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Notes and News	145	The Investors' Review Fund	151
The Case for Enquiry	148	Mr. Ramesh Dutt on the Famine 152	
The Indian Budget	149	Professor Mursion on India	152
Our London Letter	150	The Indian Budget	
Letter to the Editor: Cultivators in Bengal	151	Some Opinions of the British Press 154	
The Famine in India	151	Indian Affairs in Parliament	155
4,677,000 on Relief	151	Special Report	155
The Mansion House Fund	151	Advertisements	156

NOTES AND NEWS.

ON Friday last (March 23) Mr. Samuel Smith asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether in view of the distress from famine in India "the Government would consider the advisability of making a famine grant to India from Imperial sources." Mr. Balfour, while admitting the exceptional gravity of the famine, said he was informed "that the Indian Government, without resorting to further taxation, have funds sufficient to meet all the calls which are likely to be made upon them." We have ourselves pointed out the unfortunate effect that the attitude of the Government is but too likely to produce upon benevolent people at home who do not understand the official strategy. The *Globe*, too, appears to have become alarmed. It wrote (March 24):—

It will be matter for great regret if the reply given yesterday by Mr. Balfour to Mr. S. Smith is misunderstood to signify that no occasion exists for British benevolence to come to the help of the starving peasantry of India. . . . It will be seen, therefore, that although as Mr. Balfour correctly states, no real need presents itself for an Imperial grant in aid, subscribers to the Mansion House Relief Fund may rest assured that their benevolence will be of the greatest possible assistance to Lord Curzon in his splendid efforts to cope with the unparalleled calamity with which he has to deal. The public response up to date is so generous that it would be deplorable were the flow of subscriptions checked by any misconception of Ministerial statements.

The *Globe* explains that the Government only saves life, while the funds supplied from outside help in other ways. But had it not also as well address a word of remonstrance to Ministers and others who deal with this awful visitation in such fashion as to render popular "misconception" inevitable? If, as the *Globe* itself says, the Budget is "satisfactory and encouraging," and if there is a real surplus of two and a-half millions, no wonder people should ask themselves what all the noise is about, and bestow their benevolence in quarters that look more needless.

The *Times* of India says that the "Weekly Report on the State of the Season and Prospects of the Crops" issued by the Government "is prepared with such a keen appreciation of the art of saying nothing in many words, that it is, for practical purposes, valueless." Two good instances are given. The complete failure of the dry crops of Northern Guzerat, and the reduction of the total out-turn of the Province to four per cent. of the previous yield—an unprecedented situation—is coldly referred to thus: "the standing spring crops are in good condition in the irrigated lands of Guzerat." Again the Report says:—

Cattle are suffering severely owing to insufficiency of fodder in Rajkote and Baroda, in three districts of Guzerat, and in parts of four districts of the Deccan.

To which our contemporary appends the following comment:—

This is supposed to be an adequate summary of a famine which has littered the roadsides of Guzerat with the skeletons of famished oxen and has swept off more than two millions of the four and a-half millions of cattle owned by the hapless rayats a twelve month ago.

It is only the statistics in the Report that tell the whole truth. The first week in March added 114,046 to the numbers on relief works, and brought the total to 4,374,647, which has of course been exceeded since then. Perhaps the feature of greatest interest is the position of Madras. It was hoped at one time that the Province would wholly escape, and, compared with the other stricken districts, the

numbers on the test-works are trifling, but the prospect becomes more and more gloomy. Here is what the *Times* of India wrote early in March:—

The harvests are yielding an indifferent out-turn, and what stands will deteriorate unless watered. Cultivation meanwhile is confined to small areas under irrigation.

The special correspondent of the *Times* of India has been investigating the famine at Ahmedabad. There, at all events, he has found no signs of the readiness to accept relief lamented by Lord Curzon:—

It has touched their pride to come on to works—to live by charity; and until the last moment they have held out.

Then they have thought of the great city of Ahmedabad as their only hope, and have tramped thither. On the road they have got little help, for the fear of dacoits has driven the wealthy Hindus to the towns.

So these poor fainting creatures have become more and more emaciated on the way. If they had not disease to begin with, their wretched condition of hopelessness and hunger infected it. Many have died on the roads. Others have just lapsed till they reached their destination, which perhaps they entered at night, and the next day were found dead where they slept. A corpse or two by the wayside is no uncommon thing.

The question here seems to be how to get the people on relief works, not how to keep them off.

The correspondent goes on to tell a pitiable story of a family the survivors of which are now on the works:—

Only a few months ago they had 700 head of cattle, and of themselves there were seven—husband and wife, four children and an uncle. When the rains failed they left their village with their animals which would have been worth at one time at least Rs. 10,000. Wherever they thought grass could be found they went. But the cattle died all the same. Then the wife lay down in her last sleep, and three of her children soon followed. Only the man and one child reached Ahmedabad. And that is but one instance. There are many of this kind. The Gujerati has not known famine such as this. He has been stupefied by its presence. Here there has been no contempt of it due to familiarity. There has been no cheerful rushing to seek employment. That has only been sought when the bitterness of despair has entered his soul—when he has seen his beloved cattle lying dead, and oftentimes his family with them.

Three other pictures by the same correspondent are eloquent of the distress. At Surbej, some miles from the city walls, there is beside a Mahometan temple a large tank, "the water of which in the memory of man has never failed." In September it had diminished to a pool, in which stately cranes stood. Now no water is to be seen. But beneficent even in this last extremity, it has been sown with wheat, which there alone is flourishing. The second picture—one everywhere to be met on the roads—is that of a family whose oxen were dead, while the cart remained, and they took the places of the cattle, "panting and struggling along the rutty way a few yards at a time." And this is the third:—

Further on was a village almost absolutely deserted. The roofs had been taken off many of the houses and the rafters sold for firewood. The fresh turned earth close by marked the spots, we are told, where victims of famine lay. A few horns were scattered about, the remnants of other victims; and the sight was preparation for what was to come. A black object in rags lay in a field by the road. As we approached the crows that had been busy around it wheeled cawing into the air, as if reluctant to leave the feast. A nearer view showed the half-eaten body of a woman.

Mr. James MacGeorge, writing to the *Westminster Gazette*, packs some pungent truths into a few strenuous sentences. Thus:—

I observe that though there was a surplus in the Indian Budget of more than 2½ millions on each of the last two years, and an anticipated surplus next year of £160,000, still it is necessary to borrow £2,000,000 for Ways and Means! One cannot but wonder at this result, and still more at the chorus of congratulation which ascends from the Tory Press.

These sentences coincide exactly with the views expressed in our article on the Budget in this issue. Mr. MacGeorge

goes on to point out, as we have done over and over again, that the appalling destitution means "that never before have the people of India been so destitute of pecuniary resources to meet the exigency of famine." There has been for seven years a growing scarcity and dearth of rupees—rupees which "were readily absorbed by the peasantry and saved up for the day of drought and famine, which they knew very well would be sure to occur, and to recur." Mr. MacGeorge says:—

To the Anglo-Indian community the position may be satisfactory enough. We are congratulated upon the establishment of the gold standard. That may be all very good, and we shall see how it works. But how is it to benefit the peasant population of India? How are they to embody their savings in a concrete form if silver coin is not procurable? . . . The policy which began by closing the mints . . . is a policy of restriction fatal to the legitimate expansion of trade, fatal to the frugal forecast of an industrious and self-denying population—in a word, a policy of strangulation—from which India is suffering, and will suffer as long as it is persevered in.

Mr. MacGeorge, our official gentlemen may observe, carefully speaks of the "legitimate" expansion of trade. The *Westminster* heads the letter with a query: "Are we strangling India?" Well, of course we are; and some of us call it "exuberant" and "marvellous recuperation"!

The substitution of £ for Rx. in the Indian Financial Statement is likely to embarrass those who, year after year, have had to follow the facts that these figures conceal. It is urgently needful to warn all and sundry that this clever device of thrusting the items of Indian revenue and expenditure into sterling form tends to delusion, and to many of our public men will prove a snare. It is easy to assert that a gold standard has been secured—as is apparently claimed, without cost to anybody—and to say "the symbol Rx. disappears from the public accounts." But, after all the jerry-mandering and supersession of the automatic system, the tola rupee remains the unit of the Indian currency, whatever uncounted sacrifices its artificial enhancement may squeeze from the masses of the Indian peoples. And it is, at best, a fictitious "gold standard" that has been imposed on India. As Sir John Lubbock more correctly expressed it, what has been schemed, and for the present secured in form, is "an exchange standard."

There are two essential considerations underlying the surface of Mr. Clinton Dawkins's fluent exposition and, for the moment, triumphant answer to his critics:—(a) this "exchange standard" can only apply to transactions outside of India; (b) though the "column for exchange . . . disappears from the public accounts," the thing itself exists, and has to be paid for somehow. It may not be easy to say under which thimble the pea will be found; but let us make one guess. No country can make obligatory payments of several millions annually for which it receives no commercial return without having to make some corresponding sacrifice. The figures measuring such loss and burden may be swept off its international balance-sheet by a stroke of the pen, as does Mr. Dawkins with exultation; but the impact of the burden must fall somewhere. John Stuart Mill and other economists have indicated how that impact falls in the case of India. This has frequently been shown in these columns, and here it need only be briefly stated thus—the produce exported to defray these unrequited enforced payments must be parted with at considerably lower rates than would otherwise be obtained. Mr. Dawkins, for all his skill as a financier who deals with counters and ignores facts, is evidently not a scientific economist, for he seems not to have a glimpse of the incidence of the burden, the evidence of which he so gaily brushes off the surface of the accounts. Possibly when he has left behind his brief Indian career he may find leisure to study the dynamics of Indian export prices, and trace back to the cultivating producer the incidence of that disappearing, but ever depressing factor.

Quite apart from this huge economic burden, which for Mr. Dawkins is "not seen," there are substantial practical objections to the sweeping change in the form of the accounts, which, as is well remarked by one writer, "covers up the path by which Indian finance has come to its present stage." It blurs the record, and will make comparison over long periods more difficult than ever. It is already misleading the Press here as regards the present Financial

Statement. To revert to our (a) above, as direct expenditure on the famine is wholly an internal outlay on the basis of the rupee, the two sums stated in the Budget as £2,055,000 and £3,335,000 should be read as 27,400,000 and 44,466,600 rupees respectively. Thus, on the face of it, this new nomenclature stands condemned.

The *Pioneer* objects strongly to the methods which are being adopted to obtain subscriptions for the Famine Fund; and especially to the posting up of subscribers' names in the High Court, and the collection of money in public offices by committees in which judges and high officials are prominent. It adds: "Everyone knows how amenable the Natives of India are to this species of pressure." The *Pioneer* goes on:—

But in any case it is very undesirable that in this suspicious country the Government should give any grounds for the suspicion that what it wants is relief for itself and its own embarrassments. With all due respect to the distinguished officials who have been called upon to split hairs in the endeavour to distinguish between spheres of State and private charity, their distinction will not really hold for a moment. . . . The State is just as much concerned with the saving of the respectable indigent as with that of the day-labourers. The restoration of the agriculturist to a position of economic efficiency is in the highest degree a public concern.

Universal regret has been felt at the death of the veteran Field Marshal, Sir Donald M. Stewart. Born in 1824 of "poor but honest" parents of good Highland stock, and educated in local schools and at Aberdeen University, he entered the 9th Bengal Native Infantry, "considered the pattern regiment in Bengal, in 1840." He saw no active service till he was thirty, and his first real chance of distinction came to him with the outbreak of the Mutiny. His famous ride with despatches from Agra to Delhi, says the *Times*, "is historic." As Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General to the Field Force, he displayed high qualities as an organiser; in the capture of Lucknow and in the Rohilkhand campaign, he served as a staff-officer; and in 1858 he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel. As Assistant Adjutant-General and Deputy Adjutant-General of the Bengal Army during the next ten years he had a large part in the reorganisation of the Native army. In 1867 Colonel Stewart commanded the Bengal Brigade in the Abyssinian campaign, on which occasion he introduced a compact system of transport, which was subsequently adhered to on important expeditions. He received the Abyssinian medal and the C.B., and presently was promoted Major-General (1868). In 1871 he carried out important reforms in the Andaman Islands, where he was entrusted with absolute powers; and, though Lord Mayo's visit had a tragic ending, no blame was attachable to General Stewart.

It was in 1878, when General Stewart was fifty-four, that he obtained his first high command in the field. During the year he commanded the Kandahar Field Force at Kandahar "the surrounding districts became almost as settled as if they formed part of the Indian Empire." Here his administrative talents and experience stood him in good stead, especially in the matter of difficult commissariat. Then followed his memorable march from Kandahar to Kabul, which Lord Roberts said taught him how to march from Kabul to Kandahar. In April, 1880, General Stewart fought the important battle of Ghazni with conspicuous tactical ability. After holding for a period the supreme civil and military command in Afghanistan, he led his troops back to India through the Khaibar. For these great services he was made K.C.B. and G.C.B., and in 1880 he was appointed Military Member of the Viceroy's Council. In 1881 he was created a baronet, and made Commander-in-Chief in India, in succession to Sir Frederick Haines. In this office he developed large plans for the protection of the frontier. On his resignation in 1885 he was made G.C.S.I., and appointed a member of the Indian Council of the Secretary of State, an appointment renewed in 1896 for five years. In 1894 he was Field Marshal, and next year Governor of Chelsea Hospital. Aberdeen gave him LL.D., and Oxford D.C.L.

Sir Donald was a man of extreme modesty and extreme simplicity of character. To good judgment he joined a shrewd sense of humour. "Like many gentlemen of Highland descent, he was a keen genealogist; but a

gonologist with a humorous twinkle in his eye." He was fond of fishing, and, though a poor sailor, he went five voyages to Canada to fish with his old schoolfellow Lord Mount-Stephen. "Salmon-fishing in the heavy rapid rivers of Canada," he used to say, "is to salmon-fishing in Scotland what tiger-shooting is to deer-stalking." He had also a shrewd political judgment. Though he inaugurated considerable reforms on the Frontier, he had an eye to the cost; and one would be interested to see his Memorandum on the subject of Chitral. It will be remembered that, with Sir James Peile, he signed an important minute of dissent from the proposal of the Government to charge to India the expenses of the Indian troops despatched to Suakin. "India," they said, "had come into the matter accidentally."

The *Bengalee* (March 5) comments drastically upon the Manbhumi case (which we have already noticed) as a typical case of the malefic operation of judicial and executive functions combined in the same officer. Mr. Maguire, magistrate of Manbhumi, acting in his capacity of collector and manager of the estate of the Rájá of Katras, granted a mining lease to Messrs. Bird and Co. The East India Coal Company, however, claimed to be in possession of the mining rights under a lease from the Trigunaites, who held some land on the Rájá's estate under a permanent lease. In October, 1898, servants of Messrs. Bird laid a complaint of criminal trespass against Mr. Smith, the manager, and two servants of the East India Coal Company; and on March 20, 1899, the defendants were acquitted by Mr. Garrett, the sub-divisional magistrate, on the ground that the Coal Company was already in possession. In December and March Mr. Garrett had issued interim orders prohibiting Messrs. Bird from interference, but on March 20 Mr. Maguire wired: "See that they (Messrs. Bird) get possession as ordered by the Commissioner." Mr. Garrett wired in reply the result of the case of criminal trespass. Mr. Maguire rejoined: "Carry out my orders and send the record immediately." Mr. Garrett sent the record, and on March 23 issued this notice to the Coal Company: "This is to warn you that, in accordance with the Deputy-Commissioner's orders, conveyed in his telegrams dated 20th and 21st, you are prohibited from entering Kamarguri or working there." On March 28 Mr. Maguire, having sent the record in his capacity of Collector, recorded a memorandum to the effect that Mr. Garrett's order of acquittal was not justified and that the Coal Company was not in legal possession, and directed that, in accordance with the Commissioner's order, Messrs. Bird should be put in possession.

Now Mr. Garrett's order was a judicial finding by a first-class magistrate, and Mr. Maguire had no competency to hear appeals from him. In any case, Mr. Maguire did not act judicially; he set aside the finding by pure executive order. "Law and justice," says the *Bengalee*, "are ruthlessly sacrificed to the *Zid* of the Deputy Commissioner." Further, Mr. Maguire, having recorded his memorandum, forwarded a copy to himself as District Magistrate, with the view of putting Messrs. Bird in possession by aid of the police; and he sent another copy (with the record of the trespass case) to the Commissioner, with the recommendation that Mr. Garrett should be removed from Gobindpur, "as he does not seem to be able to control Mr. Smith, the Manager of the East India Coal Company." Meantime police officers were stationed to prevent the Coal Company from proceeding with their mining operations, and the result was that a police constable lodged a complaint against certain servants of the Company, charging them with criminal trespass. Mr. Garrett requested the instructions of the District Magistrate—he could not try the case in view of the disagreement with his judgment in the former case, for which indeed he was being transferred, and pointed out that the orders of the Deputy Commissioner were illegal. Mr. Garrett was removed. Then the case came before another sub-divisional magistrate, and thereupon the accused servants of the Coal Company applied to the High Court to have the case removed elsewhere. The High Court granted the application. On December 16, 1899, the case, which had been transferred to Ranigunge, was dismissed. But Mr. Maguire's resources were not exhausted. Next day (December 17) the sub-divisional magistrate of Gobind-

pur received this telegram from the police sub-inspector of Katras:—

Bird and Company's work at Kamarguri obstructed in force by East India Coal Company. Bird and Company expect to commence work to-morrow. Afraid serious riot. Please wire.

The sub-divisional Magistrate recorded an order requiring the Coal Company to abstain from all acts implying possession in Kamarguri, and from taking any action likely to result in a breach of the peace. And on the same day Messrs. Bird entered on possession.

The situation came before the High Court, which passed a severe censure on Mr. Maguire's acts, but found itself helpless to remedy the wrong. The judgment of the High Court declared that Mr. Maguire's order had "operated an illegal interference with private rights," and that it was "bad and without jurisdiction," and therefore set it aside as "null and void." Further:—

We are told that since this order was passed Messrs. Bird and Co. have commenced mining operations in Kamarguri. We cannot unfortunately disturb their possession, though it has been improperly obtained, and only, as we think, under that order; but we are not shown that any possession was acquired under the order of March 23, which order was wholly without any legal authority. The arbitrary character of the orders passed in favour of Messrs. Bird and Co., and the abuse of his authority as District Magistrate by the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Maguire, in persisting in his endeavours to give possession to his own lessees, Messrs. Bird and Co., regardless of the opposition on behalf of the East India Coal Company, who were judicially found to be in possession on March 20, are very lamentable, not only so far as they affect the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Maguire, personally, but so far as they injuriously affect private rights, which, in this case, we are powerless to restore.

This is a very pitiful conclusion. If the High Court has not the power, it ought to have the power. We can only look to the Government to see that right is done. "Will the executive Government," asks the *Bengalee*, "interfere and afford protection to the private rights which have been so injuriously affected by Mr. Maguire's orders?" As for Mr. Maguire himself, we are prepared to hear that he has been placed in a position where he will henceforth be unable to shame his country and his colleagues by such an open insult of law and justice. Meantime, the case joins with the Chupra case in reinforcing the demand for the separation of judicial and executive functions.

The *Sanjibani* gives an account of another shooting case. Three little girls were playing behind their father's house at Bolpur. Unfortunately a railway assistant-engineer at Burdwan came there for a day's shooting. Two of the three girls were wounded.

After the abuse of Indian municipalities to which we are accustomed in Anglo-Indian journals, it is a pleasant surprise to find the *Times of India* saying: "The report of the Bandora Municipality for the year ending June, 1899, shows a good record of useful work," and it may comfort the inhabitants to hear that the town "seems peculiarly adapted to local self-government." Great praise is given to its good management of the finances, whereby it avoided borrowing in spite of a visitation of plague. Moreover, we are told that when this misfortune befell the place "the Municipality conducted itself with admirable coolness. Preventive measures were immediately taken which, while checking the disease, gave little or no offence to the public." No doubt this could not be said of all Municipalities. Could it be said of all officials?

A representative of the *Natal Advertiser* (February 23) reports an interview with Mr. Treves, the eminent surgeon. As to the Indian stretcher-bearers, Mr. Treves said:—

What has astonished me most in connexion with the care of the wounded is the marvellous and comfortable manner in which they are transported to the base hospitals. There are some eight bearers to each stretcher, with a leader, and the number of stretcher-bearers employed can be imagined when it requires 1,200 to carry 150 wounded men away. As an example of the expedition and care these men show, take the experience we had recently. On Thursday night, when at Spearman's Camp, we got the order that every wounded man was to be put out by Friday morning. They were all serious cases, or they would not have been kept back, but would have been sent earlier to the base hospital. There were 150 of them, and by the next day they were removed to Frere, carried thither, a distance of twenty-five miles, by the stretcher-bearers, through the dust, in the blazing heat, and yet without undue discomfort to the patients. It is a noteworthy fact and deserves recognition.

We commend this fact to the notice of Mr. Chamberlain, and hope he will bear it in mind when the settlement comes.

THE CASE FOR ENQUIRY.

THE following Notice of Motion appears on the Order Paper of the House of Commons for Tuesday next, April 3:—

Sir W. WEDDERBURN, —Distress in India, —To call attention to the Indian Famine; and to move, That, in view of the grievous sufferings which are again afflicting the people of India, and the extreme impoverishment of large masses of the population, a searching enquiry should be instituted in order to ascertain the causes which impair the cultivators' power to resist the attacks of famine and plague, and to suggest the best preventive measures against future famines.

It is a motion studiously moderate in its terms and incapable of giving offence. It is true that by implication it affirms that the sufferings of the Indian people are not solely due to the failure of the rains, that their impoverishment has its causes, and that these causes, could they be discovered, might possibly be removed by human skill. But who is there even among those that treat famine itself as a direct visitation of Providence who would deny that some part at least of Indian poverty might be remedied if more was known about its antecedents? To ask not for legislation or decision of any kind but only for enquiry should surely disarm the opposition of those who generally find themselves opposed to Sir William Wedderburn's Indian policy, the more so as his opponents are constantly discounting all attempts to deal with Indian problems by insisting on their difficulty. If they are so difficult the more need is there that this great question, the urgency of which is attested by starving millions, should be dealt with on a basis of ascertained fact. There is indeed one possible reason for opposition beside the usual official dislike to any interference with the most perfect and successful Government in the world. It is a reason such as it would be thought impossible to avow in any free country without covering its authors with shame. It is that Sir William Wedderburn at the close of a distinguished official career has become the champion and chosen representative of the people of India; that he has devoted himself to their cause; and that he gives voice to their wishes. It is a sad evidence of the tempor of the times that this which should lend his words additional weight is made an excuse for neglecting his warnings and deprecating his advice.

After the last famine—the great famine, as it was called in ignorance of the greater that was so soon to succeed it—the Government appointed a Commission of Enquiry. It is true that this enquiry did not go very deep. It scarcely attempted to trace the causes of Indian poverty. It was concerned rather in gauging its extent, and still more in considering the Government measures of famine relief. So far as it went into causes at all, they were superficial and immediate rather than fundamental. But it is unnecessary to labour the point. The Government by setting at nought the recommendations of the Commission even in the easiest part of the enquiry, have shown that that enquiry can in no sense be considered as final. The Commissioners held that the relief given was too small; the Government holds that it was so profuse as to have demoralised the people. They insisted on the duty of making remissions of revenue in times of distress, and the Government have shown little inclination to carry this out up to the present.

Though they shirked the more general causes of distress, the Commissioners, as has been said, took some pains to ascertain its extent and to decide whether it was increasing or diminishing. They came to the conclusion that the landowners, the higher ranks of the cultivators and the skilled artisans, except the weavers, had improved their position; but the mass of the day labourers and the less skilled artisans were becoming not only a poorer but also a much more numerous class which,

far from contracting, seems to be gradually widening, particularly in the more congested districts. Its sensitiveness or liability to succumb, instead of diminishing, is possibly becoming more accentuated, as larger and more powerful forces supervene and make their efforts felt where formerly the result was determined by purely local conditions.

Surely, this is a result of the enquiry after the last famine which cannot be left where it is. Some effort must be made to probe the question further and find the causes of this residuum.

Sir William Wedderburn calls for a searching enquiry and it is well known, although the words do not now appear in his notice of motion, that he favours an enquiry which shall consist of a minute study of the condition of

the people in certain typical villages chosen in different parts of the country. This, as has already been said in INDIA, is in strict accordance with the methods of investigation pursued so successfully by Mr. Charles Booth, whose work has thrown so great a light on the condition of the people in the English metropolis. A village enquiry such as is proposed would certainly fulfil all the requirements of a sound method. The first step in all such enquiries must also be to separate the particular from the general, the circumstances peculiar to one locality from those spread over the whole country. The passage which is quoted above from the Famine Commissioners' report lays great stress on the risk of general forces affecting the whole of India and the consequent decline in the power of purely local conditions. The common Government, the increase in the means of communication—even the common economic drain to Europe, and the very general over-assessment of land—tend to make local peculiarities of less account, in view of these preponderant conditions. An enquiry carried on in various villages in different parts of India would show at once, on a comparison of results, how far distress was a question of local environment or local law, and how far it resulted from the action of great general forces. To take the best known of local differences, a comparison between the state of typical Bengal and Madras villages would bring out clearly how far the prosperity of the former Province was due to its permanent settlement. Again it would show the extent to which irrigation was available. It would discredit it as a universal panacea, since of all remedies—and in its due place it is a remedy of great importance—it is perhaps the most partial. This, indeed, might seem too obvious to need any enquiry, were it not that many speak of irrigation as if it were universally applicable.

It is hardly matter for doubt that such an enquiry would show a vast amount of distress existing under the most diverse conditions and obviously attributable to more or less general causes. It would then be the task of those who had taken the investigation in hand to ask how far this distress was increasing or diminishing; how the present compared with the past. Here again the resources of a village enquiry would take us further than any other method. It would, in many cases, be possible to trace the changing conditions of the life of the village with an accuracy impossible in an enquiry covering a wider area. Looseness and vagueness of statement would be more easily avoided; while the danger of staking too much on an individual case would be obviated by the ultimate comparison of the results obtained in the villages chosen in different parts of the country. Finally, the general statistics relating to the present would be illuminated by the light thrown on typical cases and, ceasing to be dry bones, would rise up and live. It is becoming more and more an axiom that such enquiries are a necessity for the true interpretation of statistics. Mr. Charles Booth's book on "London Life and Labour" is full of statistics, but statistics at once checked and explained by the results of his enquiries into the lives of particular families, the conditions of particular streets, and the working of particular industries. Why should not such an enquiry be made in the villages of India?

Assuredly there is need. In the face of swiftly recurring famines this will hardly be denied. Sir William Wedderburn by making his demand for enquiry has left it open to those who disagree with the method of enquiry which he favours, to support his motion; and he has left it to the Government to adopt the course which most commends itself to them—to put aside the village enquiry in favour of a better, if a better can be found, or to hold it with such modifications as official knowledge or official caution may suggest. It will, therefore, be all the more scandalous if enquiry is refused. That the people of India are afflicted by grievous sufferings is admitted—sufferings which have deeply touched the hearts of many in England. That large masses of the population are extremely impoverished was admitted by the Commission that sat after the late famine, and must now be still more true—now that another famine has come upon them before they have recovered from the effects of the preceding one. That the intensity of famine depends in a great measure on the resources of the cultivators is obvious; and it follows that whatever tends to diminish those resources tends at the same time to increase the famines. Thus it is only by studying the causes of Indian poverty that we can arrive

at the causes of Indian famine. It requires, then, no very long train of reasoning to see that an enquiry into poverty is a necessary preliminary to any real treatment of the famine problem. To prevent the recurrence of famine you must know its causes, and the great cause of famine is poverty; for where there are stores of grain or money, no failure of the rains can do more than create scarcity. Therefore you must know the cause of Indian poverty; for without knowing its cause, it is hopeless to attempt its prevention.

How, then, stands the question? Famine is universally deplored, but the possibility of a remedy depends on our knowledge of Indian poverty and its causes. That knowledge can only be gained by enquiry, which is demanded by the motion that will shortly come before the House. If any are found to oppose so reasonable a request, they will assume a terrible responsibility; for they will affirm their belief that either famine is inevitable or the public interest requires that the causes of poverty should remain hid; which last appears to be a foul libel on our Indian Empire.

THE INDIAN BUDGET.

THE Viceroy's telegraphic summary of the Indian Budget is very cheerful in tone, in spite of the famine and the plague, and this cheerfulness is reflected, as it was intended to be, in the comments of the British Press. *The Times* discerns in it "a remarkable and most gratifying elasticity"—"growing prosperity of the country." *The Standard* finds in it evidence of the "marvellous recuperative power of the vast Dependency." *The Globe* takes it to be "satisfactory and encouraging"; and, though the horizon is not unclouded, yet there is "every reason to look forward to the immediate future with hope." *The Spectator* declares it to be "unexpectedly reassuring," and says Mr. Dawkins, "has produced these gratifying results," as if Mr. Dawkins had actually engineered the whole business instead of being a mere fly on the wheel. *The Saturday Review*, with a spice of greater discrimination, thinks "the two Finance Ministers concerned may fairly point with pride" to the results. We greatly doubt whether Sir James Westland, outside his official rôle, really regards the results with pride, whatever may be the attitude of Mr. Dawkins. Anyhow, the *Saturday* says, "the new Indian Budget displays marvellous financial strength." Even the *Economist* admits that the statement "shows the financial position of India to be much better than even the most sanguine anticipated." *The Daily News* deserves a special pillory all to itself. We take the following pronouncements from its short article:—

Remarkable tribute to the elastic resources of the country and to the skill with which they are administered.

The recurrence of famine in India appears to baffle all the resources of agricultural and engineering science. Otherwise the economic state of the country is sound and hopeful.

The change to a gold from a silver standard has been accomplished without friction, and with manifest benefit to the community.

Such a consensus of favourable opinion is sufficiently significant. Officialdom sets the tune, and the Press strikes up in unison. How can the British public doubt that India is flourishing? Yet there are still small voices of dubiety or dissent. *The Investors' Review* is full of distrust, and passes some incidental strictures with severity, although the Editor waits for fuller information, which, by the way, the *Economist* also desiderates. And several of the younger journals, which are not disposed to shut their eyes and swallow unquestioningly what the officials offer them, repudiate the conclusions of the Viceregal statement.

The sum and substance of the official conclusions is reported by Reuter in two carefully framed sentences from Mr. Dawkins's speech:—

In spite of the famine we have attained a gold standard through the continued closure of the mints and the ordinary operations of trade without adding to the indebtedness of India, and the uncertainty due to a falling and changing exchange has become a thing of the past. India, who has relieved her sufferers and has invested revenue in reproductive works, can count on a surplus with reasonable confidence.

The surplus is given at £2,553,000, and the estimates for next year anticipate another surplus of £160,000. The figures look healthy, but what one would like to know is how far they represent the facts. Is there a genuine surplus of two millions and a-half, or is it a mere matter of account? The point is one that we put with much

reluctance; but, if the surplus be genuine, one has some difficulty in comprehending the lamentable wail of Lord Curzon on January 19, and one feels compelled to revise one's notions of the dire effects of famine and plague, to say nothing of other mischiefs that work more silently in the system. For the year now ended, the cost of the famine in direct expenditure is given at £2,055,000; or rather, this figure shows "the increase due to famine," though we are not told what it is an increase on. Next year "direct famine relief is expected to cost £3,335,000," and "it is hoped that the famine will have disappeared by September." The basis of this hope is not stated, and the last famine ran on for a second year. The Collector, then, will be active after September. "We might deem this cold and indifferent calculation an exhibition of folly," says the *Investors' Review*, "but that would be feeble; it is really one of abominable cruelty. Those famine-stricken districts can no more pay up arrears than the Viceroy and Council could pay the whole cost of the famine out of their own pockets; but this also is the Indian way." But returning to the figures, one cannot but contrast them dubiously with the admitted cost of the last famine, which ran to something like twice as much; and again one is troubled to understand the Viceroy's lamentation of January. We can only wait for developments, hoping meanwhile that the benevolent public here will hold these figures in deep distrust and not allow them to affect the Mansion House and other famine relief funds.

Again the Government takes credit for not "adding to the indebtedness of India," and Mr. Dawkins thinks that India "can count on a surplus (next year) with reasonable confidence." Yet when we look at the Viceroy's telegram we find that "the Secretary of State for India expects to incur temporary debt of £500,000." The bland qualification "temporary" should not deceive even our leading journals by this time. Let them turn back to the history of "temporary" Indian loans and see how often they have maintained that character and how often they have gone to swell the frightful mass of "permanent" debt. We regard this "temporary" with the deepest suspicion. Further, we find that "The Secretary of State for India does not expect to raise fresh sterling permanent debt"—no doubt for the very good reason that the process involves a discussion of Indian finance in the House of Commons, with the result that the public may obtain some inkling of adverse ideas as well as of facts that the Government is not anxious to make widely known. "But," we are informed, "a rupee loan of three crores is estimated to be necessary in India for Ways and Means." Of course the public here will obtain precious little information on the subject of a rupee loan, and the operation will be quietly effected. But, if this rupee loan is not successful, what then? Why, then, there must be recourse to a sterling loan in London, unless the accounts can be arranged so as to tide over the necessity. For "railway, capital expenditure will amount to £4,872,000, and the irrigation grant is raised to a full crore," and some scope can be found there for rearrangements. But, on the face of the statement, there is in contemplation a loan totalling some two millions and a-half sterling. Mr. Dawkins, when taking credit for not "adding to the indebtedness of India," appears to speak with reference to the year just closed. Evidently, in spite of his anticipated surplus, he contemplates that the Government will "add to the indebtedness of India" in the year now begun. The burden is only postponed.

There is, however, another point that deserves very stringent examination. If the Government has not "added to the indebtedness of India" during the past year, has it added to the indebtedness of the Indian people individually, or to the burden laid upon them individually by legislative and administrative measures? "The introduction of a gold standard," says the *Spectator*, "has been effected almost silently, and none of the expected difficulties have occurred. . . . Gold being wanted in India, gold has 'rushed' to India. . . . The relation of gold to silver has become so stable." This is mere repetition after Mr. Dawkins. The *Saturday Review* also thinks that "much no doubt must be credited to currency reforms which have created a gold standard and have for the present stopped the long process of exhaustion due to meeting sterling obligations with an ever-depreciating silver coinage." "For the present," yes, apparently. But, after all, are not those exhausting payments still made?

The Government has struck Exchange and Rx. out of the accounts, and speaks only of £ sterling; but has that fact abolished the payments that used to stand so vexingly under the vanished headings? Surely it is the height of credulousness to fancy that any such magical relief has been found. And what can it matter to the Indian taxpayer whether he pay the amounts in London or Calcutta? What does matter to him is this: that he has to pay the former amounts under another denomination, and other amounts besides. Formerly he had to make up his rupees to the gold value required, and he knew that he had to do it. Now he has not only to contribute to the Calcutta treasury the former amount, but he has also to pay all his other obligations in a rupee artificially fixed at not less than 16d. which practically adds at least one-third to his previous outgoings. It is useless, we know, to persist in attempting to hammer into official (and other) heads the obvious fact that the debt of the country must be paid out of the industry and commerce of the country. It is useless, too, apparently, to point out as we have already done (INDIA, Vol. xii. p. 69, August 4, 1899), that the saving on Exchange by the artificial raising of the rupee has largely exceeded the surplus, and that the emergency taxes expressly imposed to meet the fall in Exchange are still exacted though we are told that Exchange is abolished. We are informed—and the boast is thoughtlessly re-echoed in London—that Indian trade is expanding. Yes, says the *Times*, "the trade statistics for the year compare favourably with those of its predecessors; the total volume of trade is £115,361,000 as against £109,298,000 in 1898-99, and £104,909,000 in 1897-98." True, we suppose; but what does it mean? Even Mr. Dawkins has the grace to deprecate the inference that the export of hides is "a matter for congratulation"? Is there, then, any other export besides hides to deduct from the large figures as not "a matter for congratulation"? Neither Mr. Dawkins nor his panegyrist point out the appalling excess of somewhere about Rx. 35,000,000 of exports over imports—an excess that averages at least Rx. 16,000,000 over a period of quite sixty years back. The position is ruinous; no self-governing and self-respecting State would stand it; it is a disgrace to the Government, and a danger of the most ominous character. Yet the *Times* cheerfully sees in it the "growing prosperity of the country"; and the *Economist*, looking at the cost of the famine and the alleged surplus, declares that "nothing could be more eloquent as to the solidity of the basis upon which the finances of India now rest." When the crash comes, we shall be told it was "inevitable," or else these and other blind guides will then turn and rend the Government that they led into the ditch—the abyss—of destruction.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Thursday.

DISSOLUTION is no longer in the air. Addressing a deputation of miners at the Home Office on Tuesday Sir M. White Ridley plainly intimated that the Government are looking forward to one more year of certain existence before appealing to the country for a renewal of power. The intimation has caused no surprise in official Liberal circles, where rumours of an approaching general election have been consistently discredited. After all, it must be remembered that the Conservatives would be seriously handicapped in an electoral struggle at the present juncture. Twenty or thirty of their men are in South Africa and would be unable to defend their own constituencies from attack. Moreover, an enormous proportion of the electorate is actually engaged at the front. Thousands of active politicians who might be expected to "vote khaki" would thus suffer disfranchisement, because even if the war is over before autumn it is obvious that a considerable time must elapse before the troops can be withdrawn. In any event, it is absurd to suppose that the result of a general election would be a foregone conclusion. Organisation and local feeling are powerful factors in the determination of a political contest, even during periods of intense national excitement; and it is an absolute fact that both in its machinery and its equipment of local candidates the Liberal party to-day occupies a stronger position than it has held for fifteen years. Liberalism in London at the present moment is undoubtedly under a cloud, but reports from the country

would seem to indicate that the sun is shining brightly everywhere else.

During the past week the Parliamentary debates have been illuminated by two speeches which reached almost the highest level of political oratory. One was by a man already in the zenith of his fame and the other by a hitherto undistinguished Welsh member. Of Mr. Balfour's passionate plea on behalf of a national—otherwise a Roman Catholic—University for Ireland, that austere critic Mr. John Morley was moved to declare that it was worthy of the spirit and eloquence of Canning. Mr. Healy, whose utterances are always the expression of the moment's emotion, spoke of it as a noble speech and carried the House with him in hailing the orator as in some respects the true inheritor of Mr. Gladstone's moral fervour. The other hero of the evening was Mr. William Jones, a diffident, shrinking, self-taught scholar whose eloquence although famous in the valleys of Wales had scarcely been suspected in the House of Commons. His success accordingly had all the dramatic effect of the unexpected. Again, it was Mr. Morley who was the first to clasp the blushing Welshman by the hand and congratulate him on an achievement which by this very act was elevated into a triumph. Presently Mr. Balfour, who seldom fails in generosity to a political opponent, was heard acclaiming Mr. Jones's speech as the most interesting and eloquent on an educational subject ever heard in the House of Commons. A private member has rarely received such a tribute.

While every mail continues to bring fresh evidence of Mr. Cecil Rhodes's insubordination to military authority at Kimberley, the officials in Pall Mall remain in happy ignorance of the scandal. To all inquiries on the subject Mr. Wyndham has returned the stereotyped reply that he has no official knowledge. The facts, however, are well established, and the deductions to be drawn from them are only too obvious. Curiously enough, the strongest evidence against the Chairman of the De Beers Company has issued from his own lips in the form of newspaper interviews, from his own pen in the form of a whining petition for instantaneous relief addressed to Lord Roberts, and from the enraptured eulogists whose infatuation seems to have rendered them incapable of seeing when they are doing their idol a mischief. Those persons talk and write in the style of characters in the Palace of Truth. They tell us in plaintive tones how their hero badgered Colonel Kekewich in the discharge of his duties, how he taunted the British Army at Magerfontein on its slowness, how he fumed when Lord Roberts hinted that Kimberley might have to be left in the lurch, and how he took counsel with the shareholders of De Beers on the situation. And in telling us these things they evidently expect us to sympathise not with Colonel Kekewich and his brave comrades, but with the harassed and fretful millionaire. Happily, there is no reason to suppose that Parliament shares in the hypnotism of Mr. Rhodes's journalistic worshippers. His name may be mentioned now in the House of Commons without eliciting a single cheer. Members, indeed, are made obviously uncomfortable by the slightest reference to the great man. Like the War Office they would prefer to have no knowledge of him, official or otherwise.

Undiluted justice is invoked by Mr. Rudyard Kipling on the heads of the disloyal Dutch in Natal and Cape Colony. This popular writer's distaste for the quality of mercy, although in itself of no political value, directs attention to not the least of the difficulties by which our statesmen may still be confronted when the war is over. Englishmen at home would probably be only too glad to let by-gones be by-gones once they have thrashed the adversary—forgetful, perhaps of the fact than an injury is apt to linger in the memory of the victim long after the assailant has blotted it from his own magnanimous mind. But Englishmen in South Africa are apparently not going to be appeased by the defeat of the enemy. They are already demanding that he should afterwards be kept in chains. Trials for treason are spoken of in the Dutch districts of her Majesty's colonies, and lest there should be difficulty in securing convictions from a jury the suggestion is made that a judicial commission, armed with exceptional powers, ought to be dispatched from England with a view to the summary confiscation of property now in the hands of offenders as well as the issue of wholesale edicts of disfranchisement. Sir Edward Fry and the octogenarian Lord Brampton—better known as Mr. Justice Hawkins—are mentioned as possible members of the suggested inquisition. Perhaps the best solution of the diffi-

culty would be the appointment of a body analogous to one of our own Royal Commissions. We should then enjoy a breathing space of many years, and at the end of the term the report of the Commissioners might still be expected to excite a mild historical interest.

Superstition reigns even in the corridors of the House of Commons. On the night of Sir Donald Stewart's death a curious story was current in the Lobby. Members were reminded that the Commissioners on Indian Finance, of whom Sir Donald was one, numbered thirteen. At their last meeting, it was said, some jesting compliments were passed on the immunity from misfortune which the thirteen had enjoyed during the pudulou prolonged period of their official association. Perhaps those congratulations were a little premature. After all, the work of the Commission was not quite completed, because the report had still, technically, to be signed. At all events, one could detect a latent, half-confessed feeling in some senatorial minds that had Sir Donald Stewart been one of twelve instead of one of thirteen he might have survived even the interminable Finance Commission.

Moliere should have represented his *Malade Imaginaire* as a politician. When Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman found himself compelled to cancel his engagements the other day, owing to an attack of laryngitis, a kind friend is reported to have said that it was one of the most daring illnesses ever known. Other Mrs. Candours dropped amiable hints about the advantages of an opportune cold and the diplomatic value of a sudden sickness. Sir Henry simply shares the common fate of prominent statesmen. It used to be said of Mr. Gladstone in times of political crisis, that he took to his bed as a refuge from callers, and that most of his Cabinets were formed in the seclusion of the sick room. When Lord Salisbury handed over the seals of the Foreign Office to Mr. Balfour for a season, the quindness thought they knew better than to accept the Prime Minister's plea of illness. It is one of the penalties of greatness that a man may not sneeze without eliciting a compliment on histrionic talent. "What is he up to now?" the gossips ask, as the poor patient summons his doctor.

An incidental result of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman's illness—which unfortunately happens to be only too genuine—has been the sudden promotion of Sir Edward Grey to a place on the Liberal platform never previously occupied by a statesman of less than Cabinet rank. The selection of the Northumberland baronet to act as the Liberal leader's deputy at the Nottingham Conference has naturally given rise to a good deal of speculation, the general inference being that the heads of the party must finally have decided to commit themselves to Lord Rosebery's policy of a sane Imperialism. Their real motive was probably to direct public attention in a striking manner to the points of agreement which are still common to the great body of Liberals. Both Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, in his letter, and Sir Edward Grey, in his speech, made that the keynote of the occasion. The incident therefore may be regarded in a sense as a symbol of Liberal unity. Whether it has also, as some people believe, brought a new leader to the front remains to be seen.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

CULTIVATORS IN BENGAL.

To the Editor of "INDIA."

SIR,—I was very glad to see Mr. Dutt's statement in his letter of January 31 that "in Bengal, where the landlords make their own arrangements with cultivators, the rental does not exceed one-sixth of the gross produce in any district and falls far short of it in many districts"; with the result that "the cultivators of Bengal are resourceful and prosperous, and can save in good years against years of bad harvests"; and his further statement in the *Times* this morning that, consequently, "there had been no famine in Bengal during the whole of this century."

I have no personal knowledge of Bengal, but I cannot reconcile his account of the prosperous condition of the cultivating classes either with that of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and other observers who generally speak of the condition of the actual cultivator in Bengal as more unsatisfactory than in any other Province, or with the Report of the Famine Commission dated July 31, 1880, that they "have received a large amount of evidence, remarkable in its weight and unanimity, to the effect that in the Bengal Province the relations of landlord and tenant are in a specially unsatisfactory condition"; and surely there was something like a famine in Behar in

1873-74, or why were six millions sterling spent in the relief of that comparatively small area?

I quite agree with him that Madras has been much over-assessed as compared with the rest of India, except (I suppose) the Central Provinces, and am inclined to think that his proposal to adopt as a maximum assessment one-sixth, or even one-fifth, of the gross produce would be highly beneficial to the country, and a most useful check on the vagaries of the Settlement Departments. I do not at all agree that the assessment should be permanently fixed in money and the "unearned increment" deliberately thrown away for ever as it has been in Bengal.—Yours,

J. B. PENNINGTON.

Madras Civil Service (Retired).

24/3/1900.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

4,677,000 ON RELIEF.

The Secretary of State for India has received (March 26) the following telegram from the Viceroy on the subject of the famine:—

"Situation unaltered. Number of persons on relief works, and gratuitously fed, have both decreased slightly in some provinces; reduction, probably temporary, may be due in part to incomplete reporting. Numbers of persons in receipt of relief:—Bombay, 1,250,000; Punjab, 230,000; Central Provinces, 1,425,000; Berar, 321,000; Ajmere-Merwara, 111,000; Rajputana States, 441,000; Central India States, 123,000; Bombay Native States, 454,000; Baroda, 61,000; North-Western Provinces, 3,000; Punjab Native States, 7,000; Central Provinces Feudatory States, 47,000; Hyderabad, 197,000; Madras, 7,000. Total, 4,677,000. Relief works being opened in Jammu Province, Kashmir."

[THROUGH REUTER'S AGENCY.]

HALIFAX, MARCH 26.

The people of Nova Scotia are contributing liberally to the Indian Famine Fund. The *Halifax Herald* to-day cabled \$600 to Lord Curzon as the first instalment of the relief fund it is raising.

THE MANSION HOUSE FUND.

The Mansion House Fund for the Indian famine sufferers amounted on Wednesday evening to £154,000. The Lord Mayor sent a further sum of £13,000 to the Viceroy on Wednesday for relief purposes, making in all £148,200 already remitted.

THE "INVESTORS' REVIEW" FUND.

We take the following from the current issue (March 24) of the *Investors' Review*:—

This week's additions to the little fund we are trying to set together for the families of the distressed in India is small but good, and a token of true goodwill. The smallness, moreover, is not to be wondered at, seeing how slowly other funds grow. Undoubtedly the majority of the British public has a rooted prejudice against any class of people who may be endeavouring continually to get into sympathetic communion with the Natives of India. Many also, as we have somewhat bitterly to confess, entertain the notion that these famines are merely "the scourge of God," or, as they generally prefer to put it, the effects of purely natural causes and, therefore, in the long run, good. "India is over-populated," they would tell you, "and the famine is Nature's way of redressing the balance"; therefore, let the people die. The utter heartlessness of such views does not strike those who utter them because they are not in sight of the suffering, and do not possess imagination enough to form any conception of what human misery under hunger and thirst can be. The skeletons dying by the wayside and hidden in the huts and homes of the people are not visible to them, therefore they say "let them die." It is in vain to tell these people that India is not over-populated, but only over-taxed and over-exploited, hurried and hustled onward by expensive methods in paths unsuited to the people; they do not believe you, but continue incredulous and stick to their own opinion. Yet we hope that as the extent of the misery is brought home to the English people, as it must soon be when some five millions of starvings are in receipt of relief on public works to the tune of £1s. 4d. a week, broad and large-hearted charity will yet widely assert its power and those at home who have means give freely to spare life. They may depend upon it sooner or later, and we fear sooner rather than later, the effects of these devastations of hunger and plague in our dependency will be felt here in spite of abounding Indian

railway receipts and an apparent revenue prosperity that nothing can destroy. India is not over-populated, and the loss of its population, strive as the tax-collector may, must presently seriously affect the power of its Government to pay its way. But although disappointed at the volume of the response, all the more cordially do we thank those who do remember that although the colour of the skin may not be the same, it is humanity after all that is suffering and dying in India in millions, because the people had no means to lay by such little stores of grain as used to protect them against instant want when drought came. And we thank the *Star*, the *New Age*, and India for the valuable help they have given us in making the fund known.

Subjoined is the list and amount of subscriptions received for our little fund up to date. May we again repeat that it is a fund, every farthing of which will be put to good uses, especially in helping the starved cultivators to replace their lost cattle, and that the more help we can give in this direction the sooner will the distressed provinces and Native States—for they cannot be forgotten in the present misery—recover some of their ancient prosperity? Cheques and postal orders should be drawn to A. J. Wilson, crossed Union Bank of London, Famine Fund Account.

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Amount acknowledged last week ..	£346 1 6
Estacee Charlton, Esq., West Hallpool ..	5 5 0
Miss Edith Dale, London ..	0 10 0
—Hooper, Esq., London ..	0 5 0
—Country Banker, Manchester ..	5 0 0
Miss Lisa M. Ker, Aberdeen ..	3 3 0
Francis Yates, Esq., Surbiton ..	5 0 0
"R. B." London ..	1 0 0
Per the <i>Star</i> Newspaper Company, London ..	1 7 6
Total to date ..	£367 12 0

MR. ROMESH DUTT ON THE FAMINE.

The following letter from Mr. Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E., appeared in the *Times* of Saturday last (March 24):—

Sir,—Even at a time when public attention is mainly confined to the incidents of the Transvaal war, Englishmen have not lost sight of the grave disaster which has overtaken their suffering fellow-subjects in India. Over three millions of my countrymen are on relief works, and English administrators, from the highest to the lowest, are straining every nerve to save human lives in the midst of a calamity almost unexampled in its intensity even in India.

Permit me, as an old and faithful and retired servant of the Indian Government, to speak a few words at this juncture. For the present system of relief operations I have nothing but praise; from all accounts that I have received and am receiving from the tracts most seriously affected, I am convinced that all that is humanly possible is being done to save life. I wish therefore to confine my remarks to the subject of preventing such famines in the future, and making the cultivators of India more resourceful, more prosperous, more able to tide over bad years which must come from time to time.

In Bengal the cultivators are, generally speaking, prosperous and resourceful. It is within my experience that when the entire crop of a year were destroyed in certain tracts by a cyclone and storm-wave (in 1876) the people helped themselves out of their savings of previous years, and I scarcely opened any relief works except for a small number of orphans and old men and women. The old Hindu rule that one-sixth the gross produce of the soil is due as rent is virtually observed in Bengal; in no district of Bengal is the average of rent higher, and in many districts it is considerably lower. This permits the cultivators to save, and invest in Orissa, which is not permanently settled, there has been no serious and disastrous famine in Bengal within this century.

In Northern India the mistakes made in land settlements in previous years have to a great extent been rectified. The old practice of the Government settling the rent payable by every village and every cultivator has been abandoned, and landlords are permitted under certain restrictions to make their own arrangements with cultivators. The old rule of demanding two-thirds of the landlords' rental as Government revenue has been abandoned since 1855; the Government has considerably limited its demand to one-half the rental. You will see from Sir Antony MacDonnell's replies to questions 5,727 to 5,740 of the Currency Committee, which lately sat in London, that under the present arrangements the cultivators generally pay one-fifth of the gross produce of the soil as rent to landlords, and one-half of what the landlord receives is claimed by the Government as its revenue. This arrangement is satisfactory, and I would only fix this one-fifth of the produce as the maximum limit of rent, in order to permanently prevent undue enhancements, which must necessarily impoverish the cultivators.

It is in Southern India, and in the Central Provinces of India that land settlements are harsh and unsatisfactory, and necessarily render the cultivators resourceless and helpless in years of bad harvests. In Madras the Government is virtually the landlord in most parts of the province, and demands as revenue one-half of the net produce of the soil, which, it is explained in Government orders, should not exceed one-third the gross produce. The "net produce" is ascertained by deducting from the "gross produce" the cost of cultivation; the calculations are made by subordinate and low paid Government officials who are not always fair to cultivators; and distinguished and honourable Madras gentlemen have placed facts before me, showing that in some cases the Government assessment approximates one-half the gross produce of the soil. I shall be able to lay these facts before the authorities and the public on my return to Europe; but what I wish to urge now is that either one-third or one-half the gross produce is a high and ruinous limit of rent, and necessarily reduces

the cultivators to a state of perpetual poverty and indebtedness. Such a limit of rent is unexampled in Bengal and Northern India; it disables cultivators from saving in good years, it renders them subject to inevitable famines and deaths by the million in bad years. The Madras famine of 1877 swept away five millions of the population.

The worst case, however, is that of the Central Provinces of India. There the Government fixes the rents payable by cultivators to landlords, and also fixes its own share of revenue out of the landlords' receipts. The principle on which the rents are fixed is the same as in Madras, namely, one-half of the net produce of the soil is fixed as rent; practically the assessments have been even harder than in Madras. I have carefully ascertained facts from the best authorities; it was only yesterday that a distinguished gentleman, now a member of Lord Czerston's Legislative Council, was kind enough to place documents and facts in my hands; and this morning I have received a letter from another well-informed gentleman, who writes thus from the Central Provinces:

"The rent payable by every class of tenants in these provinces has been fixed by the settlement officers at the recent settlement. The rent so fixed is generally high and can only be recovered, even in good years, with difficulty. Since the year of the recent settlement (1894) a good portion of the land which was cultivated before has become fallow. The Government revenue is still in arrears, notwithstanding the hard measures adopted last year for its recovery."

While the rents payable by cultivators to landlords have thus been fixed unduly high, the revenue demanded by the Government from landlords has also been fixed high. In Northern India, as Sir Antony MacDonnell informed the Currency Committee, the Government claims one-half, but does not really take more than 40 per cent. of the landlords' assets. In many districts in the Central Provinces the Government demands and obtains 60 per cent., plus 12½ per cent. as rates, of the landlords' supposed assets. And as the landlord never gets the high rents which the Government has fixed, it comes to pass that the Government demand amounts sometimes to 80, or even 100 per cent. of the landlords' real income. I have instances before me in which landlords have offered to surrender their property because the Government revenue demanded from them was really more than all they collected from cultivators.

I lay these facts before you, sir, in the sincere desire that this over-assessment may be rectified, and that the people of Southern India may be saved from poverty, famines, and deaths. The Government revenue itself will not be increased by such over-assessment; the proceeds of indirect taxes will decline with the poverty of the people; the land revenue will fall off as lands are thrown out of cultivation. It is no reflection on honest administrators if they are sometimes mistaken in administration; the mistakes made in Northern India have been rectified since 1855, and the time is come when the very principle of assessments in the centre and south of India should be rectified in order to give the population some real relief and some opportunity to save.

Adopt the old Hindu rule, a rule which answered well in India for thousands of years, a rule which is virtually observed in Bengal and Northern India to this day with the most happy results. Make one-sixth or even one-fifth the gross produce of the soil the maximum limit of rent payable by the cultivator under all forms of settlements and all modes of land administration, and the southern cultivators will learn to save, as the Bengal cultivator has learnt to save. Famines in India will be less frequent and less disastrous if the condition of the cultivators is improved by considerate assessments; there is no other permanent remedy for this terrible and recurring disaster.—Yours faithfully,

ROMESH DUTT, late of the Indian Civil Service, and President of the Fifteenth Indian Congress.

Calcutta, Jan. 24.

PROFESSOR MURISON ON INDIA.

LECTURE TO THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

On Friday evening last (March 23), Professor Murison delivered a lecture on "India," at an invitation, before the Fabian Society at their Hall in Clifford's Inn. There was a large attendance of members and their friends. Among those that took part in the subsequent discussion were Mr. William Digby, C.I.E., and Mr. G. P. Pillai. The Committee of the Fabian Society, we understand, are thinking of arranging meetings for the further discussion of Indian affairs in some detail.

NATIVE STATES "IN SUBORDINATE UNION."

Professor Murison, putting aside the history of the transformation of a trading company into a territorial Power and an Empire, limited himself to a general sketch of the present position in India, with some anticipations of the future. As to the Native States, he remarked on Sir William Lee-Warner's classification of the varying policy applied to them by the supreme Power: from Plassey (1757) to 1813, the policy of "non-intervention"; from 1814 to 1856, the policy of "subordinate isolation" (an expression that concealed a vast annexation of territory); and since the Mutiny, the policy of "subordinate union," treating them as junior partners with separate departments, and laying stress on their responsibilities. The terms used indicated a gradually tightening relation. Then, while statutes of 1861 and 1876 spoke of the "princes and States in alliance with her Majesty, a statute of 1889 spoke of them as "under the suzerainty of her Majesty." The deprecated the evil omens of the term "suzerainty," and hoped that, in spite of over-zealous residents and a perverted Imperialism, the Government would adhere to their professed intention of preserving the Native States. He must not touch the cesspool of Hyderabad politics, with the shocking retention of Berar for half a century; nor could he do more than refer to the excellent government of many of the Native States—such as Mysore, Baroda, and Little Gondal.

THE BENEVOLENT "TRUSTEE."

As to British India itself, Dr. Murison reproduced the notion that Britain had gained it by the sword or kept it by the sword, except it was by the sword of the Indians themselves. It was a much truer view that had been expressed by Mr. Cotton, the Commissioner of Assam, that the British were in India "by sufferance of the people." Political actors of the more prudent type were anxious to hide away the sword, and proclaimed India to be "the brightest gem in the Imperial diadem," and the British people to be "trustees" of India. Quoting the spontaneous and solemn promises of the Proclamation of 1858, the Indian "Magna Carta," he invited the audience to enquire how far they had been fulfilled. Lord Lytton had said they had been evaded by "transparent subterfuges." Lord Salisbury had used the words "political hypocrisy." Sir Henry Fowler, a Liberal ex-Secretary of State for India, thought "history has never known so fair, so just, so equitable, so successful, so successful a government," while Lord Mayo, a Conservative Viceroy, believed "we have not done our duty to the people," and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, had described India under British rule as "the poorest and most wretched country on the face of the earth." It nearly concerned Englishmen to look into the facts and discover the truth of the matter.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

Plainly it was the duty of the Government to protect India from external aggression and to maintain internal tranquillity and good administration. The sole area of external trouble lay on the North-West frontier. Nowadays, indeed, it might be doubted whether there was a frontier; the Government would not specify the line of demarcation, for it was more convenient not to have a definite frontier when it was necessary to come to Parliament for leave to spend Indian money on expeditions beyond it. The frontier had faded into a sphere of influence, which had been partly demarcated, at grave political expense, by the Durand Commission. There had recently been issued, at the instance of Mr. John Morley, a Return of the expeditions across the border since 1849, which the Government had taken just two years to compile in only strategic form. There had been 110 expeditions—over two per annum—and in the last of them upwards of 10,000 troops had been employed. The troubles with the local tribes arose from raids induced by sheer hunger, or from irritation by local British officers suffering from the K.C.B.-mania, or from tribal dread of the loss of independence. As we had come to understand the tribesmen better, the troubles had steadily decreased, and the fact that not a single expedition had taken place during Lord Ripon's viceroyalty pointed to the potency of right judgment and strong will in high quarters. Beyond the tribesmen were Afghanistan and Russia, and our military expeditions had grown out of foolish and attention to the futile monies of Russia. The first Afghan war, a prodigy of folly both in inception and in execution, had been deprived of its two alleged grounds before the British army started from Indian territory. The second Afghan war was simply Disraeli's reply to Russia for upsetting his policy in Eastern Europe; it was forced on the Amir, and justified to the home public on disingenuous grounds, which are partially repeated in the recent Return. The fear of Russian aid or influence in Chitral was conspicuously absurd. Dr. Murison touched on certain details showing the hopelessness of any Indian attempt at invasion so long as India was contented, and pointed out that Skobelev had openly declared the Russian policy when he said that, but for the Central Asian influence on the Eastern Question in Europe, "the hide was not worth the tanning." Still all these expeditions, with the constant military preparations, had involved India in a cash expenditure that could not be less than £100,000,000, to say nothing of the material losses. The game was not worth the candle—nor any candle; it was all but wholly sheer waste. And though a large part of the military operations was undertaken for Imperial purposes, the whole of the £5,000,000 in account of the second Afghan War) had come out of the pockets of India or had gone to swell the Indian debt. Though the country had been successfully protected from external aggression, it had been done in such a manner as to involve grave violations of our duty to India. The question of the external relations was closed by a succinct reference to the unhappy treatment of British Indians in British Colonies, and notably in Natal, where Imperialism was exhibited in the most contemptible of its worst forms.

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION.

No doubt, internally also, we had maintained the *pax Britannica*—an exceedingly easy thing to do, seeing how ready the Indians are to obey the constituted authorities. The occasional quarrels between the Muslims and the Hindus were really of no importance, and the riots we had ourselves occasioned by injudicious official action, as in the Dekkan riots, and in the recent riots at Bombay, Poona, and Mundah. Reviewing the official hierarchy, Dr. Murison enquired where the final responsibility lay—who could be hanged in case something went disastrously wrong. It did not appear that anybody was in the slightest danger; for the Viceroy and the local Governors took no important step without the consent, if not at the instance, of the Secretary of State, who would always be supported by his Party in Parliament. Even if he were thrown overboard, that would not recall an act already done, or bring a pie of compensation. It was extremely important that some real check should be devised. The Indian Civil Service was unquestionably a strong body of executive officers, devoted to duty, largely capable, and generally desirous of bettering the people. The grave misfortune was that they had little real knowledge of the people, and less sympathy with their aspirations. There was a lamentable decadence from the attitude of the elder generations of civilians, who made friends with the people, and thus came to understand them, and to sympathise with them, and to see the good that was in them. It must be said for them that they went out young (though the elders went out younger), crammed with irrelevant learning and totally inexperienced in political life, and then all except the best-natured and the strongest-willed fell victims to the deadly "Anglo-Indian" atmosphere. They had far too much power for their years and experience. Still, as a body,

they did their work with energy and devotion. Only one in fifty was a Native. Natives came in under extreme difficulties, and only one (he believed), Mr. Romesh Dutt, had been allowed to rise so high as Commissioner. In the Upper Department of the Minor Civil Services also, nearly all the places were reserved for Europeans (as shown in the recent representation addressed to the Government of India by the Indian Association of Calcutta)—in spite of the solemn promises, and in spite of the Public Service Commission. In fact, hardly a post that was worth a European's while was allowed to go to a Native. Only in the lower and worst-paid branches of the administration had the Native a chance. Here was a very solid and serious grievance, in the face of which it was rather startling to consider Mr. Asquith's assertion (at Birmingham, December 16, 1898) that the predominant object of our policy "is, or ought to be, the slow but in the course of time effective association with those to whom we owe the character of strangers and conquerors, in the task of working out for themselves a larger and a better political and social ideal." In local self-Government, the Indians were traditionally well-fitted to do excellent work, if we would only let them. Mr. Cotton had testified that centuries of bad government had not eradicated the prolonged teaching of the immemorial panchayat. The official Blue-books testified year after year to the general progress of the municipalities. But Government seemed bent on uprooting the thriving plant of local self-government. Dr. Murison outlived the extraordinary process whereby, by the way, any settlement or more annex to the Government of Bengal, and warned his hearers to keep an eye on the projected legislation against the municipalities of the Bombay Mofussil.

Turning to the material conditions of the country, Dr. Murison dealt with the financial affairs. He pointed out how the Budget had been run up to an extravagant figure, and at the same time a monstrous debt had been incurred; how the Home Government, while spending India's money on Imperial objects, and admitting a certain liability, yet ever delayed coming to any settlement or making any payment on account. If the debt had even been guaranteed, as Lord Derby said it ought to be (1858), it would now be practically non-existent. The heavy Home charges, with the fall in Exchange, had led to the artificial establishment of a Gold Standard and a false rupee, with disastrous consequences (not yet fully developed) to industry and commerce. No doubt admirable work had been done in irrigation, which moreover paid on the whole, though the main fields seemed now nearly to be supplied. The railways had enormously decreased as "reproductive" work, while showing an enormous debt—though opening up the country, had also done much to destroy the local industries and to exhaust districts prematurely; and, now that they had done all they could do for the remedy of famine, the agencies for further development (at any rate on European capital) was a dangerous craze. Now railways ought to be light railways, built on rupee capital. The large figures of exports and imports proved mainly the rapid and appalling exhaustion of the country; for what other significance could possibly be attached to the fact that the exports had increased from £10,000,000 in 1850 to £85,000,000, and on an average of the past sixty years by little short of half as much annually? Apart from agriculture, the industry and commerce of the country was in the hands of Europeans; it was not Indian, except territorially, and the profits went mainly out of the country. For a quarter of a century, agriculture had been steadily getting starved, as Mr. A. O. Hume had earnestly but vainly pointed out. Yet there was plenty of European evidence of the rayat's intelligence and thrift. Why should there be famine? Sir James Caird said another bushel an acre would feed 22,000,000, and Mr. Hume declared that "with proper manuring and proper tillage, every acre, broadly speaking, of the land in the country, can be made to yield 30, 50, or 70 per cent. more of every kind of crop than it at present (1880) produces." Yet Mr. Hume's all-important office was abolished because the Government in consequence of the expenses of the second Afghan war could not afford to keep it up, and his expert advice went unheeded. For the past fifteen years the Government had been buying itself about agriculture, and what had it achieved? An elaborate department of Land Records. And here we have "the worst famine of the century" every third year now! The Government said this was owing to failure of rain. A better reason was: the people had nothing to eat, and nothing to buy food with. Why? The main cause undoubtedly was over-assessment and stringent collection in money. "Mind you assess low!" said Lord Lawrence to an assessment officer: "if you don't, I shall be your enemy for life." That precept was now forgotten, as Mr. Romesh Dutt had shown in his Presidential Address and in his letters to the Government. The Dekkan riots were the ominous memory in this connexion. The moral conditions of the country—justice and police, education, the Press and the platform—Dr. Murison passed over cursorily under pressure of time. The section laws and the reign of repression looked rather foolish now in the light of the recent outburst of loyal demonstrations.

LOOKING FORWARD.

The destinies of India, as Macaulay said, lie in thick darkness. On the one side was an unteachable official optimism, bent in recent years upon ignorant repression, which, as Mr. Cotton said fifteen years ago, can only lead to outbreak. By asserting the principle that India shall not fall into the arena of party controversy, Sir Henry Fowler delivered her over to the least-instructed and least-elevated type of Tory domination. It was necessary to look outside Parliament, and to arouse active interest of the country, whose sympathies were perfectly sound. The Indian National Congress, which yearned for sympathetic treatment, had opened its eyes, and generally disliked and condemned by officialdom, with earnestly for the fullest enquiry on the part of the British people, on whom in the last resort the real responsibility lies. But how could the British people know the facts? Here came in the responsibility of the Press. The question of questions was, as put by Sir W. W. Hunter: Consolidation or disintegration? The Congress stands for consolidation, and will inevitably prevail. The point is to minimise the troubles of

a transition period. The wisest course would be to open up the official posts more and more liberally to qualified Natives—a course that would tend alike to cheapen administration and to conciliate Native opinion. But officialdom is stubborn as well as blind to facts, and nothing will teach it wisdom but the free opinion of the British constituencies. These at best believe that "the essence of political wisdom is to dare to do right."

THE INDIAN BUDGET.

SOME OPINIONS OF THE BRITISH PRESS.

THE "INVESTORS' REVIEW."

We submit the official summary as volunteered to the Secretary of State by the Viceroy. It is a model of the luminous obscure, but that, perhaps, is not Lord Curzon's fault. Indian Budgets have always been framed apparently with a fine eye to mystery, and this one is no exception to the rule. Indeed, it announces the introduction of a new element of confusion to be put in the way of students of Indian finance. The barbarous "Rt." symbol has been dispensed with, and, on the ground that India has now "a fixed exchange" at 1s. 4d. per rupee, the whole of the figures are converted into sterling on the basis of fifteen rupees to the pound. Why cannot the Indian Government stick to pice and annas and rupees, and avoid the chopping and changing in this manner whenever it becomes expedient to cover the tracks of the past? As a matter of fact, the exchange has not been "fixed" at 1s. 4d. per rupee, for, as is admitted in the subjoined summary, and thanks to the dangerous restriction of currency in the Peninsula, the Government has been able to force the rupee above 1s. 4d. On its own showing, therefore, this new method of converting Indian money into English does not accord with the fact, and is, therefore, calculated to mislead. "But we must play at 'gold standard,' whatever happens."

We shall defer any detailed examination of the subject matter of Mr. Clinton Dawkins' Budget until the full document is before us; meantime, will readers please note one or two points? First, the "saving" of 738,000 under Army service, due mainly to the despatch of part of the Indian garrison for service in South Africa. That admirable little weekly newspaper *INDIA* in this country, and, to their honour, many of the English journals in the Peninsula itself, have seized upon this reduction in the army of occupation as evidence that it has been always too large. They point out with irresistible logic that the Indian Mutiny was really a mutiny of Native troops in our pay, not an insurrection of the Indian people. Consequently, a British force of sufficient strength at all times overawed and controlled the Native soldiery is all that India requires. Given good government, a careful economic government, a government anxious to promote the well-being of the meanest of its subjects, and there is no more danger of a rebellion of the population of India against us than of the rebellion of Lancashire against Kent. We hope this view will be pressed upon the Imperial Parliament and on British constituencies incessantly, because it is of the utmost importance to India that her military expenditure should be reduced with a sweeping hand.

Over all other topics in the Budget famine predominates, and we gather that it is estimated in the expiring year and in the coming year to cost about £5,500,000 by the new reckoning; that is to say, upwards of 60,000,000 of rupees. In addition to the art of maintaining the population alive and no more—we suppose it is in addition—there has to be taken into account the considerable loss of revenue; but all will be right by next September, the optimist Budget-drawer declares, for by that time the famine will be over and the revenue collector in full swing with his work, again calling not only for current rent but for arrears. We might deem this cold and indifferent calculation an exhibition of folly, but that would be feeble; it is really one of abominable cruelty. Those famine-stricken districts can no more pay up arrears than the Viceroy and Council could pay the whole cost of the famine out of their own pockets; but this also is the Indian way. Its hierarchy of bureaucrats lives above the clouds and sees the plains beneath through a golden mist. We shall not now enter into the currency conjuring alluded to in the appended summary further than to point out that India cannot be said to have a gold standard yet of any stability, when necessity has compelled it to resume the coinage of silver after having exhausted every device its ingenuity suggests to force out gold or notes based upon gold. How can gold be put into circulation in a country where, as *INDIA* pointed out last week on the authority of Lord Cromer, formerly financial member of the Viceroy's Council, the average wage of the labouring classes is less than £2 per annum? India is to borrow 38,000,000 in rupees and large amounts in sterling for railway extension, but that subject also must wait.—(March 24.)

THE "STANDARD."

The abstract of the Budget Statement of the Indian Government, received from the Viceroy yesterday, concludes with the significant remark that "the financial history of the year is overshadowed by famine." It says much for the fiscal resources of the country that in spite of this grievously disturbing factor, the result for the triennial period is by no means bad. For the current year and that immediately preceding, the surplus realised or expected reaches the satisfactory figure of two-and-a-half millions sterling. Again, as regards the approaching twelve-month, during which the full stress of the Famine will be felt, the Treasury counts upon emerging with an appreciable balance to the good. Without any recourse to exceptional taxation, the enormous expenditure on Relief will be fully met from the Revenue. To appreciate aright the reassuring significance of this equilibrium, it is necessary to remember that the effects of the recent visitations of distress have by no means passed away, and that the Land Revenue—one of the great heads of income—is directly affected by any extensive failure of crops. We are entitled to believe that but for the occurrence of the recent droughts, the financial record of

Lord Curzon's Administration would be one of singular brilliancy. As things stand, we can only console ourselves for the passing trouble by reflecting on the evidence afforded of the marvellous recuperative power of the vast Dependency, and its proved capacity to supply, from the resources of the prosperous regions, the wants of districts in which dearth is almost absolute. Though statesmen may well refuse to take a despondent view of the political situation, the sufferings of the afflicted people claim sympathy and succour from all humane men. After allowance has been made for the competition of the various appeals connected with the war, it is disappointing to find that the Indian Famine Fund at the Mansion House has not yet reached £140,000. It is growing; but it ought to grow much more rapidly. . . . Had not famine on an unprecedented scale eclipsed every other feature of interest, the retrospect of the year would have been, on other grounds, singularly instructive. The loss of troops, in connection with the African Campaign, implied, on the financial side, an opportune saving, and, fortunately, there is no reason to apprehend any serious disadvantage to the military sense. Next year, however—as a set-off—the re-arming of the Native army will absorb about one-third of a million sterling. Famine relief will claim about three and a half millions in addition to the two already spent this year. When we recall that the failure of the monsoon affected sixty millions of people, of whom five millions already depend on British aid, the figures will not be judged extravagant. While the country has been passing through this economic ordeal, it has had to work out simultaneously a monetary revolution. For the first time the Budget figures are given in sterling (at the rate of fifteen rupees to the pound). This is the formal declaration of the success claimed by the Government in establishing a gold standard and fixing the value of the rupee at one shilling and fourpence. It would argue a strange forgetfulness of the warmth with which the currency controversy engenders to assume that the sanguine assumptions of the Finance Minister will pass without challenge. Neutral critics—if there be any such—will be content to take note of the Viceroy's boast that "India during the current year has met all demands for famine and railway construction without borrowing, and passed to a gold standard, through ordinary trade operations, without adding to her indebtedness." (March 21.)

THE "DAILY NEWS."

Although the famine casts its shadow over Indian finance, there is a small surplus on the Indian Budget, estimated at a hundred and sixty thousand pounds. This is a remarkable tribute to the elastic resources of the country, and to the skill with which they are administered. The wise adoption of a gold standard has got rid of the tiresome denomination known as tens of rupees, and all sums are now expressed in pounds sterling, at the rate of fifteen rupees to a pound. The increase of expenditure due to famine between March, 1899, and March, 1900, was a little more than two millions. The estimate for next year is rather less than three millions and a half. The total cost will therefore be about five millions and a half, unless the period of scarcity is prolonged beyond the next financial year. In spite of this heavy drain, India just pays her way, and Lord George Hamilton is enabled to avoid application to Parliament for a grant in aid. The Indian Government have not borrowed, although they are spending very large sums on the construction of railways and on irrigation works. This is the last Budget for which Mr. Clinton Dawkins will be responsible. He is coming home to be the London manager of Morgan's Bank, and will be succeeded this month by Sir Edward Law. Mr. Dawkins' Indian career has been prematurely closed, but he has the satisfaction of leaving the accounts better than could be expected under very trying conditions. The reduction of the famine in India appears to baffle all the resources of agricultural and engineering science. Instead of diminishing, these terrible visitations rather tend to increase, and the prompt relief of the sufferers is the only practical course the Government can take. Otherwise the economic state of the country is sound and hopeful. The Viceroy, who in the House of Commons strongly supported the forward policy, has seen the error of his ways, and completely reversed it, thus saving money as well as lives. The change to a gold from a silver standard has been accomplished without friction, and with manifest benefit to the community. No more is heard of the cotton duties, which Lord George Hamilton modified to keep the Lancashire vote without regard for the interests of India. The sugar trade has been severely injured by the protective duty on foreign sugar, but otherwise Indian commerce is fairly prosperous, notwithstanding the famine. (March 21.)

THE "MORNING LEADER."

The Anglo-Indian Finance Minister presented his Budget in Calcutta yesterday, and already one hears the earliest notes of that chorus of superficial optimism in which the great majority of English newspapers are content to join on these occasions. There is now in India a famine of a severity which Lord Curzon says is unparalleled. The pangs of hunger have driven five millions of our fellow-subjects to the hard labour and the sorry pittance of the relief works, and it is certain that the intensity of the famine will steadily deepen during the next few weeks. Meantime the burden of taxation has admittedly reached its maximum, the debt of India is increasing by leaps and bounds, and the claims of an exorbitant military expenditure, over which the taxpayer has no vestige of control, are paramount. But comfortable critics in London, like Gallo, care for none of these things. "The report," says the *Globe*, "is satisfactory and encouraging," while the *Standard* rejoices over the "evidence afforded of the marvellous recuperative power of the vast dependency." For our part we would rather see evidence of such power, not in the book-keeping of a Finance Minister, but in the condition of a peasantry who, as the present famine and the famine of 1896-7 prove, are immediately reduced to a condition bordering on starvation by failure of the rains. How often must it be repeated that in India as elsewhere famine is the result not of drought but of poverty unable to make provision against drought? It will be time enough to use epithets like "satisfactory and encouraging" when this utter poverty begins to be less evident. The first step in that direction will be taken only when the people and the Parliament of this country insist

upon fearless enquiry into the causes of the phenomenal destitution of India. . . . But perhaps the most significant fact which Mr. Dawkins's Statement brings out is that during the current year the cost of the Army Services has decreased by £738,000 "chiefly owing to the despatch of troops to Africa, Ceylon, and Singapore." Now the troops which we have borrowed from India for South Africa were obviously not needed for the defence of India or we should not have borrowed them at such a time. If, then, India saves £700,000 by lending us these troops for a few months, how much is she unjustly required to pay in ordinary times for the maintenance of this reserve force for our use? Let us think over the question, and then ask ourselves whether in the circumstances we can fairly refuse to make now to our indigent fellow-subjects the grant-in-aid from the British Treasury which we were willing to make at the time of the Tirah campaign. (March 22.)

Imperial Parliament.

Thursday, March 22.
HOUSE OF COMMONS.
THE INDIAN CAMP-FOLLOWERS.

Sir EDWARD SASSOON asked the Secretary of State for India whether the Transvaal Refugees' and other War Funds, to which our Indian fellow subjects had subscribed, would be available for the relief of the wives and families of the killed and wounded amongst the Indian camp-followers, who had been and were serving with Her Majesty's troops in South Africa; and if not, whether he would use his good offices to enable this purpose to be achieved.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I have been in communication with the Patriotic Fund Commissioners and am informed that arrangements are being made for the grant of relief to the wives and families of Indian camp-followers incapacitated on account of service in South Africa.

Friday, March 23.
HOUSE OF COMMONS.
THE EXTENT OF THE FAMINE.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND asked the Secretary of State for India how many people in India were estimated to be suffering from famine in India, how many were engaged upon public relief works, and what was the total sum available to meet the distress in India.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The area affected by the drought in India contains a population of about 61 millions.

The number in receipt of relief is about 5 millions of whom 4,200,000 are employed upon public relief works:

The sum devoted to direct famine relief in 1899-1900 was £2,055,000; in 1900-1 it is estimated £3,335,000 will be required for this purpose:

If more should be needed, the Government of India will provide it.

FAMINE GRANT REFUSED.
ALLEGED SUFFICIENCY OF FUNDS.

Mr. SAMUEL SMITH asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the sufferings caused by the famine in India, and to the fact that nearly five millions of people were now on relief works, which number must be largely increased before July, also to the fact that a number of cattle had died, and that the peasants would need more generous relief to start them after the next rains, the Government would consider the advisability of making a famine grant to India from Imperial sources.

Mr. BALFOUR: The distress caused in India does, I believe, both in area and in intensity exceed any visitation of recent years; but I am informed that the Indian Government, without resorting to further taxation, have funds sufficient to meet all the calls which are likely to be made upon them.

THE INDIAN AMBULANCE CORPS.

Sir MAXWELL BROWNAGG asked the Under Secretary of State for War if he could state what number of British Indian subjects had been employed in the Indian Ambulance Corps from the date of its organisation in connexion with the operations in South Africa:

How many of them had been wounded and killed:

If a full list of the persons so employed was kept:

And, whether, in the case of their being wounded or killed, intimation thereof was duly conveyed to the Indian authorities and published for the information of their relatives and friends.

Mr. WYNDHAM: There is no nominal roll in this country of the British Indian subjects employed in the Indian ambulance corps in South Africa. Approximately there are about 1,300 Indian subjects employed in connexion with the campaign in South Africa of whom the majority are employed with the Army Medical Department. Four have been killed and seven wounded. The Government of India is informed by the military authorities in South Africa of all casualties amongst the Indian contingent.

Monday, March 26.
HOUSE OF COMMONS.
THE SUGAR DUTIES ACT.

Mr. MACLEAN asked the Secretary of State for India if he could now say what had been the result of a year's working of the Countervailing Duties Act passed in March, 1899:

What amount of revenue the Act had yielded:

And, what effect it had had on the importation of cane and beet sugar respectively, as compared with the Returns for the years 1897-8 and 1898-9.

Lord G. HAMILTON: In the telegram from the Viceroy, giving an abstract of the Indian Financial Statement, which was published in the newspapers on Wednesday last, it was mentioned that for the last nine months the imports of beet sugar had fallen off to the extent of 46 per cent., but that the circumstances were such that no conclusion could safely be drawn from the figures. I can add nothing to this, nor can I give as yet the amount of revenue yielded by the countervailing duties. The imports of cane sugar for the same period are not statistically complete, but they are believed to have increased to the extent of about 12 per cent. as compared with the average of the two preceding years.

THE BORROWED TROOPS IN SOUTH AFRICA.
LIST OF CASUALTIES.

Mr. MACLEAN asked the Secretary of State for India, what had been the total casualties from all causes, up to date, in the troops belonging to the Indian garrison which were employed on active service in South Africa.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The figures are as follows:—Killed, officers, 15; non-commissioned officers and men, 135. Died of wounds, officers, 3; non-commissioned officers and men, 20. Wounded, officers, 41; non-commissioned officers and men, 465. Missing, officers, none; non-commissioned officers and men, 338. Reported as prisoners (including 15 wounded), officers, 19; non-commissioned officers and men, 17. Deaths from disease, officers, 2; non-commissioned officers and men, 245. Total, officers, 30; non-commissioned officers and men, 1,221.

Mr. MACLEAN: What was the total of the force from India.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Between 7,000 and 8,000.

Tuesday, March 27.
HOUSE OF COMMONS.
THE RELIEF OF FAMINE.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND asked the Secretary of State for India whether Lord Curzon had announced that American contributions for the relief of the famine in India would be thankfully received.

And, whether it was the intention of the Imperial Government to contribute any sum for the same purpose.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I have no information from Lord Curzon to the effect suggested, but I have seen a short statement in the newspapers upon the subject, which I have no doubt is correct.

These private contributions are not paid to Government, nor used so as to reduce the sums expended by Government upon relief of distress, or to cover in any way the work undertaken by Government.

The money so collected is applied to certain defined purposes outside the sphere of Government operations, and its application is superintended by local committees of private individuals, but who work in co-operation with the Government authorities.

NOTICE OF MOTION.

The following Notice of Motion appear on the Order Paper of the House of Commons:—

Sir W. WEDDERBURN,—Distress in India,—To call attention to the Indian Famine; and to move, That, in view of the grievous sufferings which are again afflicting the people of India, and the extreme impoverishment of large masses of the population, a searching enquiry should be instituted in order to ascertain the causes which impair the cultivators' power to resist the attacks of famine and plague, and to suggest the best preventive measures against future famines. [Tuesday, April 3.]

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS.

Notice has been given of the following questions:—

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN,—To ask the Secretary of State for India, what have been the practical results of Mr. Nicholson's enquiry of 1897 regarding agricultural banks as a means of relieving the rural population of India from oppression by the money-lenders:

What were Mr. Nicholson's recommendations as regards making early experiments in establishing agricultural banks:

And, what steps have been taken to carry out his recommendations, and what success has attended the action of Government. [Thursday, March 29.]

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN,—To ask the Secretary of State for India, whether, looking to the early recurrence of famine in India, and the unparalleled magnitude of the present visitation, as described by the Viceroy of India, he will suggest to the Government of India, to institute, at a convenient time, a detailed enquiry into the condition and food supply of a few typical villages in the provinces liable to famine, with a view to ascertain whether, by local storage of grain in times of plenty and other precautionary measures, the economic condition of such villages may be so far strengthened that the failure of a year's harvest will not bring the cultivators into danger of starvation. [Thursday, March 29.]

Mr. PRICE,—To ask the Secretary of State for India, whether some portion of the labour now employed on relief work in India is being used or can be used for the further provision of tanks and other minor irrigation works. [Thursday, March 29.]

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS,—To ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he is in a position to give in detail the contributions of India to the War in South Africa as regards men, horses, and military equipment:

And, whether, in view of the value of India in the military defence of the Empire so clearly demonstrated in this war, the Government will give an opportunity for the discussion of the claim of the Government of India for relief from some portion of its home military charges, before the Indian Budget discussion at the end of the Session. [Friday, March 30.]

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