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## Topics of the Week.

### The Assembly In Session.

THE current session of the Legislative Assembly which commenced on Monday does not promise to be eventful or interesting till about the middle of next month. For one thing, public interest is naturally centred more in the elections that are in progress in the provinces than in the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. And for another, Congress M. L. A.'s have as a body decided to absent themselves from the session till after the elections are over. It would be useless to pretend that the abstention of the largest single party from the proceedings of the Assembly would be without its effect on its work or would make no difference to the interest the public may be expected to take in it. The session will certainly go on but would be largely occupied in the consideration of comparatively unimportant business till Congressmen find it possible to attend the Assembly, which would be about the 20th of next month.

ANSWERING questions on Monday the Home Member gave the Assembly a good deal of information relating to State prisoners including Mr. Subhas Bose. The public will be somewhat relieved at the reassuring news Sir Henry Craik had to convey about Mr. Bose's health which is satisfactory and now gives no cause for anxiety. Upon the more funda-

mental question touching his release the Home Member was as usual too vague to be enlightening. The only assurance he could give was that Mr. Bose would not be detained longer than is necessary, from which the public may draw whatever satisfaction it may.

It may be recalled that out of the three recent suicides by detenus, one at least was due to the fact that his dependants found themselves unable to interview him, because they could not afford the journey to his detention camp at Deoli. It now transpires that the detenu's mother had applied for free conveyance to Deoli and back for herself, her husband and daughter—a request which was rejected with a callousness characteristic of the bureaucracy. If it had been rendered possible for the detenu's relatives to see him, the suicide might perhaps have been averted. It was also revealed that several requests for increased allowances made by relatives of detenus were similarly turned down. It is difficult to say whether they were rejected after careful consideration or whether a negative reply was given in the course of office routine. Anyway we would suggest the setting up of a predominantly non-official committee to which all such requests should be referred for consideration and whose decisions should be binding on the Government. This seems to be the only way to ensure that the grievances of the detenus will receive proper attention.

### Ban on Independence Day Pledge.

THE customary Independence Day pledge has this year been officially banned. During the last seven years it used to be the practice with the Congress to have the pledge read at public meetings all over the country on the 26th January, which therefore came to be known as the Independence Day. Though it was the provincial Governments that severally issued notifications declaring the pledge illegal on the ground of its being seditious, the methodology—a notification accompanied by an explanation—universally adopted in making the ban known and the internal evidence unmistakably suggest a common inspiration. But even the Central Government was apparently unable to make up its mind quickly and finally with the result that the actual issue of the ban was preceded by much uncertainty. Except on this hypothesis it is impossible to account for the conflicting instructions issued by the Police Commissioner of Madras to editors of newspapers two days previous to the issue of the Government notification. On the 21st inst. he rang them up to intimate to them the Government's intention to ban the pledge and to advise its non-publication. Within twenty-four hours of this message he conveyed flatly contradictory instructions by another phone message, followed by the publication of the Government notification the very next

day, all which evidences frequent changes of mind on the part of those in authority at the Centre. Or was it the case that the provincial Government, being unconvinced of the wisdom of the proposed action, was pleading for the grant of some latitude to itself in the matter?

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COMING to the ban itself, we have no doubt that the condemnation poured on it from all quarters was fully deserved. As pointed out already, it has been in use for seven years during which time it has not brought down the heavens. The Government regards its renewed use, after its discontinuance for two years, as a challenge. The information at the disposal of the Government and the assertion of the Congress on this point are, it may be stated, widely divergent. And as it is a question of fact on which Congress alone can speak from firsthand knowledge, it follows that its statement must be accepted as the last word on the subject. But even supposing the facts were as stated by the Government, one cannot help regretting their action as being needlessly provocative and utterly inexpedient. If the Government regard the reading of the pledge as a challenge, the public can hardly be blamed if it regards their action in no other light and reply by returning more and more Congressmen to the legislatures. Were it not for the commonsense and sagacity displayed by the Congress authorities in counselling obedience to Government orders, a political crisis of considerable gravity would by now have developed.

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#### Threat or Demand for Inquiry?

THE Madras Government's assurance of protection to their servants, to which attention was called in these columns last week, was occasioned so we were told, by a so-called threat by a prominent Congressman of victimisation of officials, when Congress came into power. Mr. Satyamurti now reveals that the Congressman was none other than Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel and the alleged threat nothing more than a desire for an inquiry into what may be termed the excesses of subordinates of Government. Mr. Satyamurti who accompanied Mr. Patel during his recent tour of the Madras Presidency gives the facts from personal knowledge. It fell to Mr. Satyamurti to translate Mr. Patel's speech and it is very unlikely that he would make any mistake.

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THE facts are these. It would appear that in the district board elections which preceded Mr. Patel's tour in the Southern Presidency the police were guilty of misbehaviour on many occasions. Their worst sin was the arrest of one hundred Congress volunteers and seven or eight leaders. It is the Congress contention that these arrests were unnecessary, uncalled-for and unjustifiable. Mr. Patel made a reference to this incident in one of his speeches and pledged Congress to work for "an open and impartial inquiry" into this and other police excesses. It is easy to see that a threat of victimisation and a demand for inquiry are two very different things. Cannot the Madras Government see the distinction between the two? Nobody questions its right to reassure its employees when such assurance is really necessitated. But it is the propriety of its present action when no occasion had in fact arisen for it that is in serious doubt.

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#### Objectionable Police Order.

CONGRESS authorities have just succeeded in unearthing a highly objectionable police order in force in Karnatak. It is issued by a sub-inspector to

village patels under him and virtually enjoins the latter not to allow public meetings or processions in their villages without previous permission. This is, however, to be insisted upon not in the case of all meetings or processions but only in the case of those organised under Congress auspices and that too in connection with the elections. Other parties than the Congress will be under no obligation to secure the village patel's previous consent for holding a meeting or organising a procession, whether it relates to the elections or not.

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IT is noteworthy that the order cannot be dismissed as the foolish act of some overzealous officer who was ignorant of Government policy or did not know what he was doing. The sub-inspector has acted under instructions from the District Police Officer. In this case one would not be overshooting the mark very much in assuming that such restrictions about public meetings and processions organised by the Congress would hold good in all parts of the district concerned and not in the particular taluk to which it refers. It is impossible to conceive that the District Police Officer concerned would be more kindly disposed to Congress meetings and processions in some parts of his district than in others.

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IT would be easily seen that the order places the Congress at a decided disadvantage in the pursuit of its election campaign. It imposes upon it a disability to which other political parties would not be subject. One fails to see how this discrimination can be defended with any show of reason. More than that, one cannot see how this official interference with the election activity of the Congress can be reconciled with the Government's policy of non-interference. A departure from it was, according to Sir Henry Craik's explanation in the Legislative Assembly, to be allowed only for the purpose of checking the spread of sedition. The Congress not having so far been guilty of seditious propaganda in the course of its election campaign, even that possible justification is removed from the order. May it be hoped that the order will be at once withdrawn?

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#### Congress and States.

THE Mysore People's Federation Conference which held a successful session last week at Kolar had for its president Mr. V. Venkatappa, member of the State Legislature. He expressed strong disapproval of the proposed federal constitution which denies to Indian States' subjects the right of electing their representatives in the Federal Legislature. The Chairman of the Reception Committee Mr. K. C. Reddi was even more explicit on the point. He mentioned certain features whose incorporation in the Federal Constitution would alone, in his view, make it acceptable to the people of the States. These were:—

- (1) The Federal legislature should comprise of the elected representatives of British India and the Native States;
- (2) the list of Federal subjects should as far as possible be the same for British Provinces and the Native States;
- (3) the Federal authority should take the place of the British Government in the exercise of paramountcy over the States;
- (4) Freedom of speech, association, religion, etc., should be embodied in a declaration of fundamental rights and be made applicable to the people of Native States as to the British Indian people and all should have access to the Federal Court on the same common issues;
- (5) and of course, all this should be auxiliary to the existence of Responsible Government in all the units that will compose the Federation including the Native States.

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THE Indian National Congress is thinking of fighting the ensuing elections to the Mysore State Legislature by putting up its own candidates as in British India, and had asked for the co-operation of the People's Federation in the task. The President considered the request premature and subjected the Congress attitude to the problems of Indian States to criticism. Said he :—

The attitude of the Congress towards the problems of the Indian States has hitherto been vague, halting and undefined and has been at best one of casual sympathy; it has essentially been one of aloofness. In such a circumstance, we are asked to define our attitude towards the Congress and it is highly necessary to do so now, as the Congress committees in our State want to fight the ensuing elections to the Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council by putting in their own nominees on the electoral field. We of the Federation have no quarrel with such resolve on the part of the Congress committees. But for us to join the Congress officially and run candidates on Congress tickets is premature, as Congress has not cared to define its exact attitude towards our problems. When the time comes we have no hesitation in joining hands with that august body. As it is, to run candidates on Congress ticket is meaningless, when the Congress programme is not applicable to conditions prevailing in Indian States, except the programme relating to the removal of untouchability, promotion of swadeshi, reconstruction of rural areas, etc.

#### Compulsory Education in Cochin.

IN the recent debate in the Cochin State Legislative Council on the Compulsory Primary Education Bill, the Dewan, Sir Shanmukham Chetty advanced a reasoning which is remarkable for its originality. Compulsion, he said, is generally resorted to in order to compel parents to send their children to school. Its use is both justifiable and necessary in areas where parents and guardians do not co-operate with Government by sending their children to school of their own accord. What they would not do on their own volition, they are made to do under compulsion of the law.

IN Cochin with 80 per cent. of its school-age population at school and with a large number of children ready and willing to submit to instruction, where was the need for measures of compulsion as generally understood? he asked. The problem in Cochin was not how to make parents do their duty by their children—they were wide awake in the matter—but how to satisfy the ever growing demand for education. We do not know if when he said all this the Dewan excepted the backward and depressed classes from his remarks. It was evident from some speeches made in the course of the debate that these classes were not equally eager for education with the advanced classes. At least in their case compulsion must be said to be necessary even in advanced Cochin. This is, however, by the way. If there was any difficulty in the matter of compulsion, it was, the Dewan admitted, on the side of the Government who owing to want of funds find themselves unable to cope with the demand for education. If, therefore, compulsion is to be brought into use, it must, he pointed out, be for the purpose of compelling Government to make adequate provision for the educational needs of the people.

BUT it is obvious that a law compelling Government to provide fully for the educational requirements of the people would soon become a dead letter unless Government are placed in sufficient funds

for the purpose. It was for this purpose that the Dewan appealed for the co-operation of popular representatives in the Council. As a matter of fact, even when the Bill was referred to the select committee, the Government agreed to the course on the understanding that the Council would be prepared for additional taxation. The State already spends about 20 to 25 per cent. of its revenue on education and there is little possibility of its finding larger funds for education in the absence of additional taxation. As for retrenchment both in the education as also in other departments, the Dewan promised his fullest co-operation to non-official members. Accordingly a predominantly non-official committee will soon scrutinise the educational expenditure. If its labours should fail to result in an adequate saving in the educational budget it must, said the Dewan, be prepared, according to the original understanding, to propose measures, unpopular though they may be, for financing compulsory education.

#### Detenus' Grievances.

WITH nearly 1,500 young Bengalis locked up in detention camps the Bengal Civil Liberties Union has more than enough to engage its attention. It must initially press for the release of all these detenus to whom freedom is arbitrarily denied and in the alternative, for their being given an opportunity of proving their innocence in a judicial court in the usual manner. If it succeeds in securing their restoration to freedom, nothing better can be desired. But till this consummation is achieved the Union cannot afford to disinterest itself in their well-being. It is a matter for satisfaction that this aspect of the situation is ever present to the mind of the Union.

IT has recently drawn public attention to four hard cases. In three of them the detenus had contracted tuberculosis as a result of long continuance in detention camps but were not receiving proper medical treatment. And as if all this was not enough hardship, one of them had his monthly allowance reduced from Rs. 60 to Rs. 40. This led to a hunger strike on his part lasting for three weeks which was abandoned only on official assurance as to the restoration of the allowance to its original figure. It is complained that the assurance has not been implemented even after the lapse of a month!

THE fourth case is that of an educated girl, an M. A., who, having been in the detention camp for three years, had her health very much impaired. The Bengal Government, expressed their readiness to set her free but coupled the offer with two conditions: one that she should live outside Bengal and the other that she would get no allowance. She might perhaps have agreed to the first condition if it had not been joined to the other. But the enforcement of both the conditions has the result of making the Government's offer of her release practically useless. The reason is simple. She does not possess enough private means to enable her to maintain herself in comfort outside Bengal, and finds that she is not in a position to purchase her freedom as it were. The justice of the demand for the unconditional release of these four persons is so obvious that we feel no further pleading is required to bring it home to anybody. Let Sir John Anderson's Government remember that these persons are detained not because of any crime judicially proved against them but for the Government's own convenience. The least that the Government owes to them is to see that they are put to the irreducible minimum of inconvenience and discomfort.

## REGULATION OF MOTOR TRANSPORT.

IT was announced during the course of the last week that the Government of India has resolved to withdraw the Road Motor Bill introduced in the Legislative Assembly last autumn. A certain amount of satisfaction will no doubt be felt at this decision of Government. The Road Motor Bill had encountered heavy opposition in the Assembly and seems to have received no better reception when circulated for opinion to members of the public and the provincial Governments. It was an ill-conceived measure which needed at any rate drastic alteration. But while the withdrawal of the measure may cause no regret the situation as we see it to-day is yet uncertain and unsatisfactory.

In all countries the problem of motor transport regulation is difficult enough; it is, however, rendered peculiarly difficult in India on account of certain special circumstances of our situation. The national ownership of railways in India has necessarily made Government a biased party in this matter. While in many other countries it has been possible to look at the problem as one of partial obsolescence of one means of transport and it has been clearly recognised that some depreciation of railway capital must inevitably be faced on this account, the fact that this capital is represented by public debt in India has gravely complicated matters here. The Imperial Government is unwilling to reconcile itself to the prospect of a reduced income from railways and is evidently intent on bolstering up the position of railways with all the means within its power. This, however, is not the only complication. For, while the Imperial Government is vitally interested in the railways it is the provincial Governments that control road transport and stand to profit by its development. These Governments, therefore, cannot be easily made to fall in with the view of the Government of India on the regulation of road transport. This has made for a deadlock and the withdrawal of the Road Motor Bill by the Government of India is merely symptomatic of this state of affairs.

The Government of India feel that if the provincial Governments cannot be persuaded they must be coerced. And the means of coercion that the imperial Government can use are obviously financial. Thus though the Road Motor Bill is withdrawn the resolution on the Road Fund still stands on the Assembly Agenda. For, this is the first line of attack. The resolution seeks to give power to the central Government to prevent the Road Fund from being used for expenditure on certain types of roads, chiefly roads parallel to railways. Now it is undoubtedly true that any extra expenditure on roads parallel to railways is under the present circumstances undesirable; but it may still happen that an important gap in the general road system of an area may be a patch of low grade road or a bridge lacking on a road parallel to railway and there should certainly be no prohibition of the provincial Governments using the Road Fund money for filling up such gaps. While a programme of road-

building which unnecessarily duplicates transport facilities is to be avoided there is no warrant for laying down such definite percentages of expenditure on different types of roads as the Government resolution tries to do. The Road Fund is an all-India fund raised for the definite purpose of helping provincial Governments to make good the deficiencies of their road systems; the general principles that should govern its allocation etc. have been laid down in the report of the committee on Road Development and have been approved of by the Government of India and the Legislative Assembly. No data have been published to show that there has been a misapplication by any provincial Government of the funds received out of the Road Fund and we, therefore, think it entirely wrong of the Government of India to use this means to force its road policy down the throats of the provincial Governments.

The Road Fund resolution is one means of bringing financial pressure to bear on provincial Governments. But another and an even more powerful means has been afforded to the Imperial Government, whether consciously or unconsciously, by Sir Otto Niemeyer. While Sir Otto was perfectly justified in pointing to the shrinkage in railway revenues as one of the reasons of the unsatisfactory condition of Indian Governmental finance we do not think he was right in establishing the direct connection between provincial betterment and railway surplus that has been indicated by him in his report. It is plain, however, that the Government of India will now exploit to the fullest the case for the betterment of railway revenues by all means as thus presented by the financial expert.

It is most unfortunate that this financial aspect should so dominate the consideration of the road-rail problem in India. For, on the one hand it makes for a clouding of issues and on the other it prevents, on account of the differences between provincial and imperial Governments, action being taken speedily. It is reported that the Government of India will remodel the Road Motor Bill in the light of the proposals of the Railway Committee. The two cold-weather English experts will and should be concerned mainly with the technical aspect of the problem of running the Indian railway system more efficiently. And as we have already pointed out in these columns, they are really not in a position to report on the complicated problem of rail-road competition in this country. The way they have been going about their business also shows that at the end of their tour they will be not much wiser regarding the conditions of road transport in this country than they were at its beginning. It is futile to hope, therefore, that any new light will be shed on this problem by the Railway Committee's report.

Surely the development and regulation of motor transport in this country is a problem big enough to merit the serious and unbiased attention of the imperial and provincial Governments! It is not a problem that could satisfactorily be solved by treat-

ing it as if it were a question of bargaining between two parties or of the ability of one party to force its opinions on the other. It demands investigation and deliberation in all its aspects. It is strange that a Government which is ready to appoint a Committee at the slightest provocation has yet not undertaken an enquiry into this problem by that method. We would by the usual Government standards rate it worthy of a Royal Commission! The conditions to-day are vastly different from what they were when the Road Committee reported. The Mitchell-Kirkness Committee was a purely official one and it confined itself to one aspect of the problem. Road Conferences, where only two sets of officials meet, mostly in the spirit of rivalry, have proved unable to afford a solution or rather have even failed to approach the way of such a solution. We would, therefore, urge on Government the necessity of the appointment of a strong committee with very wide terms of reference to go fully into this question. If the comparatively simple and sectional problem of compulsory insurance needs investigation at the hands of a Committee, the whole of the complicated problem of road transport regulation obviously needs it a thousand times more. Or is it that the Government of India feels its financial interests so vitally at stake in this problem that it fears consideration at the hands of a committee that may take a more impartial and wider view than itself?

## Reviews.

### MODERN POLITICS.

**FORCES IN MODERN POLITICS.** By E. ASIRVATHAM. (Upper India Publishing House, Lucknow.) 1936. 20cm. 216p. Rs. 3.

IN spite of its title the book does not deal with all or even with the more important forces in modern politics such as Capitalism, Fascism and Socialism. It contains three separate essays on important and inter-related subjects—Nationalism, Imperialism and Internationalism.

The aim of the author appears to be—there is no preface or introduction by the author—to make available to the students in a summary form the views of modern writers on Nationalism and Imperialism and to describe in a brief compass the organisation and aims of the League of Nations and its working during the short period of its existence since 1920. In this the author has been largely successful and the historical and narrative parts are fairly good;—but the constructive portions of the essays are generally poor. It appears that the essays have been written rather hurriedly and enough thinking has not been bestowed upon them.

The three essays are not of an equally high standard—the essay on Imperialism is the best and that on Internationalism the poorest. The first part of the essay on Nationalism is good though the treatment of some of the factors that go to make up Nationality is scrappy and unsatisfactory. This is particularly so in the case of the economic factor. The part dealing with the growth of nationality in India is rather poor and the author appears to accept the view of Bernard Joseph that instead of fostering

the growth of one Indian nationality it would be better "to pursue the course of fostering the national development of the principal groups of India into a number of distinct and friendly nationalities." The author has succeeded in bringing out very clearly the evils of Nationalism but he has failed to do justice to the other side of the picture in spite of his sound belief that the building up of an international society is only possible on the basis of true nationalism.

The treatment of Imperialism by Dr. Asirvatham is both comprehensive and sound. It appears that the author has some sympathy with "the dynamic" powers like Germany, Italy and Japan, who were deprived of their colonies or who do not possess a sufficient number of them in their desire to pursue an aggressive policy with a view to regain or acquire more colonies. He has laid bare the true nature of modern imperialism and has carefully discussed the defects of the mandates system. But he feels that the only practical escape from the evils of Imperialism is through the extension of the mandates system to all colonies. Dr. Asirvatham has been greatly influenced by the views of Leonard Barnes and he has summarised his suggestions for improving the mandates system. I, however, wish that the author had discussed the problem of imperialism in its latest setting—i. e. from the standpoint of the two contending forces—Fascism and Socialism.

In the essay on Internationalism Dr. Asirvatham has not been able to make a penetrating study of the problem of the success of the League of Nations. He has not dealt with the problem of the development of an international society comprehensively, nor is he clear as to what Internationalism is or what is its real value. In discussing the question of the failure of the League of Nations and the methods of securing success to it he has talked vaguely of the necessity of developing "international mindedness" but he has failed to grapple with the real problem. He has not even referred to the impact of capitalism and imperialism on the problem of developing an international society. His discussion of the problems of collective security and international sanctions is most inadequate.

However, Dr. Asirvatham writes all through in a simple and clear style and the book can serve the purpose of introducing students and others to the three important subjects of Nationalism, Imperialism and Internationalism—all of which are of special interest to us in this country.

GURMUKH N. SINGH.

### PROBLEM OF POPULATION.

**THE SOCIOLOGY OF POPULATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO OPTIMUM, STANDARD OF LIVING AND PROGRESS.** By BENOY KUMAR SARKAR. (N. M. Ray Chowdhury & Co., Calcutta.) 1936. 24cm. 139p. Rs. 3.

THE ordinary treatment of the subject of population is so exclusively coloured by mainly biological presumptions about a population law that it is somewhat of a relief to come across a sociological treatment of the same. Recent work on population, particularly in the U.S.A. and in Germany, has tended to emphasize the close relation between the quality and numbers of the human population on the one hand, and the stage of intellectual and social progress on the other. Mr. Sarkar has correctly appreciated the validity of this viewpoint and he has written a book about Indian population which is well worth reading.

Prof. Sarkar claims that no science is more characteristic about population than sociology, and observes in consequence that the law of population is



not universal, eternal or uniform but varies with the epoch of development. To those who have learnt always to look at population through the so-called Malthusian Law on that subject, which even now most old-fashioned economists claim to be true in the long run, the statements of Mr. Sarkar will sound surprising. The attempt to treat of population not only in a sociological, but in a historical context is unusual in this country, though it is all the more valuable on that account.

Prof. Sarkar traces the outline of a historical comparison between the East and the West, and between West-European countries and India by suggesting that the difference between the East and the West is not one of inherent capacities but rather of differing stages, and that the present position of birth and death rates in India is comparable with the position of West-European countries about 40 years ago. Without wishing to challenge the element of truth that lies in a historical approach it must be asserted that to an extent the sociological and the historical approaches are somewhat contradictory. The Japanese have taken the Western world by shock by combining Eastern simplicity with more than Western efficiency. The difference between Japan and England, for instance, is not only one of stages but one of fundamental outlook, which is no doubt susceptible to change by an internal sociological movement but is not traceable to any difference in the stage of economic evolution.

It must be admitted that Prof. Sarkar subordinates the historical to the sociological interpretation, and hence does not misread the significance of the Japanese situation. With regard to India, Mr. Sarkar finds no cause for a scare about over-population in India at this stage. He concludes with a mass of comparative statistical information, that the Indian birth and death rates are by no means abnormal, that they are falling, and that infant mortality and expectation of life are showing a welcome change. Much of what Mr. Sarkar has to say in these respects, though well supported by statistical and other argument, is likely to go against widespread popular conviction. Especially his observation with regard to the general state of nutrition is likely to cause comment. Mr. Sarkar says, (page 49), "Howsoever low the income per family *per capita* may appear to be in terms of money the factual dietary of large numbers of the population can be, generally speaking, taken as well balanced."

This statement, if it refers to proportion of the population and not merely to numbers as is the literal meaning, can hardly be borne out either by figures or by observation. Not only is the per capita production and income yet too small to warrant the presumption of a balanced diet for any but the upper few, but such indirect evidence as Mr. Sarkar has been able to produce fails to substantiate the conclusion. The movement in vital statistics, though tending in a favourable direction, is too slow, and generally too intermittent to warrant any positive conclusion. Mr. Sarkar is undoubtedly right when he says that at the present stage of our industrialisation our numbers need not cause much alarm, and that with a welcome change in our sociological outlook and economic structure the numbers will tend to be more satisfactorily regulated. In so far as there is a solution to our population problem, as it now stands, it can only be found in a wider diffusion of education. Not Bhakti and Dnyan yoga but Yantra yoga is the pressing need of the times. If the mentality of our people is so changed as to be passionately attached to a planned, progressive and active life the details of sociological and industrial progress may be left to adjust themselves.

It is encouraging to find that Mr. Sarkar is on the whole hopeful of such a change. His book is to be heartily recommended to all students of the population problem.

D. G. KARVE.

## ART AND REALITY.

THE HINDU VIEW OF ART. BY MULK RAJ ANAND. (Allen & Unwin.) 1936. 20cm. 245p. 8/6.

IT is an extremely interesting and instructive book, written by a man who seems to have a profound intuitive insight and an imaginative grasp. The unity of the human race is postulated and art is explained as the expression and achievement of human ends which can have no significance without religion and philosophy. The sculptures of Sanchi and the paintings of Ajanta are unintelligible to those who know nothing of Indian philosophy. "The Hindu view of art is the Hindu view of life as interpreted by religion and philosophy". Art, in India "has been consecrated by the service of the intuitively realised ideal of a religious philosophy and a philosophical religion." "God-intoxicated" imagination and hence realism in the European sense has no place in Indian Art.

A theory of beauty was expressly worked out in connection with poetry, drama, and the dance, by the interpretation of the professed ideal of religion and philosophy, *Ananda* (joy) as *Rasa* (the delight experienced through a work of art). And this conception may be considered as equally applicable to painting, sculpture, architecture and other arts. Thus there is an overlapping of the ideal of religion and philosophy with the ideal of art.

The author, therefore, reviews the Hindu religious-philosophical conception before he would treat of aesthetics proper and of the principle of aesthetic practice enjoined in the *Shilpa-Shastras* (Art-treatises). And the Hindu view of art proper, as he explains, lies in the aesthetic conception of *rasa* which can be intuitively realised. *Rasa* is a very subtle state, requiring the manipulation of several different kinds of emotion, and a host of feelings in a judicious fusion, before it can be evoked. And it has to be evoked by any aspect of life treated by a perfect artist. Perfect art is perfectly spontaneous as the Ajanta frescoes.

The conception of *rasa* is in the aesthetic world: what *Ananda* is in the metaphysical and *Ishwara* in the religious. It is "really only the religious-philosophical hypothesis in a different dress, designed specifically to fit in with the science of aesthetics".

The discussions of the author then lead him to a description of the practical rules laid down in the *Shilpa-shastras*. "As religion is for the Hindus only a way of philosophy, art becomes for them simply a way of illustrating the central truth of religion and philosophy". Three arts in India especially have been the handmaids of religion, architecture, image-making and painting. The author next describes the life of the *silpin* (or *sthapati*, *karma-ra*, *rupa-kara*, *chitra-kara*) or the Indian artist and his high spirituality. But if the Indian artists were essentially the bearers of a message, a prophecy, they were also the skilful bearers of that message or prophecy. If it was the deep religiosity of their mental outlook that enabled them to conceive the Reality behind the appearance it was also their intimate knowledge of appearance which helped them to translate that Reality into form. The symbols which serve as *via media* to concentrate attention on the abstract Universal Soul or God are the *Pratima* or the *Pratika*.

The author next illustrates from Sukracharya's *shilpa-shastra* the canon about the making of images. He next describes the Indian arts of painting and architecture.

Hindu idealism, as the author truly observes, is not only in the blood of India; it is also in the soil of India. He concludes this interesting book with the profound hope that if a renaissance of Indian art is to come, "it will come from among the masses, from among the fervent devotees who still believe in the ideals of India". But the immediate need of the moment is "that this belief should be strengthened and reconciled with what is best in the beliefs of the other races of the world".

PRATAPAGIRI RAMAMURTI.

### INDIAN FEDERAL COURT.

**THE FEDERAL COURT OF INDIA.** By E. S. SUNDA. (The Author, Madura.) 21cm. 1936. 268p. Rs. 4.

MR. SUNDA'S little book is particularly welcome on the eve of the inauguration of the Federal Court at Delhi. The learned author has very carefully pointed out all the implications of the constitution of the proposed Federal Court and has emphasised the incongruity of democratic India and autocratic States combining into a federation.

The Federal Court provides the machinery for the interpretation of the constitution in an authoritative manner and for the adjudication of disputes that may arise between one unit of the proposed federation and another. The Federal Court will have an original jurisdiction dealing mainly with constitutional issues and it will also hear appeals, mainly involving constitutional questions, from the decisions of the various High Courts in British India and the Courts in Indian States which may have joined the federation. Mr. Sunda has rightly suggested that Delhi would not be quite a suitable place for the location of the Federal Court and as once proposed by Sir Amberson Marten, the ex-Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, the Court should hold its sittings in turns at more suitable places in India.

It is significant that the Crown's prerogative to give special leave to appeal to the Privy Council is not touched by the Government of India Act. And in special cases, an appeal may be preferred to His Majesty in Council from a decision of the Federal Court.

The author has treated the subject as completely as was possible and throughout the book he has made his own suggestions when the point discussed admitted of a doubt or a difference of opinion. Though it is a study in constitutional law, the monograph will appeal to an intelligent layman, and Mr. Sunda must be congratulated upon his very fine contribution to the study of this topical subject of engrossing interest. The statements that the learned author has made have been supported by authorities and he has given full references. At the end of the book are collected together all the material sections from the Government of India Act, bearing upon the Constitution of a Federal Court. Parallel provisions from other federal constitutions are also quoted in appropriate places and the reader is thus enabled the better to appreciate the provisions of the Government of India Act. The case law on the subject is also not neglected, and though the legal profession may have expected fuller references to the case law, the layman may thank the author for not overburdening his book with citations.

S. G. PATWARDHAN.

## Miscellaneous.

### ABORIGINALS OF ATTAPADI HILLS.

MR. NAYANAR'S IMPRESSIONS.

*Mr. V. R. Nayanar, Member, Servants of India Society, in charge of its Calicut Centre, recently visited the Attapadi Hills. In the course of a statement giving his impressions of the visit Mr. Nayanar says:*

Although Attapadi is a portion of Malabar very few Malayalees have seen it, due to the inaccessibility of the place and the virulent malaria which prevails there. The region is unsurveyed and unknown. Its approach is through Coimbatore district, the ascent via Mannarghat in Walluvanad Taluka being very steep and dangerous due to the presence of wild elephants. The valley is very extensive, covering an area of about 500 sq. miles. It contains the tallest peaks in the Taluka, prominent among which is Malleswaram which the aboriginals regard with awe and worship as mount Kailas, the holy abode of Siva. The Bhavani river flows through a densely wooded gorge. It is joined by its tributary, the Siruvani, at the border of the Coimbatore district. The peaks are clothed with splendid forests, portions of which are reserved by the Forest department. The villagers construct their bamboo huts thatched with grass in the valleys. They cultivate paddy, ragi, chama, vegetables, etc. There are nearly 100 villages containing about 2000 huts. The number of huts in each village varies from 10 to 100. The total population is about 9000 all of whom are aboriginals named Irulas, Mudugas, Kurumbar, etc. These aboriginals are not enjoying any of the amenities of civilised life. There is no dispensary for medical relief in the whole area, although cent. per cent. of the people are victims of malaria with enlarged spleen. The District Health Officer examined the children of select villages and it was found that a very large percentage and in some cases every one of them was affected by spleen enlargement. There is not a single school in any of the villages. The people are steeped in ignorance and illiteracy.

The economic condition of the people is very unsatisfactory. Depending only on cultivation for their livelihood, the villagers are put to very great difficulty for want of sufficient rains. When the monsoon fails there is great scarcity even of drinking water. Except a hut and a few torn clothes and old vessels the villager has nothing to call his own. Traffic in the Hills is very difficult as there is no proper road. The foot track from Thatakam, a village in the Coimbatore district, connects Thenkara, a village of the Walluvanad Taluka, cutting across the Hills and covering a distance of about 50 miles. There is a Coffee Estate in the Hills conducted by a Frenchman.

Mr. T. B. Russell, when he was the Collector of Malabar, insisted upon the annual inspection of the Hills by the Revenue Divisional Officer. Mr. Carleston was the first officer who made an extensive tour in the valley on foot and studied the condition of the aboriginals. Mr. Platt, the present Sub-Collector, equally enthusiastic and sympathetic, continued the inspection and suggested the construction of wells for the supply of pure drinking water for the inhabitants. The District Labour Officer has selected sites for three wells. It is hoped that Mr. MacEwan, the Collector, who is interested in the welfare of the backward people in the Hills, will recommend to the Labour Department to open some schools and to the District Board to open a dispensary

which is the most urgent need. The distribution of quinine has to be made more efficient. A regular road connecting Mannarghat and Coimbatore will greatly help the people in the Hills to get better prices for their agricultural products and thus improve their economic condition. A co-operative stores for the supply of cheap provisions to the inhabitants and the introduction of cottage industries like weaving, mat-making, etc. will stop the exploitation of the poor villagers by the petty traders from the plains who charge exorbitant rates.

If sufficient help is forthcoming from the Government and the public, the Devadhar Malabar Reconstruction Trust will be quite willing to organise welfare work in the Hills and relieve distress among the aboriginals.

## Correspondence.

### DIVORCE IN ENGLISH SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—I read the article entitled "Renouncing the Throne" in your issue of 17th December, 1936, with real regret. I have subscribed to your journal for years, and have continued my subscription since leaving India, because I believed that I could rely on it to give me an informed interpretation of Indian events, and a sane appraisal of world events, from a progressive Indian angle. You have, I fear, so seriously misinterpreted English sentiment about the recent unhappy events that my faith in your judgment is shaken.

You suggest that the Duke of Windsor was forced to abdicate for reasons other than the ostensible reason, and you take leave to doubt Mr. Baldwin's statement that "a morganatic marriage such as the late King had proposed would not commend itself to the British people". Let me assure you in all sincerity that Mr. Baldwin judged rightly. I had the opportunity, both before and after the abdication, to hear the opinions of all classes of society. It was not necessary to solicit opinions, because no one could think or talk of anything else and even total strangers volunteered their opinions. I have never known the country more moved, more troubled, or more solid. I talked with factory hands, railway porters, shop assistants, agricultural labourers and many others. A typical verdict, given by a young man of about 20, was: "I put him on a pedestal. I feel he has let me down." On the day that the King's decision to abdicate was announced, I happened to be in a factory employing more than 4,000 hands, men and women. The management arranged for the staff to be kept in touch with events by means of wireless. The reaction of the staff was immediate and impressively uniform, for they made it clear that they were wholeheartedly behind the Prime Minister.

I venture to quote one other sentence from your article. You say: "All this furore is to us simply unintelligible and can only be due to social prejudice which cannot be defended." The British people are still Puritans at heart, and should not be confounded with the "smart set" or judged on Hollywood standards. Unless you grasp this, you will never be able to understand British character or appraise British instincts.

I believe that the British people would have ac-

claimed the King's marriage with a commoner or with an American provided that they felt that the lady of his choice would share his throne with dignity and grace. Anything less than this would have appeared to them a derogation of that cherished institution, the Monarchy. If "noblesse oblige," how much more "majesté" ?—Yours, etc.

A. R. GREEN.

Berkhamsted, Herts,  
England.

January 6.

[ It may well be that the majority of the British people were against Mrs. Wallis Simpson becoming either Edward VIII's queen or his consort. We must admit that public opinion in England, in so far as it has had an opportunity of expressing itself, was more hostile than we thought it would be. But we cannot accept Sir Alan Green's suggestion that it was unanimous or nearly unanimous. The *New Statesman and Nation*, whose comments we have quoted before, suggested the compromise of a morganatic marriage. Mr. Lloyd George treats the "forcing off" of Edward from the throne (an American paper's phrase) as "shabby and stupid treatment." Several other distinguished persons from the upper classes have spoken in the same strain. As for the masses, they are at least divided. *Reynold's News*, which, strangely enough, supported Mr. Baldwin, published several letters of workingmen who denounced the paper's policy on the subject and regretted the snobbery which made it impossible for Edward to marry where he liked: these persons saw no conflict between love and duty.

We could quite understand England, if it were a Catholic country believing that marriage is an indissoluble sacrament, viewing Edward's marriage with Mrs. Simpson with holy horror. But, frankly, we are unable to see a country whose Protestantism was an indirect result of Henry VIII compelling the Church, by subordinating it to secular power and secular interests, to grant him a divorce from his lawful wife, now proclaim the sacramental contract of marriage as the sacred tie which binds civilisation together. Sir Alan Green avers that Englishmen are still Puritans at heart. The sequel to the proposed Edward-Simpson marriage no doubt lends confirmation to this statement. But are divorces so uncommon in English society as to lead to the inference that the English people believe that divorce is the supreme proof of a general moral decay and that the toleration of divorce is the dissolvent of society? We cannot help feeling that Britishers' Puritanism is reserved only for the royal family, and the point that we tried to make in our article was just this, that a much stricter moral code was being applied to the King than to the common run of English humanity. We have no sympathy with Hollywood morality, but are unable to appreciate a Puritanic standard being made for the exclusive benefit of the wearer of the crown when Parliament has reduced the crown to a merely symbolic value, and when there is no likelihood of a Trojan war being provoked by a liaison between Helen and Paris.

As to whether there was any ulterior motive behind the abdication or as Mr. Brailsford would say, deposition, only history will tell. We do not believe that Sir Alan is in any better position to judge of it than anyone else. We only expressed a doubt. Several responsible people have done likewise.—  
Ed., S. o. I.]