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CONTENTS.

	Page
TOPICS OF THE WEEK	205
ARTICLES —	
The Sonya Maruti Dispute.	207
The Assurance Controversy.	209
The Jute Strike Settlement.	211
Reactions to Nehru-Jinnah Controversy.	212
REVIEW —	
Christian High School Education.	
By Prof. M. R. Paranjpe, M.A., B.Sc.	214
SHORT NOTICE	214
MISCELLANEOUS —	
Teachers & Rural Uplift —	
Mr. Suryanarayana Rao's Paper.	215

Topics of the Week.

Mr. Savarkar Released.

BY unconditionally removing the ban on Barrister V. D. Savarkar's movements who was confined to Ratnagiri ever since his release from the Andamans in 1924, the Bombay Ministry has given a fine earnest of their desire to fulfil that part of their programme which deals with the repressive acts of the old regime. Mr. V. D. Savarkar gave brilliant promise of a public career even during his studenthood a quarter of a century ago and when he went to England to qualify himself for the bar, his activities there, although they were hardly to its taste, evoked admiration for his eloquence even from the *Times*.

UNFORTUNATELY, Mr. Savarkar inclined towards the extreme left wing of the nationalist movement and his career was cut short by his arrest in England and subsequent deportation to the Andamans on a life sentence by the Government of India. While being conveyed to India he made an unsuccessful dash for liberty by jumping into the sea and swimming to the French coast. He was arrested within an inch of liberty, as it were, on French soil. He appealed without success to The Hague against police. But the indomitable will and bravery displayed by a young man caught the imagination of the country. His exploits have already become a thrilling legend to Indian youth, particularly in Maharashtra which is rightly proud of him.

SINCE his release from the Andamans and detention at Ratnagiri, Mr. Savarkar has thrown

himself with characteristic energy into the movement for the regeneration and reorganisation of Hindu society. He is a champion of the untouchables and has been instrumental in building a temple in that town which is open to all castes. He is the inspirer of the Pure Marathi movement in Marathi literature, a language which he wields with forceful originality. He is a poet and an author, a constant contributor of vigorous articles in Marathi journals. The cruel hardships of the Andamans which he endured for fourteen years broke his health but not his spirit and although modern political trends in India might find his views antiquated in some respects, none can forget that he gave his young life with reckless abandon to the country's cause. We welcome him back to liberty and congratulate the Cooper Ministry on righting a grave injustice done to a selfless patriot.

Mr. K. N. Phadke.

MR. K. N. PHADKE of Poona, whose activities in the civil disobedience movement brought him under the Bombay Government's notice and whose radical views probably enhanced his offence, was ordered to restrict his movements to Poona and not to take part in any public meetings since nearly four years now. We have been protesting against this attack on his civil liberties and the news that the order has now been withdrawn will gladden everyone who values freedom. The Bombay Ministers could have done nothing better to create a favourable atmosphere for the reception of the very difficult task they are facing in accepting office in face of considerable odds. Their work in removing unjustifiable encroachments on people's freedom which characterised the old regime would go a long way to mitigate their offence in assuming office against the wishes of the Congress party in the Bombay legislature.

Impudence or Senility?

WE in India are accustomed to libels by supercilious globe-trotters who "do" this country in a month or two, return home and write an "authoritative" volume on "the Indian situation," or on "the Indians, their religions and customs" etc. The trash put on the market by such writers might offend a few sensitive people, but the majority knows how to treat it with the contempt it deserves. But the report of a recent speech by Lord Baden Powell, the head of the Scout Movement, shows that cheap superiority complex is not the monopoly of foot-slogging journalists; it is in evidence even in the case of a person who is the inspirer and pillar of a movement supposed to establish feelings of brotherhood and service among the youth of the world. While speaking in England before a gathering of journalists at the conclusion of his Indian tour, Lord Baden-Powell indulged in cheap and insulting jibes at the cost of India. He found, it seems, that the Indians lack character

and honesty. Trying to provide a striking streamer-line for the yellow journals of England, he declared that one of the difficulties he met with in India was that there was no word for "honour" in Hindustani. We do not know what qualifications Lord Baden-Powell possesses as a linguist, but if his knowledge of our languages is commensurate with his sense of gratitude, it must be infinitesimal indeed!

HERE is a man who goes round this country receiving hospitality and courtesy at the hands of the people, enjoying Government hospitality and adulation from the youth of the country, and the moment he turns his back on us and finds that there is a convenient stretch of six thousand miles of water between himself and the people he is maligning he libels them with unashamed impudence before a gathering which was collected to broadcast his speech all over the world. Whether such a person, however great his services to his own country, is entitled to speak about honour at all is a moot question, but even from a politic point of view, he should have realised that his speech was not going to endear the B. P. scouts to Indians. As it is, the existence of that movement is entirely due to the artificial respiration which it gets from official patronage from time to time. Anyone who has studied the growth of the Seva Samiti Boy Scout organisation and the attempts made by officials to defeat it and to bolster up the B. P. scouts in U.P. will bear testimony to the already waning popularity of the Baden-Powell scouts. The authorities of this movement, if they desire to keep their work going, will do themselves a good turn if they hasten to dissociate themselves from their Chief's senile views. As for the general public, we are sure it will draw its own conclusions and adopt a right attitude towards an organisation which is dominated by men of such mentality.

Resignation or Dismissal ?

MR. T. R. VENKATARAMA SASTRI has examined at greater length than before the difference between these two alternative ways of reducing to a minimum the interference of the Governor in the administration. As we said before, Mr. Sastri's views are identical with ours. He says :

The insistence on dismissal in preference to resignation, with all deference to those who insist on it, appears to me to be based on a misunderstanding and requires further consideration. Dismissal involves, no doubt, the responsibility and the duty of explanation to the public why that extreme step was taken. But resignation of the Ministers involves exactly the same responsibility and the duty of explanation why he preferred to accept their resignation rather than yield to their demands. In both cases, the Ministers must explain their demand to which the Governor did not accede. The charge on the one side and the defence on the other, before the bar of public opinion, comes at the end. Behind the scenes, there have already been consultation, discussion, explanation of the point of view of each to the other, and a final breach before which the Governor has said, "I cannot yield; you resign if you like". What is that but a dismissal? Does the Governor owe less explanation for driving the Ministers to resignation than for a dismissal order of his own, or does he incur less responsibility for the course of events? Do the Ministers owe less explanation for having driven the Governor to a dismissal of Ministers than for tendering their resignation? In each case, the point of difference which led to resignation or dismissal will be the subject of appeal to the opinion of the country, so long as public opinion is with the Ministers, how does the consequence vary according as it is resignation or dismissal?

The more trivial the matter on which the Ministers have been dismissed or driven to resignation, the more complete

and irrefutable will be the proof that the Government of India Act needs to be revised. The Indian demand will be unanimous and insistent on such revision, and the reasonable section of British and foreign opinion, in so far as it matters, will be convinced that the Act does not confer that responsibility which it is claimed to have really conferred.

Mr. Dravid's Rural Work in Berar.

THE following appears in the annual report of the C. P. and Berar Branch of the Red Cross Society for 1936 :

The most gratifying feature of the year under review is the development of the Rural Welfare Centre at Shendurjana which is run by the Servants of India Society, with the co-operation of the Indian Red Cross Society, District Branch, Amraoti, and managed by Mr. Dravid, its senior member. Thanks to the energy, enthusiasm and tact of Mr. Dravid, this Centre which was started two years ago is already established on a sound basis and is becoming increasingly popular in the group of villages that it serves. With the help of a generous grant from the Silver Jubilee Fund, a new building for a welfare centre and maternity home with quarters for a health worker has been provided. The foundation of the building was laid last August by His Excellency the Governor of the Central Provinces. The building has now been completed and was formally opened last November by Mrs. Trivedi, wife of the Commissioner of Berar. The new maternity home will be a great boon to the village of Shendurjana and the neighbouring villages. It will also serve as a centre for the training of village *dais* and will enable them to do their practical work under conditions which will be an object lesson to them. The difficulties which beset welfare work in rural areas are far greater than in urban areas. Conditions differ and welfare service has to be organised to meet those conditions. The experience gained at Shendurjana will be invaluable for the purpose of organising rural welfare work and Shendurjana will be a model for the rural districts of the province. It is hoped that in future the students under training at the health school will spend a short time at Shendurjana and work under the direction of the local health worker. This will give them a practical acquaintance with the character and organisation of rural welfare work.

India & Imperial Conference.

A REPRESENTATION has been submitted to Government by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in which they are urged to secure the presence at the forthcoming Imperial Conference, which opens in London on the 14th inst. of representative non-official Indians having an intimate knowledge of problems connected with Indian industry, trade and shipping. It is to be noted that the Federation does not want these Indians to form part of the official Indian delegation to the Conference whose personnel is already made public. What it desires is that they should be enabled to attend the Conference so as "to enable the delegation to have an intelligent and effectual participation" in the deliberations of the Conference. It is a very modest request which is made by the Federation with which Government should find it possible to comply, if they have not already done so.

BUT the representation does not stop with pressing for the presence of such Indians at the Conference. It makes suggestions having a close bearing on the Conference's work which, if accepted, would undoubtedly redound to the benefit of this country. The first one relates to the negotiation of trade treaties with foreign countries. In this matter India has been allowed some lati-

tude. The Indo-Japanese agreement was, it is true, signed in London by the Foreign Secretary and the India Secretary, but non-official Indian opinion was called into close consultation at all stages preceding the conclusion of the agreement. The Federation is anxious that this concession should not be non-existent with the introduction of the new constitution which reserves External Affairs for administration by the Governor General in his discretion. As a matter of fact the Federation has set its heart upon an advance in this position. In this connection it may be stated that the Federation attaches special value to the opening of Indian Consular offices in foreign countries if the Federal Government is successfully to negotiate trade treaties with them and the Dominions. Similarly, the Federation would also like greater constitutional liberty, secured to India, of conducting direct trade negotiations with all Empire and non-Empire countries.

IT is also suggested that the problem of India's heavy defence expenditure be raised at the Conference. In this matter India's complaint, as is well known, is that a comparatively heavier burden is thrust upon her which is not justified by considerations of justice and equity, apart from the fact that it has no relation to its economic capacity. It would certainly be a good thing if the Conference could be induced to review the problem of expenditure of imperial defence so as to reallocate the share of such expenditure as between India and the different parts of the Empire in a manner which could be called really fair and just. That any relief from her present intolerable burden of military expenditure would be heartily welcomed all over the land needs no saying, as it would release considerable sums for the development of nation-building services which are, under present conditions, completely starved.

Manufacture of Quinine.

SO the problem of indigenous manufacture of quinine and of a reduction in its price so as to suit all pockets is going to be seriously tackled in the near future. This was the upshot of the discussion raised on the subject by Mr. P. N. Sapru in the upper House of the Indian Legislature. His resolution asked Government to check the malaria scourge by giving encouragement to the indigenous manufacture of quinine and by cheapening the drug. It was announced by Government that the question would be carefully gone into by the recently constituted Central Health Board at its meeting to be held at the close of this month.

THE facts connected with the quinine situation as stated by Mr. Sapru are well known and may here be briefly referred to. Malaria takes a toll of at least one million lives every year, the mortality going up by 50 per cent. in case of epidemics. What we have in mind here is the mortality directly traceable to

malaria. If to this is added the number of deaths due to lowering of vitality brought about by continued malarial attacks, the total malaria mortality, it is believed by experts, would be very nearly two millions. But staggering as this figure is, the number of sufferers from malaria is several times larger. It is estimated to vary between 100 and 200 millions every year. And the tragedy of the situation is that only one-tenth of these malaria patients receive any treatment at all.

QUININE is a well-recognised anti-malaria remedy. But, as Mr. Sapru pointed out, its consumption in this country is very low. India consumes only $3\frac{1}{2}$ grains of quinine per head as compared to 16 grains for Italy and 24 grains for Greece. This is not surprising in view of the high price of the drug. The remedy is, instead of depending upon imports, to arrange for the local manufacture of the drug on such an extensive scale that it could be priced low enough even for people of limited means, in other words to make the country self-sufficient in respect of its quinine requirements. It is to be noted that our present production of quinine is only about 70,000 lbs. compared to our total estimated requirements of over 9,00,000 lbs. We hope the problem will be examined by the Central Health Board in all its aspects with a will to hammer out a satisfactory solution.

Scandalous.

IN our obituary notice of Mr. J. M. Adhikary, a brother of Dr. Adhikary of the Meerut conspiracy fame, the point was stressed that his death was the result of bureaucratic delay, and that he might have been spared longer if facilities for proper medical treatment had been made available to him before it was too late. A similar case from Bengal is brought to light in the latest bi-weekly bulletin of the Indian Civil Liberties Union. An internee by name Mr. Rajani Kanta Pramanik, B. L., has been suffering from colic pain which makes life a burden to him. An X-ray examination has been recommended not only by his own medical attendant but even by the police officer himself. Facilities for such examination not being available in the place in which he is detained, he made repeated applications to Government to be allowed to go to Calcutta for the purpose. But it is strange that all such applications have been consistently turned down.

THE sequel is easy to imagine. The disease remains undiagnosed and the patient's health goes on suffering increasing impairment with every day that passes without the examination being arranged for. As a matter of fact it is generally expected that a physical collapse is impending. All this has, however, left the Government unmoved. They have yet shown no sign either of permitting him to proceed to Calcutta or of arranging for an X-ray examination locally. If the worst happens how could anybody be blamed if he visits the sin on the Government's inconsiderate attitude?

THE SONYA MARUTI DISPUTE.

THE Sonya Maruti affair in Poona took a grave turn on Friday last when the police made a lathi charge on the peaceful procession which was escorting Mr. L. B. Bhopatkar, leader of the Democratic Swaraj Party, to the temple where he offered satyagraha by ringing the small bell in the temple as a protest against the District Magistrate's

order. The growing number of arrests in this connection, which includes leaders like Mr. N. C. Keikar, the eminent position of some satyagrahis and the lathi charge incident should give the Government of Bombay grave concern. The question, had it been handled without the nervous funk which was displayed by the Poona authorities in the matter, could

have been resolved without causing harm to the peaceful relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. The District Magistrate of Poona committed an initial mistake by not only prohibiting religious festival ceremonies in and around the temple, but including in the list of prohibitions the simple ringing of the small bell in the temple which forms, as any Hindu would testify, an integral part of the ordinary everyday *darshan* ceremony. Those who have seen the temple are surprised that such a miniature structure and such a small bell should become the centre of acute anxiety both to the Government and the public. As far as the ringing of the bell is concerned, we can testify to the fact that it is hardly heard beyond a few feet even when the street is quiet. When it is crowded, as it usually is, the tinkle of the bell is hardly noticeable. If the Muslims really apprehend that their prayers will be disturbed by that faint tinkling, and not by the blare of gramophones, hoot of horns and the innumerable other noises which create a din on that busy thoroughfare, their supra-sensitiveness to the noise of a bell must be remarkable indeed!

It is worth while to recount here the events which led up to the deplorable communal riots last year. The road-building activities of the Poona municipality brought both the mosque and the temple on the same wide road. In addition to this they left a vacant plot adjoining the mosque, which the mosque authorities desired to acquire. An application to that effect was made to the Poona municipality which decided, with the concurrence of the Hindu and Muslim members of the municipality, to grant the plot to the mosque on a nominal rent but with the express stipulation that as the acquisition of the plot brought the mosque nearer the Sonya Maruti temple, the Muslims must respect the established rights of the Hindus as regards worship and festivals at the temple and raise no objection at any future date to their exercising it. This very sensible arrangement, which, it was hoped, would prove a healthy precedent in settling Hindu-Muslim questions, failed, it is significant to note, because of the Commissioner who refused to sanction a conditional grant and referred the question back to the municipality. This refusal obviously meant either that the Commissioner had no faith in the *bona fides* of the Muslim leaders who agreed to the condition and apprehended trouble in the future due to the proximity of the two places of worship, or that he was persuaded to object to the condition by some Muslims who went behind the agreement and approached him. The municipality refused to grant the plot without the precautionary condition for obvious reasons. But the public discussions of the matter had already given rise exactly to that state of feeling among the Muslims which the Commissioner apparently desired to avoid. They took time by the forelock and objected to the Hindus performing the annual festival in and around the temple, and the Poona executive authorities, with characteristic haste, promulgated an order prohibiting the festival. The Hindus, be it noted in fairness to them, obeyed the order but continued their efforts to get it rescinded and, as a compromise for

the time being, agreed to celebrate the last day of the festival with only soft music and without utilising the louder and somewhat harsher musical instruments used in the Indian band. But the mischief was done and the Muslims took the offensive, resulting in the regrettable riot which is a matter of history now.

It will be seen from the above that the sensible elements in both the communities were agreeable to respect the Hindu rights, that the Hindus, before their feelings were exacerbated, showed a disposition to accommodate the Muslims by eliminating loud musical instruments from the festival and that, but for the nervousness and officiousness displayed by the authorities, that arrangement might have led to a happy precedent of mutual toleration and accommodation between these two communities in Poona. Unfortunately, today neither party is in an accommodating mood, the Muslims largely because of the indirect advantage they have secured entirely through obstinacy and the Hindus as the reaction of a self-respecting community in sheer exasperation of the violation of what they believe to be their religious rights.

But we have no desire to go into the religious aspect of the case at all, for religion, as it is understood now-a-days, seems to give a strange twist to the commonsense of people. We view the dispute purely from the standpoint of the civic rights and responsibilities of a citizen, whether Hindu or Muslim. The question that has to be resolved is whether the Sonya Maruti temple was being used by the Hindus before last year, when the riots took place, as a place of public worship and whether the annual festival, which is the cause of the trouble, was being held there with all the accompanying ceremonies and whether before last year the prayers in the mosque, thirty yards or so off, were disturbed and whether the Muslims objected to the ceremonies all these years. As far as one can judge in such matters, it is beyond dispute that the annual festival at the Sonya Maruti temple was an occasion for festivities of a considerable magnitude and that the Muslims had not objected to them. However, a new situation can be said to have been created by the construction of the Laxmi Road, which has brought both the temple and the mosque on the same road within visible distance. The Muslims now claim, as we said above, that on account of the removal of the intervening structures, the noise of the annual festival at the temple has come to constitute a disturbance to their prayers. That they have not gone to the civil court to have the question decided seems to strengthen the Hindu contention that they had no right in the matter. In fact, we believe that custom and usage, which in law more often than not decide the civic rights of a community in a matter like this, are strongly on the side of the Hindus in the present dispute. What the Muslims want is the creation of a new right for their convenience and they would have been quite justified if they had gone about it in a conciliatory manner and requested the authorities of the Hindu temple to accommodate them. If the Hindus had displayed an unreasonable attitude, public sympathy would then have been in favour of the Muslims.

Taking into consideration all these facts, we feel that the duty of the Government is clear. They must not allow themselves to be bullied by any community, whether a majority or a minority. A threat to the peace of the town by one section or the other must be avoided not by allowing one or the other successfully to prevent the exercise of its acknowledged rights but by enforcing the law with unhesitating determination. If the impression gains ground that any community might tyrannise over another by the simple process of a threat of a breach of peace, the meaning of government is lost and we go back to the jungle law. The executive authorities of Poona, we are afraid, are taking the short and easy path of suspending the citizen's rights and to all intents and purposes prejudging the issue. If a question of civil right is involved the courts are open to judge the dispute. It is none of the business of the executive authorities to disturb settled customs and usages to save themselves trouble, which in the end, as events have proved, they do not succeed in doing. The Government communique, issued on the 6th instant talks of taking "the earliest opportunity of examining the whole question in co-operation with all the interests affected so that an agreed settlement may, if possible, be reached." We wonder why it took Government all these days and all this irritation and harassment of the public to reach this decision. The communique further states that "if their (the Government's) efforts are not successful, it will be necessary for them to come to their own conclusions as to the merits of the dispute and to assure all concerned such rights and privileges as may be determined." This decision could have been taken long before the festival days arrived. Or are we to believe that the local authorities are so divorced from contact with the public that they did not foresee this trouble except on the eve of the festival? What we would like to know is whether any efforts were started during this year under official auspices to settle the dispute, whether any community was found unwilling to cooperate in such efforts and why, failing an agreed compromise during the last year, Government did not advise the aggrieved party to go to a civil court and get its rights adjudged? And why did Government deviate from their usual practice of maintaining the *status quo* and gave virtually an *ex parte* decision against the Hindus? To us it seems obvious that whoever was responsible for the handling of this affair last year and this year is singularly lacking in the knowledge of mass psychology if he believed that his order was not a direct invitation to one party to break it and to the other to consider it as an indirect encouragement to bullying tactics. Under the circumstances we are afraid that Government cannot avoid coming to "their own conclusion," as the atmosphere is hardly conducive to the cooperation which the Government require if the promised inquiry is to achieve any measure of agreement. We would, however, be the last to discourage any such attempt and we urge both the communities to consider that as it is not possible for them to live in mutually antagonistic camps forever, the sooner they agree to a compromise the better for both of them.

We cannot but refer in the end to the lathi charge on the public last Friday morning. We should be failing in our duty if we did not record our protest against this unjustifiable show of brutality by the police. We have had the evidence of eye-witnesses of unimpeachable impartiality who tell us that the lathi charge was entirely unprovoked and that the general behaviour of the subordinate police officials stationed nearabout the temple was and is such as to irritate and annoy perfectly inoffensive and peaceful passers-by. The conduct of the public and the satyagrahis has been such as to satisfy even the rigid standards of Mahatma Gandhi himself. It precludes any charge of unruliness on their part, and we hope Government will not fail to institute a public inquiry into the lathi charge incident also. We are afraid that the general handling of the Sonya Maruti affair is hardly a credit to the coolheadedness or right understanding of "the men on the spot". If the inquiry revealed either overzeal or undue nervousness, on the part of any official or officials, Government must not hesitate to deal with them in an adequate manner.

Upon our Muslim friends who, we are afraid, have not as yet given enough thought to the very serious consequences of their obstinacy, we would urge the consideration of what we wrote in these columns almost exactly a year ago:

We should be the last to be accused of any intention to incite the Hindus against the Muslims or of any anti-Muslims bias. But we cannot help feeling that in the Sonya Maruti affair the Muslims allowed their religious zeal to get the better of their judgment and discretion. If music in the temple, even if played outside their prayer hours, is to wound their susceptibilities, music in connection with marriage or other ceremonies played at all odd hours by private persons living roundabout mosques must be supposed to have an equally disturbing effect on their mentality. Are the Muslims then going to be so unreasonable as to ask for the absolute stoppage of all such music? They ought not to grudge to other communities the same freedom in matters of religion that they demand for themselves.

THE ASSURANCE CONTROVERSY.

CURIOUSLY enough, Lord Snell in his question in the House of Lords concerning the political impasse did not ask Lord Zetland whether he was prepared to agree to the procedure proposed by Mahatma Gandhi and accepted by the Working Committee with a view to ensure that no undue interference would take place with the Ministers, the procedure, namely, that the Governor should make himself responsible for the dismissal of the Ministers whenever in his opinion any occasion for interference arises instead of leaving it to the Ministers to tender resignation of office. The whole controversy has now narrowed itself to this: resignation or dismissal, and neither Lord Snell put a question on this specific issue to Lord Zetland nor did Lord Zetland take occasion to answer it.

His answer only dots the i's and crosses the t's of his previous statements. So far as this dotting and crossing goes, it has given general satisfaction.

Everyone from Mahatma Gandhi downwards thinks that the tone of Lord Zetland's speech on this occasion was better than on the previous occasion. What, however, does matter is the substance of the speech rather than the manner of making it, and so far as the substance is concerned, things have not advanced any further. This is not to say that the speech was unsatisfactory. It reproduced textually the statement contained in Mr. Butler's speech which has given general satisfaction, viz. "His Majesty's Government have no intention of countenancing the use of the special powers for other than the purposes for which Parliament intended them. It is certainly not the intention that the Governors, by a narrow or legalistic interpretation of their own responsibilities, should trench upon their wide powers which was the purpose of Parliament to place in the hands of the Ministers and which it is our desire they should use in furtherance of the programme which they advocated." It is clear that these words first used by the Under-Secretary were given him by the Secretary, and there was at no time reason for complaint that while Mr. Butler was conciliatory, Lord Zetland was obstructive.

But the assurance given by Mr. Butler and repeated now by the Marquis of Zetland, while admitted as going a long way, does not give entire satisfaction to the Congress and is considered to be inadequate. It would appear from the statement made by the Congress authorities that nothing would please them except an assurance that no interference shall take place unless previously the Ministers are dismissed from office. As the Government's views on this proposal are not yet known, there is no means of finding out whether a way out of the impasse can be found. Whatever non-Congressmen may think of the necessity or utility of this particular form of assurance, it is certainly free from the objection originally taken to it. It would not be constitutionally impossible for the Governors to give the assurance, and in giving it they would not surrender anything to the Congress which, in the circumstance of the large majorities which the Congress commands in the legislature, they would not be compelled to surrender anyhow. Why should a personal contact between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi be at all necessary in order that the Government may be enabled to decide whether such assurance should be given or not? There is nothing ambiguous about the assurance. The Government can come to a conclusion on this point independently, and they must come to a conclusion early if the existing tension is to be relaxed.

Some of the strongest advocates of the Congress demand for an assurance are sometimes found to make unnecessary and even damaging admissions. For instance, Mr. Rajagopalachariar says: "The only correct way of working out responsibility, either for the whole of India or for a province within a limited sphere is . . . 'Do not interfere if you keep a man in office as Minister, but dismiss him if he

neglects the primary functions of government.' Allowing peace and tranquillity to be disturbed, oppressing minorities or making unfair discrimination between one class of citizens and another are grounds for immediate removal."

From this statement one would gain the impression that even under a system of full responsibility the Ministers can be removed by the Governor if, in the latter's opinion (and this is important), the Ministers do anything calculated to disturb peace, ill-treat minorities, or discriminate between one section of people and another. If we had unlimited provincial autonomy, instead of the limited one that the Act purports to give, the Ministers would be allowed to go their way, unhampered by the Governor even if the Governor felt that "the primary functions of government" were neglected. Under full democracy the Ministry in the first instance and the legislature and the electorate in the second would be the judge of this, and not the Governor.

In order to enlist the support of the minorities an admission is often made by Congressmen that if any minority was really in danger of oppression the Governor would be entitled to intervene, and the only fear they entertain on the point is that the Governor will intervene even where there is no question of oppression. It is, however, well to remember in this connexion that, even in genuine cases of oppression of minorities, the Governor would not have the power of interference in a constitution of full-fledged self-government. Cases of such oppression frequently occur, and the only remedy that free countries have is an appeal to the country. If the electorate too is in a mood to oppress, the minority has no recourse but to submit or to revolt.

Take, for instance, the position of Catholics in the Canadian Province of Ontario in the matter of education. It is a long-standing complaint of the Catholics in this Province that they receive step-motherly treatment from the Protestant majority in the matter of grants-in-aid for their education. Only last year things took a turn for the better, for an Act was passed at the time whereby Catholic schools in the Province were given a more equitable distribution of corporation taxes. But this year again the Act has been repealed, thus reverting to the utterly unsatisfactory state of things that existed all these years.

"Catholic Quebec has taken good care of Protestant and Jewish school-children throughout the Province since 1869. Alberta and Saskatchewan, neutral Provinces as regards religion, have liberal provisions for school minorities. But the Protestant majority of Ontario has intolerantly refused to hearken to the representations made by the Catholic minority every one of the past seventy years." The repeal of last year's Act giving a better deal to Catholic schools was due to Premier Hepburn, whose chief reason for the abolition of this better system of allocating funds was the extreme unpopularity of the

system with the majority community. He said: "It is my responsibility now to forestall at whatever cost the possibility of a religious war in our Province." A Catholic paper, commenting on this utterance, says that the Premier might well have added, "I sacrifice the Catholic minority to satisfy the Protestant majority."

We will not of course countenance, either expressly or by implication, any policy likely to hurt the interests of a minority anywhere, but the point that is of immediate application here is that in a fully developed democracy a majority has the legal right to oppress a minority which none can take away, and that the political organisation provides no remedy against such possible oppression except the doubtful expedient of the minority converting the majority to its views. In Ontario the Catholics cannot run to the Governor over the head of the Prime Minister and say: Protect us from this oppression. Nor can the Governor veto the repeal or say to the Prime Minister: Take back this measure or I will dismiss you.

If Mahatma Gandhi now offers to submit to a dismissal of the Ministry by the Governor when, according to his judgment, any minority is given scurvy treatment, he does so because he recognises that the provincial autonomy contained in the Act is limited by the safeguards. He does not ask for full provincial autonomy, but only for a certain device which in his opinion will secure the Ministry against vexatious interference by the Governor. But we should remember that, even if this device is agreed to by the Government and however great its efficacy may prove, we shall still have in the best of circumstances only partial self-government in the Provinces under the present Act.

THE JUTE STRIKE SETTLEMENT.

THE Bengal jute workers' strike has been called off as a result of discussions between the strike leaders and the Bengal Government. Commenting on the strike in our last issue we observed that the refusal of the Labour Minister to recognise the Strike Committee and to deal with the leaders of the strikers can lead to nothing but a stiffening of the attitude of the workers. It is gratifying to note that the Bengal Ministry realised the folly of the Labour Minister in time with the result that the jute industry has been saved from certain ruin. The jute strike was a result of smouldering discontent and assumed huge proportions during the last two weeks. It is obvious that both the Government and the employers were misled into believing that the strike would not affect as large a number of mills as it eventually did and decided upon a trench warfare. No other reason can explain the sudden change in the attitude of the Minister of Labour within the short time of a week. Only a week ago he had declared that he did not desire to negotiate with the Strike Committee, and that he would deal with the strikers direct. A few days after we find the very leaders

whom he denounced as politicians masking their anti-Ministry activities under labour leadership being invited to his house for a discussion of the strike situation.

There is no doubt that this was the result of the solidarity displayed by the workers in the jute mills, and it is certainly creditable to the Government that they refused to stand on considerations of prestige when they realised that the situation was serious and did not hesitate to offer an invitation to the very people whom they had tried to discredit in the eyes of the workers. The terms of the settlement show that the strikers have gone back to work almost on their own terms, a rare end of a strike in India. The terms of settlement include (1) no victimization of workers for participation in the strike; (2) recognition of the workers' trade union; (3) a liberal policy to be followed regarding all cases arising out of the strike; (4) thorough investigation into the questions of the wages and other grievances of jute workers; (5) the withdrawal of the prohibitory orders under section 144 Cr P. C. It will be seen that the workers have won all along the line as far as the terms of settlement go, but the enforcement of these terms depends on the patience and goodwill of the Government which should be held responsible for their proper administration. For the strikers have not succeeded in getting a wage increase, but only a promise of an inquiry into the justice of their demand for it. The wage inquiry shall be the touchstone of the *bona fides* of the intentions of the Government as well as the employers and it will be awaited with interest all over the country.

There are certain aspects of this dispute, however, which merit reference. It will be recalled that both the Government spokesman and the employers took an obstinate view of the situation at the beginning. The Labour Minister, Mr. Surhawardy, for instance, declared that he for himself found no economic basis for the strike and openly charged his political opponents with using the strike weapon to discredit him and the Bengal Ministry. He claimed that under the new dispensation where the Ministers were the spokesmen of the people strikes were "meaningless and unjustifiable." Fortunately for the working class movement in India, the strikers stood firm and in spite of great sufferings and provocation compelled the Bengal Ministry to climb down from their high horse. The Prime Minister of Bengal, Mr. Huq, declared on May 5, only two days before the strike was called off, that "the real nature of the game of these well-wishers of labour, who are fomenting the strike, is quite apparent. There has not been anything like a real economic basis for these strikes and now at any rate they are admittedly being used by communist leaders to pave the way for a revolution in India." Mr. Huq then "warned" the strikers for allowing their representatives to invite Pandit Jawaharlal "instead of discussing the situation with the Ministers who have been working unceasingly to bring about peace." The interesting part of this affair comes in when, only two days after, the Bengal Prime Minister solemnly declared that

"many of the grievances of the labourers are such as can reasonably be admitted to be genuine... Some however of the demands of the labourers are such as require careful investigation and negotiation before they can be satisfactorily dealt with. The question of wages is one of them. Then there are the powers of the sardars and the overseers in matters of appointment and dismissal which have given rise to grave abuse." The layman might be pardoned if he asked how a strike, which had no economic basis at all only a couple of days ago, became all of a sudden one which required an inquiry into reasons which can "reasonably be admitted as genuine." The leader of the Bengal Ministry can alone justify these contradictory statements coming over each other's heel. To say the least, it looks as if the Bengal Ministry has been following a hand-to-mouth policy as regards the dispute like the employers who follow the well-known method of starving the strikers out of their demands.

But reason, at whatever time and through whatever pressure it arrives, is commendable and the readiness of the Bengal Ministry to admit the hard realities of the situation and to devise ways and means to get the strike settled as quickly as they could does merit commendation. We are not interested in discrediting the Bengal Ministry, as it alleges some people are, and we shall certainly welcome any advantage that they can confer on the workers. We, therefore, echo the sentiments of Mr. Huq and appeal to the strikers and those interested in them to "give Government a chance of helping labour to get its due." At the same time Mr. Huq would do well to remember that although the leaders of the strike may not belong to his party they have the great sanction of the workers' strength behind them and it would serve no purpose by trying to break their influence by clumsy methods such as those adopted by his colleague in the Cabinet, Mr. Surhawardy, the Labour Minister. If Government has a genuine desire to give a square deal to the worker, temporary and makeshift compromises cannot help. The whole basis of the industrial organisation in the jute area must be overhauled. The pages of the evidence submitted to the Labour Commission in behalf of the jute workers would provide the Bengal Ministry enough material as to what kind of approach to his problem the worker will appreciate and we hope no time will be lost in setting up an inquiry which will command the confidence of the jute workers.

REACTIONS TO NEHRU-JINNAH CONTROVERSY.

THE issues in controversy between Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. M. A. Jinnah have considerably occupied the Indian press. We dealt in these columns some time back with the statements of both these leaders. But it is interesting to dwell on the divergent views expressed by the press on this controversy which has been further augmented by an additional exchange of statements between Mr. Nehru and Mr. Jinnah. Replying to Mr. Jinnah's rejoinder

to his statement, Mr. Nehru again maintains that "the cleavages of political and economic opinion are rightly represented by political and economic parties in public life, but to form religious or communal parties which also dabble in political and economic matters cuts across the real cleavages of opinion on live issues and thus is an unreal party in the political sense." Mr. Nehru's charge that the Muslim League cannot be called a real political party at all as it comprises men whose political views range from the extreme left to the extreme right, is refuted by the *Pioneer* which asks: "Is it not true to say that in the Congress ranks also are Socialists, Communists, Liberals, Anti-Socialists etc.,—in fact as heterogeneous a crowd as one may hope to meet in any communal party? . . . There are Congressmen among the leaders and in the rank and file who are no less communal-minded than some leaders and members of purely communal organisations." The paper wishes to advise Mr. Nehru that "if it does not necessarily follow that those who profess the same faith will hold the same political opinions, it is equally true that all members of a particular class of society do not inevitably gravitate into the same political or economic compartment. The 'class warfare' theory assumes that men are capable of adopting only one version of their interest and that, having adopted it, they move fatally to realise it. It is a false assumption."

The gravamen of the *Pioneer's* disapproval of Mr. Nehru's statement is its opposition to the class theory of economic warfare. The *Tribune* on the other hand emphasises that aspect of Mr. Nehru's statement which alludes to the identity of the economic and political interests of the citizens of a State irrespective of creed or caste. "Mr. Jinnah and other communal leaders have been repeatedly challenged," the *Tribune* observes, "to point out a single fundamental political right or interest which they claim for their community that is not identical with the corresponding political right and interest of members of other religious communities." Freedom of speech and discussion, the liberty of the press, the right of association, freedom to move about, these and many others, the *Tribune* points out, are or at least should be equally sacred to everyone, whatever his religion. Mr. Jinnah's statement that the Muslim League Party was a corollary to the existence of separate electorates the *Tribune* characterises as "arguing in a circle." For "after all separate electorates either owe their existence to these separate political parties and organisations or are effects of the same cause as these parties and organisations, and it is certain that they will not go until the mentality of which these parties and organisations are the outcome goes." But the *Times of India* would advise Mr. Nehru to heed what Mr. Jinnah has to say about the privileges granted to the French Canadians. It carries the argument further by pointing to Great Britain itself where "a minority like the Scottish people has constitutional guarantees preserving its own law and the independence of many executive departments. Yet even today there is a strong movement in Scotland and Wales for greater independence from the majority."

The argument regarding the position of the French in Canada and the Scottish people in great part, however, misses, in our opinion, one great factor which places their case on a different footing than that of the Muslims in India. All these great communities which profess a different culture and tradition than those of the majority are concentrated to a great extent within certain definite geographical boundaries. Protection of their special interests in such circumstances certainly admits of an easier solution than in the case of the Muslims in India.

The *Mussalman* and the *Comrade*, both of Calcutta, which are Muslim papers professing widely divergent views, also comment on the controversy extensively. The *Mussalman* gave rather an ingenious retort to Mr. Nehru's charge that Mr. Jinnah was exhibiting a thinking in terms of medievalism when he talked of religious considerations influencing political or economic ones. "By emphasising the political and economic aspects," the *Mussalman* says, "of the Indian problem, Pandit Jawaharlal thinks in terms of a nineteenth century U. S. A. politician who believed that in the midst of diverse races American nationality could be carved out of common political and economic interests. But India is different from U. S. A. U. S. A. is a vast country where there was room for expansion of a small population. The land was new which had no cultural history." The *Comrade*, a Muslim leftist paper, entertains no doubts whatsoever about the "sad degeneration" of Mr. Jinnah into a perfect communalist. "It is a pity," the paper says, "that for some time past Mr. Jinnah, who rightly enjoys the reputation of being one of the keenest intellects in contemporary India, has been constantly resorting to arguments which are the sole stock-in-trade only of those politicians who try to make good their deficiency in brain-power and capacity for giving real service by parading themselves in season and out of season as champions of Muslim solidarity. Every progressive move by any section of the Muslim community towards any progressive section of any other community is attacked by these men as a danger to Muslim unity. We regret to see a man of Mr. Jinnah's intellectual eminence fall in line with such men."

Whatever the reactions of the office-bearers of the Muslim League to Mr. Nehru's invitation to join him, he who runs may see that the League is steadily approaching that stage in its career when the progressive elements among the Muslims will prove too strong for its present leaders. In trying to draw its skirts away from contact with the Congress, the League is but refusing to recognise the march of time, when Mr. Jinnah cannot prevent the current of modern political and economic ideas sweeping into the back-waters of communal bodies. But the controversy raised by Mr. Nehru, besides touching the Muslims, has also roused keen interest in other minority quarters also. For although the Muslims form the most important community there are other minorities who are equally anxious to safeguard their religious and cultural institutions whom Mr. Nehru's views have not failed to dis-

turb. The *Guardian* of Madras, excellent Christian journal, discusses the future of minorities in a dispassionate article and although its views may not find acceptance with those whose political philosophy is bounded by almost fatalistic conceptions of the inevitability of the class struggle it puts the sober minority view for the consideration of our political leaders. It admits that the optimism of Mr. Nehru in believing that the hindrances to Hindu-Muslim unity are not insuperable is not unjustifiable. It is not sure, however, whether a simple mass appeal would remove the inherent difficulties even though the appeal may be based upon a common distress that binds all the people of India together. The obstacles, in the opinion of the *Guardian*, are these: "Muslims are generally slack and conservative; they are suspicious of Hindu leadership; where suspicion is absent, it is easily aroused; Muslim leaders who speak of the special interests of the Muslims think more of their own interests and plan solutions to help themselves rather than the Muslim masses whose needs are urgent. Apart from these, culture, religion, customs have established differences which are harmless normally but become deep cleavages at times and cause much estrangement."

The *Guardian* does not believe that a closer connexion would tend to lessen these differences. It would rather "throw into greater relief the differences in religion, culture and custom. A life of segregation has less risks than one of co-operation or mixture. In fact, segregation is often resorted to as one method of ensuring peace when the disparities are stubborn and incapable of adjustment. There is also the fact that when a united battle against a common enemy is fought the desire for the spoils is accentuated." The *Guardian* elaborates the spoils theory further and doubts whether economic groupings will really eradicate communal sectionalism. But further it says that "as economic advancement proceeds, there will be continually demands for a proper allotment of spoils secured. After all economic advancement is self-interest on a national scale and hence a proper division of gains would be a necessary consequence. This will be one more force to keep alive the sense of separateness." Representing, as it does to some extent, the views of minorities in India, the *Guardian's* views are entitled to the respect of everyone who desires to tackle this vexed question. For the Muslims, although the biggest, are not the only minority in India; there are others of considerable number and importance whose difficulties, claims and problems deserve the sympathetic attention of the majority communities. Hence we commend the conclusion which the paper arrives at to the consideration of all public thinkers.

"The response from the side of the minorities," the *Guardian* says, "though assured by reason of the power of the drive, may be willing or unwilling. They are in no mood to sacrifice their religious and cultural rights to their economic interests. There a distinction remains and must be respected. If these are

not safeguarded, the fear is evoked that the majority community may extend the principle of absorption practised in the case of political and economic matters to concerns that do not admit of such absorption. While pacts, assurances and guarantees cannot be stipulated as a prior condition for the Congress campaign among the minorities, the satisfaction that these proposals seek to secure cannot progress too far in its campaign without being confronted by the demand for tangible evidence for the security of these rights. Its gains will remain temporary until alongside of the campaign is carried out a conscientious study and endeavour to satisfy the fullest life that the minorities seek."

Review.

CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION.

CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOLS IN INDIA.

By ALICE B. VAN DOREN. (Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, Calcutta.) 20cm. 1936. 170p. Rs. 2.

THE volume under review is the Report of a Survey conducted on behalf of the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon. The Christian High Schools in India have had a double function. Like other high schools in the country, managed by the Government or private bodies, the Christian schools undertake to prepare students for the public examinations. But instruction with them is a secondary objective, the first being the carrying to the Indian people, through schools, the message of Jesus Christ, which at one extremity means conversion of the people of India to Christianity and at the other the imparting of moral or social qualities which, the missionary claims, the average Christian shows in a more intensive form than the average Hindu or Muslim. During the last hundred years, however, there has been a steady change in the objective of Christian High Schools. They have long ceased to be proselytizing agencies and there is very little now to distinguish between well conducted Christian and non-Christian high schools. The so-called Christian ethics again is as much a heritage of the Hindus and Muslims and, eliminating the faith in Jesus Christ, the programmes for character education in all good schools are similar.

In the minds of devout Christians who help the Mission Schools this change has created a problem. Should they continue to spend funds on the education of non-Christian pupils? Will it not be better to use them for Christian pupils only? Can a High School be called a Christian High School if its pupils consist mostly of Hindus and Muslims and its staff of non-Christian teachers? Does the school justify its existence if it cannot in ten years induce even ten of its alumni to seek salvation through Jesus?

The volume under review does not state in clear terms the objectives underlying the survey, but one need have no doubt that its organisers hoped, after its completion, to be able to answer some of the questions discussed above.

The chief means of Christian education is participation in the life of a Christian community. . . . Many of those who have been engaged in the work of this survey are of the opinion that under ordinary circumstances, a school ought to aim at not less than 75 per cent. of Christian teachers. . . . One hears that a good Hindu or Muhammedan is to be preferred to an unsatisfactory Christian. At the other end of the scale are those who tell us that a

Christian school should be satisfied with nothing less than a hundred per cent. Christian staff.

These and other sentences scattered throughout the book point to the general impression among missionary organisations that the Christian high schools, whatever be their efficiency as places of instruction, have not been able to create the Christian atmosphere or Christian influence for which purpose they really exist.

One need not discuss this aspect of the question here. One may readily grant that the Christian high schools have done valuable service to the cause of education in India and even if one may not grant their claim for the spread of Christian virtues, one may still agree that they have awakened in us a high sense of civic and individual morality which had lain dormant in the disturbed period before the advent of the British. They have never been aggressive agencies of the Christian church and many a leader of India half a century ago—both Christian as well as non-Christian—proudly declared that he was made by the Christian principal of the Christian high schools which he attended. Some of these high schools are now rotting, because of the rise of equally good Hindu and Moslem high schools in the vicinity but there are others which have still maintained their reputation and would still be in the forefront by adopting new methods of education. It would be instructive to read of these schools in the pages of this report. The Basel Mission School at Badagara (Malabar), the C. M. S. School at Shrinagar, the C. M. S. School at Tinnevely, the Jey Narain School at Benares are trying to give an industrial bias to their teachings. The Christian High School, Kharar, and the American Mission High School, Pasumalai are specialising in agriculture. In point of women's education the mission schools are still in the forefront, and many a new experiment in education has been first tried in a Mission School.

One can read about these schools in the book under review and that part of the book will interest both the Christian as well as the non-Christian reader. Again Part II of the Report which discusses "The Teaching of the Christian Faith", or "Evangelism Through Education" will be a good antidote to many an educationist who advocates secular education and then allows his ideas to degenerate into a mere book instruction, an education without an ideal. We recommend this Report on Christian High Schools in India to all who are interested in the reconstruction of Indian education.

M. R. PARANJPE.

SHORT NOTICE.

FOREIGNERS AREN'T FOOLS. By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS. (Longmans.) 1936. 20cm. 143p 5/- "To see ourselves as others see us" is a great gift. Rare among individuals, it is to be found even more rarely among masses of men with their vision blinded by national pride and perverted through the very modern art of propaganda.

A natural sense of humour, the presence amongst them of large numbers of widely travelled and well-informed men and a free press have not together succeeded in fully clarifying the vision of Englishmen, as we in India find it to our cost in regard to the problems of their foreign policy. The uncertainties of the future have but driven them further into their shell and they trust to their courage and their might and their power of muddling through to save them from the dangers ahead.

Mr. Hollis has pointed out a different and a better way for them. He tries to get into touch with

representative foreigners, induces them to give vent to their view of England and her foreign policy in a series of conversations. The result is a fairly correct picture of the present state of international anarchy that is beckoning them to prepare themselves for "the next world war." Accuracy of detail is not his aim; he is satisfied if he can but interpret to the ordinary Englishman the prejudices, the loves and the hates of the ordinary Italian or Russian, of the German and the Japanese.

One hopes that similar pictures were allowed to be produced and freely circulated in the danger-spots of Europe and Asia, to enlighten the minds of those peoples. "Knowledge is virtue," said Socrates. And though one may not aspire to hope thus far, one feels that such information, widely disseminated and organised into an active public opinion, may go a great deal towards the Conquest of Peace.

R. H. KELKAR.

Miscellaneous.

TEACHERS & RURAL RECONSTRUCTION.

MR. SURYANARAYANA RAO'S VIEWS.

At the Madras Provincial Educational Conference held at Tanjore on the 7th inst. a paper on the above subject by Mr. R. Suryanarayana Rao of the Servants of India Society was read. The paper ran:

A DDRESSING a gathering of educationists, it is unnecessary to emphasise the well-known fact that India is primarily an agricultural country and any effort at village improvement will not yield appreciable results unless the handicaps hampering the development of agriculture are removed. But it is well to bear in mind some fundamental features distinguishing agriculture from manufacturing industries. The pursuit of agriculture involves risks due to causes mostly beyond the control of the farmer; agriculture is not always amenable to planning. As one writer sums up, "The farmer is unable to adjust the output of any crop or of all crops he produces or to vary his aggregate of crops in such a manner as to keep his net income stable or even to enable him to determine in advance what his net income will be". While this is true of agriculture all over the world, there are peculiar features prevailing in India which tend to make agriculture a precarious occupation. The most distressing fact is the smallness of the holding. The last Report for the Madras Presidency on the Settlement of the Land Revenue for Fasli 1344 gives interesting facts and figures well worth the perusal of everyone interested in rural uplift. Out of a total of 6,169,582 single and joint pattadars, those paying assessment of Rupee one and less were 732,355 single pattadars and 592,699 were joint pattas shared by 1,934,081 persons. The bulk of the number of pattadars is those paying Rs. 10 and less but over Rupee one, their number being 2,095,516 single pattadars and 1,315,793 joint pattadars with shareholders numbering 4,178,304. These pattas alone form 56 per cent. of the total number of pattas. Adding to this number the pattas paying rupee one and less, it will be clear that the bulk of the land in the ryotwari areas is largely held by these two classes of small pattadars. It is also said the average area of land and assessment on pattas paying Rs. 10 and less but over rupee one works out to about 3 acres and Rs. 4 respectively. Besides, the quality of the land is poor, yielding low produce. Being illiterate and ignorant, the Indian farmer cannot easily appreciate and adopt the methods calculated to increase productivity. Even if he has the mind to do so, want of adequate finance prevents him from adopting improved

methods. There are very few subsidiary occupations to follow during spare time in order to supplement his meagre income from land. In most places his rights in the land are restricted and do not offer any incentive to effort. Above all the system of taxation oppresses most those who are least fitted to bear it. The farmer cannot also easily give up expenditure on ceremonies, etc., imposed by social customs. All these factors drive him into debt, often borrowed at usurious rates and such benefit as he may derive from his land is eaten up by interest on debt. Recent fall in the prices of agricultural produce has rendered the situation worse. So practically a state of affairs has been reached when agriculture is being followed more as "a mode of living" than for profit because no other means are available and it is also too true to say that the cultivators "are born in debt, live in debt and die in debt". Besides these small pattadars there is a large number of landless agricultural labourers who depend mainly on the well-to-do pattadars for their very existence. They are practically serfs of the soil, depending often even for land for house-sites on impecunious and unsympathetic landowners. During the off-season they are helpless and resort to migration to Ceylon or Malaya as the only escape from starvation. But there are some extenuating circumstances which have enabled the farmer to exist in spite of everything that has happened almost to blot him out of the map. He is plodding on his weary existence hoping for better days. Hitherto his wants have been very few. He has been a member of a village community whose chief characteristic has been self-sufficiency. His pathetic belief in his destiny and placid contentment have stood him in good stead. Times are changing. Economic and administrative influences are at work which are gradually changing the structure of village life and whether he likes it or not, he is being profoundly influenced by them. The fatalistic theory of life is being rudely shaken. Improved means of communication have brought him into more intimate contact with the outside world and the desire for social and economic development has been stimulated. He too is anxious to share with others the good things of the world. He looks in vain for help and guidance, for wherever he turns he sees nothing but means of exploitation under which he feels he has already suffered enough. He has lost the faculty of distinguishing a friend from a foe. His past experience has been disappointing. There is no right kind of leadership. The educated men are unwilling to live their life in a village and the few who volunteer to do so become very soon infected with the virus of factious spirit which has unfortunately taken root in many of our villages. They often assume an air of patronage and feel that the villagers are obliged to them for such little services as they may render. But in most of the villages even such persons are not available. The villager needs some one who will infuse hope and cheer into his sad and miserable life. To whom then should we turn for leadership?

The village teacher is the one person best fitted to play the role of a leader to the village-folk. In most places, perhaps he will be the only person in the village imbued with ideas of citizenship. By precept and example he can inculcate the ideal of corporate action for common benefit. His spare time he can utilise in educating the parents of his pupils and keep alive such literacy as exists in a village by organising a reading room and library. Nowadays some villages, perhaps due to their importance for other purposes, are subject to frequent visits by officials of various departments of Government, while the existence of others is not even recognised. But during these visits if any, much which can improve the lot of the villager cannot be accomplished. Much time is spent on inspections which must necessarily be

cursory. At best instructions may be left for the guidance of the villagers and there is no intelligent appreciation of these instructions on the part of any one to follow them up in action. The village teacher can be a liaison officer of the various departments of Government and he can make every effort to educate the people and make them carry out the instructions. In times of outbreak of epidemics such as cholera or small-pox his presence and assistance are invaluable. The subordinate revenue officials, however efficient they may be in their normal duties, lack the vision which the village teacher by his training and nature of work in which he is engaged ought to possess. It is difficult to make the subordinate village revenue officials to appreciate, imbibe and carry out even to a limited extent the ideals of village improvement. These teachers may, if need be, even be given a special course of training during their training period which may provide, as suggested by the Royal Commission on Agriculture, "in addition to imbuing them with a sense of dignity of corporate labour for mutual benefit, is designed to familiarise them with the principles of sanitation, elementary medical aid, co-operation, agricultural improvement, and to give them some knowledge of the simpler home industries; in order that each may, when the training is completed, act as 'guide, philosopher and friend'". If the importance of every village possessing a person whom the villager can look up to for help and guidance is recognised, the village teacher is the only person available and competent to play the role of a village guide. But if the village teacher has to play his part well, he should be given every encouragement to do so and he should also be continuously educated and furnished with up-to-date information on men and things. This necessitates the setting up of a central organisation consisting of experts from which all new ideas should be broadcasted to every nook and corner of the presidency. The villager is astute and will not be merely convinced by propaganda. The effects of the new ideas should also be demonstrated to him. Nothing strikes the imagination, appeals to his sense of reason and evokes ready response better than demonstration. He should also be provided with means, wherever necessary, to practise the new ideas he imbibes.

I should not be surprised if some one among you or outside criticises me by saying that I have set a formidable task to the village teacher forgetting the fact that he is at present neither equipped for it nor sufficiently remunerated even for his present normal duties. Such criticism is fully justified. As regards equipment I have already suggested in what respects he should receive training to enable him to play the role of a village guide. The courses of studies in Training Schools have to be altered to suit the purpose in view and if need be the period of training may have to be increased. Then it may be asked what enthusiasm can rural uplift work rouse in a village teacher who is himself leading a precarious existence and is the worst victim of "the strings and arrows of outrageous fortune". I submit our attitude towards the village teacher should be radically changed and his remuneration for the responsibilities he discharges should be assured. He should no longer be treated as a chattel subject to the whims and caprices of the appointing authorities especially the Local Boards. Similarly the interests of teachers employed under aided agencies should be protected. Conditions governing their scale of salary, appointments, punishment and even transfer should be definitely laid down and enforced. The present Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Statham, has within the few months since he took charge given a new orienta-

tion to the question of mass education, realising, as he must, that any appreciable and real progress in mass education is mainly dependent on a contented army of teachers fired with enthusiasm for the cause. I am sure he will soon take steps to redress the grievances of teachers. With proper equipment, with prospects assured, with the necessary guidance and support provided, I have no doubt the village teacher will soon play his part in rural uplift and the village school will become a real community centre.

I may be pardoned if I do not venture to say much regarding the part which teachers in the urban areas can play in the work of reconstruction. Unless the school is situated in a rural area no appreciable good can result from spasmodic efforts made during occasional visits. They may help to please us and also indirectly enable us to earn *kudos*. Rural work is dependent for its success on daily intimate contact with the villagers and sharing the life of the people amidst whom the teacher's lot is cast. What is being done may be a form of social service and to that extent it should be welcomed. Teachers and students may spend at least a part of their vacation in villages, study the conditions prevailing, rendering such small services as they can and in that way become rural-minded. There is no gainsaying the fact that such work widens their outlook, enables them to get a good grasp of the realities of the situation which may stand them in good stead when they secure opportunities for further service.

A word about the Rural Uplift programme of the Government may not be out of place. Its chief defect is that the persons who are affected by it and whose co-operation is essential for the success of efforts made have no voice in the programme. It is all thought out for them by others sitting at a table. It is true some amenities may be provided in a few villages here and there. But it is not a nation-wide programme touching all aspects of village life and catering to the needs of all villagers. No serious attempt is made to deal with the root causes and so it cannot raise enough enthusiasm. Above all, the village teacher has no place in it. Without his active co-operation and support nothing tangible can be accomplished. What is urgently needed is leadership. At present "no one corresponding to the squire, the doctor and the parson is to be found in an Indian village". The village teacher alone can occupy such a place.

My task is over. Within the limits generally imposed on such papers read before conferences I have attempted to indicate the nature of the problem and what part the village teacher can play in solving it. I shall be satisfied if the few thoughts I have ventured to place before you provoke discussion. In a recent publication of the Board of Education, a fully educated man is visualised as "one who is enlightened in his interests, impersonal in his judgments, ready in his sympathy for whatever is just and right, effective in the work he sets himself to do and willing to lend a hand to anyone who is in need of it." Given the necessary training, the village teacher can, not only become a 'fully educated man' as visualised here, but also become a centre of light and learning in villages and share with village-folk the ideals which he imbibes. I have no doubt, if opportunities are provided, the village teacher will soon come to occupy the position of a parson to his 'congregation.' His will be a life dedicated to the propagation of the ideal so well expressed in the lines :

Let each man find his own in all men's good.
And all men work in noble brotherhood.