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PATNA, TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 1940

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Through The X'Ray

By Politicus

Beware of the coming state

Even the little doubt that might lurk in any cynical mind has been set at rest by Mr. Gandhi. He has clearly told the entire body of Congressmen through the Subjects Committee that if they appoint Mr. Gandhi as their general they must obey his command. "You must fulfil the conditions set down in the Independence Pledge", so has gone out the clear command. Now, my friends, you know what these conditions are and you know how they are being fulfilled. You take it from me that the three thousand delegates and the lakhs of visitors that went to Ramgarh will fulfil the conditions of Mr. Gandhi as enthusiastically as they have been doing since the adoption by them of the Independence Pledge. Transformation of the Indian humanity into Godhood is thus assured and thereafter the descent of heaven on earth. If Englishmen have any sense still left in them, they should start packing up right from now and so should I and also those of you who dread the perpetual enjoyment of heavenly bliss in the company of millions of Gods. Mr. Gandhi's public appearance at the Subjects Committee and the acceptance of the official resolution by the Congress constitute a silence order on the struggle-wallas and a quit order on those like us who do not want it. We must now seek a new land where the struggle for freedom is carried on with waving of flags and singing of songs. Indian Congressmen will fight now with the deadlier weapon of the Charkha.

The unity at Ramgarh

Mark the joy of the Rightists—they had a clean walk-over at Ramgarh. How crude the feeling and how crudely expressed! Oh no, I am not thinking of its essential unseemliness,—the vulgarity at the root. Nor am I worried for the moment by the set-back in the Indian national movement which the Congress has recorded and which is the basis of the joy of my Rightist friends. For the moment I am thinking only of the other crudeness,—the real, sordid vulgarity wholly without polish. The Congress Press has harped over and over again on the theme that the key-note at Ramgarh was unity as distinct from the note of dissension which had run through the proceedings at Tripuri. At the end of the session at Ramgarh there has been no end of jubilation at the fact that only about twenty votes were cast in the open session against the resolution of the Working Committee. The facts are granted. I have not the least desire to challenge the proposition that at Ramgarh Mahatma Gandhi's leadership was undis-

puted—no one thought of challenging it. But what was there in it to gloat over? It was a curious sort of unity which the unanimity at Ramgarh is said to have disclosed to the intense satisfaction of the Gandhites. It is a silly proposition to advance that the absence of opposition is the proof of unity—it is sillier still to gloat over it. There was a time when equally marked unanimity used to be shown in the Congress when the resolution on loyalty to the Throne was moved and passed. If you ever visit the inside of a prison, you will be struck by the remarkable unity demonstrated by the prisoners in submitting to whatever order is passed by the jailor. Does anyone wonder at such unity? Why then should the Congress Press have gone into ecstasy over the so-called unity at Ramgarh? What part of it was not to be expected? What did the Rightists do ever since the announcement of the re-election of Mr. Bose as President some fifteen months ago? They worked for nothing else than this unity, that is to say, the elimination from the Congress of those who would not offer unquestioned obedience to the Gandhian leadership. With the Socialists hypnotised with the show of an impending struggle, with every moment since September as the point of that impen-dency, with Mr. Subhas Bose and Swami Sahajananda expelled from the Congress, with an entire province like Bengal robbed of its right of representation except through a particular type of Congressmen and with the systematic elimination at election of those who have the audacity to think for themselves, what else could Ramgarh Congress demonstrate than unity? It is a funny mentality that gloats over a unity which is the result of the organised stifling of the voice of opposition. It is so stupidly crude that its expression jars in the ear even in this age of progaganda.

Kurukshetra over again

The battle of Kurukshetra has been re-enacted at Ramgarh—not the war part of it by any means, but the milking part—the milking, that is to say, of the cows of the Upanishads by the Son of Nanda for the feeding of the wise people of the earth. Did you listen to the speeches of Mr. Gandhi—did you at least read the reports thereof? If you did so with even the indifferent attention of an average member of the crowd, you will feel no difficulty in appreciating what I mean. Mr. Gandhi only paraphrased in his speeches what Lord Krishna said to Arjuna,—leave behind all *Dharmas*; take shelter of me alone: I will save thee from all sins,

grieve not. What else could Mr. Gandhi mean when he asked the delegates and through them all Congressmen in particular and the people of India in general to render implicit obedience to him if they wanted him to lead the struggle? Mr. Gandhi left absolutely no room for doubt as to his meaning. Struggle he talked of no doubt but he made it amply clear that he would not go within even a mile of it if everyone in India did not become truthful in deed, words and thought and did not, in addition, take regular exercise in non-violence through the mystic movements of the Charkha. He would allow absolutely no say to anyone as to the character of the struggle he would wage and also as to the time of its start. The conditions for the struggle he would lay down himself, and he would be the sole judge as to whether those conditions have been fulfilled. Well, this should finally set at rest any doubt that might have been entertained in any quarters not only as to the democratic character of the Congress but also as to the character of Democracy itself. On the basis of the new *Bhagabat Gita* revealed on the holy Mount of Jharkhand, I venture now to give you a new definition of Democracy. It is a system of organisation—does not matter of what—under which the millions should surrender their judgment to the leader with the one precious freedom left to them, namely, the freedom of the blind man to let slip the hand of the guide who himself has rendered him blind and therefore incapable of any form of independent action. Surely, Ramgarh has marked the final stage in the evolution of Democracy which had started as a protest against the unfettered power of a despot over the millions in a State. After all, you cannot escape the fact that the earth is round and that, therefore, wherefrom you may start, you are bound to return to the same point at the end of your laborious journey.

An unchivalrous Rain God

What a pity! The cruel Rain God refused after all to be propitiated at Ramgarh with even all the romantic offerings of the Vedic Age so devoutly tendered by the members and the volunteers of the Reception Committee. Absolutely without sense of humour—this King of the gods in heaven, and how ungrateful too! The atheistic anti-compromise-wallas did not offer him even a flower. And yet they were allowed to conclude their conspiratorial deliberations in peace while the Rain God let loose all his thunders and showers on the faithful just a few minutes before the proceedings were to start in the open Congress session. The outburst of the divine fury was particularly cruel for it was just about that time that the ceremonial presidential procession was about to be formed. Surely, Lord Indra should

have shown some consideration for the feelings of Maulana Azad who was to have been the apple of every eye in that congregation. I am afraid that the whole performance of the Lord was unchivalrous in the extreme and even inhuman even though it might have been planned in consultation with one who is more than God, to test the discipline and fortitude of the delegates and the visitors and to give them a foretaste of the sufferings that are to come. In my view, the proper course for the Rain God was to take the fortitude of the delegates for granted after the demonstration of their chosen ones in the Subjects Committee of their unconditional surrender to the divine will and instead pour forth all his wrath and fury on the heretics some two miles away. That would have demonstrated the glory of the Lord and would have resulted, I am sure, in the conversion of even the few who had the audacity to raise their hands against the Messiah.

Humbug and hypocrisy

Fortitude and discipline,—indeed! For the thousands of Aryan peasants and non-Aryan aborigines whose skin as a rule is so well-protected that not a drop of rain ever touches it, to let themselves be profusely drenched at Ramgarh is such a unique sight for the leaders of the masses that they have every reason to go into raptures over the beauty of it. Who can deny the uniqueness of the sight of people silently braving the piercing arrows of the Rain God when there is no shelter available within hundreds of miles? I have no desire therefore to rob the heroic sufferers of even a fraction of the compliments which they so deservedly won from Mr. Gandhi. But in spite of all the testing and the giving of all the foretaste which the fury of Nature is said to have achieved to the great delight of the general who is to lead this heroic battalion in the coming struggle, the fact remains that the fury destroyed within a few hours all the paraphernalia for human existence which the Reception Committee had built at Ramgarh at the cost of lakhs collected from the people not many of whom are in affluent circumstances. That raises the question, is the lesson which is said to have been learnt worth paying for in such costly lakhs? Time was, and not very long ago, when Congress sessions used to be held in towns. It is a whim of Mr. Gandhi which created the village Congress session a few years ago. And what a village! A village erected in open space at the cost of lakhs with electricity, filtered tap water, loud speaker, telephone, telegraph, modern conservancy, restaurant, hotel and everything else that constitutes the village life in India! Have you known of hypocrisy advertising itself in more blatant fashion? And

than mark the cruelty of it! You drag lakhs of people to a far away place where in spite of your best endeavour you cannot give them protection against weather and have actually to ask them to go away within a couple of hours under the threat of contaminated water and the entire stoppage of food supply—as Dr. Rajendra Prasad actually did at Ramgarh. And for this, you spend lakhs! A whole city with, however, none of its security, is erected in the wilderness to last less than a week to be wilfully destroyed thereafter if Nature does not choose to destroy it as it did at Ramgarh! For what? To fraternise with villagers? To give the delegates a taste of the village life? To test their discipline and fortitude? The more I think of this Gandhian fad of the village Congress the more I am reminded of the semi-lunatic ruler of India of the Tughlak dynasty who transferred his capital from Delhi to South India several times and every time brought it back after a few days to the incalculable waste of public revenue and indescribable hardships of the people who were practically continuously kept on the march. Is there no one in the Congress who can tell its dictator that he should better confine to his own life all experiments with truth. Surely, the nation that suffers all these idiotic syncracies of its dictator, cannot be expected to have any future. And mark, it is to this father of the idea of village Congress to whom this year's delegates have surrendered all their judgment for all the future.

Mr. Bose's stunt

Nevertheless, I congratulate the Rain God on his performances at Ramgarh. I am grateful to him for he it is that has defeated the hypocrisy of the Congress wallas who erect a "village" in the wilderness at the cost of lakhs and has, for the first time, given the romanticists the taste of the real village life so much so that even Mr. Gandhi has blurted out,—even in the mist of all his gushing tributes to the brave soldiers—that henceforward the site of the Congress should have an additional qualification of possessing enough shelter against weather. At the same time, I have to congratulate Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose. I have to admit that he is a genius,—a greater genius, I should say, than even Mr. Gandhi. I have often explained to you the stupendous stunt which Mr. Gandhi has kept up all these years. But Mr. Bose's stunt is even more masterly in conception and execution. Think of the bogey of compromise he created with the necessary complement of the stunt of struggle. Think of the magnificent stunt of his anti-compromise conference. The Congress Press may belittle it but its inordinate anxiety to do so is itself the most convincing proof of the success of the stunt. The balance of the proof necessary is furnished by the loud talks about struggle that burdened the air of Mazharpuri. But

what is this struggle that Mr. Bose talks of? Wherein does its superiority lie over that talked of by Mr. Gandhi and the host of Gandhites? Nowhere; for Mr. Bose's "struggle" is the same nauseating and pestering stuff as Mr. Gandhi's. Even if Mr. Bose starts the struggle, he will ask his followers to play the same hide and seek game and do the same aping of the hardened criminal. As for the compromise against which Mr. Bose has been so clamorously warning the public,—well, as he will not fight British Imperialism with machine-guns and incendiary bombs, his struggle is bound to end with the same compromise as Mr. Gandhi's. My good readers, don't have any illusion about Mr. Bose on that account, for an agreement between the two contending parties does not cease to be a compromise simply because it is called, Irish fashion, by the name of treaty. But think, nevertheless, how the stunt has played! Magnificent is the only word for it, for it has thoroughly poisoned the source of complacency of the Congress leaders, including that of Mr. Gandhi himself, so much so that Mr. Gandhi who had made himself so rare all these years to the general body of Congressmen, was compelled this year to come out from his seclusion and address not only the Subjects Committee but also the open Congress session. As for Mr. Bose himself,—well, he had the satisfaction of enjoying all the "honour" associated with the duly-elected President of the Congress, which a host of flatterers and admirers and a horde of rabble can confer in the eyes of people who have not the necessary intellectual attainment to distinguish between appearance and reality. The whole thing, indeed, has been the master-stroke of a genius.

The long and the short of it

A devotee of mine who appears to be a careful reader of all that I write in these columns, has put a question to me in great bewilderment. What was the use of holding a costly Congress session, he asks, if a resolution already passed by the Working Committee was simply to be endorsed and that in spite of Mr. Gandhi's determination, as I say, not to start the struggle until all Indians have attained godhood? My reply is very simple and short. He could have read my reply in Mr. Gandhi's speeches if he had my insight to discern the reality hidden at the bottom of a mass of appearances. Mr. Gandhi is a truthful man. He has made no secret of his desire to see the Viceroy as many times as may be necessary for the purpose of effecting an "honourable settlement." That being his view and that being his plan, he wanted simply an authorisation by the Congress to the effect that he alone can deliver the goods at least so far as the Congress is concerned. The Working Committee, by itself, has no competence to issue that authorisation. Hence the necessity of holding the Congress session. The Ramgarh Congress was merely a device to overawe the British Government with an ocular demonstration of the hold Mr. Gandhi has on the masses. The net result, therefore, is the strengthening of the hands of Mr. Gandhi, in so far as another ocular demonstration at Lahore would let it be, for the purpose of further negotiations with Lord Linlithgow and through him with the British Government. That is the long and short of the whole thing.



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The Behar Herald

Patna, Tuesday, April 2, 1940.

MR. P. R. DAS' SPEECH

The home truths spoken by Mr. P. R. Das at the Hazaribagh Conference of the Bengali Association regarding the vanishing ideal of one Indian nation have naturally been ignored by Congress papers in India. The Bihar dailies which represent the interests of certain dominant castes in Bihar would, it was expected, try to avoid the inconvenient questions put by Mr. P. R. Das to all who pose as Indian nationalists, by the familiar trick of putting in Mr. Das' mouth and ascribing to the wicked Bengalees of Bihar, the idea of monopolising all the public services and starving out every other resident of the province. Dishonest as the trick is, it still passes muster with certain people who are more to be pitied than censured for their diseased outlook on all questions affecting the growth of a spirit of unity among the people of India. The allegation that but for a rigorous elimination of Bengalees from Bihar, or for that matter of all non-provincials from any one particular province, Bihar or that province would be swamped by Bengalees or other foreigners is a libel not on the Bengalees but on the people of Bihar or the province concerned. There is no province now in India where education

has not advanced to such a degree that its educated men cannot hold their own in most cases in a fair and open competition with outsiders. The Bengali-Bihari problem as it took shape during the Congress ministry in Bihar is only a typical effect of that poisonous mentality produced amongst crude and half-baked people suddenly placed in power which made them avid to monopolise for themselves, their kith and clan, their favourites and their henchmen all the spoils of office and power.

A little analysis will illustrate what we mean. Though education has progressed by leaps and bounds and every province can now furnish large contingents of matriculates, undergraduates and graduates, actually however these contingents come from only particular castes representing a small fraction of the population. This was inevitable, because for hundreds of years, literacy has been the monopoly of these castes and with increased facilities for education these castes have been the first in the field. In Bihar, this class of people may for all practical purposes be taken as consisting of Muslims, Kayasthas, Brahmins and a few of the trading castes among the Hindi-speaking people. The Bengali inhabitants of Bihar, numbering some thirty lakhs also belong to this class. If therefore one takes any year's list of successes at the University examinations, it will generally be found that among those who have matriculated or gone in for higher degrees 15 to 20% would be Muslims, 25 to 30% would be Bengalees, and of the remaining 50 or 60% nearly half would be Kayasthas, and the rest would be comprised of other castes. The Muslims and the Bengalis are each about 10% of the population, though in the case of the latter, by a gross manipulation of the census figures, the percentage has been shown somewhere between five and six. Now if there is a rule which fixes the percentage of admission of Bengalis and Muslims to their census percentage in the population it would mean that if 100 men are to be taken, only fifteen or sixteen are to be Muslims and Bengalis, half of the rest must be Kayasthas and the balance filled up by the other literate castes. The Kayasthas are about one per cent of the whole population, but the fixation of percentages for Muslims and Bengalis gives them a free run of all public services and educational institutions. The attempts, therefore, of the Congress ministries to fix percentages for such communities as Moslems in all the Congress provinces and the Bengalis in Bihar, though ostensibly made to protect the interests of these communities, have really had the effect of eliminating competition from the way of young hopefuls of the dominant castes in the provinces. The public should therefore realise who it is that is trying to monopolise the services.

But the Bengali-Bihari problem in Bihar, as it arose during the Congress regime, was really never a question of public services so far as the Bengali-speaking people in the province are concerned. Ever since the province became self-contained in every respect and had its own High Court, its own University, its own Medical, Engineering and other technical institutions, recruitment of Bengali-speaking people to the public services had almost stopped. It is true that there are still, in the senior ranks of the higher services, a substantial number of Bengalees who had been recruited before Bihar could produce its own suitable men for the various departments. New Bengali entrants have been few and far between. We know it as a matter of fact that the Bengali voters at the last Council elections plumped solidly for Congress. There must therefore be very cogent reasons for these whole-hearted supporters of the Congress to have started an agitation about what they alleged to be a determined drive by the Congress Government against them. Surely it was not simply a question of recruitment of Bengalees to public services. As we have shown, for at least fifteen years before the Congress Government came to office such recruitment had almost disappeared. The domicile rules (minus the questionnaire) had also been introduced long before the Congress came to power. What then was the cause of the widespread alarm and resentment felt all of a sudden by thirty lakhs of people at the action of a Government which they themselves had helped to return to power? It is not to be expected that those responsible for creating the situation would put to themselves this question. Politicians are never given to self-introspection and Congress politicians are no exceptions to the rule, despite Mr. Gandhi's plaintive appeals for self-examination and purification. Mr. P. R. Das in his memorandum to the Working Committee gave numerous specific instances of what was going on sub-rosa. These instances were glossed over by Srijut Rajendra Prasad in his report on the memorandum by the assurance that every one of these cases would be examined by the Congress Ministry in consultation with the authorities of the Bengali Association. That assurance was never implemented and such a solemn and well-considered document as the Working Committee's resolution was shelved. Judging from the comments on it that appeared from time to time in the party papers it can be fairly inferred that the resolution did not find favour in the eyes of those who had deliberately worked themselves up to regarding the very existence of the Bengalees, their language and culture in Bihar as a menace and an insult to their power.

To us, the exclusion of the Bihar Bengalees from public services and educational institutions, the restrictions placed, wherever possible, on Bengali business and enterprise, the statistical pogrom of Bengali in the census tables, the persistent campaign against the Bengali language in Manbhum, Santal Parganas and other Bengali-speaking tracts do not appear to be so dangerous as the mentality behind all these persecutions. India, we know to our cost, is still full of such vulgarities as breaking one another's head over questions of food, or dress, or language or worship or even feasts and fun. That is the mentality of the mob and the mentality displayed in the Bengali-Behari problem is that mentality magnified a hundredfold. This mob mentality has already led to a position in which one section of the population of India is demanding the partition of India on communal lines and the creation of half a dozen independent units all prepared to spring at each other's throats at the first opportunity. The loudest to condemn this demand are Congressmen and among Congressmen none so loud as Sriji Rajendra Prasad. But we may ask that noble son of India and Bihar that if he is prepared to give free play to the mentality that is responsible for the creation of the Bengali-Bihari problem, how can he prevent the partition of India into a number of warring units and the disintegration of that growing sense of one nationhood that had been the notable work of the Indian National Congress. Mr. Das as a believer in that one nationhood has had his heart lacerated by the debacle which has come upon the ideals of the Congress. It is futile to expect those who are the authors of that debacle to gauge the anguish that he and all other true nationalists feel at the rising tide of national disruption, or appreciate the high idealism behind that anguish.

Notes & Comments

Experience leaves no room for doubt

According to a Congress daily, "It has been felt by all of us who visited the Congress session that the problem of evolving a common national diet is important and practical." Now that we are a full fledged nation we must have a "national diet" as all other nations have. We have a national song the singing of which in public meetings leads to heads being broken. There is our national language which can be taught in schools without serious interference only if a thousand people are put behind prison bars. The framing of a national diet by the Working Committee will go a long way to reiterate our nationhood, if only we could impose heavy fines on all dissenters. The

problem of national dress has already been solved in a very simple way by the cap that has been sanctified by Mr. Gandhi's name. This reminds us of the last item in nationhood—religion—which can be nationalised in the same practical way.

'Twere well 'twere quickly done

Mr. Rajagopalachariar's one-sided offer of granting big slices of British (or Congress) India to the rulers of Native States as reward for approved behaviour has been accepted by the Jam Sahib of Nawanganar. Speaking at a reception in New Delhi the Jam Sahib said: "We have kept yellow a part of India on the map. Why do you want to turn it into red? I am sure you do not like red colour, which is the emblem of Bolshevism. Let us make the whole map of India yellow." Now that the owner is prepared to give and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on behalf of the recipients is willing to accept the gift, there ought not to be any technical legal difficulties in the transference.

Outlining our foreign policy

The British Government, as a matter of policy, maintained friendly relations with the countries that lay beyond the political frontiers of India. Ever since the war of independence started in India, these States were apprehensive of the possible imperialistic designs that a free India might have towards her weak neighbours. Now they can breathe in peace as "Congress had made it clear that Free India's foreign policy would be to promote peace and democracy and develop friendly relations with all her neighbours" (local Congress paper, 17th March). This statement requires a little qualification. It would be a mistake to think that the boundaries of "Free India" would be the same as that of the erstwhile British Indian Empire. The future India will include all lands bordering on the Indian Ocean, viz., Western Australia, East coast of Africa up to Somaliland, the Malaya Peninsula and certainly the Dutch East India Islands. Once we have secured our lebensraum,—our place in the sun—by acquisition of all territories—British, Portuguese, French or Dutch,—washed by the Ocean that rightly belongs to us (as shown by its name), we might think of "promoting peace and democracy and developing friendly relations" with any neighbours that may be left.

A flimsy pretext

The Tripuri Congress was utilized by the Gandhist leadership to transform an unexpected defeat into a resounding victory. In the face of the fact that a majority of the Congress members pronounced an adverse verdict, the veterans at the head of the Congress managed not only to retain, but reinforce their control of the Congress organisation. According to Mr. M. N. Roy that only proved the immaturity of the

democratic revolt, and revealed the weakness of the opposition. That being so, it is a poor excuse that disunity and internal dissension prevent the Working Committee from taking any decisive step. The imagined opposition from the Left is surely not a serious obstacle.

A secret mint

According to Mr. Kripalani's annual report the total value of cash benefit to the people rendered by the Congress Ministries is as follows:—

United Provinces—32 crores; Bombay—7 crores plus 40 crores; Madras—6 crores plus 50 crores. Similar handsome figures are also given for Assam, Orissa and Bihar. So the net gain in three provinces only amounts to 135 crores. One is curious to see the other side of the medal also,—the net loss suffered by Bengal and the Punjab through their non-Congress Ministries. The effect of so much extra money being put into circulation within a short period of two years has the usual result of lowering the purchase value of the rupee and we have to pay more for all commodities to-day than we paid in 1937.

Our Corps Diplomatique

Talking of the foreign policy of "Free India" reminds us that in the bustle and tumult of war no one has yet thought of the personnel of our diplomatic corps. A fairly large staff is wanted for this purpose and the selection should not be done in a hurry. A tentative suggestion sent by a correspondent, who believes in thinking ahead, is as follows:

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Soviet Russia—Pandit Nehru.

Do, in Germany—Sardar Patel.

Do in Italy—Mr. Bhulabhai Desai.

Ambassador to the Court of St. James—Mrs. Naidu.

Consul General in Paraguay—Mr. Satyamurti.

Consular Representative at Iceland—Mr. Kripalani.

Minister Resident in Greenland—Professor Abdul Bari.

Vice Consul in Mexico—Dr. Sitarayya.

Charge d'affaires in West Indies—Mr. Sampurnanand.

Consul in Spain—Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy.

Lack of space prevents us from reproducing the whole list. It is open to our readers to make their own suggestions in this important matter.

Not God alone, but the prophets too

Sardar Patel told the members of the Subjects Committee (in Ramgarh) that they "must repose their faith in the Working Committee just as they had reposed faith in Mahatma Gandhi." "People have reposed

their faith in Mahatma Gandhi because he is a "living deity" or "more than God". Before the people can repose the same amount of "blind faith" in the Working Committee they should be told the position held by the members of the Working Committee in the divine hierarchy. The preaching of exclusive monotheism by Mr. Krishnaballav Sahay will come to naught, if the prophets are also entitled to equal veneration with God.

Overheard in a railway journey

"When boiled down, the Left-Right controversy in the Congress amounts to this: Mr. Bose, knowing that Mr. Gandhi will not start the 'fight', talks a lot about 'fight' and says that he is prepared to follow Mr. Gandhi in the 'fight' that Mr. Bose knows very well is not going to materialise. Mr. Gandhi has at last consented to launch the 'fight' 'when the people are ready', which he knows they will never be under the present conditions in the country. From now, Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Bose will talk of 'fight' both knowing full well that there will be no 'fight'. The newspaper statement that 'Congress politics has robbed Mr. Bose of his thunder' really means that both Congress and the Forward Block are now armed with the same weapon but neither is going to use it.

Freedom is cheap

As a result of the heavy rain on the 19th, Mr. Gandhi did not stir out of his camp. An Associated Press representative took advantage of this to secure a message from Mr. Gandhi regarding the heavy downpour. Mr. Gandhi said:—"It was a soul-stirring sight to see people standing knee-deep in water. I feel that God had ranged Himself on the side of the people and gave them a foretaste of the suffering to be voluntarily undergone as the price of freedom."

A statement like this is rather surprising, coming as it does from Mr. Gandhi, who is supposed to know rural India. Millions of Indian peasants spend hours in knee-deep water in the season of paddy transplantation. The Indian peasants have been given this "foretaste of suffering" by God for many centuries but it has never been accepted as the price of freedom.

Tall talks

(1) "The heavy rain was perhaps the forerunner of many (sic) more suffering that we may be called upon to undergo in the coming year."—Maulana Azad.

(2) "Yesterday's downpour had shown their preparedness to face difficulties."—Pandit Nehru.

Thousands of people all over the country get drenched to the skin for many days in the year witnessing football matches, but neither they nor anybody else ever regard such events as "fore-runners of suffering" or as evidence of their "preparedness to face difficulties." People will always undergo minor inconveniences when a *tamasha* is on.

Some of our leaders can talk only in bombast. Dr. Rajendra Prasad alone seems to be free from this vice. He attributed the putting up with the inconvenience by the people to their "intense desire to participate in the proceedings."

Habitual liars

The popular belief that journalism is the most ephemeral form of literature is not quite true. Babu Brajendra Nath Banerjee has compiled a very interesting social history of Bengal of the early nineteenth century by rummaging through the files of newspapers of a century ago. The material unearthed by him from old newspapers could not be had from any other source. But modern journalism is extremely unkind to the future historian of the country. Imagine the quandary the student of history will be in when he reads the following two accounts in two newspapers of the same date: "About eighty adibasis, some 100 volunteers and fourteen bullock carts, a number of lady volunteers and the band playing constituted the actual procession of Mr. Subhas Bose".—(Patna Congress daily, 19th March). Compare this with the account given in the *Statesman* of the same date: "Mr. Bose's procession was *certainly* more impressive than that of the Congress president."

If the historian belonged to the Congress school of thought, he would unhesitatingly accept the former version to be true. Similarly a "forward" historian would give credence to the version of the *Statesman*. But an impartial historian (assuming there will remain any such) will have the greatest difficulty in his choice between these two versions. He might look into the *benefits* of of the two papers but that will confound him still more. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's paper, the organ of the party that stands for Gandhian truth, cannot tell a lie. On the other

hand, it is perfectly well known that the *Statesman* is not enamoured of Mr. Subhas Bose and is not likely to exaggerate the latter's glory.

A ruse that failed

When the procession of Mr. Bose was passing towards Congressnagar, a large crowd was kept engaged in listening to the speeches of Acharya Narendra Deo, Professor Abdul Bari and Babu Jagat Narayan Lal. The procession was just passing when Babu Jagat Narayan Lal had begun to speak. The crowd hearing the shouts coming from Mr. Bose's procession ungratefully left Babu Jagat Narayan Lal high and dry and went over to the enemy. It was a mistake to bank too much on the "pull" of Jagat Babu; a more popular idol should have been selected to prevent the sheep from straying.

In Madras, he would have been sent to jail

When the annual report was placed before the Subjects Committee in Ramgarh, a member protested because it was not written in Hindustani. Dr. Rajendra Prasad had to admit that the author of the report, Mr. Kripalani, did not know Hindustani. Subsequent to this we have been told that Mr. Kripalani will have to play second fiddle from now as Joint Secretary of the Congress.

Thieves and representathieves

During the Congress session at Ramgarh, the Police "succeeded in unearthing a gang of about 25 thieves who had been carrying on their depredations there. They belong to Gujrat and they generally attend the Congress sessions." These compatriots of Mr. Gandhi are probably of opinion that they have just as much right (if not more) to attend the show got up by their illustrious countryman as those who call themselves representatives.

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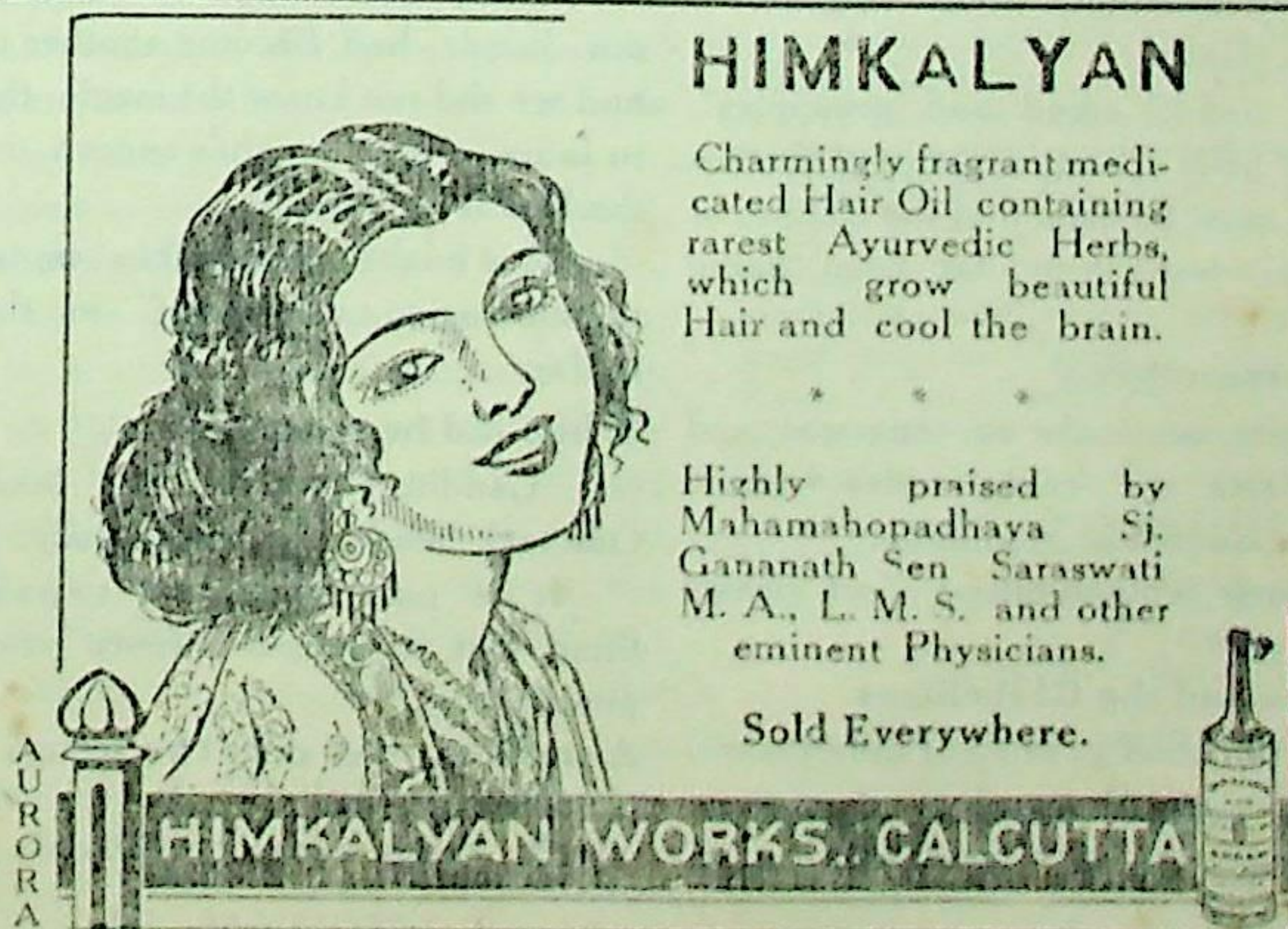
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THIS INDIA

By Mallinatha

We never knew he had so many qualifications

"Dr. G. S. Arundale, President of the Theosophical Society, arBt, uqfx dlasffit shar shardr, who presided over the Diamond Jubilee celebrations."—Local daily.

The titles of Dr. Arundale should have come just after his name.

Danger breeds fear

"The arrest of Mr. Jaiprakash Narayan has driven the Congress Socialists closer into the arms of the Mahatma."—Local daily.

When they scent danger, all troublesome children are driven closer into the arms of their ma.

No fear of that

"Let us hope that at this critical moment, no action will be taken on either side (Congress, British Government) which its authors may later have to regret."—Local daily.

Both are far too wide awake to fall into each other's trap.

Why discard a successful weapon ?

"Mr. K. Sanatanam said (in the Subjects Committee meeting at Ramgarh) "India should have wider and broader conception of national struggle apart from filling jails."—Local daily.

This shows that he has no faith in the coming "fight".

We are not going to repeat their mistakes

Sardar Patel in trying to meet the arguments of those who wanted the "fight" to be launched immediately told the Subjects Committee "you have seen the fate of Poland and Finland."

It was certainly hasty of Poland to declare war on Germany and imprudent of Finland to launch fight against Russia.

The fateful "it" again

"The future of the country was assured if Congress creed and principles were based on truth and aimed at establishing equal rights for every individual in the country."—Mr. Narendra Deva.

Leaving aside "creed and principles", and judging from actual practice of the last two years, it must be said that the future of the country was very far from being "assured."

Forcible representation

"The Congress seeks to represent and serve all classes and communities without distinction."—Ramgarh resolution.

Even those communities and classes that repudiated it ?

The Guelphs and the Ghibellines

"One of the chief points (of difference ?) between Tripuri and Ramgarh is that there is not much of left and right this year."—

Patna daily.

Naturally, because this time the opposing camps are a mile apart.

Browbeaten by the elders

"There may be voices urging the adoption of an immediate fighting programme, but they will easily be silenced when they are told that a fight is not a children's toy."—Ibid.

But old men's *hookka*.

Moloch and Belial encroaching on Gabriel's preserve

"The Congress Reception Committee asked Mr. Bose's volunteers not to play bands on Congressnagar roads, in order to avoid confusion, but Mr. Bose's volunteers did not heed the request. No conflict however took place."—Ibid.

Or the Congress would have gone the way of Gandhi Seva Sangh.

Mr. Gandhi as film star

"Mahatma Gandhi plays the title role in "Mahatma Gandhi" the first complete biographical film of the leader."—Ibid.

We knew that the interview in London with Charlie Chaplin would lead to this.

Nehru repudiates Gandhism, throws Charkha overboard

"In this age, only strength tells in the end and neither the arguments of a lawyer nor loud shouting can carry us far."—Pandit Nehru in Congress souvenir.

Such intellectual flashes of Pandit Nehru are now, unfortunately enough, few and far between.

Failure of Monotheism

"Shouts of Azad-ki-Jai went up as the train steamed in."—Local daily.

We have always been doubtful of the success of Mr. K. B. Sahay's campaign to ensure that only Mr. Gandhi gets all the "jais".

In China shop ?

"The late Sri Madhusudan Das of Orissa used to say that we had become like bulls, our hands had become another pair of legs and we did not know the magic that existed in India."—Mr. Gandhi's speech in opening the Khadi Exhibition.

This might be a possible explanation of there being so much "fight" in the country to-day.

When did he retire ?

"Gandhi returns to active leadership."—One inch headline in Patna daily.

It is poor journalism to pass off something that happened twenty years ago as news to-day.

A small word of only two letters but how helpful

"If Congressmen could only fulfil the

conditions, Mahatma Gandhi would commence the struggle within one month."—Ibid.

If we could only get the first prize in the Calcutta sweep we would also begin many things within the next week.

The unrelenting attitude of the generalissimo

"For the present I have not given up all hopes of a compromise. I am prepared to see the Viceroy even fifty times."—Mr. Gandhi, 18th March.

The "fight" will begin after the fiftieth meeting.

Planned on the model of the alimentary canal

"In Ramgarh all the latrines are at one end. The hotels are at the other extreme and since one has to take some time to approach there, they are not getting adequate number of customers."—Patna daily.

Which, the latrines or the hotels ?

Triumph of Mr. Gandhi and Stegaon

"One curious feature of the placards that have been hung up here and there in Ramgarh is that they are mostly in Gujrati and Marathi."—Local daily.

An insidious move to displace Hindusthani from its proud position.

Some people are so hard to please

"There was not much enthusiasm among the visitors to the Congress."—Local daily.

Did they expect that the "war" would be declared on the first of April ?

A wet squib

"With clouds gathering on horizon and another fiery ordeal confronting India's soldiers of freedom, it is good to feel the security of sound and courageous leadership."—Local Congress daily.

The ordeal was anything but fiery as the gathering clouds brought rain, putting out the "fire".

Azad and Bose speak same language

"We can only go forward...I proclaim that we must, and will go forward, we can look forward to a future of successful achievement."—Congress Presidential speech

They depend on tongue and pen for going forward, not their legs.

Discovering the mote that is in thy brother's eye

"Sardar Patel said none of these Royists and Communists had shown any result except moving heroic resolutions."—The National Herald.

A part from Viceregal interviews, we don't know what Congress has done "except moving heroic resolutions."

Commendable stage management

"Mahatma Gandhi is evidently in high spirits because of the vote of complete confidence in his leadership recorded on the 11th."—Local daily.

We know several headmasters who secure 100% passes for their schools by forcing transfer certificates on those boys who are not likely to pass.

Power is always captured by a few in the name of the masses

"The Swaraj we seek will be a Swaraj for the whole country in which it will not be a top few who will wield the power but the masses."—Pandit Nehru (Ramgarh)

The masses will have the power to shout "Mahatma ki jai" as loudly as they can.

From the Pen of a Pedant

By Magister Stultorum

["Magister Stultorum" or "The Master of Fools" is not unknown to readers of this paper. He is a distinguished scholar and a profound thinker. Though his activities are cloistered, his deep humanism leads him, even in his quiet study, to follow the affairs of men, their fancies and foibles with understanding and sympathy. His writings naturally savour of book-lore but an intelligent reader will find them highly instructive and edifying.]

Something attempted, something done

It is a matter for congratulation that the Bengalee Association of Bihar is now well established. I wish our Association and all its many activities every good fortune. It is not easy for one man, even with the great possession of zeal and enthusiasm to learn the details of the many problems facing us to-day; they are so complex and interwoven that it will be no easy task for any one individual to make up his own mind; it will perhaps be still less easy to convince others to adopt the measures he thinks best. The members of our Association are scattered; they are busy, they are unusually varied in their needs, wishes, even their prejudices. They are mostly too busy to write, a few are too busy even to read the "Behar Herald", the mouth piece of the Association. It is true that it has not yet been possible to achieve much but we must remember that it takes a long time for an organization to grow; it must reach man's stature before it can hope to accomplish great things; and the rate of its growth will depend upon the capacity of its members for constructive work and upon their active support. The problems ready for discussion are many and important; when and where they can be discussed so that some benefit may accrue to the Bengalees? Although the organization of the Bengalees in Bihar is slowly becoming better, still further opportunities for discussion and co-operation become necessary.

The greatest danger in Indian politics

Empires rise and fall—they fall, Flinders Petrie has told us, as democracy becomes uplifted, when the unintelligent prevail. So it is with the Bengalees in this province. Its interest, like other interests to-day, is suffering from lack of real leadership: liberties may therefore be easily taken with its rights. Fortunately, during the last two years there has been a remarkable revivification of interest in the Association in striking contrast to the previous attitude of its members. This has been due, in part, perhaps, to the infusion of an element of practical common-sense and human sympathy long absent from it; in part also to a revolt against the unimaginative parochial outlook of the official guardians of the Ark of our Covenant. The appeal some of us dared to make in the protection of interests of Bengalees in Bihar has not been quite without effect. At least, our protest against the blind worship of provincialism,

making as it too often does mountains out of molehills, has caused some to reflect seriously. Still the victory gained will be slight, if we have but leapt from the provincial frying pan into a fire of pretensions, and meaningless jargon. Glancing at the so-called nationalist papers of the province—it is impossible to read them—it is clear that never before was language so stilted, never were writers so ostentatiously careless in the use of words, never more lacking in critical faculty and journalistic honesty. A speculation once stated is ever afterwards treated not as if it were open to proof but as an established fact. To-day the greatest danger in Indian politics is that, if carried much further upon the stream of mere fancy, there would be no consolidated Indian nation left to us, only a cult of communalism and incomprehensible provincialism. In the fulness of my experience, however, blankly pessimistic as our age may be, I take leave to doubt even what Matthew Arnold said:

"True, we must tame our rebel will;
True, we must bow to Nature's law—
Must bear in silence many an ill;
Must learn to wail, renounce, withdraw."

Blind leading the halt

I think our school system to be rotten from top to bottom. Our future depends upon our finding a new race of leaders, able to meet the needs of the times by giving disciplinary training. Man needs habits and faculty, not mere facts. We have to simplify the instruction in every direction. At least, we must teach the masses and ourselves to be alive to the ignorance of our would-be leaders, as well as our own. Our immediate task is clear. Taking into account the great diversity of the peoples of India, it is unlikely that we shall secure any large measure of general agreement. We have to consider ourselves, and set the best possible example we can to other people. We are now at a supreme crisis in our affairs. The question, which demands an instant answer, is whether or not we are to submit the problems of our country to scientific examination and study forthwith or drift I know not where. Politicians will not help us. In his work on "King Edward and his Times", M. Maurois sets at the head of his opening chapter the quotation—"Nothing makes Constitutions: every Constitution emerges from the spirit of a people through an inward process of development: or rather every Constitution is the spirit of a people."

What spirit of self-help, of constructive desire, have we in us to-day? Only the spirit of drift: no clear cut constructive policy: only the parrot cries—"Long live Revolution"; "Boycott schools and colleges"; and other familiar slogans. What measure of scientific understanding of the world have the men who prate to us—what right to mouth their shibboleths? The only way of making an Indian nation is to create a body of men educated to understand present day doings, men who will know better than to follow this leader or that. How can the blind lead the halt? The body corporate needs reform: to learn to know and to use the knowledge we have.

No liberty without tolerance

A very large proportion of the population is reasonable and fair; a small proportion, but a noisy one, is extreme and apt to become intolerant. One extremist calls into being another extremist with opposite views. If a regiment of pink shirts is formed, those who dislike their programme band themselves together to combat the menace. The old-fashioned die-hard produces the communist, the communist produces the Fascist or some such citizen, and so unnecessary conflict originates. Lack of knowledge breeds suspicion and hostility. Viscount Grey said, "Nations cannot help disliking what they do not understand". This is also true of individuals. Half the troubles in this world will disappear if the various peoples would tell each other the whole truth and if they allowed every one to express his views temperately and peaceably. Frederick the Great saw a caricature of himself stuck up on some high place; he made his groom hang it lower down so that the people could enjoy it without straining their necks. It would be possible, though perhaps unwise, to contrast this spirit with that of more recent times.

Milton said: "that no grievance ever should arise in the commonwealth, that no man in this world expects; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply considered and speedily reformed, then is the utmost bound of civil liberty attained, that wise men look for." Nowadays we shall act prudently if we all freely hear and deeply consider the essential thoughts and aspirations of our fellow countrymen even before they rankle so as to become complaints.

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Indian Insurance under the New Law

By S. C. Ray, M. A., B. L.

Editor, Insurance World & President, Indian Insurance Institute

The furore created in India by the enactment of the Insurance Act of 1938 is perhaps unprecedented as no other legislation in recent years has evoked so much public interest. This is not so much because of any revolutionary changes it has brought about in Insurance legislation but largely because of the fact that Insurance is a business in which a very large number of countries is directly interested and an increasingly larger number of people is gradually becoming associated with its advantages.

If you will permit me to be a little imaginative and allow me to draw a picture of the Indian Insurance world, I would ask you to visualise in your mind's eye a large federal organisation composed of about 200 autonomous states, the total population being about 14 lakhs of people and in which each person contributes roughly Rs. 100/- per year towards the exchequer. The accumulated resources of this federal organisation come to over Rs. 45 crores and its citizens are absolutely protected against unforeseen calamities in their families on account of sudden death. I have taken the number of policies, premium income and total funds of life offices only. Including other insurance offices their annual revenue comes to about Rs. 17 crores. At first we feel the largeness of this federal organisation but on considering the potentialities of this vast subcontinent of India the most important factor that comes to our mind is its smallness. Out of a population of over 35 crores a mere 17 lakhs of people belong to this organisation, or, in other words, the total number of people enjoying the privileges of Insurance can comfortably be accommodated in a small district of Pabna in North Bengal or Birbhum in West Bengal. In spite, however, of the smallness of the number of people involved in these financial transactions, the interests concerned are of such a vital nature that they cannot be lightly treated. The contributions made by these persons when capitalised come to about Rs. 300 crores, roughly speaking Rs. 10 per head of the population. Any state conscious of its duties and responsibilities must devise suitable measures for the protection of these resources and also for the regulation of the machinery leading to their development.

Insurance business in India is making rapid progress from year to year as the following figures will show :

Year	Total Life Business (Both Indian & Non-Indian)
1932	Rs. 27.66 crores
1933	Rs. 33.00 crores
1934	Rs. 34.00 crores
1935	Rs. 43.20 crores
1936	Rs. 46.73 crores
1937	Rs. 48.74 crores

These figures indicate that in the very near future the business will have larger dimensions and will involve a larger number of people.

It is not necessary for me to go into details with regard to the origin of Insurance nor to discuss its historical development. In England where the business is of fairly long standing piece-meal legislation was passed to regulate certain aspects of the business. But a comprehensive enactment was brought into existence only in 1909. Following the footsteps of Great Britain, Indian legislators in 1912 passed the Indian Life Insurance Companies Act which was the first attempt to regulate the growth of insurance in this country. But this piece of legislation dealt only with life assurance business and companies doing other classes of insurance were left entirely alone. During the same year the Provident Insurance Societies Act was also passed to control companies doing insurance business on a very large scale. These Acts worked satisfactorily for a fairly long time. But in 1924 Sir Purushothamdas Thakurdas raised the question of the revision of the Insurance Law and he was followed by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta who introduced in 1925 a bill in the legislature which was subsequently dropped. In 1930 the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry adopted a resolution incorporating the demands of the Indian Mercantile community with regard to the lines on which the Insurance law required revision. The controversy gradually gained ground and two schools of thought made themselves felt. One pleading for safeguarding the interest of policyholders in a better way and the other stressing the necessity for legislation to protect indigenous insurance companies, from the fierce competition of their powerful foreign rivals. In 1935 the Government acknowledged the necessity for taking steps in this direction and appointed a Special Officer to enquire into this matter. This report was examined by a small committee of insurance men and in 1937 a draft bill was introduced in the Indian legislature. The bill proved a highly contentious measure and after protracted deliberations it became law early in 1931. An unusual feature of the law was that it was amended before it came into operation. On the 1st July 1939 the new Act came into force and it has brought about changes of a substantial nature with regard to the development of insurance business in this country. Roughly speaking the main principles of the new Insurance law are :—

1. It is comprehensive in that it brings under its provision all kinds of insurance

business, fire, marine, etc., and also includes Provident Societies under centralised control.

2. It gives policyholders some amount of say in the internal administration of insurance companies.

3. It puts foreign insurance companies on a separate footing and provides for certain restrictions to their activities.

4. It gives statutory recognition to insurance agents.

5. The Government is invested with wide controlling powers to regulate the internal administration of insurance companies.

The new law has imposed responsibilities for statutory deposits with the Government of India in regard to all classes of Insurance business. Even Lloyds' organisation which carries on insurance business in this country through its numerous underwriters is subjected to the provisions of the new law.

Provident Societies which were formerly dealt with under a separate Act are now brought under the purview of one and the same Statute relating to insurance business. Being under the control of the same department they are allowed to develop as companies dealing with smaller insurance business.

Insurance agents are now given statutory recognition, it being obligatory for every insurance agent to take out a license from the Government on payment of a fee of Re 1/- and to renew the same every year. Their remunerations has, however, been put under statutory control as they cannot obtain more than 40% of the first year's premium and 5 per cent on renewal in regard to life business and 15% of annual premium on non-life business. Younger life companies are however, permitted to pay a little higher rate of commission (5% & 6%) during the first ten years of their business. It may be mentioned here that licensing of agents is an innovation. The system does not prevail even in Great Britain. The Clauson Committee in 1937 discussed this question but rejected it as unnecessary. The Canadian law provides for the licensing of agents.

(To be continued)

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An Economic Miscellany

By Economicus

Decrease in price of cane

The excise duty on sugar has been increased by 50 per cent. How should this affect the minimum price of cane? The Governments of the U. P. and Bihar fixed last year a schedule of cane prices each of which corresponds to a given price of sugar. The idea is obviously to assure to the cane growers a fair share of the profits of sugar manufacture. The profits, it is needless to state are a surplus over costs. The costs include the taxes paid by the manufacturer. The raising of the tax on sugar must reduce the net surplus accruing to the sugar manufacturer if sugar sells at a given price. The cane growers must bear their share of the loss so inflicted. The way in which they can be made to do so is a revision of the schedule of cane prices. The schedule should be scaled down in an appropriate manner. Corresponding to each sugar price, the price of cane should be reduced by an amount equal to that portion of the increment in sugar excise which should with justice be passed on to the growers. There is thus a case for the Indian Sugar Syndicate's demand that the schedule of cane prices be revised. Justice and fair play call for such revision.

The Governments of the U. P. and Bihar reacted to the enhancement of the excise duty by reducing the price of cane by three quarters of an anna. They did this because the price of sugar was not raised by the Syndicate despite the raising of the sugar excise. From the arguments adduced above it will be clear that this action on the part of the authorities is perfectly justified. Dr. Katju, the ex-Minister of the U. P., has denounced the step taken as detrimental to the interests of the growers. He bases his case on the Finance Member's statement that the enhanced sugar excise is intended to fall on the shoulders of the consumers. Intentions of politicians must not, however, pass for facts. In course of a bitter reply to Dr. Katju, the Syndicate points out that the competition of Java precludes it from raising the price now. The port prices of Java sugar are at the present moment below the Indian parity. One wonders how Java can do this. Java must indeed be a land of miracles. But the fact is there and it must be recognised by the Government so long as it is the policy of the Government to protect the sugar industry.

One point must not be lost sight of in this connection. Even if the excise is wholly shifted on to the consumers through a rise in the price of sugar by the full

amount of the tax, the cane growers cannot be entitled to that minimum price which under the schedule corresponds to the higher price of sugar. In other words, the case for a revision of the schedule does not depend on the possibility or otherwise of shifting the tax burden to the consumers.

Tax or Debt ?

But for the Excess Profits Tax and the additional taxes on sugar and motor spirit, the current year's budget would have showed a huge deficit. It has been debated whether the deficit ought to have been met by taxation or loan. Supposing that the deficit could not have been avoided by economy, expert economists are of the opinion that it is best to meet the deficit by taxation. As the times are now prosperous, it will be easier for the community to meet the demands of the state out of its income at the present moment than at a future date when economic conditions may be worse. A debt has to be repaid. When shall it be repaid? In bad times or in good times? If it is to be repaid in future good times, why incur the debt at all now when the times are quite good? In an address delivered to the Calcutta University Commerce Society, S. J. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar has tried to counter this opinion of the economists. He observes that conditions in India differ from those in industrially advanced countries. Industrial advancement is the greatest need of India. A heavy burden of taxation is likely to cut at the roots of economic progress by creating a feeling of despondency in business men. If budget deficits are met by loans, industry will prosper and the income of the community will increase rapidly. Hence posterity will be in a better position to meet the demands of the state than the present generation. The argument has force. Care must be taken, however, to ascertain how far the adverse effects of taxation on industry are real or fanciful. Compared to the great waves of

depression that periodically overwhelm industries, the effects of taxation are negligible. The greater problem facing the state is to remove the more fundamental causes of business stagnation. Direct taxation is bound to figure largely in the armoury of a national government embarking on an economic plan for India. This fact has to be recognised by our business men who must also revise their ideas of fair profits and reconcile themselves increasingly to a lower rate of return to capital. The present Government, however, is not a national Government; nor has it any definite ideas of speeding up industrial progress. In such circumstances, a relentless policy of balancing the budget by taxation cannot but serve as a handicap to industry. The policy of the present Government is merely negative. Therein lies its danger.

Indo-Japanese Trade

The Indian Trade Commissioner in Osaka, Japan, deplors the general decline of India's exports to Japan. During 1938-39, only mica and pig iron improved their position in India's export trade owing to their military importance. The export of raw cotton reached a record low level. For cotton and certain other agricultural products Japan is placing an increasing reliance on North China and Manchukuo with which Japan constitutes the Yen-block. Exports from these countries have not to be paid for in foreign currencies. That is an advantage for Japan. The Chinese "incident" makes Japan anxious to preserve her foreign currency for buying military requirements. For one of these, hides and skins, she has preferred America to India because American supplies are from the military point of view more satisfactory. But there are deeper and more permanent tendencies at work. For safeguarding her economic position in the event of future war Japan is steadily pursuing a policy of confining her purchases to her own Empire. She knows that she can sell to India anything provided its price is sufficiently low. Hence she does not feel the need of reciprocity, of buying things from India in return. One way in which this superstition

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can be removed is conclusion of a trade treaty on a basis of reciprocity that will extend to the entire sphere of trade between the two countries. This is what Indian opinion has been demanding for a long time. India's trade needs to be planned bilaterally on a barter basis, account being taken of the need to maintain a favourable balance where one exists.

Bihar Budget

The Bihar Budget estimates for 1940-41, disclose a revenue surplus that is described as small but problematical. The total revenue is estimated at Rs. 5,508,000 and total expenditure charged to revenue at Rs. 5,46,34,000. The Governor and his advisers have decided to carry on the constructive programme of the Congress Ministry. An amount of Rs. 2 lakhs has been provided for continuation of mass literacy work, Rs. 4,23,000 for Cane Development Scheme and Rs. 1,99,000 for Rural Development. The augmentation grant has been increased from Rs. 1,80,000 to Rs. 2,99,000 and the grant for rural water-supply from Rs. 150,000 to Rs. 1,65,000. A new scheme for the introduction of the teaching of biology in the Patna Science College has been adopted. Bihar's revenue position has been appreciably strengthened in recent years, a process that is likely to continue in 1940-41, in spite of the introduction of Prohibition. The sales tax on motor spirit is expected to yield Rs. 1,35,000 during 1939-40 and Rs. 3,47,000 during 1940-41. The Provincial share of the Jute Export Duty is expected to yield Rs. 16,08,000 in 1939-40, an improvement of two lakhs over the budget estimate and Rs. 18,76,000 in 1940-41. The Provincial share of Income-Tax is estimated at Rs. 26,00,000 in 1939-40 and Rs. 27,80,000 in 1940-41. The revised estimate for 1939-40 shows an increase of Rs. 10½ lakhs over the budget estimate.

But for the revision of the Niemeyer Award, Bihar's share of the income-tax might well have been in the neighbourhood of Rs. 47 lakhs. The modification of the Distribution of Revenue Order has inflicted a loss of about Rs. 20 lakhs on Bihar. The Agricultural Income-Tax is expected to yield Rs. 14 lakhs in 1940-41. This is far short of an original expectation of a yield of Rs. 40 lakhs in a full and normal year. Excise revenue is not falling rapidly owing to the partial character of prohibition. Last year there was actually an increase in it owing to keenness of bidding in wet areas.

Repatriation of Sterling Debt

In his Budget speech, Sir Jeremy Raisman commented at some length on the Government scheme for the repatriation of India's sterling debt. The improvement in our balance of trade caused by the war, the large purchases of raw materials and goods made in India on behalf of His Majesty's Government and the recoveries from His Majesty's Government of their share of the war expenditure in India in accordance with the recommendations of the Chatfield Committee have enabled the Reserve Bank to accumulate huge sterling balances. Opportunity thus presented is being availed of to put into effect the scheme for the repatriation of sterling debt with which an experiment was first made on a small scale in 1937. Under the old scheme, the Reserve Bank is authorised to buy India sterling non-terminable securities in the open market as amounts become available and to transfer the securities so purchased to the Government of India for cancellation. In their place additional rupee paper of the 3½ per cent and 3 per cent non-terminable loans is created up to the same nominal value, which is issued gradually by the Reserve Bank in accordance with the requirements of the Indian market.

A further and a much bolder scheme of debt repatriation has been brought into force extending the option of transfer to rupee loans to holders of our sterling loans. The Reserve Bank has been authorised to open books for rupee counterparts of specified sterling loans and transfers will be allowed on payment of a premium which will be fixed from time to time according to market rates. These new loans have in the first instance been issued by the Government on its own account in exchange of sterling securities purchased by it. From April next these facilities will be open to the public on terms based on the market prices of the securities in question.

Indian opinion is clearly in favour of the principle of debt repatriation. It will bring about an appreciable substitution of rupee liabilities to residents in India in place of sterling liabilities to non-residents. This should considerably relieve the remittance liabilities of the Government of India in future. Under the old scheme debt repatriation was a source of profit to the Government. The selling price of the rupee counterpart was consistently in excess of the buying price of the sterling paper. Will repatriation under the new scheme bring about the same desirable result? If new rupee loans are created in excess of the additional demand for them, rupee paper will sag. Sterling paper on the other hand will tend to appreciate. This will not only annihilate the profitability of the scheme to the Government but may also inflict losses on the holders of Government rupee paper in general. Fears have been expressed in market circles that such tendencies are already discernible and that they will be accentuated from April 1. The Reserve Bank should thus proceed with great caution in the matter.

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The Bengalee Association, Bihar

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Report of the proceedings of the Second Annual General Meeting of the Association held at Hazaribagh on the 22nd and 23rd March, 1940.

Friday, the 22nd March, 1940 at 2 P. M.

OPEN SESSION

The following members and visitors, among others, were present :

Rai Bahadur H. P. Banerji, Messrs K. N. Bhattacharya, B. Bakshi and B. N. Ghosh (Jharia); J. C. Sarkar, A. N. Bose, K. N. Sen Gupta, S. N. Roy, Sudhakar Sarkar, Kshitish Ch. Banerji, Sushil Roy, Sukumar Dutt, S. N. Chakravarty and Capt. H. C. Mallick (Dhanbad); H. S. Bhaduri (Muzaffarpur); Rai Bahadur H. C. Basu, Messrs. P. B. Chakravarty and Debendra Nath Gupta (Monghyr); Charu Ch. Mitra (Ranchi); Rai Bahadur Satya Kinkar Sahana, Messrs Gangadhar Samanta, B. Daw and D. B. Sahana (Kodarma); Rai Bahadur P. C. Ghosh (Gaya); Messrs. Atulendu Gupta (Dinapur); M. L. Dutt, Anil Kumar Guha and Bireswar Mukherji (Motihari); Annada Kumar Chakravarty, Suresh Ch. Sarkar, Dharendra Nath Bhattacharya, Sukumar Biswas, Anil Kumar Bose, Profulla Ch. Das Gupta, Bankim Ch. Bose and Purnendu N. Mitra (Purulia); Kanan Ch. Bakshi (Dumka); Basanta Ch. Ghosh and Ajit Kumar Nag (Giridih); N. N. Rakshit, G. Mukherji, Profulla K. Mitra and Sudhendra N. Sen (Jamshedpur); Rai Saheb Nalini K. Sen, and Akhil Pada Ghosh (Singhbhum); Messrs P. R. Das, Tripurari Ch. Palit, S. Bose, M. C. Samaddar, S. N. Datta, Jagadish Ch. Sinha, Rai Saheb Annada K. Ghosh and P. N. Mitra (Patna); Messrs. Byomkesh Dutt (Daltongunj); A. B. Banerji, Nirmal K. Banerji and D. N. Sircar (Bhagalpur); Suresh Ch. Bhattacharya, Sushil K. Chakraverty and R. P. Datta (Jamalpur); Tara Pada Mukherji (Jamui); J. M. Choudhury and S. S. Mukherji (Purnea); H. N. Banerji (Deoghar); Rai Bahadur S. P. Chatterji, Rai Saheb S. K. Gupta, Messrs. A. M. Roy, P. N. Ghosh, D. M. Mukherji, Amal K. Ghosh, Dr. S. C. Mitra, Messrs. Purnendu S. Mukherji, Rabindra K. Ghosh, Deb K. Mitra, S. K. Mukherji, Ajit K. Mitra, Provat K. De. Gora Mallick, Asoke K. Gupta, Krishna M. Mukherji, Sambhu N. Sen, Tarun Ch. Ghosh, Satkari Sarkar, Bama Ch. Sen, S. N. Roy, A. C. Banerji, S. K. Basu, Amarendra P. Sarkar, Saraj K. Roy, S. N. Banerji, Satyendra Mitra, Nagendra Ch. Pal, Sukumar Dutt, Debiprasanna Roy, Monoj M. Roy, Nagendra N. Banerji, Jiban K. Biswas, Sripada Mallick, Jatindra Lal Moitra, Nirmal Ghosh, Shymal Gupta, P. K. Sen, S. R. Roy, Sailen M. Roy, Mrigendra N. Gupta, Manmatha K. Ghosh, Amarapati Chatterji, Chandī Ch. Guha, Hari P. Bose, Radhaballav

De, N. K. Roy, Subrata K. Gupta, Arabinda M. Roy, Bimal K. Sarkar, Rabindra N. Gupta, Uma S. Ghosh, Khity N. Mukherji, Anil K. Mukherji, Jagat N. Mukherji, Amiya Moitra, Dilip Aikat, Harinarain Mukherji, Bimalendu Dutt, S. Gupta, A. P. Sarkar and B. C. Pain (Hazaribagh); Tusar Kanti Ghosh and Amarendra N. Sen (Calcutta).

PROCEEDINGS

'BANDE MATARAM' was sung while those present remained standing.

Address of welcome was delivered by Rai Bahadur Shiva Priya Chatterji, Chairman of the Reception Committee.

Messages of good will from the following well wishers of the Association were read and appreciated :—

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bengal, Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, Mr. Ala Mohon Das, Mr. Santosh Kumar Bose, Dr. R. C. Mazumdar, Mr. Bhabani Charan Law, Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy, Mr. Abinash Chandra Sen, Dr. Radha Kumud Mukherji, Dr. Bimala Charan Law, Mr. Narendra Kumar Basu.

Presidential address was delivered by Mr. P. R. Das. (Vide Behar Herald dated 26. 3. 1940 for the complete speech).

The following gentlemen addressed the meeting :—

Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh, Rai Bahadur Satya Kinkar Sahana Vidyabinode, Rai Bahadur Hem Chandra Basu, Mr. N. N. Rakshit, Rai Bahadur P. C. Ghosh, Mr. D. B. Sahana, Mr. Nirmal Ch. Banerji, Mr. K. N. Bhattacharya, Rai Saheb Annada K. Ghosh and Mr. Annada Kumar Chakraverty.

Subjects Committee was formed with the following members. Mr. P. R. Das (President), N. Banerji and A. B. Banerji (Bhagalpur); B. Mukherji and M. N. Datta (Motihari); Rai Bahadur H. C. Basu and S. C. Bhattacharya (Monghyr); Rai Bahadur P. C. Ghose (Gaya); B. C. Datta (Daltongunj); C. C. Mitra (Ranchi); S. C. Sarkar and D. N. Bhattacharya (Purulia); J. M. Choudhury and S. S. Mukherji (Purnea); Rai Saheb A. K. Ghose and T. C. Palit (Patna); Rai Saheb N. K. Sen and A. P. Ghose (Singhbhum); N. N. Rakshit and G. Mukherji (Dhalbhum); Rai Bahadur H. P. Banerji, K. N. Bhattacharya and B. Bakshi (Jharia); J. C. Sarkar, A. N. Bose and Capt H. C. Mallick (Dhanbad); B. C. Ghosh and A. Nag (Giridih); K. C. Bakshi (Dumka); A. Gupta (Dinapur); Rai Saheb S. K. Gupta, A. M. Roy and S. Roy (Hazaribagh); H. S. Bhaduri (Muzaffarpur); D. B. Sahana and G.

Samanta (Kodarma); H. N. Banerji (Deoghar); T.P. Mukherji (Jamui) and S. N. Datta (Secretary).

At 7. 30 P. M.

SUBJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING

Resolutions received from the following centres were considered and discussed—

Dhanbad, Dinapur, Muzaffarpur, Purulia, Chapra, Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Hazaribagh, Jharia, Patna, Jamalpur, Giridih.

Resolutions to be placed before the open session were drafted.

Saturday, the 23rd March, 1940 at 9 A. M.

OPEN SESSION

Report of the Secretary was read and accepted. Account submitted by the Secretary was passed.

The following Office-bearers and Members of the Executive Committee for the year 1940-41 were duly elected.

President : Mr. P. R. Das (Patna).

Vice-President : Rai Bahadur H. P. Banerji (Jharia), Mr. Hem Chandra Mitter (Chupra), Rai Bahadur Purna Chandra Ghosh (Gaya) and Rai Bahadur Hem Chandra Basu (Monghyr).

Secretary : Mr. S. N. Datta (Patna).

Treasurer : Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sinha (Patna).

Jt. Secretaries : Rai Saheb Annada Kumar Ghosh (Patna) and Mr. Tripurari Charan Palit (Patna).

Asst. Secretaries : Mr. Sukumar Biswas (Purulia) and Mr. K. N. Bhattacharya (Jharia).

Members of the Executive Committee : Rai Bahadur Surendra Nath Mukherji, Messrs S. K. Banerji, A. K. Roy, Saratendu Gupta, Baikuntha Nath Mitter, Hira Lal Das Gupta and Achalendra Nath Das (Patna); Mr. Promotho Nath Bal (Motihari), Rai Bahadur Durga Prasanna Ghosh (Purnea), Mr. Atulendu Gupta (Dinapur), Rai Saheb Surath Kumar Gupta (Hazaribagh), Mr. Dharendra Nath Sarkar (Bhagalpur), Rai Bahadur Satish Chandra Sinha (Purulia), Rai Bahadur A. G. Chatterjee (Bettiah), Mr. J. M. Choudhury (Araria), Mr. Basanta Chandra Ghosh (Giridih), Mr. B. M. Chakravarty (Jamalpur), Rai Bahadur D. C. Lahiri (Deoghar), Mr. U. N. Sen (Muzaffarpur), Capt. H. N. Mallick (Dhanbad), Mr. Priya Nath Mitter (Darbhanga), Rai Bahadur S. K. Ghosh (Daltongunj), Rai Saheb N. K. Sen (Singhbhum), Mr. N. N. Rakshit (Dhalbhum), Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy (Ranchi), Mr. L. Choudhury (Raghunathpur), Rai Saheb Dr. R. P. Ghosh (Samastipur), Mr. C. C. Choudhury (Katihar), Mr. Pasupati Kumar (Kisangunj), Mr. A. C. Chatterjee (Pakur).

The following resolutions were passed.

1. Believing that complete unity is essential for the very existence of Bengal, this Association requests Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and their followers on the one hand and Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and their followers on the other to close up their ranks and form one united party in Bengal.

This Association deeply deplores the controversy between the Bengal leaders and the Bengal press, and while it requests the former to call off the boycott against the press it requests the latter to be true to its high tradition and do nothing which may be detrimental to the unity of Bengal and the interest of the Bengalis as a whole.

A copy of the resolution be sent to Messrs Subhas Chandra Bose, Sarat Chandra Bose, Nalini Ranjan Sarker, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and the President of the Indian Journalists Association.

2. The membership fee of the Association be reduced from rupee one to annas four and rule 33 of the Association be amended accordingly.

3. The scheme of constructive works framed by Rai Bahadur H. P. Banerji be accepted except in so far as it relates to the Sonar Bangla Bank.

Each Branch Association be directed to give effect to any one or more of the constructive works within one year from date.

4. The Board of Trustees of the Behar Herald be requested to constitute an advisory board consisting of Rai Bahadur H. P. Banerji, Rai Bahadur G. N. Roy, Rai Bahadur S. C. Sinha and Rai Saheb S. K. Gupta to advise the trustees.

5. In order to facilitate the constructive programme of the Association, each Branch Association be directed to enrol a body of voluntary workers consisting mainly of young Bengalis.

6. The Executive Committee be authorised to nominate one or more members for each division to organise and consolidate the activities of the Association.

7. In view of the coming census and to counteract the attempt to oust the Bengali language from predominantly Bengali-speaking areas, a sub-committee be formed with head quarters at Purulia and consisting of representatives from the districts of Manbhum, Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Singhbhum, Bhagalpur, Purnea and Santhal Perganas.

8. Considering that objections are being raised by the co-operative department to register co-operative stores pioneered by Bengalis, Government of Bihar be requested to look into the matter and to sanction early

registration of stores which have made the necessary application.

9. Dowry system be abolished among the Bengalis in Bihar and propaganda be carried through the Behar Herald in this behalf.

10. In order to avoid misapprehension in some circles within and outside the Association it is necessary to clarify the aims and objects of the Association, to give direction for guidance of its individual members and branches and to explain the real implications of certain clauses of its Memorandum of Association.

This Association states that the object of the Association has never been nor shall it be to find employment for the Bengalis in public or other services.

This Association affirms that the object specified in sub-clause (b) of the Memorandum of Association, namely, promotion of unity, solidarity and co-operation among the Bengalis should be implemented simultaneously with the object specified in sub-clause (c), namely, promotion of co-operation, cordiality and fellow-feeling between the Bengalis and other communities, and that any emphasis on the former without the latter would be dangerous and harmful to the Bengalis in Bihar.

This Association warns young generation of the Bengalis in Bihar against futile pursuit after limited public services which cannot satisfy the demand for employment of an educated people like the Bengalis in a substantial manner, and implores them to take to commercial, industrial and agricultural enterprises in large or small scale or on a collective basis of co-operative system.

In pursuance of the objects stated in the memorandum of Association, this Association

recommends its individual members to take active interest in and co-operate with progressive organisations and activities in the province as far as practicable.

11. This Association recommends the formation of a Bengali chamber of commerce for Chota Nagpur and requests Rai Saheb S. K. Gupta to take steps in that behalf.

12. Rai Bahadur Satish Chandra Sinha be congratulated on his being elected to the Bihar Legislative Council.

13. A Special General Meeting of the Association be held at Dhanbad in 1940 on a suitable date to be fixed by the Executive Committee.

14. The next Annual General Meeting of the Association be held at Muzaffarpur.

Vote of thanks to the reception committee was moved by Rai Bahadur Hem Chandra Basu.

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The £1,600,000 Howrah bridge now being built by British engineers at Calcutta carries the third largest cantilever span—1,500 feet—in the world, only the Forth Bridge and the Quebec Bridge have larger. The two "long-armed men", or creeper cranes, which will be largely responsible for the building of the steelwork, will steadily piece the gigantic structure together, starting from opposite banks of the river.

In doing so they will climb higher than the dome of St. Paul's; travel at the rate of a foot a minute; and handle loads of 60 tons.

At the end of their task, when the two arms of the Bridge are at the point of meeting over the Hooghly river, the cranes, which with their "cradles" weigh 765 tons each, will then dismantle one another.

Foundations have already been laid for the two great towers and anchorages to support the central span, and work has now begun on the actual steelwork forming the 25,000 ton superstructure.

Indian labour and overseers, under a staff of British engineers and foremen, are carrying out the whole of the work. In building the foundations of the tower on the Calcutta side of the river, compressed air at a pressure of 40 pounds to the square inch had to be used and, owing to the intense heat and humidity, the men could only work for short periods. This arduous initial task having been successfully completed, the creeper cranes are now preparing for their long climb, on which they will travel ahead, like monster spiders, on the steel web they themselves have made.

Overseas Insurance

Rumours have been spread throughout many countries that British Insurance Companies, owing to Treasury Finance Regulations imposed as a result of the war, will be unable to settle their losses or meet their other obligations.

The following interpellation is an official public denial of these false rumours.

On the 6th Feb. 1940, Mr. Pethick-Lawrence asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Treasury Finance Regulations impose any obstacle on British Insurance Companies in the carrying on of their overseas business and in particular in meeting admitted claims payable in foreign currencies.

Sir John Simon: The fullest arrangements have been made to enable British Insurance Companies to carry on their overseas business without impediment and to meet claims by Allied, Neutral or British claimants under any policy in accordance with the terms of the policy whether it be expressed in sterling or in foreign currency.

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To all tea drinkers, the very name of tea is enough to arouse pleasant expectations, and yet not every tea drinker troubles to see whether his cup of tea is prepared strictly according to the way it should be prepared. That is why most tea drinkers, while religiously turning to the "Cup of a Thousand Virtues" every day, fail to enjoy the maximum benefit that it has in its power to give.

To make a good cup of tea is one of the easiest things in the world; the difficulty is that people do not usually give it the little careful attention it needs.

There are certain essential principles of good tea making which should always be observed. In the first place, you must use good tea; for, it is not only more tasteful, but is also more economical in the long run. From one pound of good Indian tea you can make at least 240 cups of delicious tea. Secondly, the vital factor in the making of a most enjoyable cup of tea is in the water used. The water must be absolutely fresh and properly boiled. If over-boiled, previously boiled or under-boiled water is used, it will make the brew insipid and flat.

The next important point is the manner of infusion. To fill the pot with boiling water first, and put in the tea afterwards is an incorrect procedure. The correct method is to rinse the pot with hot water before putting in the dry leaves, and to pour boiling water on to the leaves in the pot.

The tea must be allowed to infuse for at least five minutes. If you pour it out before it has been allowed to stand for those few minutes you cannot expect to obtain its full value, both in taste and flavour.

Although the practice of adding sugar and milk to tea is widely prevalent, neither milk nor sugar is essential for making tea enjoyable. Many people like it without milk and sugar or with just a piece of lemon in it.

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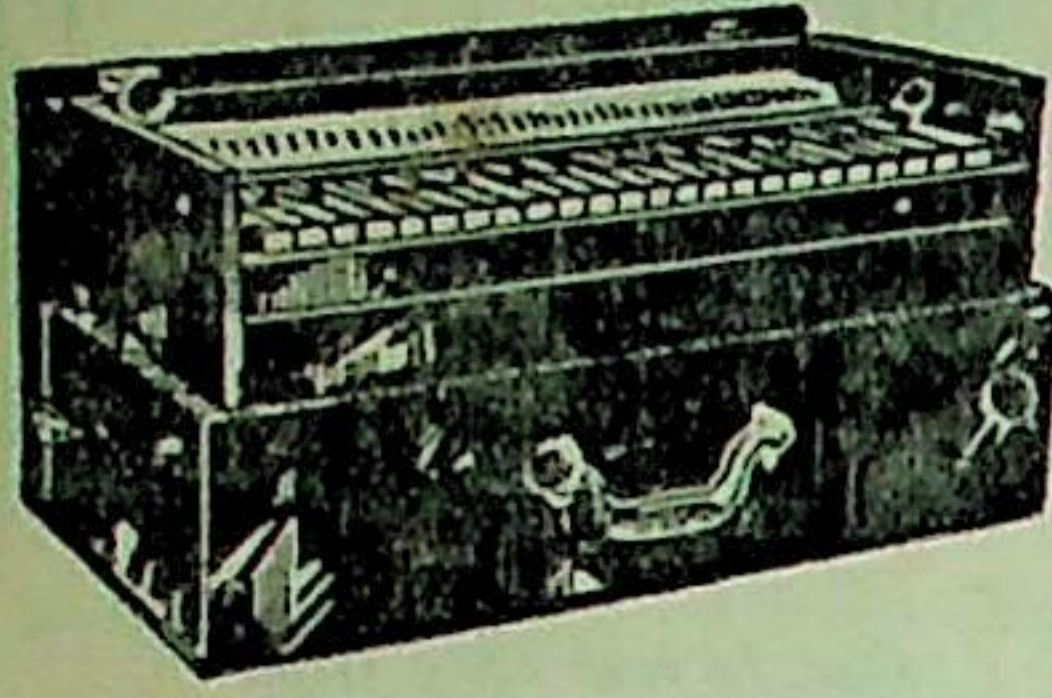
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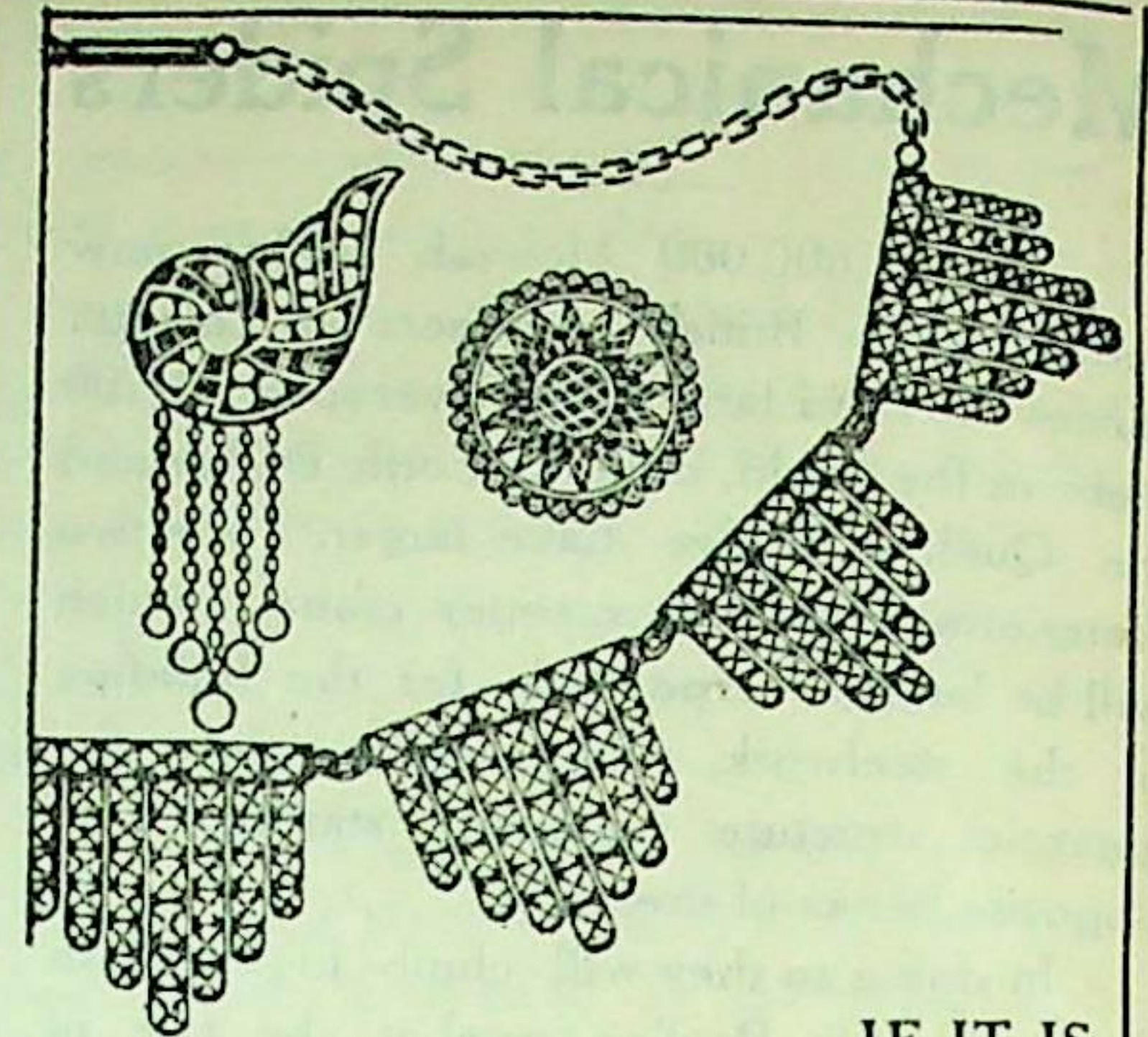
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