent. of the votes) a majority of 250 in the House of Commons? I think not. I think he would have polled at least one million votes less and the Opposition at least two million more. In that case the Coalition Government would have fallen.

The British nation will stand a good deal from politicians, but it will not tamely endure national humiliation and moral defeat. Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues will never recover from this self-inflicted wound.

Sir Samuel Hoare and friends once more proved too clever by half. They knew that their policy of Imperialism, as it was, as it is and as it ever shall be, is distasteful to the vast majority of British voters. The British as a people are quite ready to benefit from their imperial possessions, as long as it can be done fairly decently and, anyhow, peacefully. But the idea of another war is so universally abhorrent in England, that, I am sure, if the choice lay clearly between Empire and Peace, the British elector would choose Peace.

The Tory Imperialists know that as well as anybody. Mr. Neville Chamberlain in his speech in Birmingham (of Dec. 20) in so many words said it:

If I read public opinion aright at the last election it supported the Government in all that it could do to support the League because the League stood for peace.

Behind that all the time was the feeling above all 'Let us escape another war.' (Hear, hear.)

Let us escape another war—at any price. "Never no more"—the phrase with which British soldiers came out of the last War remains burnt into the minds of the whole people. "Never no more—let us try to do our best with the League, to uphold international peace and perhaps even introduce a system of international justice: but anyhow, whatever you do, don't think that we are ready to march again, as we did in 1914. Once caught in a war to end war, twice shy. Never no more." This, I think, fairly sums up public opinion in the British Isles. It is that which renders the Imperialist game of the Tories so utterly futile in the end. They may bluff and bluster, as much as they like, and draw the most grandiloquent cheques: the public will curtly

"refer them to drawer" when asked to cash them—just as it has done on this last occasion.

It is one thing to be drawn into a war as a unit of the League, it is another to wage war in England's own name. As long as it is only a question of helping to enforce the Covenant, the professional, standing, forces of Great Britain will suffice; and therefore public opinion will endorse it, though reluctantly. But a war, which would call for conscription all-round again? Never no more.

As regards backing the League, Mr. Chamberlain voiced the general view when he said (in Birmingham):

We must do that, and if other countries do the same and they show that they, too, are prepared to take their share of the risk then the risk itself will disappear. For make no mistake, whatever the form of pressure which the League may exercise upon an aggressor in the future, the ultimate recourse, the ultimate fact which makes the difference, is the fact of force and nothing else. Unless an aggressor is satisfied that there is against him a potential force too great for him to withstand, then you never have any security.

After all, that is the rule which governs our own affairs here at home. It is because criminals know that there is a force ready to act if need be that, if crime is not prevented, it is at any rate diminished, and the criminal thinks twice before he commits his crime.

That is the kind of League which is acceptable to public opinion; but it is not a League which would be, as it is today, a mere instrument to carry out the Imperialist policies of a few Imperialist Powers. That is why the latter do not want such a League but are anxious to leave it what it is—in Mr. Maxton's telling words in the Commons debate on Dec. 19:

a thing which has no power, no serious intentions, no preparations to face up to the logical conclusions of its policy, merely a propaganda body passing resolutions without any power to put them into operation, without any common philosophy or common understanding in the matter, with, indeed, all sorts of war antagonisms.

For the moment, matters must be left at that: but summing up the events of these last days I cannot do better than quote Lord Hartington's words on the same occasion:

The events of the last few days do not mean all loss. The Government took a step which profoundly shocked the conscience of the nation and the conscience of an educated democracy. That informed democracy was able to bring it about that that step was reversed. In this we have shown the world that a democracy can take a courageous step in the right direction, can make a difficult and courageous decision as swiftly and as courageously as any dictator. That is a very good thing to have done. (Cheers, in which the Opposition joined.)

H. C. E. ZACHARIAS.

Geneva,
Dec. 26, 1935.

INDIAN LABOUR PROBLEMS.

MR. JOSHI'S WORK AT GENEVA.

Mr. N. M. Joshi, M. I. A., represented Indian labour at the Maritime Conference held under the auspices of the International Labour Organisation. In a statement to the press Mr. Joshi reviews the proceedings of the Conference. He says:

I WENT to Europe first to attend the meeting of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization and secondly to attend the Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference. It should be of some interest to India that the question of a 40-hour week

in the textile industry will be discussed at the 1936 Conference.

The Governing Body discussed the question of the revision of conventions which have so far been passed with a view to their application being extended to those categories of workers to whom the original conventions did not apply. In this connexion I strongly pressed on the Governing Body the necessity of revising these conventions in which special terms are given to India.

I pointed out that these special terms have

been in existence for about 15 years and that it was time they were revised.

For instance, the Hours Convention ratified by India provides for 60 hours a week, while even our present Factory Act has provided for 54 hours a week. Similarly, the convention ratified by India in 1921 regarding children's age of employment permits employment of children over 12. It was time that this age limit was raised.

I also pointed out the great necessity of the International Labour Organization giving attention to the devising of some machinery for negotiating ratifications, as mere passing of conventions does not serve much useful purpose unless the conventions are ratified and action taken on them.

I suggested that besides the Director and some senior members of his staff, a small sub-committee of the Governing Body itself should visit different countries to negotiate ratifications. My suggestion has been referred to a committee of the Governing Body for consideration.

After attending the meetings of the Governing Body I spent three weeks in London. I took advantage of my stay there to try to secure better Labour representation in the Federal Upper Chamber and to secure at least some Labour representation in the Provincial Upper Chambers. With this object in view I saw Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, and the Under-Secretary Mr. Butler. I also saw Lord Snell, the leader of the Labour Opposition in the House of Lords, and Mr. Attlee, the leader of the Opposition in the Commons; also Mr. Morgan Jones, M. P.

During my stay in London I also addressed two meetings on the work of the Servants of India Society and a meeting of the Joint Committee of Women's Organizations which interests itself in the welfare of Indian women, and tried to explain to them the attitude of Indians, especially of Indian women, towards the new Constitution. I also met the India Reconciliation Group and explained to them why we objected to the Criminal Law Amendment Act enacted by the Governor-General's special powers.

I went to Geneva again in the last week of November for the Maritime Conference. The questions which came before the Conference for consideration were the hours of work on ships and the manning of ships with a view to preventing overwork among the crew. The Conference also considered the question of holidays with pay for seamen.

As this conference was only a preparatory one, it did not take any decisions, but its discussions are summarized in a report which will be circulated to all countries and final decisions are to be taken at a conference to be held in the latter part of 1936.

In this Conference I pointed out on behalf of Indian seamen that at present there is no regulation of hours of work for Indian seamen either by legislation or through their articles of agreement signed on recruitment, or through private collective agreements made between the employers and the seamen, and that as large numbers of Indian seamen are employed on ships which are not registered in India, international regulation of hours of work and manning was the only way of giving them protection in this respect.

As the question of the right of a Government to ask for special reactionary terms for some countries like India and some classes of seamen like Indian seamen was raised by the representatives of the Government of India and of the British Government, I made it clear on behalf of Indian seamen that they

would insist upon the same conditions regarding hours of work and manning as may be provided for European seamen.

The question which is causing anxiety to Indian seamen at present is the attempt made on behalf of the British seamen's organizations to reduce the employment of Indian and coloured seamen on British ships. As this question could not relevantly and profitably be raised at this Conference, I privately discussed this question with the representatives of British seamen who were at Geneva and have begun correspondence with them, which I am hoping will result in British seamen recognizing the right of Indian seamen being employed on British ships, and I expect that a conference will be arranged between the representatives of British and Indian seamen to negotiate a settlement of this question.

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