

# Servant of India

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## Topics of the Week.

### Costly Anachronism.

THE All-India Medical Conference which held a successful session at Karachi had for its president Rai Bahadur Dr. B. N. Vyas. In the course of his address he gave faithful expression to the attitude of the general public as also of the independent medical profession towards the I.M.S. It cannot be denied that the I.M.S. has in the past rendered valuable services and Dr. Vyas was by no means niggardly in his compliments to it on that score. But he feels that the Service has long outlived its use and the sooner its is scrapped, the better. Even if the discontinuance of the I.M.S. as a whole is not immediately feasible, there is absolutely no reason, he thinks, for retaining its civil side. This is officially described as a war reserve, which ground is in fact cited as an excuse against ending its life. But it will be easily seen that the continuance of this part of the I.M.S. has the effect of foisting on the civil population what is essentially a military service. And this can never be looked upon as a satisfactory arrangement. It may, however, be conceded that its continuance would have had some show of reason if an independent medical profession were altogether non-existent in India. Can even the most indiscriminating champion of the I.M.S. suggest its absence by way of a justification of the status quo without looking ridiculous? Few will doubt that the war reserve of the I.M.S. is thus a costly anachronism which must be put a stop to as early as possible.

THE problem of qualified unemployed medical men also engaged the attention of the president of the

Conference. Here it is apparently not a case of lack of work so much as want of readiness on the part of medical men to go where work awaits them. It is estimated that the number of qualified people engaged in the practice of medicine in this country is about 25,000. Even if to this is added the number of vaidyas, hakims, etc., Dr. Vyas believes it is a mere drop in the ocean when the requirements of the total population are considered. Why then should doctors not be fully employed? The reason is, according to Dr. Vyas, their desire to settle only in large towns and cities. This has led to a congestion in the medical profession in urban areas. If they would only turn their attention to the villages, there is good reason to hope that they would not suffer from want of work.

ANOTHER direction in which some of them could be absorbed was indicated by Dr. Vyas. It is the development of industries for the manufacture of simple chemicals needed for medical purposes. Research on indigenous drugs is bringing to light their medicinal value. The utilisation of the products of such research can also, Dr. Vyas said, provide employment to some medical graduates. All these are matters of particular interest to the members of the medical profession and no one can quarrel with the Conference for devoting so much attention to them. But what the general public is more immediately concerned with is the problem of the cheapening of medical relief. On account of the heavy fees charged by doctors no less than by practitioners of the indigenous systems of medicine people of moderate means have very often to go without medical relief. Will not the Conference devote its attention to this pressing problem and think out some means of bringing medical relief within the easy reach of persons of modest means?

### Bhor People's Grievances.

THE people of Sudhagad taluka in Bhor State recently met in their annual conference under the presidency of Mr. G. M. Panse, a well-known public worker in the State. A considerable portion of Mr. Panse's address was devoted to proving that politically speaking, Bhor was not only not moving in the direction of progress but in the contrary direction. In support of this contention Mr. Panse adduced several proofs. The recent amendments of the Legislative Council rules have, instead of widening the scope of its work, restricted it. Whereas in the first two Councils popular representatives enjoying public confidence had found a place, such persons have been scrupulously excluded from the membership of the present one. The result is that the Council had become thoroughly unrepresentative of public opinion in the State.

THE element of election which had been recently introduced in its constitution must be described as a mere make-believe, when it is remembered that local boards which are endowed with the power of electing members of the Council are themselves wholly nominated bodies. The introduction of elective representation in their constitution is authoritatively stated to have been held over till the return of peace in the State! The Durbar must indeed be credited with very queer notions about peace if the present state of life in Bhor strikes it as unpeaceful.

BUT does the Durbar realise that in doubting the existence of peace in Bhor it is in fact contradicting itself? Did the Durbar not pat itself on the back in the administration report for 1933-34, from which Mr. Panse makes a quotation, on its success in the restoration of peace and the suppression of all disorderly and subversive movements? But perhaps the fiction of absence of peace has to be kept up as an official necessity. How else can the Durbar justify its heavy expenditure on the police? As pointed out by Mr. Panse, while the educational expenditure of State is a paltry 5 per cent. of its revenue and that on medical relief only 2 per cent. the police department swallows as much as 11 per cent. This clearly betokens want of trust on the part of the ruler in the loyalty and devotion of his subjects, for which, Mr. Panse took occasion to assure him, there was no real justification whatever. It is to be hoped, therefore, that his appeal to the Raja Saheb to forget and forgive the past and to implement as early as possible his own promise to usher in responsible government in Bhor will not fall on deaf ears.

SEVERAL public grievances were ventilated at the Conference. One of these related to the revised rates of fees for land surveys. These press very hard on the poor people and are so absurdly heavy that in many cases the cost of survey exceeds even the value of the land. These rates as also the recent increase in the local fund cess are matters which cry for urgent attention at the hands of the authorities. There can be no doubt that these new levies are a source of much hardship to the poor ryot, specially in view of the exceptionally hard times with which he is faced. The ruler of the State would earn the gratitude of the ryot by cancelling the increase in the local fund cess and by making the fees for land survey bearable to the poorest of his subjects.

#### Abdication.

COL. WEDGWOOD expressed in the House of Commons on 10th December the feelings, we believe, of millions of people in the Empire on the ex-King's abdication. He said:

I could have wished that the King had been allowed to live here married, happy and King, but he has wished otherwise. A thousand years hence, perhaps, we shall be liberal enough to allow such a thing; it is too early now. He had been very kind to me and to a great many people throughout this Empire personally known to him, and I think we may all wish him a happy life there, if not here. The right hon. Gentleman has made it perfectly clear that, in spite of what I wished, and many others wished, there were really only two alternatives—to continue lonely, disappointed, bitter, ruling the Empire, or else to do what he has done, to throw up royalty and remain a man. We shall all commend him for that choice of the two, for nothing could have been worse than a Kingdom ruled by a man with a grievance, partly hostile to every Minister who had put him in the dilemma—(Hon. Members: "No!")—collecting round him false friends—(Hon. Members: "No!")—collecting round him those who would use the

King's feelings against the Ministry and against the constitution. That would be an alternative which everyone must have seen ahead of us, the most dreadful alternative. Tomorrow we shall take a new Oath of Allegiance. There will be no non-jurors this time, because it is by the King's wish that we take it. There will be no non-jurors below the Gangway, no non-jurors throughout the country. There will be, I would say, millions of people with aching hearts. They will carry on for England. They will take that oath because he wished it, and, if they sometimes raise their glass to the King across the water, who shall blame them?

#### Corruption in Sind.

IT is a matter for satisfaction that the long-standing scandal of official corruption in Sind has attracted the attention of the head of the province. A circular has been recently issued under his orders in which Government servants are enjoined not to accept bribes. It is not enough, as the circular points out, for departmental heads merely to refrain from accepting any illegal gratification themselves; they must regard it as part of their duty to see that their subordinates resist the temptation with equal success. It is difficult to say with what response the Governor's appeal will meet at the hands of the Sind officials or their subordinates. But let not Sir Lancelot Graham consider his duty discharged or his conscience relieved with the issue of this appeal. If, as we believe, he is keen on the eradication or rather the minimization of this evil, let him keep his eyes and ears open for instances of corruption and deal with them with a heavy hand, when they come to light. Let him make an example or two of Government servants, however high placed, who may be found guilty of making any illegal levies.

THE public too cannot escape its share of blame for the prevalence of corruption. The offence takes two parties for its commission, the giver and the taker of the bribe, and the former is not less blame-worthy than the latter. But a major part of the blame must obviously be placed at the door of that party which takes the initiative. And in most cases of corruption it would, we believe, be found on proper investigation that it is the receiver of the bribe that sets the ball rolling. It is inconceivable that the public would go out of its way to place a temptation in the way of a Government servant without there being good ground to believe that the bribe would facilitate the attainment of the desired end. It is stated that the bribing of officials not only in Sind but even in other parts of the country has become such a routine affair that though the incumbents of office may change, a stated proportion of the contractor's bills invariably finds its way into pockets other than his own. If the official head has a real aversion to the evil and is bent upon reducing it to the minimum, all that he has to do is to make it unmistakably clear to all concerned that he will stand no non-sense and that the offender, whoever he may be, will be sternly dealt with.

#### Indian Agent-General's Work.

THE work of the Agent-General for India in the Union of South Africa, as the Government of India's representative in that country is now known, is largely of a diplomatic nature and his report for last year teems with instances in which he acted as the connecting link between the Indian community on the one hand and the South African authorities on the other. This is not to say that in every case in which his good offices were invoked he was able to afford relief or secure redress of the grievance complained

against. Even so his presence is doubtless a source of strength to our countrymen there, as the following typical example will show.

IN May 1935 an ordinance "containing possibilities of application against the Indian trader" was passed by the Natal Provincial Council. Under it rural authorities were given the power to oppose the grant of a licence on the ground that "the business which it is proposed to carry on is calculated to depreciate the value of the property in the vicinity" or "to interfere with the health or comfort of occupiers of property in a locality which is wholly or in greater part confined to residential occupation." It also authorised rural licensing boards to impose such restrictions on the applicant as they might consider necessary if they felt that in the area concerned there was already a sufficiency of trades or businesses of the kind for which a licence was asked or for any other reason. Another objectionable feature was the insistence by the ordinance upon the personal presence of the applicant or his being represented by a whole-time employee, failing which by an attorney of the Supreme Court. Formerly applicants for licences used to be represented by agents who were well acquainted with the licensing laws. The requirement for the presence of an attorney with the possibility of his charging heavy fees will, it was feared, bear hardly on the applicants.

IT is true the ordinance did not specifically mention Indians whose bitter past experience, however, awakened them to its dangerous possibilities. Indian opinion set about getting the ordinance annulled or suitably amended. The Natal Indian Congress in due course submitted a representation against the ordinance and waited in deputation on the select committee charged with its consideration. Nevertheless it failed to secure its amendment in the desired direction. Through the good offices of the Agent-General, the Congress was later on enabled to submit its case to the Minister of the Interior, who gave the Congress deputation a sympathetic and courteous hearing. But as for the suspension of the operation of the ordinance he plainly expressed his inability to advise the Governor to refuse assent.

THE Agent-General did not, however, allow the matter to rest here; he subsequently interviewed the Administrator of Natal and the provincial Executive Committee which, though willing to give the desired assurance, was unable to sponsor a suitable modi-

fication of the ordinance. The Agent has now succeeded in extracting an assurance that the ordinance will not be racially applied and that the whole question will be reconsidered if it is found to have been applied harshly or unfairly against Indians. Who can deny that this is something gained? Or that even this little step forward would have been impossible in the absence of the Agent-General?

#### Temperance Work in Secunderabad.

THE Secunderabad Temperance Association came into existence in 1932 mainly through the exertions of the then Resident, Sir Terence Keyes whose interest in temperance was very well known. The Association has just issued its report for 1935-36 which discloses a record of much useful work to the credit of the Association. The Association acts on its founder's suggestion that intemperance should be attacked in the home and not at the liquor shop. We find from the report that this policy is meeting with great success among the women and children of the depressed classes and other backward communities.

THE Association's work divides itself into various classes such as centres for children, workmen's clubs and night schools, women's work and temperance propaganda. The three children's centres were visited, it is seen, by nearly 38,000 children. The children are given a daily bath and instructed in the three R's besides receiving medical treatment for minor ailments. At the clubs for workmen there are arrangements for sports like hockey, and gymnasium rooms will soon come into being at the three centres. Education in the night schools for workmen and boys is free, books and slates being given free. These schools were attended by 138 persons. The number may not appear imposing at first sight; but in view of the difficulties attendant upon such work it will, we hope, be generally regarded as encouraging, if not satisfactory.

TEMPERANCE propaganda is conducted with the help of charts, maps and magic lantern lectures. Its effect is thus described in the report: "All round, the mass mind has been stirred, and with the necessary material assistance to lift the ruined families, the Association sees visible signs of real reformation in the lives of many." The Association's efforts have been responsible for an amendment of the excise rules prohibiting the sale of liquor to children and their employment at liquor shops.

## WHY THIS OPPOSITION?

THE *Manchester Guardian* is puzzled to see Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru expressing in his presidential speech at the Congress a rooted opposition to federation, lock, stock and barrel, and advising the Congress to bend its whole energies within the next few months to the prevention of the inauguration of the federal scheme. Pandit Jawaharlal's personal view was never in doubt. What is a matter of surprise to a certain extent is that the Congress has followed his lead in this respect and has in specific terms declared war (of course, non-violent) against the Princes. For so long the Congress resolution about total rejection of the whole constitution was supposed to include also rejection of its federal part, but at best it was a matter of inference. Nor could rejection of federation

be conclusively inferred from rejection of the entire constitution. The Congress attitude towards the communal award is a case in point. The Congress rejected the constitution, but it did not on that account reject the communal award. On the contrary, it adopted towards this award an attitude of non-benevolent neutrality, if one might so call it. It neither accepted nor rejected the communal award. Similarly, it was quite open to the Congress to refrain from a categorical rejection of federation in spite of its utter and wholesale rejection of the constitution. Indeed, the Congress leaders' concentrated attack upon the part of the constitution which affects the British Government and their leaving severely alone the part which affects the Indian States naturally led one to

believe that the Congress is not willing to lose the friendship of the Princes. Above all, Mahatma Gandhi's role at the Round Table Conference lent ample justification for such suspicion. He put forward many demands in so far as the British Government was concerned, and this too in strident tones. But before the Princes he knelt down as a humble suppliant and said things which could only be expected of an incurable flunkey. Not only Englishmen, therefore, but many Indians believed that whatever objections the Congress may have to the constitution as a whole, it has no serious objection in principle to the federal structure as it has been embodied in the constitution, at any rate no objection to the position which the Princes would occupy in that structure. The *Manchester Guardian's* surprise at the sudden turn of events in Faizpur is thus entirely justified, and the credit, as we look upon it, for this development is certainly due to the personality of Pandit Jawaharlal, who never shared the tenderness that Mahatma Gandhi is known to have for the Princes. And his feat is so wonderful that, as Mr. Nehru has made known, Mahatma Gandhi himself now opposes federation—not inferentially, but expressly.

But why this opposition? The answer to it is so obvious that one is rather tempted to ask in return how all these eminent people could so long avoid voicing their positive, direct and absolute opposition to federation. However, if a statement is needed explaining and justifying British India's opposition to the federal scheme, it is to be found in a scholarly work, "Indian States in the Federation" by N. D. Varadachariar (Oxford University Press, Rs. 3-8). In this volume Mr. Varadachariar gives the three lectures that he delivered to the Madras Law College in March last under the Sundaram Iyer—Krishnaswami Iyer Endowment at the invitation of the University of Madras. He speaks here not as a politician to politicians but as a lawyer to lawyers, and there is no room in what he has said for mere shibboleths uttered for the purpose of making political capital. He argues everything in cold reason and in doing so thoroughly rationalises the attitude of uncompromising hostility which the Congress has now adopted to federation. Mr. Varadachariar has summed up, in his legal exposition, the fundamental defects of the federal constitution from the point of view of British India in two brief but significant sentences: "It makes privileged members of the States-units with special quasi-contractual rights and leaves the future development of the constitution much in their hands. The growth of democratic institutions and responsible government must to a large extent be delayed in consequence". This conclusion is fully supported by citing provisions in the Act and elaborated in long and cogent arguments by the author in his lectures, remarkable as much for judicious restraint and wise reserve as for clear conception and bold presentation. Mr. Varadachariar does not ascribe any motive to the British Government—it would have been foreign to his purpose to do so—in fashioning a constitution which is not only full of defects, but defects which cannot be cured in future by any constitutional means. But he reviews the development of

the British Government's policy in regard to the States, and in this survey one finds very satisfactory explanation. Why were the States preserved? Mr. Varadachariar gives a quotation from the celebrated dispatch of Lord Canning of 1860, shortly after the mutiny. In this dispatch Lord Canning observes: "It was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm that if we made all India into Zillahs (British districts) it was not in the nature of things that our Empire should last fifty years; but that if we could keep up a number of native States without practical power but as royal instruments we should exist in India as long as our naval superiority in Europe was maintained. Of the substantial truth of this opinion I have no doubt; and recent events (of 1857) have made it more deserving of our attention than ever."

This quotation affords the clue: British rule in India becomes safe if the Princes are maintained—in dignity but without power and as *royal instruments* or as tools of the British Government. They are intended in the federation to perform the same function. Our author says: "The Rulers have since (1857) remained an immense source of strength to the British Raj. They have ruled their principalities as faithful royal instruments and have saved the Crown much of the trouble and embarrassment of organising their direct administration. And as the radical elements in British India begin to assert themselves, the Rulers whose interests and upbringing are necessarily conservative are proving once again how wise it was of British statesmanship to have saved their order from the total annihilation with which the early Empire-builders threatened them. The kind of federation set up by the Government of India Act of 1935 is the great fruit of this policy." The federation is only the culmination of a policy which ever since 1857 is being steadfastly pursued by the British Government—the policy of making, in Sir John Malcolm's expressive phrase, royal instruments of the Princes. Professor Berriedale Keith, in a private letter to Mr. Varadachariar, expressed the same view as a constitutionalist rather than as a politician. The view was expressed in 1934 before the constitution was actually enacted. Mr. Keith says:

As the position presents itself to me, the Government of this country is satisfied that it would be dangerous to accord responsible government to British India and is only prepared therefore to accord such government, with large exceptions, to a Government whose conservative character will be ensured by the measure of representation accorded to the Indian States. It declines to impose any obligation on the part of the States to move towards representative or responsible government, since such a movement might destroy the conservative character of State representation. The extensive character of the central powers is dictated by the desire to secure that the conservative forces in the country shall be in a position to counteract any undue democratic tendencies in any province.

The skill of the proposal is obvious, for to grant responsible government to the provinces while retaining the central government under British control would have created serious difficulties which are much diminished by substituting for British control of the centre that of conservative Indian elements which are opposed to the advance of democracy on principle. I fear that the Indian leaders who accepted the federal ideal acted unwisely so far as the extension of democracy is concerned.

but, of course, they may have felt that democracy is out of place in India and that an Indian oligarchical regime is preferable to one mainly British. The decline of democratic institutions in Europe has no doubt filled many minds with grave doubts as to the possibility of the success of this system in India. Personally I should have preferred immediate responsible government in the provinces, without vital change at the centre as the first step, leaving the States over until a federation would be achieved on the basis of responsible government as an objective for the States.

Is it then due to distrust of democracy that leading politicians in British India have supported the federal structure, which, according to Mr. Keith, can be the only conceivable justification for their attitude? That the Princes and their Dewans have no faith in democracy is natural enough. The Maharaja of Patiala's notorious declaration that the Rulers were not willing "to wear on their healthy body politic the Nessus shirt of a discredited political theory" can never be forgotten, nor can the warning of the allegedly liberal statesman, Sir Mirza Ismail, against the introduction of radical reforms in India "when democracy was decaying everywhere." Sir Mirza said on this occasion, "I am sure the conscience of the State feels that our present constitution is quite democratic enough for all practical purposes." Does the conscience of British Indian leaders like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru also feel that the federal constitution is as liberal as it might well be, and is their support of it due to this feeling? We cannot believe that they really want an oligarchy in place of a democracy. They feel perhaps that, though India is ripe for democracy, the introduction of Indian Princes into the constitution, which makes for oligarchy, is necessary for relaxation of British control. Mr. Varadachariar says: "Indian statesmen like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru considered any price not too high (at the Round Table Conference) to bring the States into constitutional relation with British India, leaving the rest to the future." But the future is not open. The very act of bringing the States into constitutional relation with British India has bound British India's future for all time. The *liberum veto* which the Princes enjoy under the constitution precludes amendment of any of the vital provisions of the Act. This is brought out very clearly in his lectures by Mr. Varadachariar. He says:

This clause is really the key to the constitution. . . . The effect of the clause is to make the Act so rigid as to be

almost incapable of any change under constitutional forms. Even more than other federal constitutions, the Act will need frequent amendments to adjust its complex machinery to the conditions of change and growth which are occurring with great rapidity among the various interests it is to serve. From this point of view the danger of this arrangement is obvious. *It will be a direct incentive to revolution.* The machinery for the alteration of the constitution provided in the existing federations is rigid in different degrees, but nowhere is a *liberum veto* given to the units. The object always is to make certain that the preponderant opinion of the nation as a whole is in favour of the proposed change, but not to make changes impossible except where there is unanimity.

What then is the position? First, the Indian constitution, being frankly transitional, will need to be amended more frequently than other constitutions. Secondly, the Indian constitution will require amendments just in respect of those provisions which, in so far as the States are concerned, are protected against any future amendment without their individual consent. Thirdly, if an amendment is made in this field without the consent of any single State, that State will acquire the right to secede from the federation. Fourthly, the federation is meant to be perpetual and indissoluble. The logical conclusion is that in order to give no State an excuse for withdrawal, no amendment must be made to which any State can possibly object!!

If an oligarchy is temporarily accepted because it will facilitate relaxation of British control, this object will not be realised. The transfer of control over the army, for instance, will require an amendment of the Act. For such an amendment to be made the consent not only of the British Parliament—which was the only requirement so far—but of every one of the numerous States will be necessary. Thus, even an enlargement of political power on an oligarchic basis will be impossible in future—that is, by constitutional methods. The substitution of a democracy for the oligarchy now to be established will, on the face of it, be an impossibility—that is, again, by constitutional methods. Thus both the Indian oligarchy and British autocracy will be permanent. In fact, the federation is, as Mr. Varadachariar says, a direct incentive to revolution. Is there any difficulty now in understanding the opposition of the Indian people to this federation?

## EUROPEANS RAISE A STORM.

THERE has burst in Kenya the anticipated storm of European opposition to the Government's proposal for the imposition of a mild income tax. The scale of the proposed tax is very moderate indeed. The additional yield of the tax is estimated to be only £32,000, in a country of which the revenue expenditure in 1935 was £3,253,000. Lord Moyne in 1932 and Sir Alan Pim last year recommended the levy of an income tax, less as a source of additional revenue, than as a means of placing the taxation system of the country on an equitable basis. Lord Moyne said in his report:

The comparison of the burden of non-native taxation in Kenya with that borne by tax-payers in other countries is indeed striking. Whereas elsewhere civilised communities have had to maintain their solvency by adding still further to burdens of direct and indirect taxation which had already seemed almost intolerable, the non-native population of Kenya are probably in the unparalleled position among civilised nations of bearing no direct taxation at all beyond a male poll tax of 30s., a male education tax of 20s. or 30s., and a comparatively light scale of death duties. The resource of direct taxation in some degree proportionate to the means of the tax-payer is therefore at present practically untapped, and the budgetary balance could be restored by a relatively low tax on incomes.

Since the report was issued the non-native poll tax has been extended to women whose taxable income exceeds £120 per annum, in contradistinction to men who are subjected to a basic poll tax of 30s., whether they earn any income or not. And on the basic poll tax is superimposed a graduated poll tax. The receipts from this combined poll tax in 1935 were £70,987, from the male education tax £24,792, from the estate duty £9,956 and from the traders' and professional licences £32,890, or £138,625 in all from direct taxation levied on non-natives (though the last-mentioned tax is applicable to natives too). The natives contribute a little less than four times as much in hut and poll tax, the proceeds of which in 1935 were £502,302. The chief reliance of the Colony is on indirect taxation, receipts from customs and excise being in 1935 £715,212 (customs £690,380; excise £24,832), and this source of revenue is failing on account of the world depression. In 1929 the amount of revenue which accrued from customs duties was nearly £950,000, and there has been a severe decline in it, though on account of the beginnings of trade recovery there is some improvement latterly in this item. But another factor has come into play with the drop in customs revenue. The proportion of native and non-native contributions has undergone a change for the worse, and the fiscal system that was inequitable enough before has become still more inequitable. On 26th July, 1932, the Governor justified the imposition of a small income tax which was in contemplation then by pointing to this fact. He said to the Legislative Council on this occasion :

An examination of the incidence of the decrease (in customs revenue) shows that while between 1926 and 1931 the contribution to customs revenue of the European and Asiatic communities have fallen respectively 42 per cent. and 27 per cent., the contributions of the native community have risen by 7 per cent. . . . This means that the old system of relying upon indirect taxation through customs duties is rapidly breaking down, and that the basic principle of taxation, namely, that it should be imposed on all sections of the community as far as possible in accordance with their capacity to pay, no longer applies. For these reasons, apart from the general considerations that are put forward by Lord Moyne in his report, it seems to me that a case for a low income tax as an equitable instrument of taxation is unanswerable.

Sir Alan Pim, the Indian civilian who was appointed to inquire into the system of taxation in Kenya, also found that it was necessary to introduce an income tax into the tax scheme of the Colony. For the sake of securing financial stability and making a commencement towards the accumulation of a reserve such a measure was, according to him, essential, but it was above all a necessity for the purpose of making a beginning, though only a beginning, in the gradation of taxes according to capacity to pay. The emergency levy on official salaries, he suggested, ought to be abolished, and also the rate of tax on extra huts under the native hut and poll tax reduced from 12s. to 6s. This could only be done, he thought, by imposing an income tax on a modest scale. Even the income tax he proposed had a large element of the poll tax in it, for he fixed the minimum tax to be levied upon every non-native at 50s., the sum paid by Indians in the way of the poll tax and the education

tax. The substitution, therefore, of an income tax would go some way in making the taxation system a little more logical, scientific and equitable. The Kenya Government has adopted these recommendations in part. It has done so only in part because, while it intends to abolish the levy on official salaries it does not intend to lower the hut tax on the natives. This will be retained at the present figure, and all the existing injustices connected with native taxation will thus remain unredressed. But non-native taxation will be placed on a somewhat sounder basis than at present. The Government proposes that the basic poll tax and the education tax together will hereafter be for Europeans, Indians and Arabs 50s., 40s. and 30s. respectively instead of the existing rates of 60s., 50s. and 40s., or 10s. less per head in the case of each community. The rates chargeable at present for traders and professional licences will also be lowered so that there will be a reduction of about one-quarter in their yield, from £33,000 to £25,000. And an income tax will be levied, which is expected to yield about £84,000. The poll tax on non-natives at the reduced rate is expected to bring £52,000 instead of £96,000 that it brought in 1935, or £44,000 less. Add to this the loss of £8,000 which the Colony will suffer on account of the proposed reduction in the rates of traders and professional licences, and the net addition to the revenue to be obtained from the proposed income tax will be only £32,000. The Government has published figures to show that this much additional revenue is necessary in view of the country's financial position. The Estimates for the current year, which were placed before the Legislative Council recently show a deficit, as compared to the Estimates for 1936, of about £100,000, which must be made good in some way or other. The deficit will be caused by an increase in expenditure of £50,000 and decrease in revenue of £47,000 consequent on the abolition of the levy on official salaries. As against this £57,000 is estimated to accrue from increased customs revenue, and a gap of some £43,000 remains, which can be filled for the most part by the imposition of the proposed income tax, which, as said above, is calculated to bring £32,000 more to the treasury than non-native direct taxes imposed at present.

The Government has thus conclusively shown that the immediate financial requirements necessitate the imposition of an income tax, but the proposal is inspired more by a desire to make the taxation system of Kenya slightly more just than at present. It says: "By this comprehensive readjustment of the fiscal system of the Colony as applied to the non-native races it is confidently believed that many of the difficulties and inequalities apparent in the present legislation will be overcome and that a system based on the broadest principles of equity and justice will be established." It is only as a first step, and a short step at that, towards equality, that this measure can be welcomed. For, under it, 73 per cent. Europeans, 99 per cent. Indians and 99·6 per cent. Arabs would pay "less or not more" than at present in direct taxes. Thus the Bill affects virtually only a very small minority of the European

community. And "the additional revenue will be obtained to a very large extent from absentee shareholders and others who have not contributed towards the revenue of the Colony" so far. In moving the Estimates the Colonial Secretary stated that out of £32,000 extra revenue expected from the income tax, £25,000 would be paid by overseas absentee shareholders and £2,000 by pensioners. Thus only about £5,000 would be paid by the non-native settlers! This is all that the income tax threatens to do to the permanent population: it would mulct them in a bare £5,000! And yet what a furor is raised by the whites!! They refuse to believe that the immediate financial needs of the Colony require additional taxation at all. Major Grogan, the most aggressive of the white settlers, declared at a public meeting that the Government had deliberately faked the budget and underestimated the revenue in order to make out a case for its income tax proposals and that the whole explanation of the Government was "a frigid and calculated lie." As for equity, the white settlers deny that income tax is a fair tax recognised as a necessary element of taxation in all civilised countries. As for its being a mild tax at the rate proposed, they ask: What is there to prevent the Government from putting on another 6d. later at its sweet will? They demand, as Capt. Schwartz did on 28th July, 1932, when a similar proposal was discussed in the Legislative Council of Kenya, that "if there is going to be a change in our fiscal system and an introduction of income tax, the next step in constitutional evolution, namely, an unofficial majority, should be advanced and brought into being at the earliest possible moment. Without such an unofficial majority there can be no possible control of the income tax by the people of the Colony who have to bear the burden of that taxation."

They have one more complaint, viz. that the tax will be applicable practically to the incomes of Europeans alone. This is true to some extent, but, as Mr. J. B. Pandya said in the Council, "this only proves that Europeans have more opportunities of acquiring wealth in this country than other sections of the population and they accordingly ought to pay more to the state for the welfare of its subjects." In order evidently not to provoke the European community to too much opposition, both Lord Moyne and Sir Alan Pim felt compelled to suggest a very light tax, i.e. a tax on a small-scale on relatively high incomes. The Kenya Government followed this clue. First, in ascertaining "chargeable income" several deductions are allowed: one-tenth of the earned income subject to a maximum deduction of £2,000; a deduction of £150 in the case of residents in the Colony or British subjects; a deduction of £50 for a wife or wives; a deduction of £40 for one child and £30 for each subsequent child, subject to a maximum of £100; a deduction in respect of any life insurance premia subject to a maximum of one-sixth of the chargeable income and to a maximum amount of £200. Secondly, the rates of tax leviable on this "chargeable income" are very low. For every £ of the first £350, 1s.; for every £ of the next £350, 1s. 50 cts. for every £ of the next £800, 2s.; for every £ of the next £1,500, 2s. 50 cts.; for every £

of the next £2,000, 3s.; and for every £ of the remainder, 3s. 50 cts. Thus Europeans with an income within the £300—£400 bracket would be liable to pay only £2 10s.; those within the £400—£500 bracket, £6 15s.; those within the £500—£600 bracket, £11; those within the £600—£700, £15 7s.; those within the £700—£800, £21 15s., those within the £800—£900 bracket, £28 2s.; those within the £900—£1,000, £34 10s.; and so on till one who has an income of £5,000 will pay £512 15s. Indians will pay in every case 10s. extra; thus what they gain in a lower education tax they lose in income tax, their contribution on the whole being the same. If, in order to do justice to the natives, an income tax could be levied on lower incomes, the contribution of Indians would be greater; but Europeans would never consent to it. If, therefore, on account of the European opposition to a tax which would tap small incomes, Indians escape comparatively lightly, none but the Europeans are at fault. Even so the total contribution of Indians is not negligible. Europeans are estimated to pay £61,087 and Indians £36,265. Indian contribution is thus very nearly 60 per cent. of European contribution, and therefore when Indian residents in the Colony support the measure it is not as if by doing so they make a vicarious sacrifice. They have to pay their share.

Indians solidly support the proposed income tax just as Europeans almost solidly oppose it, and the most praiseworthy thing in this affair is that they are alive to the injustice that is being done to the natives and press for a reduction of native taxation, both direct and indirect. Mr. Pandya in his budget speech made a powerful plea on behalf of the natives. He said that "the natives paid a 50 to 60 per cent. duty on ad valorem basis on various articles which were no longer luxuries to them", and that the hut and poll tax was also oppressive. "The average income of the native," he said, "was from 10s. to 12s. per month. The tax, therefore, amounted to 10 per cent. of his gross income, in addition to which he paid a good deal in the aggregate through customs duties." Mr. Pandya took exception to the conclusion arbitrarily arrived at by the Commission of the Treasurer and the Chief Native Commissioner, namely, that £550,000 paid by the natives in direct taxation must continue to be extracted from them. He said: "The amount was larger than circumstances justified, and it did not conform to the principles of sound taxation quoted by the Commissioners in their report." The Indian community's position was, we are afraid, somewhat doubtful on the last occasion when the question of income tax arose, but we are now glad to find that they have come out strongly in favour of the tax and still more glad that they are taking such a strong line in regard to native taxation. We firmly believe that in proportion as they try to be just to the native will justice be done to them. In this matter expediency coincides closely with equity, and we do hope that they will never allow themselves to forget that the country they live in belongs to the native, and that they will forfeit their moral right to be there as soon as they forget their duty towards him. Let Europeans oppose income tax and compel the Government by *force majeure* as it were to abandon the Bill, if they can. Let theirs alone be the ignominy. We are proud to see that Indians have no part or lot in it.

## CONGRESS CONTRADICTIONS.

**R**EADING the proceedings of the last session of the Congress, the thing that strikes one painfully is the want of severe thinking among those responsible for it. This has led to no end of confusion and contradiction in its policy and programme.

The President in his speech concerned himself mainly with Independence and the fading away of Imperialism. He wants socialist freedom, but is content to let that wait and make a drive now for independence. Pandit Jawaharlal certainly knows what independence means and has meant for ages—it is the domination of a class. Being a socialist, he yet wants that class domination to be established in India without making any terms with the class which would certainly dominate.

As to how that independence is to be achieved, the Congress has, presumably at the instance of Mr. M. N. Roy, adopted a programme of tactics by which the masses of India are to be mobilised in the aid of this objective. I shall leave aside the question of the practicability of the programme, only mentioning by the way that independence has never yet been achieved without the force of arms. Even if Mr. M. N. Roy's dream of organised masses is established, this is sure—that mere non-violent mass action will not send away the Britisher.

But assume that all this is possible. What then? In the last analysis it comes to this, that the entire masses of India are exploited for bringing into existence the dominance of a class in India.

Do Messrs. Nehru and Roy hope that if independence is achieved by mass action, the constitution would be inevitably socialistic? The early French socialists who joined in the French Revolution with that hope were cruelly disillusioned. In Russia too the Kerensky regime would have similarly robbed the masses of the fruits of their victory but for the superior tactics of Lenin. And even in Russia, are there not signs of the great socialist republic leaving the moorings in which Lenin left it and slowly veering round towards capitalism?

No socialist who thinks in terms of socialist freedom would agree to join in a struggle for blank independence except on terms which guaranteed socialist freedom. Yet Jawaharlal Nehru and Manabendra Roy are content to join up unconditionally in a programme for exploiting the masses for the establishment of class rule in India.

Coming down to practical proposals, the Congress attitude towards the new constitution is one of unqualified hostility, and their sole programme is that of wrecking the constitution by creating deadlocks and making a bid for a constituent assembly.

On principle, the Congress has my fullest sympathy. But coming down to brass tacks, what does all this imply? It means that the Congress will not lift its little finger to help to carry on the day-to-day administration of India and devote all its energies

for years, and may be decades, till the constituent assembly is convened.

Let us not forget our experience. We had an unofficial constituent assembly which passed the Nehru Report, which was forthwith thrown into the scrap-heap by all parties concerned. It took us two years to produce that futile scheme which pleased nobody. Then, for three years more, there were endless wranglings between Indian representatives at the Round Table Conference and they could not agree on a constitution. No doubt, things would be somewhat different with a constituent assembly which had legal authority to decide by majorities. Even then it would be optimistic to expect that the constituent assembly would finish its deliberations in less than five years.

To force the British Government to agree to a constituent assembly, the only tactic thought of is obstruction. Mr. Nehru realises that in the new constitution deadlocks could not be created by work in the legislatures. For that he relies upon mass action. For that action to gather sufficient force will take at least a decade, if a day.

For the fifteen years at least, and certainly much longer which it will take for the benefits of a constituent assembly to materialise, the Congress representatives in the legislatures will therefore not help at all in the work of administration. In provinces where the Congress is in a majority this would mean government by the Governors' special powers for these years. In other provinces other parties will carry on their work merrily. That is all the promise of benefit for the next fifteen years and more that the Congress holds out to the exploited millions!

And yet Mr. Nehru tearfully recognises the desperate condition of the peasant and the worker who should be helped out of their present condition without delay. And the Congress has gone to the trouble of formulating a list of things which have to be done immediately to improve their lot. Who is to do all that if the Congress will not help? Will it be those whom the Congress is pledged to immobilise by creating deadlocks? Must the peasants and workers of India possess their souls in patience for the next twenty years merely on the strength of this pious programme, which Congressmen in the legislatures will not further, though they may have power to do so?

The agrarian programme solemnly passed by the Congress at its last session is in pathetic contrast to its brave words and noble enthusiasm for the masses. There is not one item in the entire programme which bears indication of severe thinking or imagination. Mr. Nehru utters the word 'reformist' with contempt, and yet this agrarian programme is nothing but the most cowardly and unimaginative reformism.

Vague and vacuous expressions abound in it. But landlordism is to be sacrosanct, only rents and revenues are to be reduced. Uneconomic holdings are not to be eliminated, only the burden of rent is to be



lifted from them. Even in matters on which a semblance of a reasonable programme is hinted, the Congress programme lags behind even what several of the none too progressive provincial Governments under the present regime have already achieved. Even the Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Act is more imaginative and practical than the Congress proposal for the same end. A vague wish is expressed for co-operative farming. I wonder if nobody in the Congress has heard of what has been achieved by collective farming in Russia or even by co-operation in Denmark!

If the Congress meant its agrarian programme to be taken seriously it should have spared itself the humiliation of coming out with a programme worthy of a schoolboy's essay and appointed a committee of experts to produce a really bold and imaginative programme for revolutionising the agricultural economics of India on lines which would make agriculture in India a thriving industry carried on by peasants for their own benefit, instead of letting it limp along its old path with possibly just a showy top-dressing of the turf.

Even on fundamentals there seems to be a lack of clear thinking. The Congress has not yet made up its mind on the all-important question whether it will be a party organisation or the organised nation. The two ideas are fundamentally different. The Congress can remain what it now is, a party pledged to a definite programme which it will give to the people and seek their support. Or it may throw open its gates to all and establish a national forum at which every Indian may put forward his own views and seek to secure victory for his cause. The resolution on mass contact seems to be based on the latter idea; but on the other hand its narrow creed bars out everybody who would not utter its shibboleth.

On the goal, Mr. Nehru and even Mr. M. N. Roy stick to independence as the goal. But independence has value only as a means to real freedom which is and ought to be the ultimate goal. Independence is to be desired only if it is of the sort that leads to that freedom. Why then make it your goal?

It is imaginable that the British Empire will turn socialist in the true sense of the word sooner than India achieves independence. In that event, India like all other parts of the Empire will be invited to be a part of the Union of Socialist Republics that was the British Empire. Would Mr. Jawaharlal and Mr. Manabendra Roy still insist that rather than join that union of free republics we should have independence, with a constitution based partly on mediaeval feudalism and partly on modern capitalism? If they do, they would be socialists indeed!

If not, why lisp the futile *Mātra* of Independence instead of making a straight bid for social, political and economic freedom, pure and simple?

N. C. SEN-GUPTA.

## Reviews.

### SOCIAL SERVICE AS A PROFESSION.

**SOCIAL WORK AS A PROFESSION.** By ESTHER LUCILE BROWN. (2nd Edn.) (Russell Sage Foundation, New York.) 1936. 20cm. 120p. 75 cents.

A new profession does not come up like Jonah's gourd in a night. It is a thing of painfully slow growth.

THIS book describes in a very interesting manner the steady rise of social work to the dignity of a profession in America. Active experimentation is going on still. There is very little general agreement even on the curriculum to be adopted in schools. There have been philosophies and techniques remarkable in their variety. But the general trend is obvious by now. Social work is being built up on an efficient, scientific and scholarly basis; and the basic philosophy underlying it is to raise life to its highest value.

The growth of the various concepts has been very interesting. The pioneer humanitarian movement of old laid the foundations through its rudimentary and unsound methods of charity. Apprenticeship was regarded as sufficient training and the stress laid on field-work was due to the view that students would be prepared to fill positions of responsibility immediately after. Active work was the only thing emphasized, while a study of scientific methods in research was neglected.

The American Association of Schools of Social Work and the American Association of Social Workers have been established to formulate the training of social workers, and to maintain a high professional standard. The National Conference of Social Workers is a public forum, which affords an opportunity for the expression of attitudes and philosophies by widely divergent groups. Distinctive features of the profession as it has come into being can be noticed. Social work is urban to a great extent. Small salaries are a persistent feature. Women have been in a far greater majority as social workers, though men are coming to play the role to an increasing extent. Public agencies are taking up more and more the responsibility of welfare measures, and pioneer agencies are more and more being relieved of the burden.

This remarkable account of the development and progress, of the obstacles and difficulties, of a nascent profession in a progressive country will be of gripping interest to those who are anxious to see the structure of nation-building institutions in their own country.

SHANTA BHALERAO.

### PUNJAB AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS.

**AN ECONOMIC SURVEY OF BHADAS.** By F. L. BRAYNE and SHIV DYAL. (Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab.) 1936. 24cm. 236p. Rs. 3.

BHADAS is a rain-fed village in Gurgaon district with a population of 855 Meos and others, predominantly Mahomedan. Its extent is 1774 acres, of which 1651 acres are cultivated. The population which stood at 1245 in 1881 now shows a steep decline; and infant mortality is very high in the village. Of the 184 families 73 are wholly dependent on agriculture

and 44 partly dependent on it and the rest are independent of it. 253 owners own about 1707 acres in the village and 1058 acres outside it. Wheat, barley, gram and pulses are grown and the percentage of failures to cropped area is 34.56. Fragmentation is as severe here as elsewhere and one holding is divided into 39 plots. The smallest plots are of .03, .04, .06 acres in extent. Lands are let out to tenants, and there are both occupancy and non-occupancy tenants. Tenancies run from year to year, but the occupancy tenants have rights to the trees standing on the farm. The land revenue fixed is Rs. 3500, but seasonal failures of crop have led to remissions. The total indebtedness of the village is heavy: unsecured Rs. 71,483, and secured Rs. 51,056. The rates of interest vary between 24 and 37½ per cent. In the year 1931-32, 995 acres were mortgaged and the land revenue on mortgaged land was Rs. 2,118 out of a total of Rs. 3500 for the whole village. Of the redemptions for a period of 33 years, only 241 out of 596 have been with the realisation of the sale of produce. The average price of land for 1920-24 has been Rs. 130 and the value of the whole area of the village might not be more than Rs. 2,14,610. The price of lands since 1924 has gone down considerably and it need not be surprising if perhaps the value of the whole area of the village is only Rs. 1,22,539, the amount of its indebtedness. The cash rent for the same period has been only Rs. 7-13-8 and the total cash rent for the whole village (about Rs. 13,000) might not suffice even by half to pay interest at 24 per cent. on Rs. 1,22,000. The number of cattle has been gradually on the decline. There are no industries worth mentioning except a little weaving. Bhadas is a village in Gurgaon district which is well known to all interested in rural uplift. Mr. Brayne himself has given a little scheme of work, in his forward, for rural uplift, but the glaring problem of the village is its poverty, and he does not suggest any remedy for that disease.

N. S. S.

## Miscellaneous.

### LIBERAL FEDERATION RESOLUTIONS.

*The eighteenth session of the National Liberal Federation of India was held at Lucknow on Dec. 29-31, 1936. The following are among the resolutions passed by the Federation.*

#### THE NEW CONSTITUTION.

(a) The National Liberal Federation reiterates its considered opinion that the constitution embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935 is extremely unsatisfactory and altogether unacceptable. It is not merely inadequate but is retrograde in many respects, and includes features obnoxious to Indian nationalist opinion.

(b) Nonetheless, the Federation repeats that it has to be utilised to the best advantage of the people, for the amelioration of their social and economic condition and for accelerating the pace of further constitutional advance towards Dominion Status. Therefore it expresses the earnest hope that in the elections to the new provincial legislatures the electorates will return nationalist candidates who will neither attempt the impossible nor be subservient to authority, nor prefer sectional interests to national but will do their best for the well-being and advancement of the people as a whole.

(c) The Federation is strongly of opinion that in the constitution of ministries and in the actual working of government the Governors of provinces should not further whittle down such meagre con-

cessions as the Act has made to Indian demands; but if the Governors use their powers so as to impede the political or economic progress of the country, Ministers should resign their offices.

(d) The Federation urges that no concession be made to Princes in the course of negotiations now going on between them and the agents to the Viceroy with regard to the establishment of federation which is calculated to increase still more the powers of Princes at the expense of federal government.

#### INDIAN STATES' PEOPLE.

The National Liberal Federation reaffirms its complete sympathy with the natural and perfectly legitimate aspirations of the people of Indian States for civic and political liberties.

The Federation deeply regrets that no provision has been made in the new Government of India Act for the election of representatives of the States in the coming Federal Legislature or for the recognition of the people's fundamental rights of citizenship. This Federation, however, hopes that the rulers of Indian States will allow their representatives in the Federal Legislature to be returned by election.

The Federation strongly urges once again that the Rulers of States should without further delay concede to their subjects the rights of security of person and property, liberty of speech and of the press, freedom of association, and an independent judiciary, as well as representative government as a prelude to responsible government.

#### REPRESSIVE LAWS AND DETENUS.

(a) The National Liberal Federation records its strong protest against the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the several provincial Special Powers Acts, which continue on the statute book and perpetuate or prolong the extraordinary powers taken by the executive, virtually free of judicial control, first in the form of Ordinances and next in the form of Legislation. The legitimate liberty of the Press and the public is seriously menaced by these Acts, and the Federation, therefore, urges their immediate repeal.

(b) The Federation also protests against the arbitrary use of the Sea Customs Act for the proscription of books.

(c) The Federation also protests against the continued detention of suspected persons without trial, leading to widespread dissatisfaction, and urges the release or judicial trial of the persons so detained.

(d) The National Liberal Federation of India records its emphatic protest against the Government's policy in reviving the Andamans as a penal settlement for political offenders despite the assurances given by the Government of India in this regard. The conditions prevailing in that penal settlement have caused great hardship and unnecessary suffering to the political prisoners who have been transported there, and the Federation, therefore, urges upon the Government the necessity of an immediate reversal of its present policy in this matter.

#### MILITARY POLICY & EXPENDITURE.

(a) The National Liberal Federation of India again condemns the continued unresponsiveness of Government to the repeated demand for the nationalization of the army in India by a rapid increase of facilities for the training of Indians as officers and a gradual but steady reduction of the British garrison. The Government's unfavourable attitude is the more objectionable as the advance of India to self-government is held up on the plea of the unreadiness of Indians to assume responsibility for the defence of

the country—unreadiness for which the whole of the responsibility lies on the British Government.

(b) The Federation urges that recruitment to the army be thrown open to all provinces and all communities.

(c) The Federation urges a wider expansion of University Training Corps wherever there is a demand therefor.

(d) The Federation strongly objects to the exclusion of Indians from the Auxiliary Force and urges the amendment of the Auxiliary Force Act to remove this disability.

(e) The Federation reaffirms its grave concern at the continued maintenance of military expenditure at a level which is neither just to the Indian taxpayer nor within his capacity to bear, and which further accounts for the present very high level of taxation and the lack of funds for financing schemes of social reform and economic development.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

(a) Keenly alive as the National Liberal Federation of India is to the distressing poverty of the mass of people in India and to the acute state of unemployment specially among the educated middle class, the Federation is convinced of the necessity of bold and far-reaching measures of social and economic amelioration which would recognise the legitimate rights of all classes. Such measures alone can ensure ordered progress and avert anything in the nature of a revolution disastrous to all.

(b) The Federation emphasises, as it did at earlier sessions, the imperative need of the widest diffusion of education, agricultural improvement, industrial development and commercial expansion.

(c) In particular the Federation urges—

(1) a reform of agrarian laws which will secure the tenantry in their legitimate rights, principally, fixity of tenure and fair rents;

(2) the embodiment in legislative enactments of the main principles of land revenue assessment in provinces where this has not yet been done;

(3) the relief of agricultural indebtedness by means of debt conciliation boards, land mortgage banks and the extension of the co-operative movement;

(4) the adoption of measures to check further fragmentation and facilitate the consolidation of agricultural holdings;

(5) substantial State aid in the development of industries, big and small alike;

(6) a fiscal and a monetary policy wholly in the interests of this country;

(7) legislation for the more adequate protection of the labouring classes, both in urban and rural areas;

(8) the early introduction of free and compulsory elementary education for both boys and girls;

(9) such reform of the system of education as is indicated by the great and increasing difficulty experienced by educated young men in getting employment, without prejudice to the wider diffusion of liberal education, but with special regard to the training of larger numbers for wealth-producing occupations by increase of facilities for technical education;

(10) adequate provision for medical relief and the promotion of public health, particularly in rural areas;

(11) an active policy of temperance reform which will subordinate considerations of revenue to the welfare of the people.

#### UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

While welcoming a reorganisation of the educational system so as to take account of different aptitudes and provide vocational courses at each stage of education, the National Liberal Federation views with concern the tendency manifested in certain quarters to curtail the opportunities now available to Indian youths for receiving higher education. It is strongly of opinion that nothing should be done to restrict arbitrarily admission to the Universities or check the growth of higher education which has played a large part in the awakening of India.

#### UNTOUCHABILITY.

(a) The National Liberal Federation reaffirms its condemnation of 'untouchability' and, while noting with gratification the progress of the nation-wide movement for amelioration and reform, again exhorts all classes of people to render it active aid.

(b) The Federation congratulates His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore on his memorable proclamation throwing open to all Hindus all the State temples of his territory, and hopes that His Highness's example may be widely followed both in other States and in British India.

#### INDIANS OVERSEAS.

South Africa.—The National Liberal Federation of India places on record its great appreciation of the friendly sentiments towards India expressed by the parliamentary delegation from the Union of South Africa. At the same time, in reciprocating these sentiments it expresses the ardent hope that, as a result of the closer contacts established between the Governments and peoples of the two countries, the Union Government and Parliament will take speedy and effective steps to establish equal status, under the law, of the resident Indian community, of whom at least 80 per cent. are born within the Union.

Burma.—The Federation expresses the hope and expectation that, following the separation of Burma from India, the Indian population, which has made so large and important a contribution to the stability and prosperity of Burma, will be enabled to continue to do so in collaboration with their Burmese fellow-citizens.

Aden.—Whilst appreciating the safeguards contained in the India Act of the rights and status of the Indian community of Aden, the Federation keenly regrets the separation of Aden from India. It urges that nothing should be done, whether by the local Administration or by the Indian Legislature, to imperil the economic welfare of the community.

Ceylon.—The Federation has observed with regret the evidence of strained relations between India and Ceylon, affecting not only immigrants but also the permanent Indian population of the island. The Federation is of opinion that nothing could be more harmful than the perpetuation of misunderstandings between Ceylon and India and requests the Government of India to take every possible step in conjunction with the Governments of Ceylon, Travancore and Cochin, to ascertain the facts underlying existing disputes with a view to the early application of remedies satisfactory to all these Governments and the peoples they represent. At the same time, whilst regretting the absence of an Indian from the present Government of Ceylon, the Federation would welcome the appointment by the Government of an Agent with the Government of India.

Malaya.—The Federation welcomes the despatch to Malaya of the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri as a delegation to inquire into the conditions and welfare of the Indian labourers in Malaya and to report

thereon to the Government of India. The Federation further hopes that opportunity may be given to Mr. Sastri to ascertain any grievances or disabilities under which the permanent Indian population of Malaya may labour.

**Fiji.**—In expressing its gratification that, largely as a result of the intervention of the Government of India, the franchise has been kept up in Fiji notwithstanding the attempt to deprive the electorate of its constitutional rights, the Federation deeply regrets that the principle of nomination has been adopted by His Majesty's Government, so that divisions may be artificially created in the Indian community. The Federation urges that steps may be taken to enable Indians numbering about 78,000, mostly Fiji-born, to acquire permanent title to land under all necessary safeguards of the rights of the Fijian population, numbering about 98,000.

**British Guiana and Trinidad.**—The Federation feels grave anxiety regarding the economic welfare of the Indian population of British Guiana and Trinidad, and requests the Government of India to acquaint the public with its observations on the report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the recent riots on certain estates in the former Colony.

**Kenya.**—The Federation learns with satisfaction that the administrative disqualification of the Indian population regarding the ownership or occupation of agricultural land in the Highlands of Kenya is not to have the sanction of law. The Federation, however, continues to protest against even the administrative disqualification imposed upon Indians who, by their enterprise and initiative, have contributed greatly to the opening up and development of Kenya including the Highlands, and hopes that the Government of India will take steps to secure administrative equality for the resident India community.

**Zanzibar.**—The Federation has learnt with grave alarm the substance of the report of the Binder Inquiry regarding the legislation concerning the Zanzibar clove industry and apprehends further serious injury therefrom to the Indian community whom it is sought to deprive of their ancient control of the clove export. The Federation urges the Government of India to take all possible steps without delay to protect the Indian community of Zanzibar, both as regards this industry and as regards its other interests in the Protectorate, against these sustained efforts at expropriation and ruin.

### FATHER VERRIER ELWIN.

*The Children's Newspaper in its issue of 12th December has the following :*

**I**N Africa Albert Schweitzer, the philosopher ; in India Verrier Elwin, the poet—so may we link two great men whose faith has sent them to live among the very poor in order to give them hope.

Verrier Elwin was lecturing in London the other day to raise money for his work, and those who had not read his amusing book (*Leaves from the Jungle*) but had heard vaguely of a Father Elwin who lived, in Central India, a life like St. Francis, were amazed to find themselves being addressed by a smiling young man in a lounge suit, who made them laugh with his account of life among the Gonds and the Baigas, two of the most primitive tribes of India.

He told of the dancing matches when one village gets up early and descends on another village and

starts dancing, whereupon the challenged villagers must drop everything and join in the dance.

He told of the small boy who came 40 miles to school and was fetched back by his father. The boy turned up again with two more boys, and this time three fathers arrived to retrieve them. But it was no good ; the boys came back, this time bringing their sisters.

Gond parents are fond parents. Girls are as welcome in the family as boys, and there is no child marriage. The women are usually the poets and bands of the tribe, and one day in the year they have the right to beat any man they meet till he buys them off with presents. Father Elwin says he hides indoors that day, but he may find a cobra or other deadly snake in the room with him. Once a leopard snatched a dog from under one of the beds, and man-eating tigers are a terror by day or night.

The Gonds have a great tradition of friendship, but, cheerful as they appear with their dances and songs, they are living on the border-line of starvation with fear in their hearts. That is why Verrier Elwin and his young Indian friend Shamrao Hivale went to live among them, to prove that not every man's hand is against them. They arrived in a buffalo cart at the remote Gond Village of Karanja in 1931 with £10 in their pockets. At first, when sick villagers came to be cured, they could only give them pills made by some Indian missionary society and wrapped round with such alarming texts as "Prepare to meet thy God"! But Shamrao went off to learn medicine, and now they have a dispensary, and patients come from as far as 70 miles.

One day five lepers arrived and announced that they had come to live with them as they had heard that they were amiable people. There was nothing to be done except to build a leper home. Now a Mohammedan or two, a few Hindus, and some Indian Christians have come to help in this miracle of love which is casting out fear. Schools have begun in other villages, but when Father Elwin returns at Christmas he has to move his community 15 miles, for his landlord complains that the villagers are no longer afraid of him, and is angry that they have even learned to watch their accounts.

For this move, the rebuilding of the huts and chapel, and the reconstruction of village life, Father Elwin needs £1000. "Let's give it him; let's do something reckless for Christianity," was the cry at the London lecture.

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