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CONTENTS.

	Page
TOPICS OF THE WEEK	193
ARTICLES :—	
Much of a Muchness.	195
The Red Signal.	197
The Jute Mill Strike.	198
Agricultural Indebtedness in Zanzibar.	200
Administrative Problems.	201
REVIEW :—	
Indian Constitutional History. By Prof. K. R. R. Sastry.	203
SHORT NOTICE.	204
MISCELLANEOUS :—	
Congress Working Committee Resolutions	204
BOOKS RECEIVED	204

Topics of the Week.

B. N. R. Inquiry Deadlock.

THE leaders of the B.N.R. Union have refused to participate in the inquiry set up by Government to investigate the grievances of the Railway workers. The causes which led to this rather unexpected refusal throw a somewhat unfavourable light on the manner and mentality of the responsible officers of the railways in dealing with workers' representatives. The Inquiry Officer appointed by the Government ruled that the terms offered by the Agent of the B. N. Railway on February 2 were not an integral part of those offered on January 22, the latter, according to the Agent, whose view seems to have prevailed with the Inquiry Officer, having expired on January 28. It will be recalled that the original terms offered by the Agent had to be modified in certain respects before the strike was called off. This modification involved certain lapse of time. Mr. Jarrad contended that the terms offered in February should be interpreted as independent terms forming no connexion whatsoever with those offered before.

THE B. N. R. Union leaders assert that "by the Inquiry Officer's upholding the contention of the Agent... the Government members are liable to be accused in the public eye of having allowed the negotiations to be prolonged beyond the time limit," which, of course, they had no intention of doing. The expiry of the time limit was due, in fact, to the delay of the Agent, Mr. Jarrad, in replying to the Railway Commissioner's communication, and the fact that Mr. Jarrad is insisting on treating the latter terms as independent of the former offer leaves him

open to the charge of having deliberately planned in advance a sabotage of the Inquiry.

THE fact that the Inquiry Officer has already accepted Mr. Jarrad's view shows a predisposition in favour of the Agent. The proper procedure would have been first to allow the leaders of the Union to press their views and place relevant documents on this important point before the Inquiry and decide the question of the basis of the settlement in whose light the terms of reference were to be interpreted. In the circumstances, the labour leaders had no other way to express their protest and distrust of the Inquiry except through a refusal to co-operate with it. That a sober and constitutionally minded labour leader like Mr. Giri is a party to this boycott is enough to lend force to the Union's objection.

The Cochin Order Dispute.

THE order of the Cochin State against the temple entry-proclamation of the Travancore State, which was discussed editorially in our last issue, still continues to hold public attention. The administrator of the temple in question has now joined the fray by issuing a statement questioning Cochin's right to intervene in a matter which he considers to be entirely within his competence to judge and decide. The Administrator, who is also the spiritual head of the temple, holds that the order of the Cochin Maharaja was unauthorised and the President's intervention an uncalled for encroachment in a matter concerning the spiritual administration of the affairs of the temple, in which he, the Kaimal, held supreme authority.

THE Travancore proclamation is supported by the Kaimal who intends to approach the Government of India with a view to getting withdrawn the Resident's order endorsing the Cochin prohibition. We do not know what the exact position of the "spiritual head" of the temple is after the Cochin order. If he approved of the Travancore proclamation, and held that the temple is not polluted by those priests who had helped the untouchables to worship in the temples, he himself is liable to come under the ban of the Cochin State and would be unable to transact any business in the temple under his authority as an effect of the order of the Resident. The Cochin Government has issued a statement denying any authority to the Kaimal to introduce on his own initiative any innovation not sanctioned by ancient usage and custom. Thus the controversy cannot be settled unless the Government of India intervenes. We hope there will be no delay in finding a solution to this question as this unbecoming struggle between the progressive forces of reform and entrenched orthodoxy is making the Hindus ridiculous in the eyes of the civilised world.

Hindu Wife's Rights.

THE *Indian Social reformer* draws attention to an important judgment delivered by the District Judge of Anantapur in the Madras Presidency. The judgment arose out of a case in which a Hindu husband sued his wife for the restitution of conjugal rights. This gentleman had married for a second time and, it was proved, was ill-treating his first wife, who had after considerable suffering to leave her husband's house. The lower court had decided in favour of the husband and in an appeal also a higher court found that "the woman was in a bad state of health, that the husband was proved to be most unaffectionate, that he had no great desire to get back his wife, and that his main idea in filing this suit was to escape paying maintenance." In spite of this the Court held that "the poor condition of the wife's health was no reason for refusing the husband the decree" and ordered her to go back to her husband, adding that the only consequence of her refusal to do so will be forfeiture of maintenance from the day of such refusal.

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THE harassed woman preferred another appeal against this judgment and the High Court ordered a retrial by another District Judge with the happy result that the court mercifully held that, whatever the tenets of the Hindu religion regarding a wife's duty to her husband, they cannot be made to help an inhuman husband to treat a discarded wife like a chattel at home, to be worked to death and ill-treated. The plea of restitution of conjugal rights is often an excuse to secure a slave without any payment. In such cases the husbands insist on their "sacred" rights and recognise no responsibilities. Unfortunately, the ante-diluvian Hindu law, based on what the *shastras* thought good centuries ago and interpreted more often than not by persons occupied with the dead letter rather than the living spirit behind it, has been made an instrument of torture to many a woman in India. The evil cannot be remedied without the introduction of a divorce law with the enforcement of monogamy irrespective of one's caste or creed and we hope the Indian women's organisation will undertake a ceaseless propaganda for this much delayed reform.

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Catering on B. N. Ry.

DEEP dissatisfaction was expressed in the Council of State over the catering arrangements on the Bengal Nagpur Railway. The occasion was the discussion of a motion for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the matter. The dissatisfaction related as much to policy as to details. It was the mover's complaint that the food that was served on platforms was bad and that for such bad food very nearly double the normal prices were charged, that the food contractors were not local men and had to serve a very wide area, about 600 miles each.

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WHY should complaints of this kind be voiced in the central Legislature? It may be suggested, as indeed was done by the Chief Commissioner for Railways, that they may be raised in the respective local advisory committees. A little reflection will show that the suggestion cannot, if acted upon, succeed in securing redress of the grievances against which loud complaints were heard. The reason is implicit in the constitution of these bodies. The majority of the members of these committees are, as pointed out by the mover, the nominees of the Agent himself and can hardly be expected to disregard his wishes. How can anybody hope to get justice from such committees?

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BUT the mover's real complaint was that the upper class catering is subsidised through the third class passengers. In other words, the profits from the lowest class catering are utilised to make good the losses on account of the higher class catering. Unlike other railways, the Bengal Nagpur has a catering department of its own for the benefit of the higher class passengers. So far as the catering of the third class goes, however, contracts are given, from which the Railway makes about one lakh of rupees. But the Company's departmental catering is not only not paying but results in a loss which, it was complained, is made good by the profits from third class catering. The inequity of the arrangement is too obvious to need comment and did attract the attention of the Railway Retrenchment Committee which recommended the "immediate" substitution of the departmental arrangement by one of letting the contractors do the catering as on other railways. Similarly too it suggested the closing down of the hotels run under the management of the railway at Puri and Ranchi, should they continue to work at a loss. These recommendations of the Committee have remained unattended to for over five years.

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STATISTICS were given by the mover in support of his contention about the loss due to catering of higher classes being made good from profits from the third class. The Chief Commissioner for Railways tried to rebut the accusation by pointing out that the dining cars, refreshment rooms and the two railway hotels together yielded a profit of about Rs. 37,000, which, it may be noted, is not even one half of the profits from Indian catering. These came to nearly Rs. 86,000 in 1935-36. The mover wanted to know how they were disposed of if, as stated by Sir Guthrie Russell, they were not used to fill the gap caused by European catering. To this query no definite reply was vouchsafed by the Commissioner who merely contented himself by giving expression to his belief that the amount "presumably" was absorbed in the general revenues of the administration. This is too vague to satisfy anybody. His equivocal reply itself enforces the need for a thorough inquiry into the question of catering on the B. N. Railway.

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Hindu Widows' Home Association.

AS our readers will remember, the report of the Hindu Widows' Home Association for 1935 contained a reference to the deplorable tendency on the part of the conductors of the Indian Women's University to erect a wall of separation between the parent body viz the Association and the University. In the circumstances the Association had no alternative but to warn the generous public not to give its support vaguely to "Karve's institutions" as before but to make up its mind as to which of the two institutions it wants to help. The report for 1936 reverts to the topic and mentions the fact about the relations between the two bodies being "no longer the same as before." Both institutions have, it is stated, separate purses and separate managements and though the University owes its birth to the Association, "its authorities have no longer any motherly feeling towards this parent institution." This statement in the report is illustrated by the reduction in grants made by the University towards the conduct of the High School and Training College for whose management the Association is responsible. If the decrease had been occasioned only by considerations of an expansion of the work of the university, the level of the cuts should have been uniform. But, says the report, "the cut in our grant is comparatively greater than in the case of other institutions" All that the impartial public can hope for is that everything would

be avoided by the authorities of both the institutions which would in any way be calculated to aggravate the atmosphere of misunderstanding prevailing between them.

IT appears from the report that the financial position of the Association is not all that it should be. Though as a result of economical management the budgeted deficit of over Rs. 4,600 for 1936 was reduced by nearly Rs. 3,000, there is no getting away from the hard reality of the situation that the income of the institution was less than its expenditure. A deficit of about Rs. 1,700 had also to be incurred on account of the Satara branch. All this deficit was met from the Reserve Fund which now has a balance of only about Rs. 5,600. One more deficit year and a major portion of the reserve fund would disappear. It is to be regretfully noted that the Association is also finding it difficult to get sufficient help from the outside public and its appeal particularly to its past students to come to its help will, we hope, evoke an exceptionally sympathetic response in their hearts. The celebration of the 81st anniversary of the birthday of the founder Prof. Karve, which falls next year, might be used as a starting point for a redoubled effort to place the institution on a sound financial footing.

THE only other thing requiring mention is the taking over for management by the Association of the local board school at Kothrud which is about a mile from the Association's headquarters. This was found necessary because of the need of an adequate practising school for the Training College. The primary school at Hingne was found inadequate for the purpose and a larger one was badly needed. The arrangement is likely to be advantageous from another point of view in that the contact of the pupil teachers with rural conditions will give them a firsthand knowledge of rural life and economics which no amount of theoretical study of books would. This will also pave the way for rural uplift work in Kothrud which is to be started in the near future. But even more than the teachers it is the village which stands to gain as a result of its newly established connection with the Association. The strength of the school has already gone up from 40 to 70 which includes 12 girls as

against 1 in June last. Who can deny that the beginning is full of promise?

Indian Director of Publicity Needed.

MR. KUNZRU was informed, in reply to a question put in the Council of State, that the contract of the present Director of Information, Mr. Stephens, would expire on August 24. The post has always been held by a Britisher and it is generally felt that the opportunity offered by the expiration of Mr. Stephens's contract should be taken to Indianise the post. The feeling has found repeated expression in the Indian press and its strength ought by now to induce Government to defer to it by conferring the appointments on a suitable Indian. But indications do not unfortunately point to the Government doing this very reasonable thing. As a matter of fact it is reported they have made up their mind to appoint a non-Indian to the post, when it falls vacant. Whether one is specially imported from England or selected from among those already in this country is a matter of little concern, so long as he is to be a non-Indian.

MR. KUNZRU interpellated Government with a view to finding out their mind on the point but they chose to be uncommunicative. Beyond stating that the question of the appointment of a successor of Mr. Stephens was being considered, they remained absolutely mum. Their reticence obviously lends confirmation to the fear, widely expressed, that Mr. Stephens's successor would be one who is not a son of the soil. There can be no question that the Directorship of Public Information is pre-eminently a post which should, in the fitness of things, go to an Indian. And if despite the unmistakably expressed public preference for an Indian Director of Publicity the Government go and foist a Britisher or non-Indian on this country, they would be guilty of needlessly acting in defiance of public opinion. They cannot plead lack of qualified Indians, for heaps of them are available and could be relied upon to do full justice to the duties of the post. Let the Government think a hundred times before deciding to estrange public opinion, specially in regard to an appointment to which a non-Indian cannot be justifiably appointed.

MUCH OF A MUCHNESS.

THE Working Committee of the Congress has endorsed Mahatma Gandhi's interpretation of the assurance required from the Governors as an antecedent condition to the formation of Congress Ministries. The Governors are not to be asked now to promise abstention from all interference, but only to give an undertaking that the interference, whenever they choose to practise it, shall take the most drastic form permissible in law—dismissal of the Ministries. The Congress says in effect: "Don't leave it to our Ministers to tender their resignation in cases of undue interference from the Governor. But let the Governor first turn them out before he practises any kind of interference with them." Dismissal instead of resignation: this is all that there is to this pother over the assurance demand!

That Congressmen themselves understood the demand as originally put forward in a different sense is clear from the remarks of Congress journals themselves on Mr. Butler's statement in the Commons

disowning the Government's intention to allow a detailed interference of the Governors in the administration. This statement was hailed by the Congress papers as a very generous pronouncement. The *Hindustan Times* wrote on the eve of the Working Committee's meeting: "That Mr. Butler's statement marks a reversal of Government's policy, as first laid down by Lord Zetland, is a new factor which Congress leaders who have assembled at Allahabad will do well to take note of." After the meeting was over, the *Indian Express* felt compelled to enter a mild protest against Mr. Butler and Lord Zetland being joined together in denunciation. This, it thought, was unjust to the former. "The statement of the Secretary of State was stiff and unbending and ceded no ground. But Mr. Butler's statement was somewhat different. For one thing, he dealt with the important issue of day-to-day interference and gave a qualified undertaking that it would not occur."

How can these journals suppose, we wonder, that the Secretary of State would speak in one sense and the Under-Secretary in another? Their manner may possibly differ, but the substance of the statements must necessarily be the same. Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru may sometimes allow their wide differences to appear in public, but it would be entirely against official usage for the Under-Secretary to take up a more liberal attitude towards any problem than the Secretary. And in fact Mr. Butler did not say anything different from what Lord Zetland had said and Sir Samuel Hoare had repeated very often. Mr. Butler made a special reference to "day-to-day interference" because of an earlier statement of Mahatma Gandhi, but Lord Zetland would have said the same thing if he had been asked that question. Lord Zetland and Mr. Butler gave different answers because they were asked different questions. The former was asked: "Will you promise that there will be no interference of any kind?" and his answer was no. The latter was asked: "Will you promise that there will not be constant interference?" and his answer was yes.

What is there in Mr. Butler's statement which has not been reiterated times without number? But the Congress journals took it as something unusually large-hearted and indicating a sudden change of attitude for the better. The *Hindu* said about the answers which Mr. Butler gave to questions asked in the House of Commons that they "would appear to betoken a thawing in the attitude of Whitehall. . . . Both as regards non-interference and as regards the implementing of the Congress programme by the Ministries the Under-Secretary has now conceded the Congress demand." The *Hindustan Times* remarked that it might be assumed that there would be no detailed interference with the work of the Ministers, saying: "Stripped of all diplomatic verbiage, we take it that this means that the Congress Ministers will be free to carry out the programme outlined in the election manifesto unhampered by the special powers of the Governor." It added further: "There is little difference between the latest position taken up by Mr. Butler and what Mahatma Gandhi has been saying is the real meaning of the Delhi resolution, whatsoever the position may have been a few weeks back." And again, "We are convinced that the second invitation to Congress leaders will not prove as infructuous as the first."

The hopeful situation sensed by all these journals is due not to any change in the Government attitude, but to the interpretation that Mahatma Gandhi has now given to the required assurance. The *Bombay Chronicle* observes on the Working Committee's resolution: "Those who contend that Congress is intransigent do not realise how far it has made a move towards a constitutional regime." Well, we realise it. It has taken a somersault. For the resolution means that if the Congress members accept office they will not make an attempt to prove the unworkability of the constitution. To combat the Act, to end the Act, are mere phrases. Mahatma Gandhi disowns any desire on the part of the Congress to

produce deadlocks, though it will not shirk them. This is just the phraseology employed by those who are supposed to take a miserably weak attitude towards the constitution. By working the Act in normal fashion Congressmen will be best able to end it, says the Mahatma. If this is so, there is no particular virtue in the Congress's stand against the constitution. In taking up the attitude of "no courting of deadlocks," the *Bombay Chronicle* says, the Congress has made "large concessions." To whom has it made these concessions? To Government? And why? In order to get an empty assurance from the Governors, has the Congress given up its policy of sabotage which presumably it wished to adopt before? "For Congress to go further," writes the *Chronicle*, "would be treason to its basic policy of non-co-operation and its pledges to the country." Our contemporary may well consider whether even the present climb-down is not treason to non-co-operation, for we cannot think of any hardened co-operator who will have the least objection to the policy which the Congress has adopted under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance, a policy, namely, of making a go of the constitution, however unsatisfactory the constitution may be. Some opposition was offered by the left-wingers, we are told, to the adoption of the Working Committee's resolution, but the fact that it was adopted shows how feeble the left wing is.

There is no difference now between what the Congress wants to secure and what the Government says it always intended to concede: non-interference of Governors except in grave emergencies. The only difference that has not yet been bridged is about the procedure, the machinery to be employed in ensuring that no undue interference will in fact take place. The weapon of a threat of resignation is in Congress hands, but the Congress somehow thinks that it will not be as effective as Governors being compelled to dismiss their Ministers. Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer sees no particular force in the Congress thesis. He says: "I am unable to appreciate the preference shown by the Committee for the dismissal of Ministers instead of resignation of office." This is a widely held view, and, referring to it, the *Hindu* says: "There may be those to whom this demand seems trivial, but the Congress has been insisting on it as a safeguard against the Governor lightheartedly interfering with Ministers on matters of little importance. Congress leaders argue that the Governor will be more reluctant to interfere if the obligation of dismissing the Ministers is cast on him before he uses special powers than if he were merely put to the possible necessity of having to face a situation arising out of the resignation of a dissatisfied Ministry." Since it rests with the Ministry itself to translate this possibility into a reality, to insist upon a Ministry being dismissed instead of its being left free to resign argues want of confidence that a Congress Ministry will remain straight without external compulsion.

The Congress having taken up this position, the question is: what should be Government's response? On fundamentals there is no difference. The Congress, in spite of its being committed to end the constitution,

has declared that it would give an honest trial to the constitution and not try to sabotage it; not even to crimp or destroy the Governors' special powers. The ending of the constitution is to be achieved only by working it loyally and with a full recognition of its limitations. This is an honest-to-God answer that Mahatma Gandhi has given on behalf of the Congress. Whether it can be reconciled with the general policy to which the Congress is committed is another matter. The Mahatma is capable of infinite logical contortions, by which he can reconcile things which appear fundamentally incompatible to most men. He has reconciled his advocacy of dominion status to the Congress insistence on independence. On this question also the Government may well leave the necessary reconciliation to him. What concerns Government immediately is a matter of detail—whether the Governors should be permitted to promise that interference on their part will always take the form of dismissal of Ministers. Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri's view on this aspect of the question is such as should appeal to Government. He says:

The assurance, to my mind, is as innocuous as it is unnecessary. The power of resignation is with the Ministers as the power of dismissal is with the Governor. When mutual consultation leaves the parties unyielding and no *via media* can be found, what is left but resignation or dismissal? So long as the power of dismissal remains, what power is taken away from the Governors?

What, therefore, may be expected to happen is this. The Government will give a full run to the interim Ministries. It is under an obligation to them for having released it from a tight spot. It will be in no hurry to put the Congress in office. In about six months' time from the commencement of the constitution the legislatures will be convened, and if the interim Ministries are defeated an offer of office will be renewed to the Congress. And when the leader asks for the new assurance it will be given, an assurance which apparently in the eyes of the Congress is the great open sesame which will introduce a constitution cured of all its vital defects. At any rate we see no reason whatever why the present controversy, mostly futile, should be allowed to continue any longer.

THE RED SIGNAL.

THE rulers of Indian States must be more robust-minded and stout-hearted than one would give them credit for if the deadlock that has arisen in the provincial constitution does not give them a pause in their desire to enter federation. None of them has publicly spoken to give an indication of their reaction to this somewhat unexpected denouement. That is never their way: they never speak. But it would appear that just as time is drawing near when they should be handing in their accessions they are afflicted with second thoughts, as it is very proper that they should be. The best proof of this is that the editor of *United India and Indian States* can latterly let no issue of his paper go out without filling its pages with a pathetic exhibition of the mixed feelings which surge within his breast: regret that federation may be forced off the political stage altogether and at the same time ruefulness that it may be brought about in circumstances which will only be hurtful to the interests of Indian States. Of the idea of federation he still remains a devout votary, but he realises that in the present temper of British India federation, if it is to be a reality, can only be a forced growth. No federation can be a success unless it is based upon the free consent of all the units. Such consent, however, is not forthcoming in the case of the Indian federation from the side of British India. The paper says:

The most important requirement for building of a strong Indian nation seems to us to lie in the eradication of all distrust not only between Indian communities but between the different political constituents of a United India. It is because this will not be achieved in a compulsory and merely statutory union that we have pleaded and still plead for a Federation which, to be worth-while, must be based on mutual trust and good will: if this is not feasible, Indian political federation is premature and, if forcibly achieved will create conditions of catastrophic confusion

instead of an everlasting political alliance between British India and the States.

United India would thus like the Princes to delay giving consent to federation till British Indian politicians show themselves in a more kindly frame of mind. British India's attitude, however, is not going to be altered till the Princes are willing to revise the terms which they have laid down and which the British Government has accepted. And as there is little chance of a modification of these terms in the near future, *United India* in effect advises the Princes to stay away from federation indefinitely. In giving such advice it is as wise as brave. For British India is in no mood to let the federal constitution function in the normal way. The Congress position is perfectly clear. At present its hands are too full with the impasse in the provinces to pay much heed to federation, but as soon as this strain is a little relaxed the Princes' turn will come next. The *Hindustan Times* makes clear what the Congress may be expected to do in this connection. It says:

The Faizpur Congress has placed on Congressmen the special responsibility of doing everything they can to prevent the establishment of this spurious federation. If Congress Ministries were functioning in six provinces, opposition to federation would have become very effective, as the Provincial Governments themselves would be opposed to them. With the Congress in opposition, it may not be feasible for Provincial Assemblies to refuse to elect members for the federal Assembly. All that Congress members can do is to elect a strong Congress contingent to the Federation and pass resolutions in the Provincial Legislatures refusing to enter this federation, which the Government, if the present deadlock continues till then, may treat with scant respect. But the point to which we want to draw attention now, is whether the Indian Princes will think it worth while to join a federation in which their nominees will be continually engaged in a conflict with the most progressive elements in British India. That is an aspect of the matter which has not received much

consideration till now but which the Princes must seriously take into account, if the political situation does not take a sudden turn for the better, on account of some dramatic gesture or development.

If the intentions of the Congress can be judged from this extract in the *Hindustan Times*, they seem to be twofold: in a province with a Congress Ministry no representatives of the province will be elected to the Federal Assembly at all, and in a province with a Ministry drawn from another party, such representatives will be elected as will take up the Congress position of a total opposition to federation, and in any case as soon as the legislatures meet the Congress party will endeavour to get resolutions passed declaring that India does not want this federation. Probably none of these things, considering the matter from a purely legalistic point of view, need hold up federation. If from some provinces no representatives are returned, the Federal Assembly can carry on without them; in fact it can carry on even if the whole of British India did not send any representatives. There are the States' representatives, and these by themselves will be entitled to act for the whole of India. If the Congress did send its representatives, they would be too few to make any impression, not to speak of their being able to obstruct business. The hostile resolutions passed in the provincial legislatures will not stave off federation any more than a similar resolution passed in the Legislative Assembly could stave off the new constitution as a whole. Legally the whole of this programme which seems to have been sketched out by the Congress will be without effect, but what kind of atmosphere will it produce in the country, and in what light will the country look upon the Princes? This is an aspect of the question which the Princes must take very carefully into consideration. They will have transferred to themselves the bitter hostility which the nationalist elements in India exhibit towards British imperialism. These elements are quite prepared to leave the Princes alone if the Princes on their part will leave them alone. But if they will thrust themselves into a federation which British India hates, they will inevitably become the target of constant attacks from British India. The Princes can well avoid such a situation and ought to avoid it.

There are reasons to believe that the Princes are very much perturbed at this none too cheerful prospect, and attempts are being made to put them at their ease. Perhaps the *Statesman* was making such an attempt when it wrote in a recent issue: "No solution of present problems in the provincial sphere need have an adverse effect on federation. For the federal sphere will have its own dynamics, and no measures taken by Provincial Governments within the framework of the Act can of themselves jeopardise either the introduction or the working of federation. . . . The Princes and their advisers have given no evidence that they have been alarmed by the difficulties in the provinces. That is so much to the good." This denial itself raises doubts. It looks very much like a scared man whistling for courage. The Princes are having second thoughts. Of this there can be no

doubt. This is very much to the good. The *Hindustan Times* says: "Expression to this misgiving has been openly given by at least one progressive State, and there are reasons for believing that there are other States who have a similar feeling." In fact, our contemporary's belief is that the whole fat of federation is once again in the fire. "With the States reluctant to enter it (federation)," says this paper, "and British India actively hostile to it, it looks as though the energy wasted in the enactment of the new constitution is another case of love's labour lost."

To cap everything, the President of the Congress has just issued a plain warning to the Princes not to join the federation. It is in the following words:

The constitutional deadlock that has arisen in India, immediately on the introduction of the new constitution, has brought home to many the real significance of that constitution more than any amount of explanation and analysis. The Act may remain on the Statute Book yet a while and shadow Ministries function, backed by the British power. But all this is unreality, the land of ghosts and spooks.

The reality of to-day is the British Imperialism on one side and the Indian Nationalism as represented by the Congress on the other. The Act has no place in the picture and so it is collapsing at the first touch. But we have to hasten this process at either end and we must remember that the federal part of it still raises its ugly head in the mists of the future. The Congress has directed us to fight this federal structure and to prevent its introduction, for nothing is so bad in the Act as this federal part.

What of the Princes? We hear vague rumours of some agreeing and some doubting. These Princes, or nearly all of them, have acted during the past years of the national struggle as the close allies of British Imperialism. Consistently they have been unfriendly to the national movement. Are they going to register another unfriendly act by joining the federation despite the unanimous opposition of political India to this structure? This will be a grave decision for them and they will thus align themselves even more than before in opposition to the people of India.

There is a great deal of talk of the independence of the States and of their special treaties and the like. But the thing that is going to count in the future is the treaty that the people of India make with others. The Act will go inevitably with all its hundreds of sections and its special powers and its federation. And so I would ask the Princes to consider this matter from this point of view and not rush in where wiser people fear to tread.

It need not be supposed that the Mahatma will restrain the Pandit's excessive zeal in opposing federation, for, just to dispel such a misapprehension, Pandit Jawaharlal declared in public some time ago that Mahatma Gandhi was in full agreement with the Congress resolution which pledges the Congress to the use of all available resources in preventing the introduction of federation.

THE JUTE MILLS STRIKE.

THE jute mills strike in Calcutta has assumed proportions which transform it from an isolated labour disturbance into a major national disaster. Almost the whole of India's jute industry is paralysed on the eve of a revival of trade and after years of slackness in foreign demand. On account

of the gradual widening of the ranks of the strikers, forty out of sixty mills are idle involving nearly 50,000 looms and more than 200,000 workers. The number of strikers and the area and interests involved are so huge that the dispute can no longer be treated as a provincial affair with which India as a whole has no concern. The most regrettable part of the situation is the order of the Government preventing labour representatives in the local legislature from meeting the strikers. If Government desires to settle the dispute, it cannot do so without the help of those who command the confidence of the workers and no purpose can be served by keeping them away from coming in day-to-day contact with their followers.

Unfortunately, the public is still unaware of the reasons which led to the strike although the cut effected in the wages of jute mill workers has been a cause of grievance for some time now. What information could be gathered by us leads us to believe that the strike, which is now going on for more than six weeks, gathered momentum as days went on and mill after mill had to close. There was no concerted action on the part of all the millhands, which seems to lend force to the argument of the Indian Jute Owners that the grievances of the workers formulated by the leaders now are an afterthought, that the strike was not a strike in the regular sense of the term at the beginning and that if such irregular methods of striking work are permitted to succeed, industrial disputes and their settlement would be thrown into chaos. But these considerations need not operate in a case where the welfare of a whole industry, as it were, is involved. The immediate question is how to get the workers back to the mills and the methods adopted by the Bengal Government are not expected to lead to a calmer atmosphere in which alone an amicable settlement is possible. In the first place, both the millowners and the Government seem to have been ignorant of the temper of the workers to an amazing degree. When a section of the workers downed tools six weeks ago, none seem to have realised that that small beginning was a warning of what amounts to a general strike of the jute workers around Calcutta.

When the strike assumed alarming proportions, the Minister for Labour in the new Bengal Government, Mr. Surhawardy, made attempts to get in direct touch with the workers. He addressed a few meetings and so far as the principle of a member of the Government getting firsthand knowledge of the workers' temper is concerned, the steps he took deserve commendation. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of his statements in the meetings he addressed. In the very first meeting he declared that as the present Government of Bengal was a responsible Government "strikes are meaningless and unjustifiable and those who have gone on strike can well go back to their work with honour and dignity. . . . When the Government have adopted as their policy the prevention of industrial disputes and their settlement, when Government are prepared to listen and to intervene, strikes have no justification". This declaration of a rather naive faith in the power of the new

Ministry to command the workers' confidence was followed only two days after by a declaration before the Press Employees' Association that the Ministers had refused to recognise the Strike Committee. Mr. Surhawardy seems to have no doubt that the present strike was brought about by "people who used labour for political and personal ends" and as such "were not fit to be the friends of workers; they would only bring more misery to the workers." It is a pity that the Bengal Labour Minister should be unaware that this truculent attitude towards the leaders of the strikers can lead to nothing but the stiffening of the strike and a grim resentment at these uncalled for reflections on their leaders. The Minister would have done well to remember that the Strike Committee, which he refused to recognise, contains men who have been elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly by an overwhelming vote of the workers in Calcutta. To abuse them at a time when all energies should be bent towards creating a favourable atmosphere for negotiations, is to turn the blind eye towards realities. We are afraid that the Labour Minister in Bengal has not yet rid himself of the prejudices and methods which were justifiable during election time. To cap this folly, the Ministers are trying to isolate the strikers from sources of leadership by resorting to section 144. Firing upon demonstrators has also taken place in some places and disturbances of peace have become less infrequent of late.

It is true that the strike assumed huge proportions without anyone being aware of the exact set of grievances which the strikers wanted to be remedied. But the strike is there and, whatever its genesis, the conditions for the settlement of the strike are also there. Some of which are (1) security of service; (2) recognition of the Union; (3) restoration of the cut; (4) stopping of abuses, assaults, bribery, jobbery, etc.; (5) gratuity or pension in old age; (6) privilege leave with full pay for one month; and (7) maternity leave of two months.

That these demands are not unreasonable or trumped up at the last minute to bolster a bogus grievance is admitted, strangely enough, by the Minister for Labour himself in one of his speeches to the jute workers. Better and hygienic housing, relief from indebtedness, medical facilities, maternity benefits and factory creches, abundance of water, adequate sanitary arrangements, educational and recreational facilities were, the Minister admitted, necessities of labour the need for which was patent. Twenty years after the Industrial Commission had referred to the "usually insanitary and unpleasant" surroundings of the jute workers and nearly a decade after the Labour Commission had declared that the *bustees* of the jute workers were such that "little or no consideration being given to the amenities of life, every available foot of land has been gradually built upon until the degree of overcrowding and congestion, particularly in certain parts of Howrah, is probably unequalled in any other industrial area in India." The list of necessities given by the Minister to make life sufferable to the worker indicates an infinitesimal progress in the living conditions of labour. Those who have personally visited the *bustees* of the jute workers tell

us that the workers' conditions today record very little, if any, progress over the conditions described by Mr. Thomas Johnston, the then member for Dundee in the House of Commons, who visited them in 1925.

Two-thirds of the workers in this industry (Mr. Johnston said in 1925), which makes 90 per cent. dividends for the shareholders, are housed in vile, filthy, disease-ridden hovels, called bustees. These bustees are one-storied blocks of mud plaster on wicker and matting, with thatched roofs; no windows or chimneys or fire-places; the smoke simply oozes through the thatch if it cannot get out of the doorway, which is so low that one has to go down almost on hands and knees to enter. The bustees have neither light nor water supply; the floors are earthen; sanitary arrangements there are none; and usually access to groups of bustees can only be had along a narrow tunnel of filth where myriads of mosquitoes and flies breed and the stench is such that one fears to strike a match lest the atmosphere, being combustible, should explode. Inside the bustee is a space for three or four people to sleep if they are not smoked out by the cooking fire, but we are assured that frequently two families lived in a bustee, though how that is physically possible we could not guess. One old man informed us that half the babies of the bustee died, though we for our part could not understand how any lived. The Director of Public Health for Bengal, in his Annual Report for 1923, declares that half the children die before they reach 10 years of age, but precise estimates are difficult, as there is no compulsory registration of births, and fortunately most women mill-workers have the sense to go home to the mofussil or agricultural village, when they are going to give birth to babies. The rents charged for these foul ant-heaps of pestilence are about one shilling to one shilling four pence a month. Often they are owned by the sirdars in the mill; sometimes they are owned by the company. The remaining third of the workers are housed in mill-lines or compounds. Some of these cement rows are a vast improvement upon the bustee, but the best of them are nothing to write home about. They are single-room cement houses, without light or water or sanitary arrangements in the houses. The rooms are usually 10 feet by 8 feet by 6 feet high and possess windows. Frequently they are built so closely, facing one another in rows, that there is little privacy, and many men refuse to take their families to live there. The rents vary, but usually run about 4d. a week, no taxes, and water supply is free at the end of the row. We found large numbers of these houses over-crowded with 4 or 5 men. The houses of these unfortunate workers (even though they only regard themselves as agriculturists, who are temporarily engaged in the jute industry) is a standing disgrace to the Government, the local authorities, the millowners, and everybody who has the slightest responsibility for them.

The harrowing living conditions of the jute workers and the improvements therein during nearly a quarter of a century, are a measure of their other conditions of life and the interest of the employers in them. No wonder that the strike spread with such rapidity and such completeness without the workers having an immediate grievance and although it was without a "proper" warning to the employers. Even one-tenth of the vile conditions described above would form a perpetual grievance against the employers and the Government. We urge upon the Bengal Government not to stand on the niceties of how an industrial grievance should be forced on the attention of the employers, if they are to save their reputation as the people's representatives. A case for Government investigation exists, whatever the

feeling of the millowners. A refusal to negotiate with the Strike Committee or to recognise alleged outside leadership will only lead to an exacerbation of the strikers' feelings, the consequences of which will involve the jute industry in ruin at a time when the demand for that commodity is steadily improving.

AGRICULTURAL INDEBTEDNESS IN ZANZIBAR.

THE Zanzibar papers to hand by last mail contain lengthy articles dealing with the indebtedness and clove legislation which has shaken the Indian community to its foundations. The papers would have helped in a better understanding of the situation on the part of outsiders if they had published the full texts of the proposed measures. But so far as can be seen, no paper has been able to find room for them. We hope the Government of India will lose no time in securing copies and publishing them for general information.

But though the texts are not available, the comments on the legislation in the Indian press in the Protectorate are sufficient to provide the reader with a general idea of the local Government's scheme for the relief of agricultural indebtedness. Unless we have misunderstood the Zanzibar *Samachar*, the scheme combines both debt conciliation and debt settlement. Under the proposed law, the initiative to ask for its enforcement has been thrown on the creditor. It is he who is required to submit, within three months of the promulgation of the legislation, an application to that effect to the Commissioner of Debts Settlement. This functionary will be invested with judicial powers in respect of taking evidence, i. e., he can legally compel the attendance of witnesses or the production of relevant papers and documents.

The next stage is an inquiry by the Commissioner who calls upon the debtor and other interested parties to furnish full information about the mortgaged property. Three months are allowed for the submission of this information which is then transmitted to the Resident Magistrate of the District in which the property is situated. After satisfying himself about the prima facie nature of the transaction, he is to decide whether to start adjudication proceedings. These, it has been provided, will have binding force on all parties including the Government. But the adjudication proceedings will be preceded by an inquiry by the Commissioner regarding the identification of the mortgaged property. The valuation of the property will, however, be made by the Assessment Officer, but it would obviously be open to the parties to call his valuation in question, in which case other arrangements for reviewing the valuation would be made or the Court itself might review it after taking evidence.

It is after these inquiries that the Court will decide the fair and equitable amount of debt to be paid to the creditor. As for interest, it will be allowed at whatever rates are agreed upon between the creditor and debtor subject to a maximum of one-

half of the principal amount. But these rates will hold good only up to the 6th of July 1934, the date on which the emergency legislation took effect. From that date to the date of adjudication the rate of interest will be six per cent. and thereafter 4 per cent. While adjudicating the debt, the Court would of course be empowered to reopen past transactions and settlements which it may regard as "harsh and unconscionable."

The amount due to the creditor having been fixed, a further inquiry to ascertain the right to the mortgaged property and its registration in Government records will be undertaken. After the completion of this inquiry the mortgagee might apply to Government for the purchase by them of his interest in the property. But the time-limit for such applications would be twelve months from the date of adjudication. After satisfying themselves that the property is unencumbered, the Government might purchase the mortgagee's interest in the property, though the liberty of refusing such applications "on the ground of insecurity of title" is also reserved to them under the law. The price paid by Government for such purchase or the value of the property as fixed by the Court, whichever is less, will be regarded as the debt due to the creditor. If the adjudicated debt exceeds this amount, the creditor has to forego the excess.

The procedure for adjudication laid down in the proposed measure is variously described as "unnecessarily lengthy" and "too cumbersome." But the real point for consideration is whether it is generally fair and just to the underdog. While the above summary of the provisions of the proposed law as gleaned from the Zanzibar papers may serve as a broad outline of its structure, any expression of opinion on the main point without a study of the detailed provisions of the decree would obviously be risky.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS.

MUNICIPALITIES IN BOMBAY.

The Bombay Government's review of municipal taxation and income in the presidency for 1935-36 is interesting as showing the action taken by Government to improve erring municipalities. In one case the number of elected councillors was reduced from 16 to 4 and that of nominated ones raised from 4 to 8 so as to place the nominated element in the ascendant with the Mamlatdar as ex-officio president. In another case the elective element was done away with altogether. This may be taken as an indication of the Government's desire to avoid as far as possible resort to the extreme remedy of supersession. Only one Municipality was superseded presumably because all other methods for its improvement proved or were likely to prove unavailing.

The general incidence of taxation decreased by eleven pies to Rs. 5-6-10. It varied from division to division, having been highest viz., Rs. 7-2-10 in the Northern Division and lowest viz., Rs. 3-8-11 in the Southern. In Sind it was Rs. 4-12-1. The review again draws attention to the problem of recovery of municipal dues which was officially considered serious enough to necessitate consideration by a Commissioners' Conference. The recommendation of the Conference was that the Collectors should insist upon the submission of periodical reports by Municipalities showing the progress made by them in the matter of

collection. The recommendation was accepted by Government with the result that municipalities which have more than a given percentage of outstandings, 15 per cent. in some cases and 25 per cent. in others, will be called upon to submit progress reports about collection work at regular intervals. In 1935-36 the total municipal outstandings went up by more than Rs. 1½ lakhs to nearly Rs. 27 lakhs. The effect of this new measure on the state of collection will be watched with interest.

The review remarks upon the low level of expenditure on medical relief in some municipalities. The minimum prescribed by Government is 4 per cent. of the municipal expenditure. But curiously enough even this minimum is not reached in as many as 28 municipalities and in the list figure, for a wonder, such important municipalities as Poona, Ahmednagar, Dhulia, Jalgaon, Belgaum, and Dharwar. The financial administration of the Poona City Municipality is described in the review as having been "of a retrograde nature." The desirability of the municipality considering an increase in taxation, for which, in the opinion of Government, "there is considerable scope" if it is satisfactorily to meet its obligations and to expand its activities, is suggested in the review.

The present inefficiency of municipal administration is attributed in the review to the failure on the part of municipalities to appoint "a strong executive and to leave to it the details of administration." It is, of course, for elected majorities to lay down broad lines of policy. But when this is done they must allow the municipal executive to carry their policy into effect without needless interference on their part. This, however, is far from being the case at present. And the review by no means errs on the side of exaggeration in describing such interference as "the bane of local self-government." For reasons which can be easily imagined, it is this bane which acts as a handicap to the healthy development of a strong and independent executive so necessary to the success of local self-government.

CRIMINAL TRIBES IN THE PUNJAB.

A feature of the administration of criminal tribes in the Punjab for 1935-36 which needs mention is the exceptionally large number of exemptions granted during the year. Such exemptions or cancellations of registration numbered more than 6,600, which was in excess of the total number of exemptions during the last seven years. Originally the idea was not so ambitious, all that was aimed at being just a revision of the register. But as the idea was mooted shortly before the Silver Jubilee Celebration of King George V, it somehow came to be believed that the revision had some connection with the celebration. This was, of course, what was never intended. But the general belief about there being some connection between the two events led to the dropping of names from the register of criminal tribes "on a more extensive scale than had been intended." The exemptions would not have been a matter for regret but for the fact that an increase in crime has resulted. This, it was feared, would necessitate the bringing again on the register of a number of men whose names were removed from it.

A set-back is feared in another direction as well. The experiment of replacing resident supervisors by inspecting officers in respect of some settlements which was given a trial is reported not to have met with the expected measure of success. These settlements had been in charge of a superintendent assisted in some cases by a person nominated by co-operative societies or panchayats but paid by Government.

These posts were abolished and three inspecting officers appointed, each with a group of settlements to look after. The idea behind the innovation was that the reformation of the inmates had reached a stage when supervision over them might safely be relaxed and the administration of the settlement largely left in the hands of panchayats and co-operative societies. Actual experience, however, shows that the confidence was misplaced. The relaxation of control led to an increase in crime, necessitating serious consideration of reversion to the old arrangement facilitating a firm grip over the inmates.

The system of taking certain villages, predominantly inhabited by criminal tribes, under direct departmental control is, however, favourably reported on. The essence of the system is the posting in a village or selected group of villages of a departmental officer who, among other duties, takes upon himself police duties. This system was extended to a group of seven villages whose turbulence had at one time necessitated the employment of a special force of additional police to watch them. The system of colonies in which members of criminal tribes settle under official supervision and which is very much in vogue in Bombay is not very popular in the Punjab. The official view seems to be that it is better to settle them in twos and threes rather than in larger groups which is likely to confirm them in their criminal habits instead of effecting their reclamation.

COCHIN IN 1935-36.

THE administration report of the Cochin State for 1935-36 has been received. The year was a deficit one for the State, its revenue being about Rs. 99 lakhs and its expenditure a little over Rs. 1 crore. The deficit was thus roughly about Rs. 1 lakh. But the deficit need not cause concern to anybody in view of the fact that the accumulated surpluses of the State exceed Rs. 1 crore. This, however, does not do away with the fact that the amount of the deficit nearly corresponds to the rise in palace expenses. Of this increase no more explanation is forthcoming in the report than that it was due to a revision of the Palace scheme. This is an explanation which is wholly unenlightening. Why was the revision considered necessary? Under what head did the expenses mount up? Was the increase justifiable and necessary? To such questions occasioned in the public mind as a consequence of the increase, the explanation provides absolutely no answer.

An answer to such questions, however inconvenient, is doubly necessary specially because of the fact that the ruler's expenses are latterly showing a consistently upward tendency. Three years ago they were in the neighbourhood of Rs. 4½ lakhs, while in 1934-35 they stood at Rs. 6 lakhs, a rise of nearly Rs. 1½ lakhs and in the year under report they stand at a figure bordering on Rs. 7 lakhs! Is not the public entitled to a frank recital of circumstances in which the increase was considered necessary? To say that the revision of the Palace scheme resulted in the rise is almost as good—or as bad—as giving no explanation.

The number of purely literary institutions increased by 5 to 637, of which 181 were Government schools and 456 private, while industrial institutions numbered 45 as compared to 46 during the previous year. So far as unaided or indigenous schools were concerned, their number remained stationary viz. 971. The number of pupils in these institutions increased by about 8,000 to nearly 1¾ lakhs. But to be able to assess the educational advance of the State at its proper worth, it is necessary to bear in mind the general level of literacy. The school age population, according to the 1931 census, was nearly 91,000 boys

and about 88,000 girls. The number of pupils reading in schools and colleges on the other hand was over 98,000 boys and 70,500 girls, which represents over 108 and 80 per cent. of the total school age population respectively. Of the four groups of population in the State, educationally the most advanced is the Jew which has 181 and 165 per cent. of boys and girls of school age under instruction, while the level of literacy among the most backward community, the Muslim, is 66 per cent. in the case of boys and 27 per cent. in that of girls.

But the educational level of a community must obviously be judged by that of its most backward elements. The strength of pupils belonging to such classes in the State went up by nearly 3,000 and stood at about 59,000. Of these nearly 14,500 (9,500 boys and 5,000 girls) belonged to the depressed classes against about 13,000 in the previous year. In other words, over 70 per cent. of the depressed class children were in receipt of some kind of instruction or other in the State. This comparatively high level of literacy among the most backward sections of the population is due to the special measures adopted by the authorities for the encouragement of the spread of education among them. We, however, hope the authorities will not rest on their oars but push on their efforts so as to bring these backward classes to the level of the most advanced ones as soon as possible.

TRAVANCORE IN 1935-36.

In our notice of the administration report of Cochin State for 1935-36 prominent attention has been drawn to the increase in Palace expenses that is observable in recent years. In the case of Travancore, however, we are glad to find that the Maharaja's civil list remains fixed at Rs. 15.14 lakhs. And as the revenue of the State goes on increasing without the civil list increasing, the proportion which the expenses of the royal family bears towards the State revenue goes on decreasing. Nearly fifty years ago this proportion was 8.76 per cent. In the year under report it was less than 4. The young Maharaja deserves to be congratulated on resisting the temptation to draw to a larger extent on State revenues for his personal comforts and that of his family.

Despite the fall of about 60 in the number of recognised educational institutions due to the State policy of abolishing inefficient schools, there was a rise of nearly 24,000 in the number of pupils which stood at very nearly seven lakhs. If to this is added the number of unrecognised institutions the total number of educational institutions will be found to be 3,823 as against 3,849 of the previous year and the total number of scholars a little in excess of seven lakhs compared to 6,82,000 during the previous year. But even if the unrecognised schools were left out of account, the percentage of the total number of pupils to the total population was 13.7 as against 13.2 of the previous year. It was 16.1 in the case of males and 11.2 in that of females.

While on the subject of education, a mention of the rural library system introduced during the year may not be out of place. Under this scheme 60 libraries were opened in predominantly rural areas in the State. To what extent this new facility was availed of is not clear from the report. It is only to be expected that the move would be greatly appreciated, as indeed it was, as we see from the report. But no statistics are given by which popular interest in this new development could be gauged. We hope this would be done in future. It is gratifying to note that the educational expenditure of the State exceeds 20 per cent. of the State revenue.

—We wish we could speak in equally flattering terms about the State's abkari policy. This still continues the antiquated one of minimising temptation to those that do not drink and discouraging excess in the case of those that do. Consistently with this policy there was a welcome fall of nearly 12,000 gallons in the consumption of country liquor. All this is good so far as it goes but hardly comes up to the expectations of advanced opinion from an enlightened and progressive State like Travancore. What is really needed is a more courageous abkari policy, a policy of prohibition to be attained in a measurable distance of time. We are prepared to believe that in Travancore nothing is consciously done to increase consumption out of revenue considerations. But this is only a negative gain. Let the State lay its abkari plans in such a manner that the temptation which it is now striving to minimise only in the case of the non-drinker will be absolutely non-existent in the case of everybody, drinker and non-drinker, in the course of a period of, say, ten years. We have no intention of underrating the difficulties in the way of preventing illicit distillation should prohibition be decided upon. But it is also possible that they are sometimes made much of, as is the case with the Travancore report. If the young Maharaja decides to go forward boldly it should not be difficult to devise means of effectively stopping the evil. All that it will mean is that the vigilance now exercised by the authorities will have to be made stricter. In any case we refuse to believe that the difficulties are insurmountable.

Review.

INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY.

A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF INDIA, 1600-1935. By ARTHUR BERRIEDALE KEITH. (Methuen.) 1936. 22cm. 356 p. 15/-

WHEN Professor Keith writes on constitutional topics, the discerning world expects thoroughness and accuracy. So far as the constitutions of the British Empire are concerned, six authoritative works have already appeared from Professor Keith's pen. This excellent work on the constitutional history of India is bound to be one of the best used text-books in India. It has all the advantages of conciseness with illuminating comments interspersed.

A trading association from a base six thousand miles over sea could not be said to have planned a policy of conquest and aggression. Chapters I to VI of the book which bring one to the direct rule of the gracious Queen are naturally dry and devoid of live interest. Students who had to pore through Ilbert and Cowell can now get all the relevant information from Prof. Keith's work under review. The old Factory Councils had to give place to the constitutions of the Supreme Government and the subordinate presidencies; the "twenty-four Committees" of the Elizabethan Company had to be transformed into the Secretary of State with his Council through the stages of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control. Prof. Keith is rightly harsh upon Warren Hastings; so far as the "judicial murder" of Nandakumar is concerned, "no more odious crime has ever been committed by a British Court, whether or not on the instigation of a British Governor-General"; and Hastings's demands on Chait Singh of Benares were also "below any decent standard of honesty."

Events leading to the reforms of 1919 are sketched with a vivid account of the political unrest, and the Minto-Morley Reforms. Wherever the author refers to political leaders like Tilak, Gokhale, Das, and

Gandhi, he shows uncommon insight into the reactions in India at each stage.

The chapters on Indian States are conceived in a fine historical setting. When latterly assiduous efforts were made by the advisers of the Princes to improve their legal position, Prof. Keith goes the length of taunting them that they could not "repudiate the means by which they had been able to live"; for they had "accepted the invasions on their technical rights as the condition of continued existence as independent entities."

The most important chapter is chapter X which describes Federalism and Responsible Government under the Government of India Act, 1935. A few commentaries have been published on the latest Act; but this chapter of 141 pages is bound to remain the most valuable contribution in the near future. Though the essential principles of this hydra-headed constitution are derived from Canada and Australia and thus indirectly from the U. S. A., the "combination of wholly disparate elements gives a unique character to the federation and produces certain abnormal features." While the provinces "are subject to a single system applicable to all, the States are definitely exempt from the application of a number of federal powers of legislation, unless they expressly accept them"; the executive authority of the federation which is uniform in regard to the provinces may vary as regards the States; further, as regards federal legislative and executive authority, there may be variations between States; lastly, while provinces have federation imposed from above, in each State adhesion is voluntary.

India's position in the League is "frankly anomalous"; the Governor-General in 1929 with the authority of the Government of the day might have stated that "the natural issue of India's progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status", but the exclusion of the phrase in the preamble to 25 and 26 Geo. V, ch. 42 is held a "mistake" by Prof. Keith.

The concluding chapter which evaluates the status of India in the Commonwealth is brilliant and prophetic. "It is too obvious", writes Prof. Keith, "that on the British side the federal scheme is favoured in order to provide an element of pure conservatism in order to combat any dangerous elements of democracy contributed by British India." Nor is the learned Professor oblivious of the internal condition of Indian India. "On the side of the rulers, it is patent that their essential preoccupation is with the effort to secure immunity from pressure in regard to the improvement of the internal administration of their States." It has to be remembered that all reforms in the Indian States in the direction of introduction of popular institutions have been correctly and fully noted by the author.

The Indian Legislative Assembly has unmistakably expressed its condemnation of this all-India Federation by 74 to 58 votes. Nor is the position of India with regard to the Dominions happy. When the Dominions make it impossible to permit immigration, can there be any intimate association between an autonomous India and the Dominions? There is a lesson and a warning in Prof. Keith's remarkable verdict on this "legislative monstrosity":

Whether a federation built on incoherent lines can operate successfully is wholly conjectural. If it does, it will probably be due to the virtual disappearance of responsibility and the assertion of the controlling power of the Governor-General backed by the conservative elements of the States and British India.

K. R. R. SASTRY.

SHORT NOTICE.

PRACTICAL EDUCATION. A MONOGRAPH ON EDUCATION IN INDIA. By G. N. GOKHALE. (B. G. Paul & Co., Madras.) 1936. 20cm. 225p. Rs. 2-8-0.

THE subject has received a comprehensive treatment at the hands of the author. The author himself is an educationist and the treatment of the subject, therefore, has a living touch about it. His views on religion in education are typical of a theosophist, and although they may not evoke unanimous agreement, the treatment in itself must command respect and close attention of the readers.

The problem has been discussed in a really practical manner and in view of the fact that attention everywhere has been focussed at present on the necessity of the overhauling of the prevailing Indian educational system, the book should hardly be missed not only by persons engaged in the teaching profession but also by educational administrators.

M. S. MODAK.

Miscellaneous.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEADLOCK. CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTIONS.

The Working Committee of the Congress met at Allahabad from the 28th to the 29th ult. Among the resolutions passed by it were the following :

The Working Committee approves of and endorses the action that the leaders of Congress Parliamentary Parties in the provinces took in pursuance of the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee on March 18, on being invited by Governors in their respective provinces to help them in the formation of Ministries.

In view of the fact that it is contended by British Ministers that it is not competent for Governors, without an amendment of the Act, to give the assurances required by the Congress for enabling Congress leaders to form Ministries, the Committee wishes to make it clear that the resolution of the A.I.C.C. did not contemplate any amendment of the Act for the purpose of the required assurances. The Working Committee, moreover, is advised by eminent jurists that such assurances can be given strictly within the constitution.

The Working Committee considers that the pronouncements of policy of the British Government made by Lord Zetland and Mr. Butler are utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of the Congress, are misleading and misinterpret the Congress attitude. Further, the manner and setting in which such pronouncements have been made are discourteous to the Congress.

The past record of the British Government as well as its present attitude show that, without specific assurances as required by the Congress, popular Ministries will be unable to function properly and without irritating interference. The assurances do not contemplate the abrogation of the right of the Governor to dismiss the Ministry or dissolve the Provincial Assembly when serious differences of opinion

arise between the Governor and his Ministers. But this Committee has grave objection to Ministers having to submit to interference by the Governor with the alternative of themselves having to resign their office instead of the Governors taking the responsibility of dismissing them.

INTERIM MINISTRIES.

Owing to the deadlock created by the refusal of Governors to give the assurances asked on behalf of the Congress enabling acceptance of office by Congress members of the legislatures, various questions have been addressed to the Working Committee by the Congress leaders in these provinces as to the attitude Congressmen should adopt towards the so-called ministries formed by the Governors in the provinces concerned. The Working Committee is of opinion that the formation of these ministries by the Governors is unconstitutional, repugnant to the conception of autonomy, and in total defiance of the overwhelming public opinion in each of those provinces. The Working Committee is further of opinion that those who have accepted ministerships in these circumstances have by their unpatriotic conduct rendered a disservice to the country. The Committee advises that public meetings be held denouncing the action of these so-called ministers and challenging them to face the legislatures and justify their conduct. But the Committee is of opinion that hostile black flag demonstrations and the like should be avoided.

FUTURE PROGRAMME.

Congressmen should realize that parliamentary work is but a minor part of the national programme and that the great objective of complete independence can only be secured by sustained efforts by every Congressman and Congresswoman in carrying out the programme outside the legislature as laid down from time to time. In furtherance of this objective, members of the legislatures should establish living touch with the electors in their respective constituencies and carry the message of the Congress and commend to them the constructive programme including the use of Khaddar to the exclusion of mill cloth; the local production of Khaddar in villages by hand-spinning and hand-weaving; creating public opinion in favour of total prohibition; promotion of communal unity by collective and individual effort; and the eradication of the evil of untouchability in every form.

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- THE LAW RELATING TO RELIEF OR PROTECTION OF DEBTORS. By K. V. RAMASUBRAHMANYAM. (The Law Publishing Co., Madras.) 1937. 22cm. 203p. Rs. 4.
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