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CONTENTS.

	Page
TOPICS OF THE WEEK	469
ARTICLES :—	
Income Tax for Kenya ?	473
European Devaluations and Indian Currency. By Prof. B. P. Adarkar.	474
The Capital Problem of Orissa. By S. S. M.	476
REVIEWS :—	
Translation of the Gita Rahasya. By Prof. V. M. Joshi, M. A.	477
Matter, Myth And Spirit. By Dr. D. G. Londhe.	477
MISCELLANEOUS :—	
"Ramaswamy" in Malaya.	478
CORRESPONDENCE :—	
First And Last.	480
Compulsory Education in Hyderabad	480

Topics of the Week.

Congress President.

A PROPOSAL is being canvassed in Congress circles for re-electing Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru President of the ensuing December session of the Congress, and in fact one variant of the proposal is to elect him not only for another year but for three or even five years. The proposal is very unusual, and we do not know what chance it has of being seriously considered. Nor have we, being outside the Congress ranks, any authority to express any opinion thereon which we may expect to be considered by the Congress authorities.

BUT the purpose which those from whom the proposal has emanated have in view is obvious. It is to let Pandit Jawaharlal be at the helm of the Congress while Congressmen will be in the legislatures, committed to wrecking the new constitution. If the constitution is not wrecked within the first five years it will hardly be wrecked afterwards, and even the shaping of the Congress policy in the first year after the provincial elections will go a long way to decide what the Congress is to do in later years. Those who are sincerely for the wrecking programme desire Pandit Jawaharlal to direct Congress policy at least in this first crucial year.

THERE can be no doubt that the wrecking programme will have the best chance of success under his leadership and guidance. It is well-known that the distinctive features in the election manifesto of the Congress are of his drafting. The manifesto,

strictly interpreted, leaves no alternative to a dogged pursuit of wrecking tactics. But there are many senior and distinguished men in the Congress who do not at all approve of this policy, and they can well point to some passages in the manifesto in order to justify the adoption of a wholly different or even contrary attitude in the legislatures. In these circumstances the political complexion of the Congress President will largely determine what construction is to be placed on the manifesto, for the Congress Parliamentary Board is to be under the active supervision and control of the Working Committee of the Congress.

WE are ourselves not for wrecking if by that policy is meant uniform obstruction and refusal to attempt any piece of social and economic reconstruction. We shall not shed a tear if the constitution actually comes to be destroyed; we do not shrink from wrecking because of any desire to save the constitution. But we do not support the policy for two reasons; in the first place, public enthusiasm for destroying the constitution cannot be kept up for a long time by a policy of blank negation; in the second place, there is no reason why, while trying to supersede the constitution, we should not try to exploit it to the full for such amelioration of the condition of the masses as may be possible under it. But we are all for doing everything in our power to keep the resentment of the people against the constitution alive and for taking an opportunity of teaching our masters a lesson, sharp and severe, whenever such an opportunity offers.

THE real test will come when the interests of the masses are in conflict with those of the vested interests. Wherever the tyranny of the Governor or the Governor-General as representative of the British Government is to be resisted, we have no doubt but that all progressives will stand together. The ranks of the progressives are apt to be divided when the Governor or the Governor-General stands forth as the trustee for any community or class and threatens to interfere in that capacity. In such an event the nationalistic tendencies of even progressive politicians are likely to override their sense of justice and to make them accept a compromise which is not justified by the circumstances of the case, and thus these politicians may tend to become in fact keen supporters of the British Government, doing just what the Government would like them to do.

IN whatever sense the Congress wants to pursue wrecking, there can be no question that the framer of the policy himself would be the best person to supervise and guide its actual operations. It is for this reason that Pandit Jawaharlal's election is being strongly recommended, and we cannot say that there is nothing in this reasoning.

Government Servants and Elections.

THE question of official interference in elections to which reference was made last week in these columns was raised in the Assembly by means of a resolution moved by Dr. Khan. He gave an interesting account of how his electioneering work was obstructed by the local officials. It is said that the police followed him from place to place for the set purpose of preventing his meetings being held or disturbing them when held, by drum-beating in their vicinity. In some cases recourse was had to the handy and convenient section 144, Cr. P. C., for banning his meetings.

THE debate on the resolution, which has remained unfinished, will be continued on the next unofficial day. But the telegraphic report of the speeches of official spokesmen including the Home Member himself does not show that these allegations, serious as they were, were totally denied by them. The occasion was, however, availed of by the Law Member to reaffirm the Government's policy of neutrality in connection with the elections and to proclaim the Government's intention to take serious notice of any violations of this policy on the part of any Government servant.

THIS is satisfactory so far as it goes. But what really matters at the present moment is the action taken by Government in pursuance of this policy in respect, e. g., of the officer who issued the notorious Court of Wards circular in U. P. The public would also be interested in the steps taken by Government to mark their displeasure of the conduct of those Government subordinates in N. W. F. P. who are alleged to have so far forgot themselves as to organise hooliganism at Dr. Khan's election meetings.

THE speeches of the Home Member and the Foreign Secretary were apparently designed to justify, though in an indirect manner, the official interference in Dr. Khan's election campaign. Should Government merely look on while under cover of an election campaign seditious and illegal activities are carried on? This was in substance the poser put by them with an air of injured innocence, which is like giving the dog a bad name and then hanging him. It will be seen that the question assumes the dissemination of sedition, perhaps not by Dr. Khan himself, but by his workers. But in the absence of definite proof in support of the statement, it is no better than an allegation, however eminent its source. At the same time it is difficult to believe that if any of Dr. Khan's assistants in his election campaign had been guilty of making objectionable speeches, the Government would have refrained from taking prompt action against them. We have yet to be convinced that the Government have latterly developed the qualities of patience and forbearance to the extent of allowing seditious propaganda to go on unchecked and with impunity.

Famine Relief Fund Law.

A BILL for the establishment of a famine relief fund for the Bombay Presidency was passed by the local Legislative Council last week. It should, however, not be supposed that the measure was designed to make good an omission, to build up for use in famines a fund which had not been in existence before. The bill is really a consequential measure—consequential upon the introduction of the Hoare reforms. Under the Devolution Rules the local Government is required to "establish and maintain out of provincial revenues a famine insurance fund" amounting to

Rs. 63,60,000. This fund at present forms part of the general balances of the central Government who are bound to pay interest on it, the interest being added to the fund. The fund is used only for purposes of famine relief, construction of protective irrigation works and other anti-famine measures.

WITH the inauguration of provincial autonomy next year, the Devolution Rules will cease to be operative and the Famine Relief Fund will not continue to be a statutory fund. The result will be that the balance of the fund with the central Government will merge in the general finances of the province with the corollary of its being available for meeting the Government's current obligations. If this happened, the Government would be deprived of the wherewithal to succour famine-stricken areas in case of need.

THE bill seeks to prevent such a catastrophe by throwing a statutory obligation on the local Government to maintain a famine relief fund to the tune of Rs. 63 lakhs. The amount to the credit of the fund will in due course be withdrawn and after setting apart a sum adequate to meet the requirements of the present famine year in the way of relief and loans to agriculturists, the balance will be invested in the securities of the Government of India. As at present, the fund will be drawn upon only in the case of a serious famine and for the relief of distress due to serious drought, flood or other natural calamities. When the fund exceeds the prescribed amount, the excess will be devoted to the construction of protective irrigation works and other anti-famine measures. The Bombay Legislative Council has done well in placing on the statute book such a highly beneficial law.

Hunger-Strike in Jhabua.

IT is really a matter of great surprise to us that the seriousness of the situation in Jhabua State should yet fail to attract the notice of the Paramount Power. According to latest reports, some political prisoners including Mr. Kanhayalal D. Vaidya, Secretary, Central India States' People's Conference, are on hunger-strike by way of protest against their maltreatment in jail. About the end of last month these prisoners are stated to have been subjected to severe beating, so much so that their cries were heard even outside. No outsider is allowed to see them and they are almost cut off from the outside world. Among these are apparently some under-trials who are refused all communication even with their legal advisers. This has made matters worse with the result that the hunger-strikers are now refusing even to drink water!

REPRESENTATIONS to the Council of Administration and even to higher authorities by representative organisations of the people of the State have so far failed to secure redress. The appeals for action by Mr. Mohanlal Saxena, M. L. A., to the authorities have not, he says, fared better. He is trying to secure facilities for seeing the prisoners with a view to ascertaining facts and inducing the prisoners to give up their abstention from food. It is difficult to say whether he will be permitted to interview them. But if he is not, how could the public be blamed if it comes to the conclusion that there is something in the Jhabua situation which cannot stand the light of day?

THOUGH the local authorities are immediately responsible for these heart-rending developments, we fail to see how the Paramount Power which is respon-

sible in the last resort for preventing oppression and misrule in the States can be absolved from blame for what cannot but be characterised as its criminal inaction in failing to prevent matters from coming to such a pass in Jhabua. Ignorance is the last excuse that can be put forward in its defence, for the grievances of the unfortunate people of the State have received enough publicity and have also been, as stated already, authoritatively brought to the notice of the proper authorities. Inaction in such circumstances amounts to heartlessness and a callous disregard of human suffering. The least that the public has a right to expect from the Paramount Power is the issue of an exhaustive press note shedding light on the circumstances of the hunger-strike so far as they are known, followed by an independent inquiry into the causes of the public discontent in Jhabua.

Problem of Detenus.

THE revealing information was officially supplied in the Assembly that the number of persons detained without trial simply because of their being suspected terrorists exceeds 1,200. This is exclusive of the number who, though not kept in detention camps, have most annoying restrictions of one kind or another placed on their personal liberty. Their number was not specified perhaps because it was inconveniently large. Of course all this barbarity is resorted to by the Bengal Government in the name of the safety of the British Empire in India. An improvement in the terrorist situation is even officially admitted, but officialdom is unwilling for that reason to let any of these unfortunate young men breathe the free air outside detention camps.

THIS is most sickening. If the safety and security of the Indian Government is imperilled, as officialdom wants the world to believe, by these thousand odd young Bengalees being set at liberty, every sensible and unbiased person would, we are sure, consider that there is something fundamentally wrong with the British Empire in India. And, moreover, how long are these people to rot in detention camps and to chafe under restraint on their freedom of movement? Such coercive measures, which are obviously of an emergency nature, can be tolerated only for the briefest possible time. But in Bengal they have been in operation in more or less stringent form for nearly a dozen years. If the danger to the Government threatened by the alleged terrorist activities could not be removed within that long period, it is permissible to doubt if it could ever be made to disappear.

ARE the Government, therefore, to continue to hold these persons in duress for an indefinite period? They can if they mean to. Nobody doubts their preparedness to do so. But the point is how can their conduct be justified before the bar of world opinion. These men must either be restored to freedom or placed on their trial. No other course seems open to a government which has any respect for individual freedom or personal liberty. What is going on in Bengal in the name of law and order is nothing short of a public scandal which must be put a stop to without delay.

Ghastly Tragedy.

EARLY this year India was shocked at the heavy loss of life caused by a series of accidental fires in the Jharia coal-mines. Last week a far more ghastly tragedy occurred in the same coal-mining area owing, it is said, to the subsidence of a large portion of a mine. The toll in human life is reported to exceed

one hundred, all of whom were suddenly entombed. Four miners' quarters also collapsed about the same time, burying the inmates under the debris. What their number was is not yet known. The sympathy of the whole country goes out in full measure to the victims and their dependents.

It is difficult to say whether the accident was avoidable. Soon after the shocking happenings of January last a conference of technical experts and Government officers devoted considerable attention to the problem of preventing fires in coal-mines. A set of anti-fire regulations, subsequently embodied in a law enacted by the Indian legislature, emerged as a result of the deliberations of this conference. We do not know if the problem of the prevention of loss of life due to subsidence of soil, landslide and similar other causes was at all considered at the conference. We are afraid, not. In this case the problem demands and will, we trust, receive the prompt attention of the authorities. While it is obvious that accidents cannot be altogether eliminated, cannot their number be minimised by proper precautions on the part of the management? Are such precautions strictly enforced at the present time?

Indians in the Transvaal.

IN our article on the Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act in the issue of 13th August, we pointed out the new law was a small step in the right direction, and we are glad to find that progressive European opinion in South Africa agrees that it is a small step. The Act, it will be remembered, sets apart blocks of land in townships and gives Indians the right of ownership in them, but gives them only the right of occupation in individual stands scattered about a township which they may be occupying at present. It exempts all these areas from Gold Law prohibitions against coloured occupation but treats areas comprising several stands and scattered individual stands separately. For the rest it tightens up the old prohibitions.

THE Johannesburg *Star*, commenting on the Act, says that "it not only preserves but strengthens, or rather restates in an amplified form, the Gold Law restrictions against residence and occupation of proclaimed land by Asiatics", and adds, concerning the exemptions, that "it is a matter of regret that Parliament did not see its way also to extend the right of ownership (given in respect of blocks) to the individually exempted stands outside the blocks." The reason why the right of ownership was given in blocks was apparently the fear that otherwise "the concession would be largely nugatory, as the Indians would fall ready victims to European landlords." The same danger, says the *Star*, exists in individual pieces of land too.

OUR Johannesburg contemporary continues: "When it is remembered that the total area of blocks recommended by the Feetham Commission for exemption within the municipal area of Johannesburg is less than 140 morgen (it is in fact 92.1 morgen), it will be seen that the extent awarded to the considerable Asiatic community does not err on the side of generosity. If it is hoped, by conferring the power of ownership within the blocks, to encourage the Asiatic community eventually to settle in these blocks and to abandon the isolated blocks outside those areas it must be frankly recognised that the areas at present proposed are totally inadequate for that purpose."

NOR does the *Star* approve of maintaining the prohibitions of the Gold Law in other areas. It says:

Side by side with these individual and particular relaxations or exemptions (as in the case Consuls, visitors from abroad), which are of comparatively small extent in their area of operation, can be seen a steady and inflexible determination to enforce the law as a whole and to bolt the door against fresh evasions in the future. Whether the numbers, actual or potential, of the Asiatic community in the Transvaal are sufficient to warrant the policy of fear which underlies all these Acts is open to serious question. If Asiatic immigration into the Transvaal from abroad, or even the rest of South Africa, were permitted, or if the number of Asiatics even approached those of Natal, then on grounds of self-preservation a case could be made out. But it is estimated that against a European population in Johannesburg exceeding 200,000 there are not more than 10,000 Asiatics, while the whole Asiatic population of the Transvaal probably does not exceed 20,000.

The paper hopes that the Hofmeyer mission will mark the dawn of a new era in which "the present cramped and narrow property laws which operate to the detriment of the Asiatic community may still further be widened and ameliorated."

Stepmotherly Treatment of Indian Shipping.

PANDIT G. B. PANT wanted by an adjournment motion to raise a discussion in the Assembly last week over the Government's attitude in regard to the project of an Indian-owned shipping service between India and England. But the President ruled out his motion on the ground of its not being a matter of urgent public importance. This was unfortunate. For if the question had been debated it would have thrown a flood of light not only on the Government's step-motherly attitude towards Indian shipping but would have given the public some idea as to the progress so far made in this matter. But, thanks to the information given out by Mr. Pant in support of his plea for permission for the discussion of the matter, the public is not left completely in the dark.

MR. WALCHAND HIRACHAND, it would appear, is promoting an Indian shipping company with an authorised capital of Rs. 10 crores. The Company is already registered and intends to have a shipping service between India and England. Its liners will be built on modern up-to-date lines and would have a normal speed of 24 knots as against the 20 knots of the fastest ship in service at present. It need hardly be added that the Company will specially cater to the requirements of the Indian public, which have been so far neglected by foreign shipping companies.

If profuse protestations of the Government's sympathy were all that was needed to bring Indian shipping into being, it would have come into existence long ago. While there has been no lack of such protestations, practical action to implement them is woefully lacking and there has been a wide divergence between the precept and the practice of the Government. Their treatment of the new Company's request for a guarantee of three per cent. on the capital for ten years is fully in consonance with their policy of using honeyed words but doing nothing to be really helpful. This request was turned down. When the Viceroy was subsequently approached by the promoters, they were informed of his having asked the Commerce Department to reconsider the Government's decision. The asking, however, fell on deaf ears. If after all this the public is expected to take the Government's professions of sympathy

at their face value, it goes without saying that the expectation is not likely to be fulfilled.

Cheaper Anti-Malaria Remedy.

SIR NASARVANJI CHOKSY earnestly pleaded in the Council of State for cheaper remedy than quinine to fight malaria. There can be no doubt about the necessity of such a remedy in view of the well-known fact that malaria annually causes in India an economic loss of Rs. 33 crores and that one-fifth of her mortality from fevers is ascribed to malaria. Quinine, though a well-recognised measure against malaria, is beyond the resources of the poor owing to its price. Its inaccessibility to the poor is now brought home even to the Government, the introduction into the market of a cheaper product of the cinchona bark called the cinchona febrifuge being a visible proof of its realisation by them. Due to various causes referred to by Sir Nasarvanji in his speech this product, however, failed to catch the popular imagination. A cheaper, though apparently not less efficacious, remedy than quinine by name totaquina is latterly coming into vogue. For this the world must remain indebted to the Malaria Commission of the League of Nations who devised it.

SIR NASARVANJI apparently holds the view that, though less expensive than quinine, it is not cheap enough to suit the pockets of the masses in this country. Else he would not have suggested the appointment of a committee consisting of medical, financial and agricultural experts. If the idea of the committee proposed by him had materialised, he would have liked it to devise a cheaper remedy even than totaquina. But he refrained from pressing his demand, seeing that a reduction in the price of quinine was, as announced by Sir Jagadish Prasad, under the active consideration of the Government. This announcement will, we doubt not, be received with considerable relief all over the country.

Panchayats in the Punjab.

IT appears from the report on the working of panchayats in the Punjab for 1934-35 that stagnation has set in in respect of the growth of the movement. Whereas in 1933-34 the number of panchayats stood at 1,127, in 1934-35 it dwindled to 1,050. During the year only 24 new panchayats came into existence, the maximum number established in any district not exceeding 4. Only one village in 35 has a panchayat. The stagnation is officially ascribed to the abolition of salaried panchayat officers who were charged with the duty of fostering the growth of these village bodies. The posts of salaried panchayat officers have now been revived and 21 of them have already been appointed. It is to be hoped that their exertions will once again stimulate the spread of the movement in the Punjab.

THE work of these officers might succeed in increasing the number of these bodies, but it would by no means solve the problem of how to make them take interest in their municipal duties, with which the Punjab Government in common with other provincial Governments is faced. During the year under report, these rural self-governing bodies are stated to have shown but little activity in the care of public roads and drains, still less in the management of wells and other watering places and in the provision of public buildings. It is the performance of their judicial functions that makes a strong appeal to them. In the Punjab 3,477 criminal cases were tried last year, of which 844 ended in conviction. The

number of civil cases disposed of by them was in the neighbourhood of 12,000, of which 8,144 resulted in decrees.

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THE remedy for impressing on panchayats the value of their municipal functions seems to be the insistence upon a stated period of probation in their

performance of these functions as a condition precedent to their being invested with judicial powers. The remedy was put into force in C. P. and, from all accounts, appears to have been attended with satisfactory results. There is no reason to suppose that action on similar lines in the Punjab will yield different results.

INCOME TAX FOR KENYA ?

WE may expect to see a big furore raised by the European community in Kenya on account of Sir Alan Pim in his report on financial readjustments in that Colony having recommended the imposition of income tax. At least twice before such a proposal was made; the Secretary of State for the Colonies accepted it; but on account of the wild threats held out by the white settlers the Colonial Secretary had to withdraw it. Already there are signs that strenuous opposition will be offered by the whites to the Pim proposal.

Kenya has the evil reputation of depending for the cost of government to much too large an extent on indirect taxation which presses heavily on the poorest section of the population, viz. native Africans, direct taxation contributing too small a portion. Income tax was first levied in 1921 at the rate of a shilling in the pound, under the orders of the Colonial Office and in spite of unanimous opposition of the unofficial European members of the Legislative Council, but the tax was evaded by all those who could do so. The yield was estimated at £328,000, but only a paltry £58,000 was actually collected. The abolition of the tax was loudly demanded by the white community and had to be agreed to by the Secretary of State, indirect taxation being increased to fill the gap in revenue. Proposals for a land tax were similarly opposed by the whites and never pressed by the Government who in effect accepted the contention of the settlers that a Colony like Kenya which awaits large development cannot receive the capital that is necessary unless direct taxes are either totally absent or at their minimum.

A proposal for the imposition of an income tax was again revived in 1932 when Lord Moyne, formerly Mr. Walter Guinness, made such a recommendation as Financial Commissioner to meet the financial crisis. He saw nothing in the European settlers' argument that income tax "would deter prospective settlers from choosing this Colony." He said: "In view of the almost universal application of this system and the high rates in force elsewhere, Kenya would still offer great advantages to intending settlers under the comparatively light scale of taxation which would be necessary if remedial action be taken in advance of a serious crisis." He pointed out that "the non-native population of Kenya are in the probably unparalleled position among civilised nations of bearing no direct taxation at all beyond a male poll tax of shs. 30, a male education tax of shs. 20 or shs. 30, and a comparatively light scale of death duties." They must bear, he insisted, larger direct taxation, and that the most appropriate form of such taxation was income tax.

The Colonial Secretary, who was then Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, agreed. He said: "Having once established that further direct taxation is necessary, I think the arguments which Lord Moyne advances in favour of income tax being the fairest and most equitable system of direct taxation are very strong indeed. Nor is this, indeed, a novelty in the Colonies. I have a list here of Colonies where income tax is already in force. I do not think Kenya could possibly be in the number of the elect who can avoid some measure of direct taxation." Both Lord Moyne and Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister were, however, unduly optimistic in holding that the white settlers would accept an income tax levy. Under the orders of the Colonial Secretary a Bill was prepared, but it met with such hostile reception at the hands of the European colonists that it had to be withdrawn. The Colonial Secretary only succeeded in getting from the colonists alternative measures of direct taxation. Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister admitted that of all forms of direct taxation income-tax "is the most scientifically and equitably adjusted form," but it was not acceptable to the powerful European interests, and therefore it must give place to what is acceptable to them.

The taxes levied in lieu of income tax were a graduated non-native poll tax rising from 1% to 5% of taxable income earned in the Colony, whereas before the non-native poll tax was at a flat rate of shs. 30 for all, an increase in the traders' licence fees and a tax on professions, etc. The income tax recommended by Lord Moyne was expected to produce £130,000 in a full year, but the net additional revenue yielded by the taxation measures adopted instead was in 1934 £47,000 (receipts from the poll tax being £33,000 and from increased licence fees £14,000) and that yielded by a levy on official salaries was about another £47,000. Yet it must not be supposed that the white settlers did not oppose even these alternative measures of taxation. They bore them for two years and began kicking at them since last year on the ground that they were accepted only as emergency measures for a temporary period and that Government was guilty of a breach of pledge when it tried to keep them on as if they were to be permanent measures. However, if they were accepted as an alternative to income tax which was of course intended as a permanent system, how could these measures be temporary? Another argument of the whites was that these taxes were no longer necessary in view of the improvement in Kenya's financial position.

They entirely omitted to consider the fact that income tax was first proposed and other direct taxes afterwards levied, with a view as much to the need for reforming the tax system as to that for putting

the finances on a solvent basis. The Treasurer brought out this point very well in the Legislative Council on 29th July last year. He said :

The question I wish to put is this : Having regard to all the circumstances of the Colony, presupposing reduction in taxation is possible within fairly narrow limits, does he (the mover of the resolution, Mr. Cavendish-Bentinck) advise Government that the burden should be removed in the manner suggested by him (i.e. by abolishing the new taxes) in priority to all other relief in other direction ? Some 13,500 people pay the minimum non-native poll tax and 10,500—including 70 to 100 who have an income of over £2,000 a year—pay more than the minimum. Does he suggest that the poorer sections of the community should remain where they are and that total relief should be given to those people who pay more than the maximum ? In other words, if £50,000 is available for taxation relief, does he really consider the relief of the graduated non-native poll tax and a modification of licences is preferable to all other methods of lightening the burden of taxation on the community as a whole ?

The natives of course stand in need of relief most urgently. Dr. Wilson said : "In view of the very heavy direct taxation on the native population of Kenya, which also has to bear the burden of indirect taxation, in view of that far heavier taxation on the native population, I consider that any proposal to reduce or abolish taxation on non-native incomes is absolutely unjustified." Archdeacon Burns said : "I hold it against all comers that the native today in this country is bearing more than his share of the taxation that must be imposed upon the people of the Colony for the running of government." But to such considerations European settlers are strangers.

We are glad to find that the Indian community of Kenya is in favour of income tax, Mr. Abdul Wahid stood out for it in 1933 and Mr. Shamsud-Deen last year. The latter said in the Legislative Council : "The whole of the Indian population is absolutely in favour of income tax, the only scientific tax which will do away for all time with all these multiplications of various taxes such as graduated non-native poll tax, professional taxes, and so forth. They are only the evils of trying to avoid a proper tax such as income tax which has been introduced in all countries." Mr. Shamsud-Deen also did well to bring to the notice of the authorities the threatening language which the European settlers hold to Government in this matter. Referring to the speech of Lord Francis Scott, he said :

When the noble Lord talks about serious trouble in the country (unless the taxes are repealed) the time has come when the Government should make it perfectly clear that if they mean to govern at all that they cannot stand these threats any longer. The noble Lord says that unless Government climbs down and tells a handful of people, " We will accept your dictatorship and would rather be governed by you than govern ourselves," there will be serious trouble—he has repeated those words. Those

words have been used before and we, as loyal subjects of His Majesty the King, cannot listen to those words being reiterated again and again. We have had enough of them !

One member, Mr. Kirkwood, went the length of saying that, in resisting the retention of direct taxation imposed earlier, he felt as if he was battling against the Germans. His exact words were : " I feel very much the same as I did at Loos, Passchendael, and on the Somme when I felt safe going over the top and facing the whole German army." Mr. Shamsud-Deen rightly intervened to rebuke the speaker for this sentiment bordering on sedition, but this is the general tone of the European members of the Kenya Legislative Council.

Sir Alan Pim's recommendation now is to repeal the emergency taxation measures and instead to impose an income tax, which at the least will be shs. 50 (equal to the education and poll tax prior to 1922) and which will be so regulated as to produce as much as the yield of the emergency measures (taken to be about £96,000) and in addition to make up for the loss that revenue will sustain (1) if the taxable age of natives subjected to poll tax is raised from 16 to 18, (2) if polygamous natives are omitted from the poll tax, and (3) if the non-native education tax is abolished that is to say, £20,000, £25,000 and £24,000 respectively ; £165,000 altogether. With regard to (1), when an Act was passed in 1934 consolidating all the previous legislation concerning the native hut and poll tax, the representatives of the natives in the Legislative Council, Mr. Hemsted and Archdeacon Burns, pleaded passionately for making natives only above the age of 18 liable for taxation. In South Africa and Uganda where natives have to pay a hut tax the age limit is 18 instead of 16. The result of keeping the age as low as 16 was thus described by the Rev. Burns :

We have in our towns a large number of boys who flock into those centres from the native reserves. They are a problem, and the authorities are up against it very often with regard to these boys, and they are also the seed-beds of criminals. A boy would have to go into Nairobi, provided he has no means and the father cannot provide the hut and other taxes, he would have to leave the reserve to come to some centre or some farm between 15 and 16 years of age ; and I submit, Sir, that that should not be the case in practically compelling these boys to leave the reserves at fifteen and a half years of age to come to centres or to go on farms to produce their hut and poll tax.

It is difficult to believe that this proposal for the introduction of income tax will be more successful now than the previous ones or that after the rap on the knuckles that the Colonial Secretaries received when they dared to thrust income tax on the Colony the present one, Mr. Ormsby-Gore, will be so rash as to impose it on the white settlers, however just and necessary it may be.

EUROPEAN DEVALUATIONS AND INDIAN CURRENCY.

THE bubble of the franc has at last burst. The French Government had been fighting shy of the inevitable and under the influence of an outworn orthodox monetary philosophy, which not only got France herself into deeper and deeper water

but also held up the progress of international monetary negotiations, had been straining every nerve to remain on the old gold parity. The result was that the industry and agriculture of France, as well as of the other countries which adhered to the gold pact, were

put through a grinding deflation, with unemployment, indebtedness and severely adverse balance of payments piling up from month to month. The fetish of gold dies hard, but even so the pact into which the Latin nations had entered was no more than a gold suicide pact. It was a good thing, therefore, that M. Blum (who began with professions to the contrary) decided to devalue, because thus he enabled the gold bloc to enjoy a new monetary freedom which is bound to relieve it to no small extent. With the defection of the franc, there comes into existence a new "devalued" gold bloc, consisting of the dollar, the belga, the mark, the franc and the Swiss franc, with their satellites. Still the sterling area remains by far the largest currency area comprising more than three-fourths of the currencies of the world of varying importance. The Dutch guilder will in all probability be aligned with sterling at lower parity, while the Italian policy is still nebulous. The world is thus broadly divided into the two areas: sterling and gold. However, as J. M. Keynes points out in a recent article, the variation of the sterling exchange *vis-à-vis* the gold currencies during 1935 has been within the narrow range of 2% as compared with a range of 15% in the previous year. This means that the sterling area is virtually on some sort of gold standard. The way is thus now clear for the so-called international currency stabilisation.

The era of currency stabilisation has thus arrived. The questions, however, to be decided are whether, firstly, this is going to lead to any substantial measure of recovery in world trade and employment; secondly, whether it will cause a rise or a fall in the future value of gold; and thirdly, whether there are likely to be any adverse or favourable repercussions of this event on Indian currency and commerce.

Unstable exchanges have been only one of the many factors hindering the free commercial intercourse of nations; quotas, empire preferences, prohibitions and exchange clearance arrangements have all had their share of responsibility in the matter. It is unlikely that any or all of these things would disappear in the near future. The predominant force necessitating trade protectionism of various kinds has been the disastrous fall of prices which has made the indigenous producer in each country jealous of the foreigner. The success of exchange stabilisation in achieving freer international trade depends, therefore, on two things. It will depend, in the first place, upon the success with which the various Exchange Equalisation Accounts are able to maintain the new parities selected; and, in the second, upon the rapidity with which the devaluations will be expediting the desired rise of prices. The Exchange Equalisation Accounts are being fed with the "vomited" gold from the East and with the new gold supplies made available by enormous increases in production in Russia, Canada, South Africa, and elsewhere. The West today has assumed the condemned role of the "sink for gold" given up by the East. And yet, the basic inequalities and maldistributions of gold stocks among the principal Central Banks of the world still persist. A large proportion of the total monetary gold of the world is

still concentrated in the U.S.A., France and England. It seems unlikely, therefore, that the exchange policies of the poorer, "have-not" nations would succeed under the new rules of the gold standard game.

On the other hand, it is highly dubious whether mere devaluations by themselves would be sufficient to raise prices and thus facilitate a fundamental realignment between costs and prices. Simultaneous devaluations among various countries only mean that their relative positions will be the same as before. It is highly unlikely, however, that the devaluations will be combined with any policy of currency expansions, as the new relationship between gold reserves and currencies will not be such as to bring about automatic, proportionate contractions and expansions in currency. According to the recent monetary survey of the League of Nations, the currencies which had either gone off gold or been devaluated provided the countries concerned with some recovery; but it must be admitted that this measure of recovery in the non-gold countries was largely at the expense of the gold-standard countries. The situation showed little intrinsic improvement by way of internal reflation of prices. The devaluation of European currencies will now mean the removal of this competitive advantage. There are no signs yet, on the other hand, of any determined effort on the part of the liberated monetary areas towards the rehabilitation of prices. In the absence of concerted action for raising prices, therefore, the conclusion is inescapable that the world will once more experience another currency tussle involving either competitive devaluations or all the old possibilities of a disrupted international standard. At any rate, the European devaluations, it is clear, cannot provide any panaceas for the world's immediate or future troubles.

The gold situation is somewhat more obscure. Immediately, there is bound to be a scramble for gold of a new kind, as the various Equalisation Funds will be requiring and absorbing large quantities of gold. New gold is available in enormous quantities too. Communist Russia is catering for this luxury of the capitalist world and it is estimated that by 1940 the Russian gold output will even outdistance the South African output. Apart from increased mining activity, which is a world-wide feature today, the new gold craze is attracting the Eastern hoards. All this will surely more than meet the new demand. Gold prices have gone up temporarily during the last week, as a result of ignorant speculation. The sterling and rupee prices, however, of gold promise to be liable to a setback in the near future, owing to adverse exchange arbitrages. The distant future is not so clear. If any opinion can be hazarded, I think, the Western nations will probably sooner or later realise the folly of locking up in a barren form enormous national resources just for the fetish of an exchange stability. When that happens, as it is slowly happening in the case of silver hoarding in America to-day, a plethora of gold will be thrown on the world market and currencies will be operated on the undoubtedly simpler, more economical and more efficient plan of internal management (which is not inconsistent with a

relative exchange stability). When the huge levianthan of monetary gold is thus mobilised for sale, there will be a general stampede and gold will probably sell at one anna per tola!

From the Indian standpoint, it is inevitable that the European devaluations should work as a further hindrance in the way of India's export trade with Europe. Her foreign balance, which is already very heavily adverse, will probably be in an even worse predicament. India has been clamouring for a further measure of depreciation in terms of gold especially *vis-à-vis* her competitors who have been able to undersell her in her own markets and trades. The much-vaunted rise of prices is still far from sight, while we have today some kind of stability of prices which are at a dead level far below our rigid costs. The European devaluations are bound to make this position decidedly worse and are likely to aggravate unemployment and indebtedness in this country. The improvement in international trade, if any, will not be shared by India for reasons which have been already stressed. In these circumstances, I feel, in the interests of India's agriculture, industry and commerce, it will be very soon imperative for the Government of India to take some action in establishing the rupee at an exchange and price level at which the Indian economy would find its proper balance and equilibrium.

B. P. ADARKAR.

THE CAPITAL PROBLEM OF ORISSA.

WHATEVER might be the merits of the report of the Site Selection Committee for Orissa, there cannot be any doubt about the fact that it has given rise to bitter discontent among the people. The people of Cuttack were absolutely certain that if any day Orissa was constituted a separate province, then Cuttack would surely be selected as its capital. This was not without reason. From time immemorial, Cuttack has always been the capital of Orissa. When the British conquered the Province, they made Cuttack the head-quarters of the Commissioner. The first Arts College of Orissa was established at Cuttack; so also the Training College, Engineering School, Medical School and many other institutions besides. As matters stand at present, Cuttack is the most populous town of Orissa, with a number of public buildings and institutions which no other town in Orissa can boast of. A large number of lawyers and public-spirited men belong to and stay in Cuttack and it is from among them that the best leaders of Orissa have sprung up. Long before the formation of a separate province for the Oriyas, whenever the Oriya leaders put forward the claim for a separate province of their own, they always pointed to Cuttack as their future capital. When the Hubback Committee was appointed in 1933, with the present Governor of Orissa as its Chairman, to decide which place should become the capital of Orissa, all the public men of Orissa unanimously gave evidence before it in favour of Cuttack being made the capital. So it was in 1933 that the Hubback Committee recommended Cuttack for being the capital of Orissa.

It is not as if the Hubback Committee did not take into consideration the opinions of the engineers. The Committee was assisted in this respect by Mr. Gubbay, the then Chief Engineer of the Bihar and Orissa Government and also Mr. E. R. Smith. Mr. Gubbay recommended the Chauhatta part of the town of Cuttack as being suitable for building the secretariat and the Government house. The Hubback Committee concurred with this view and fixed upon Cuttack as the capital of Orissa. This gave rise naturally to certain expectations and speculation. Rich and influential people started building residences at Cuttack. Other sites were purchased for speculative purposes. Everything seemed to be settled. But unfortunately for the people of Cuttack, when the Chief Architect of the Government of India visited the place to inspect the site meant for building the Government house and the secretariat, he expressed the opinion that the site was water-logged and unhealthy and that therefore the Government house could not be constructed on that site. Whatever be the value of this expert opinion of the Government of India architect, it cannot be denied that in this case he differed from the Chief Engineer of Bihar and Orissa and it is this difference among the experts that is the most unfortunate episode of the situation. The moment Cuttack was declared unsuitable for being made the capital, local patriotism was roused in many parts of Orissa. The people of Ganjam wanted to have the capital within their district. The people of Sambalpur and Puri also made a similar demand. Local jealousies were roused and people were acutely divided on the question of the selection of the capital. This led to most lamentable disunity in Orissa. At a time when the new constitution is about to be inaugurated, instead of concentrating their energies upon bigger and broader problems, they frittered them away in quarrelling over the capital issue. Finally, a decision about the capital was arrived at by the Jones Committee, which left most of the people utterly dissatisfied and discontented.

Agreeing for the time being that Cuttack is an unhealthy place, though it was not so regarded for the last 120 years by the Orissa Government, should the healthiness of a place be the sole qualification for making it the capital of the Government of Orissa? Are past history and importance, presence of valuable public institutions, geographical and commercial importance of no consideration at all? Yet which other place in Orissa combines all these advantages in so eminent a degree as Cuttack does? Rangleilunda might be a very healthy place, but how much money will the Orissa Government have to spend in order to make that waste-land worthy of Orissa's capital? Will not the people of Orissa be put to very great expense by reason of their coming and settling in the new capital? Will this not have the result of affecting seriously the population and the importance of the town of Cuttack? Orissa is a very poor province and its resources should not be frittered away in building up a town in a place where it can have no reasonable prospect of growth. Rather should the resources of the Government be directed towards embellishing and perfecting a town which already has

acquired considerable importance and only requires the help of the Government to blossom forth into a full-fledged provincial capital. After all, the climate of Cuttack cannot be so fatally unhealthy. Otherwise 60,000 people could not have lived there for so long a time without running away to some other place. But what is more wonderful still, Cuttack's population is not only not stationary; it is increasing by rapid strides. By the 1911 census, its population was 52,000; in 1931 it amounted to 65,000. So let not the Government of India make a fetish of the unhealthiness of Cuttack. In consideration of its past history, its population, its commercial and geographical importance, let it make Cuttack the capital of Orissa, and it will see that the decision will satisfy public opinion.

S. S. M.

Reviews.

TRANSLATION OF THE GITA RAHASYA.

SHRIMAD BHAGAVADGITA RAHASYA OR KARMA-YOGA-SASTRA, VOL. II. By BAL GANGADHAR TILAK. TRS. into English by BHALCHANDRA SITARAM SUKTHANKAR. (Tilak Bros., Poona, 2.) 1936. 22cm. 621-1210+x/viip. Rs. 4.

THE importance of Lokamanya Tilak's *magnum opus* in Marathi, namely the Gita-rahasya, was pointed out in a review of the first volume of the translation into English of that book (see the SERVANT OF INDIA of Nov. 14, 1935.) The second volume of the translation fulfils the expectations raised by the first volume. It begins with chapter fourteenth of that work which brings out in a masterly survey of the book the relations of each of the *adhyayas* of the Gita to the succeeding one and to the whole of the work. Chapter XV is meant to give a synoptic view of the Gita, emphasising, of course, Mr. Tilak's interpretation of it as a work preaching a life of high-souled disinterested action as against a life of pure contemplation, undisturbed by, and uninterested in, mundane happenings. The first two appendices treat of the relation of the Gita to the Mahabharata and the Upanishads. In the third we have the interesting theory of the identity of the authorship of the Gita and the Brahmasutras, based on cross references to each other found in the two works and on a peculiar interpretation of a verse in the XIII *adhyaya*, namely—

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्देवैः पृथक्
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥

The other appendices treat of the rise of the Bhagawat dharma and its relation to the Gita, the time when the Gita was probably written, and finally the relation of the Gita to the Buddhist literature and to the Christian Bible. The last one tears to pieces the fantastic claims of some of the Christian Missionaries as to the indebtedness of the Gita to the Bible. The volume closes with a word to word translation of Mr. Sukthan-

kar's translation of the verses of the Gita and his explanatory notes thereon. His translation of the verses is in many cases very ingenious, and in a case or two so clever as to create a suspicion as to its correctness. (The emphasis on the word तस्य in तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते seems overdone.)

Mr. Sukthankar, the translator, is to be congratulated on his successful completion of the stupendous and responsible task he had undertaken. He has laid under obligations those oriental scholars who are interested in Sanskrit literature and who keenly feel the necessity of translations into English of those works in the vernaculars of India which, like the *Gita-rahasya* of Lokamanya Tilak, contribute not a little to the better understanding of works in Sanskrit.

V. M. JOSHI.

MATTER, MYTH AND SPIRIT.

MATTER, MYTH AND SPIRIT. By DOROTHEA CHAPLIN. (Rider.) 1935. 22cm. 224p. 8/6.

THE subject of the book, only remotely suggested by its name, concerns itself with the problem of probable cultural connections between ancient India and the prehistoric relics in the British Isles, such as the emblems of the Boars and the Bulls, the Elephants and the Serpents. It is suggested that ancient Indians had reached America in their conquering and colonising expeditions and many North and Central American place and tribal names are reminiscent of Sanskrit words: Canada (Kanada), Niagara (Nirjhara), Narada (Narada), Rama (Rama), Pipal (Pippal) and Ohio (Ahee-Serpent)! Shamanism, the religious belief of the Polar Eskimos and the North American Indians, is derived from the Shramanas. Striking as these resemblances are, one cannot help feeling that great care and moderation have to be exercised before such similarities are made the foundations of far-reaching theories. Following the method of comparative mythology, the author finds that in the Mayas of Central America the fish, the turtle and the boar figure prominently and it is well-known that they are the first three incarnations of Vishnu in Indian mythology. The Orkney Islands derive their name from Orc, which means boar. There are two ancient boar carvings, one in Knock-gael in Inverness and the other in Dunadd fortress in Argyll. Ganesh is represented in a grotto at Margate in Kent and at Rheims in France with a rat above his head. The route by which the Aryan influences might have travelled to the British Isles lay across the Miocene Bridge or Behring Straits and then further by the Gulf Stream. Tara is a common figure to Hindu and Celtic mythology. Shoshonees were the oldest inhabitants of Mexico, many of whom are called snakes. Astik may have lent his name to Aztecs! Ravana in his expedition to Patala or Rasatala is reported to have subdued Nagas and Nevata-Kavachas. Nevada is derivable from Nevata. The Shweta-Dweep referred to in many of the ancient works is nothing but England.

Mrs. Dorothea Chaplin weaves the threads of archeology, mythology and religion in a strikingly bold method of interpretation which she has successfully employed to bring closer together widely different cultures. The book is more suggestive than demonstrative, and will be found to be stimulating by all those who are interested in ancient history and culture of mankind.

D. G. LONDHE.

“RAMASWAMY” IN MALAYA.

The following excerpts are taken from the Annual Report of the Labour Department, Malaya, for the year 1936, by Mr. J. M. Barron, Acting Controller of Labour:

IN view of the economic and social changes that have taken place in Malaya during the past decade, an attempt is made below to put on record a brief statement as to the life of the Indian labourer in Malaya, his mode of living and his recreations. The labourer—generally referred to as “Ramaswamy” by the planting community—varies considerably in his attitude towards work and leisure but the three main races that come to Malaya show definite specific characteristics which divide them from each other, as do their physiognomies, clothes, and customs.

The humorous and cheerful Tamil is industrious and willing while work is in progress and his conversations show an intelligent interest in the facts of his employment but once his morning's labours are over he prefers to wander and even his allotment—save in slump times—usually bores him. Conversations with friends and visits to neighbouring kampongs attract him elsewhere. He is very inquisitive by nature and slow to take offence seriously. He is economical but not as thrifty as the Telugu who had been known in Malaya to stint himself rigorously in his ambition to save quickly and return to India. The Telugu is more industrious than the Tamil but less patient, more easily offended, more reserved and less cheerful; he is less of an individualist and keener to return to India. The Telugu tills his allotments carefully, the whole family taking part in this use of leisure. He is very clannish and where a Tamil's grievance would be regarded by his friends or relatives as purely his own private concern, the Telugus in similar circumstances would take up the question in a body as their joint affair. Both the Tamil and the Telugu are tolerant and peaceful, but dangerously excitable and pugnacious when roused and in this respect they afford a contrast to the Malayali who is much more peaceful though more imaginative in his framing of complaints and less inclined to move away from his place of employment. Correlated with this it may be noted that the Malayali is more loyal to his immediate superiors than the other two races. The standard of living seems to be highest among Malayalis and lowest among Telugus, and the lines inhabited by Malayalis are as a rule much cleaner than those of Tamils who are in turn superior to Telugus in this respect. The similarity of the Malayan and Malabar climates may have something to do with this. Both are humid.

Striking exceptions appear from time to time, and with regard to the general dislike by Tamils of afternoon work it may be noted that a case came to light a few years ago in which it was shown that a Tamil gang worked on an estate in the mornings, tapped rubber in native holdings in the afternoons and undertook contract work on mines in the evenings, a round which might appeal to the Chinese vegetable gardener but which perplexed the officer whose duty it is to collect assessment for the Indian Immigration Fund on work done by South Indian labourers.

On estates the labourer usually lives in lines, but there has been a very gratifying increase within recent years in the number of estates on which semi-detached houses or separate huts are provided. By night and day the windows of the Telugu or Tamil hut are closed, for the labourer has the Continental dislike of draughts. The Malayali, however, airs his rooms by day and sets his clothing out to dry daily. Near the lines are found the temple and the allotments, but

the latter are not as popular as cattle-tending, fishing, crab catching, hunting, and conversations. Other forms of enterprise are pig or rabbit rearing. In one estate the labourers reared guinea-pigs for the table. The women in their spare time, if they live near towns or villages, collect firewood or grass for sale. In close proximity too are the piped water supplies or wells and more remote is usually a river or brook in which laughing crowds splash and swim while others test the hardness of stones with their laundry. The Indian dhoby flourishes in Malaya, but it is curious that he has not attempted to utilise the donkey as a means of transport. In South India the dhoby's donkey is indispensable.

Card-playing is not common, but is growing in popularity in town, a favourite game being “304” which derives its name from the total value of the pack, the ace counting 11, the king 3, the queen 2, the knave 30, the ten 10, and the nine 20, giving a total of 76 for each suit or 304 for all four. Each man makes an auction bid once only in each game. The highest bidder—the maximum being “304”—throws down one card and names it as trumps, and each person plays in turn. Other recreations are not—contrary to popular belief—confined to garrulous and lightning-rapid oratory concerning money or matrimony. In the coastal areas as well as inland, Tamils from even the inland districts of India develop into keen and skilful fishermen while their skill at crab-catching is superb. In the Kedah, Province Wellesley and Krian areas their important association with the harvesting of padi is of long standing and annually Tamil families return to their estates with great sacks of padi representing payment in kind for their services. A common but by no means welcome sight to the Public Works Department engineer in flat areas is the damming of roadside drains and the extraction of mud-fish from the pools by gangs of busy Tamils.

The Tamil drama is not perhaps as common now on estates as in former days, but it still plays a very welcome part in the life of the labourer and his dependants who gaze in awe at the incongruously attired cast which may include, at the one time, a warrior of the Stone Age, a Saracen, a Sepoy, and a gorgeous Rajah—all equipped with magnificent moustaches without which a man cannot be a warrior. The erection of the stage, the selection and making of costumes, and the arrangement of parts are the subject of long and careful deliberation and the keenness of the company sometimes leads to serious arguments. The scenery is ante-Elizabethan in its nudity but imagination fills in the gaps successfully. The subjects of these dramas are mainly derived from legendary history, and singing occupies much of the time. Songs—often highly libellous—and the telling of stories help to pass the evening and play no small part in the education of the labourer whose prodigious memory—well brought out in litigation or financial arguments—enables him to recall the minutest detail in a way that explains how sagas and perhaps the “Iliad” were transmitted orally from generation to generation.

Chess or draughts as such are not generally played by labourers but they have a game “The Tigers and the Dogs,” corresponding, in a way, to the English “Fox and Geese,” in which one player endeavours to move his three pawns through the opposing lines of 15 pawns. It is usually the centre of a keen crowd of spectators from which come uninvited advice and criticism as readily as from the onlooker at a Ladies' Bridge Four. It is played with stones on a diagram consisting of three adjoining vertical triangles which are intersected by two adjoining rectan-

gles giving 23 points to which the stones may move.

Festivals and marriages are the occasion of big celebrations, the Penang and the Batu Caves "Thaypusam" festival being a memorable occasion on which noisy good humour, religious enthusiasm, new and gaily coloured clothes combine to make a great day. "Thaypusam"—the birthday of the God Subramania—is a day of worship and penance and is perhaps the most important. "Deepavali", another great festival, marks the commemoration of liberation from the tyrannical rule of the demon-king Narakasura by Lord Vishnu who killed the monster. It is a day of worship and rejoicing.

Marriage is the biggest event in the social life of the labourer, and there is no mere registration formality about it. In contrast to the practice among better class Hindus, there is no horoscopic determination of the suitability of the match or the date of the wedding. The ceremonies and ritual vary from caste to caste and cannot be described in this note in detail or even generally. The Tamil in India generally marries his sister's daughter or his cousin but this is not so common in Malaya. There is little evidence of child marriage in this country, the girl being usually given in marriage when she is about 16. All is arranged by the respective parents and at the engagement the bridegroom's father visits the bride's home and hands to her parents, in the presence of elders, jewels and clothes for the girl. The bridegroom is not permitted to attend this ceremony. On the appointed day the "thali"—a string with a gold or silver ornament attached—is tied round the neck of the bride. In the Federated Malay States and Kedah the marriage is sometimes registered by the parties. The practice of giving "Stridhanam," i.e., the giving of a dowry, including money, jewels, and property by the parents of the bride, is not prevalent among labourers. If the parties are poor, the "parisam" ceremony is dispensed with and the marriage takes place in the temple in the presence of a priest and elders. Usually the marriage is performed in the bride's house.

Labourers are religious and there are very few estates which do not possess a temple while few caves or banyan trees escape the erection of a shrine. In the temple precincts labourers play "Tigers and Dogs," tell stories and have disputes settled by their panchayat—a committee of five elders. Most of the temples are dedicated to either of the gods Subramanian or Mariamman and the priest in charge, known as a "Pandaram" or "Pusari," is almost always a non-Brahmin. A "Panchayat" is a most useful body and should be more carefully fostered and encouraged than is at present the case.

Caste distinctions are not as strong in Malaya as in India and in 1935 the "Adi-Dravidas" or "untouchables" were admitted to the opening of the new Mariamman Temple in Queen Street, Penang, a remarkable instance of the growth of the new spirit of tolerance. Nevertheless on estates it is necessary to provide caste-men with separate accommodation from the Adi-Dravidas, though quarrels between the two bodies are not common, the origin of these troubles being usually due to the arrival of newcomers. In one estate in Province Wellesley, despite the fact that a large number of the labourers are locally born or old residents, the caste labourers complained in 1935 that the Adi-Dravidas did "not exhibit the same respectful inferiority as in India." In time, however, caste distinctions will probably die out in Malaya.

As regards athletics, the Tamil is hardly interested save as a spectator and he does not possess the equivalent of the Telugu sport club or the excellent Malayalam quarter staff. Football fields, have, how-

ever, been provided on some estates where the game of "Soccer" has taken on. Sports are sometimes organised by keen planters, the Bantau Meeting of 1932 being an outstanding success. It is, however, considered that visitors do not play the game when they beat a "home-team" on its own ground.

The Tamil, but not the Telugu or Malayali, mixes easily and up-country amid his tolerant Malay or Chinese neighbours he moves interestedly, accumulating information, imitating their ways and improving his own standards. In a short while he picks up a working knowledge of the Malay language, though the Malay who is a born mimic is not slow in making use of the curious results in his theatrical performances. (The growing use of Malay has been very marked within recent years and in Province Wellesley it is probable that there are few Tamil labourers who cannot at least boast a smattering of Malay.) Except as a gardener to a house, Ramaswamy does not appear to be keen on the cultivation of flowers and is inferior to the Malay or Chinese in his reaction to scenery, but he outdoes them in his love of animals and with him cattle and goats are as docile as dogs.

In the towns the standards of living of Tamils have altered remarkably in recent years. Even more so than his rural brother, the urban Ramaswamy has taken to singlets, shirts, coats, trousers, and even shoes, and the sight of a South Indian clad only in a diminutive loin-cloth is now rare save among toddy tappers whose occupation demands a scarcity of attire. Thanks to the instalment system and the cheapness of bicycles, labourers in towns—and also in rural areas—own large numbers of bicycles the use of which is learned on the high roads to the dismay of motorists. The urban labourer is influenced very strongly by the example of his neighbours and his customs and habits in consequence improve for the better. In Singapore it is said that Tamils commonly use mosquito-nets, a precaution which, although sometimes necessary up-country, is not of frequent application there. The experience on most estates which have made the experiment has been that free issues of mosquito-nets merely mean an increase in the size as well as in the number of new turbans.

In towns many South Indian labourers supplement earnings by acting as half-time gardeners, lamplighters, wood-choppers, and water-carriers. The townsman is more industrious than his rural brother in this respect, and in this connection it may be noted that there is a night school for municipal labourers in Singapore which is well-attended. One competent observer in Singapore writes as follows:

Labourers in Singapore have reduced expenditure by giving up wasteful customs to a large extent. ("Deepavali" the only day in the year on which they are apt to be reckless—no celebration is complete without a visit to the Raffles Museum). But loans for this purpose or for expensive marriages and funerals are difficult to obtain. The labourers in Singapore have started a night school co-operatively and the movement seems likely to spread.

The younger generation has discarded cigars in favour of cigarettes and sport the electric torch as a sign of superior standing. Ramaswamy likes crowds, and flocks to all possible Turf meetings, but he is keenest on the chase. Wherever the jungle is near, the Tamil labourers gather in bands to hunt the pig and Ramaswamy is an intrepid and untiring hunter. He is observant and quick and can curiously control his garrulity until the end of the day when his doings are recited to an admiring crowd. Within the last decade the most surprising advance has been in connection with the co-operative thrift movement which has made a wide appeal to the labourer. When one thinks of the hesitation of the labourer twenty years back in trusting his money to any investment which

did not include money-lending, or jewels or cattle or goats it is difficult to avoid a feeling of amazement that the co-operative movement with its comparatively low return should have made such great strides and in so short a time.

Altogether the Indian labourer never finds himself at a loss for amusement or recreation, and he improves as a result of his sojourn in Malaya. On page 93 of the Census of India, 1931, Volume XIV, Madras Part I Report, Mr. M. W. M. Yeatts states :

One social effect of emigration has been a growth in independence and self-respect on the part of the depressed classes who go abroad.

Labourers from well-run estates generally bring back to their village some of the ideas on cleanliness, food and comfort acquired while abroad. Evidences of this are to be seen in many South Indian villages and I have myself on several occasions had pointed out to me a house differing markedly from its neighbours as being that of someone who had been to Malaya or Ceylon.

Correspondence.

FIRST AND LAST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—Addressing the last joint session of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly on September 21 last, the Viceroy referred in a complacent mood to the "impressive" contrast presented by the dictator-ridden and strife-racked Europe to the "splendid vision" of the British statesmen which is about to inaugurate in this country "an experiment which for breadth of conception and boldness of design is without parallel in history."

Criticisms and appraisals of the Viceroy's speech have very naturally been concentrated on that part of his speech which deals with this "achievement" of the British genius in an alien land, and there is nothing new that can be added to them by a layman at this late hour. H. E. Lord Linlithgow's speech, however, recalls faint memories of another Viceroy's speech delivered on a similar occasion. A perusal of that other speech is instructive and revealing. Speaking at the first joint session of both the central legislatures under Montford reforms on February 9, 1921 the then Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford, characterised the era that was ushered in by those reforms as an era when

For the first time the principle of autocracy which had not been wholly discarded in all earlier reforms was definitely abandoned; the conception of the British Government as a benevolent despotism was finally renounced; and in its place was substituted that of a guiding authority whose role it would be to assist the steps of India along the road that in the fulness of time would lead to complete self-government within the Empire.

The present Viceroy expresses almost the identical sentiments but,—a Scotchman that he is—with the utmost economy of words. The reforms embodied in the Government of India Act 1935, he says, "involve nothing less than the discarding of the old ideas of Imperialism for new ideas of partnership and co-operation."

It will be seen that Lord Linlithgow has done nothing more than to paraphrase in modern language the ancient shibboleth of Lord Chelmsford.

As regards the "new ideas of partnership", I can do nothing better than quote from the Rt. Hon. V.S.S. Sastri's speech at the session of the Liberal Federation at Calcutta in April 1933. Speaking on the White Paper Mr. Sastri referred to the "somewhat remarkable change that has appeared in the attitude of our rulers today," and said :

For a long time they have called themselves the trustees for the people of India. Suddenly Sir Samuel Hoare has changed the phraseology. He now says that the people of Britain are partners with the people of India. The trustee has promoted himself to a position of even greater intimacy or association with those for whom he was trustee, so that, the safeguards have now to be not in the interest of India.... They have got to be in the common interest of India and the United Kingdom.

The people of India asked for partnership in the Commonwealth of British Nations and are given a partnership in their *own* house with a foreigner. I shall not trouble you to find out what the law says when a trustee usurps the share of his ward and becomes a partner in his estate.—Yours. etc.

Poona,

M. D. S.

October 4.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN HYDRABAD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—Apropos the editorial note published in your issue of the 3rd instant, allow me, as one of the sponsors of the measure, to clarify my position.

(a) Regarding compulsory education for girls, I consider that compulsion right away, in the case of female education, while there are numerous difficulties in the way of applying compulsion to boys themselves, would result in necessary delay and opposition, and the whole scheme may be discredited. I believe that if we introduce compulsion as regards boys first and get the people accustomed to it, there will be less difficulty in introducing compulsion against girls a little later.

(b) I have not postponed the scheme till the inauguration of independent local bodies, but I have stated in unmistakable terms that where there are Local Fund Committees (I might mention that they do exist in a majority of districts) the work may be entrusted to them, but where there are no such bodies the work may be entrusted to school bodies which will be created for this purpose. It is contrary to facts to say that I have left the operation of my scheme to non-existent bodies. On the other hand, I think I have dealt with the matter in a more realistic manner.

(c) I have made equal provision in the case of parents who need the help of their children for agricultural purposes. There is no difference on this point in Mr. Naik's bill and mine.—Yours, etc.

M. AKBAR ALI KHAN.

Hyderabad,
Sept. 18.

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CONTENTS.

	Page
TOPICS OF THE WEEK	481
ARTICLES :—	
A Patriotic Front or A People's Front?	484
Growth of World Armaments.	486
REVIEWS :—	
Hindu-Muslim Problem. By R. G. Pradhan, B.A., LL.B.	488
World Peace Problem. By Prof. G. B. Jathar, I.E.S.	489
Growth of British Empire. By Prof. M. V. Subrah- manyam, M.A., L.T.	489
SHORT NOTICES.	490
MISCELLANEA :—	
Mr. Kodanda Rao in the West Indies.	490
Depressed Classes Mission, Mangalore—Annual Day Celebration.	492

Topics of the Week.

Will Gandhiji Return to Politics ?

DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA poses this question in the *Hindustan Times*, and while he cannot give a confident answer to it he thinks there are no insuperable difficulties in the Mahatma's come-back. The reasons that Gandhiji himself assigned for his retirement from politics no doubt operate in full force, but they may soon disappear. One of these reasons is the parliamentary mentality which has come to take hold of the Congress. This, if anything, is even stronger now than before, but Dr. Pattabhi feels that, after a few years' experience of the legislatures, the parliamentary wing of the Congress may share Gandhiji's own view that the Legislative Councils "are the institutions through which the enemy consolidates his strength and power in the land", as Meesra Das, Nehru and Vithalbai Patel did soon after their break from Gandhi-ism. The Councils may become anathema to Messrs. Bhulabbai and Satyamurti and others as they are to him, and all may join together in launching again on civil disobedience.

CORRUPTION in Congress elections was another reason that led Mahatmaji to retire into his shell. In this respect too a reformation may come. Then the other causes that drove Gandhiji from active politics were the growth of socialism and the assertiveness of the Indian States' people. On the first question he sees a possibility of the socialists themselves accepting his point of view and on the second he sees on the other hand a possibility of Gandhiji accepting the point of view of the States' people. All this is of course admittedly a speculation, but except that

socialists have already shown a tendency to give in to the Mahatma, it is difficult to believe that things will fall out as Dr. Pattabhi envisages. If Gandhiji does return to politics he will find that, on account of the new constitution, the situation has completely changed in respect of civil disobedience too. Such a movement of direct action will be far more difficult to conduct hereafter, for the simple reason that most of the departments of State, including law and order, will ostensibly at any rate be in Indian hands.

Peace in Palestine.

THE general strike or really revolt of the Arabs in Palestine has come to an end, thanks to the mediation of four rulers of the surrounding Arab countries. This is all to the good, but it would be a grievous mistake to imagine that Arab grievances are at an end. These will no doubt be inquired into by the Peel Commission, but if the Commission's report is favourable to the Arabs the danger is that the report will be shelved, as the reports of the Shaw Commission, Sir John Hope-Simpson and Mr. Lewis French were all practically shelved. All these reports point to the great difficulty, if not impossibility, of giving effect to the Balfour declaration in favour of the Jewish National Home except to a very small extent. Time has come to relate the colonisation of Jews to the Arab methods of cultivation in a more intimate manner than has yet been done. Another important factor which the British Government has to keep in mind is the solidarity of the Arab people, as the intervention of the rulers of neighbouring countries which led to the restoration of peace itself shows. The British Government must realise that they have to reach a settlement, not with the Arabs of Palestine alone but with the Arabs of the whole Arab Peninsula, Jaziratul Arab.

Indians and Staff College.

DESPITE indignant public protests, the pace of Indianisation of the officer ranks of the Indian army as judged by the annual intake of 60 of the Indian Sandhurst is annoyingly slow. But that apparently is not the only means in bureaucratic hands for delaying the consummation of complete Indianisation as long as possible. The Staff College at Quetta provides higher military education to officers of requisite experience. The military training imparted here may, we suppose, be likened, roughly speaking, to the post-graduate training provided for in universities. Unless a sufficient number of Indian military officers successfully pass through the Staff College, it is obvious there can be little hope of complete Indianisation ever taking place, even supposing that the wear and tear in the Indian army is completely replaced by Indian officers.