

India

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NOTES AND NEWS.

FOR some mysterious reason the Report of the Indian Famine Commission, which was signed on May 8, has not yet (September 26) been issued as a Blue-book, although it appears to have been published in India, together with the Resolution of the Government of India concerning it. We print elsewhere a running analysis of the Report (which is full of matter and extends to 113 pages). On the larger questions raised we have something to say in our leading article. Here it may be convenient to summarise the chief recommendations made by Sir Antony MacDonnell and his colleagues. The recommendations fall into two classes, relating respectively to (a) the relief system, and (b) protective or preventive measures. In the first class the Commission recommends greater preparedness for famine, greater use of non-official agency, early and liberal advances for wells and other village improvements, the abolition of the "distance test," and of all tests save the labour test only, the prompt distribution of gratuitous relief, greater use of village works, the abolition of fines and the "penal minimum," the levelling-up of establishment, an improvement in the number and the quality of hospital assistants, an increase of railway rolling-stock for the carriage of fodder, and greater wisdom and promptitude in remissions and suspensions of land revenue and advances to cultivators. In these recommendations the Commissioners may be congratulated upon plagiarising the Indian National Congress and such non-official critics as Mr. Vaughan Nash. Their proposals to abolish the minimum wage in the case of the "able-bodied," to insist strictly on a system of piecework, and to reduce the famine wage are not open to the same remark.

The Commission was permitted only to a very limited extent to open the question of prevention of famine, but its recommendations under this head are by no means the least valuable part of the report. The chief ones are—Elasticity in the demands made on the cultivator, regular suspensions and remissions of revenue as a preventive measure in adverse years, the formation of agricultural banks, liberal advances under the Agricultural Loans Acts, a series of executive and legislative measures to deal with indebtedness in Bombay (including elasticity in the collection of the Government demand and improvement in the system of land records), and the development of irrigation. "Railway construction," the Commissioners say, with emphasis, "has played its part in the policy of famine insurance," and they express "cordial approval of a new departure in famine policy which would place irrigation works in the place that protective railways have hitherto occupied in the famine insurance programme." With the exception of the proposed restrictions upon the transfer of property, all this might have been taken straight from the Reports of the Indian National Congress or the columns of INDIA. Our congratulations, therefore, both to the Congress and to the Commission. Yet the "Times," in its obviously inspired summary of the Commission's Report, had—what shall we say? Is "courage" the word?—to write that "it is the people rather than their rulers who have had to learn"! Truly, Quiddid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

In the British Press, owing to the suppression of the Report, there has not yet been much criticism of the recom-

mendations. The "Manchester Guardian," however, had a careful leading article yesterday, in which it said of the Commission's recommendations regarding "protective measures":—

It is most important that the value of this section of the Report should be generally recognised, because it is the part on which the Indian Government seems to have reserved its decision, and it may need the steady pressure of public opinion to ensure the enforcement of the preventive reforms urged by the Commission.

Similarly the "Star" wrote on Wednesday:—

In almost every particular these recommendations are an echo of the non-official voice which has for years been crying in the wilderness. Whether the suggestions will be carried out by the authorities remains to be seen. The fact that at the head of the India Office there is such a dilatory and humdrum official as Lord George Hamilton, and the further fact that this important Report has been practically suppressed make it evident that unless the Government be stirred up India will be again forgotten, and will have to be content with being described in post-prandial perorations as "the brightest jewel in the British Crown."

The "Morning Leader" carried the matter a stage further yesterday:—

What is now wanted is another enquiry which shall begin at the point where this one stops. Sir Antony MacDonnell and his colleagues have carried their investigations down as far as the fact of the indebtedness of the cultivator, for which they suggest palliatives. But indebtedness is not the cause of poverty. It is poverty which is the cause of indebtedness. The first real step, therefore, towards the prevention of famine is to ascertain as fully and as precisely as may be the causes of poverty in India—the causes, that is, of the rayat's inability to withstand even the first effects of drought. It is, if we are not mistaken, an enquiry of this kind that the Indian Famine Union aims chiefly at securing. The Report of Sir Antony MacDonnell's Commission will no doubt strengthen the hands of the Union. We have got some light. We want more.

With reference to the delay in the publication of the Report the London Correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian" said on Tuesday:—

Remark has been excited here by the mode in which the publication of the Report of the Indian Famine Commission has been managed. The Report was signed, as I stated some time ago, at Naini Tal on May 8 last, and it was naturally expected, both here and in India, that the document would be available within a few weeks from that date. A semi-official announcement, however, was made to the effect that publication would be delayed until the resolution of the Government of India consequent upon the Report had been drawn up. This course of delay was a little later alleged by Lord George Hamilton in the House of Commons. Meanwhile the Bombay Land Revenue Bill was drafted and passed with extraordinary haste through the Bombay Legislative Council—a measure designed, according to Bombay Native opinion, to "take the wind out of the sails" of the Famine Commission's findings so far as they involved criticism of the Bombay land revenue system. I say nothing as to the truth of the conjecture, but its prevalence illustrated the mischief that could be done by a temporary suppression of the Report.

An effort was next made by some members of the House of Commons (the Correspondent added) to ensure publication of the Report

at a time which would make discussion upon it practicable in the debate on the Indian Budget, and the request seemed unanswerable in view of the fact that the resolution of the Government of India was at length known to be drafted. But early in August Lord George Hamilton justified a further delay on the ground that although he had received the documents he had not had time to consider them in Council. This unusual explanation rather stimulated than silenced criticism, and further discussion has been provoked by the publication of the Report and the resolution in India, though not in London, shortly after the prorogation of Parliament. Anyone who looks over the summaries brought by the last mail can see that the Anglo-Indian journals, at any rate, had access to the papers two or three weeks ago, and abstracts have also appeared in certain home journals which sometimes play the part of apologists for the India Office. But the Report is still not to be obtained in the ordinary way in London. Incidents of this kind do not pass without remark, nor does it escape notice that in the partisan abstracts which have appeared the recommendations of the Commission are in certain respects duly described as having been "anticipated" by the authorities.

We understand that among recent signatories of the Memorial of the Indian Famine Union are the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Earl Dunmore, Lord Leigh, Lord Stanley of Alderley, Sir W. Comer Petheram, Mr. H. J. Reynolds, C.S.I., Mr. John Burns, M.P., Sir John Leng, M.P., Mr. Herbert Roberts, M.P., Mr. Thomas Shaw, K.C., M.P.; the Principal of Manchester College, the Principal of Mansfield College, the Master of Pembroke College, and the Principal of Somerville College (Oxford); the President of Queen's College, and the Master of Clare College (Cambridge); the Rev. Canon Ainger, Rev. Canon Barnett, Mr. Bramwell Booth, Rev. Dr. Clifford, Rev. Dr. Glasse, Rev. Canon Gore, Rev. J. Page Hopps, Rev. Canon Knox-Little, Rev. F. B. Meyer, Rev. Dr. Rigg, Archdeacon Sinclair, Rev. T. Spurgeon, and Archdeacon Wilson; Sir Arthur Arnold, Mr. J. Passmore Edwards, Mr. J. Seymour Keay, Mr. George Meredith, Sir H. Gilzean-Reid, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Robinson Souttar, Mr. Herbert Spencer, Miss "Edna Lyall," Mrs. Bramwell Booth, the Countess of Carlisle, Mrs. Max Muller, Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, Madame Sarah Grand, and the Countess of Warwick; the Chairman of the Blackburn Chamber of Commerce, and the Chairman of the Cardiff Chamber of Commerce.

The Secretary of State for India has received the following telegram from the Viceroy, dated September 21:—

Rainfall has been generally confined to Southern India and Burma; elsewhere only scattered showers. Apparent cessation of monsoon causes some anxiety. Prospects have improved in Madras, and now reported fair; the same Bengal, where, however, there has been extensive damage by floods in places in consequence of heavy rain last week. Crop prospects good in North-West Provinces generally, but more rain is needed in Central Doab and parts Oudh. In South Punjab, Rajputana, unfavourable conditions during past week have intensified, and crops are withering over large area. Grain crops in Gujerat, Deccan, also in urgent need of more rain, though cotton still promises well. Rain is wanted generally everywhere, but a cyclone now crossing Orissa coast may improve situation. Prices are rising gradually, though no change of any importance in Bombay yet. Owing to unfavourable outlook number of famine relief recipients shows a decrease of 13,000 only. Number of persons in receipt of relief:—Bombay, 341,000; Bombay Native States, 25,000; Baroda, 25,000; Hyderabad, 6,000; Madras, not yet reported; Central India States, 1,000; Mysore, 1,000; total, 409,000.

Rain is wanted generally everywhere, prices are rising, and the outlook is unfavourable. These are ominous words, especially at this season. The famine, it is to be feared, is no more "over" than the war.

A correspondent writes:—In your issue of September 6 you say Lord Curzon will have to put a check on those of his subordinates who think they see in technical instruction an instrument to oust, or at any rate to discourage, secondary and higher education in India. If their real object is to do good to India let them carefully note what Sir John Gorst said on technical instruction in this country at the British Association the other day. He said:—

It is in this branch of education that Great Britain is most behind the rest of the world; and the nation in its efforts to make up the lost ground fails to recognise the fact that real technical instruction (of whatever type) cannot possibly be assimilated by a student unless a proper foundation has been laid previously by a thorough grounding of elementary and secondary instruction.

If that is the case for the people of this country it is evident that for technical instruction to be of any use in India Indian students should be given a thorough secondary and higher education.

The Madras journals received by last mail show how influential and comprehensive was the great meeting held at the Victoria Public Hall, Madras, on Sept. 2 to consider a memorial to the Government of India on the inequitable nature of the Financial Contract so far as it affects Madras. The Hon. A. J. Yorke, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Member of the Legislative Council, presided. The "Madras Mail" says:—

Europeans, Hindus, and Mussalmans, the mercantile, the professional, and the trading classes were one and all represented to an extent which is rarely seen in connexion with a public movement to represent a grievance in this country. . . . The Chamber of Commerce, the Trades Association, the Bar, the Attorneys' Association, the Vakils' Association, the Indian Mercantile and Trading community—all testified by the presence of prominent representatives to the wide and general interest felt in the movement by all that is best and most intelligent in the non-

official world of Madras. . . . And if the official world was not represented, owing to the character of the meeting as one of public protest against official action in the highest quarters, we may be sure that it was not from any want of real sympathy with the movement itself, for we know that the Local Government and the Provincial officials generally must feel the injustice and unsatisfactoriness of the present financial arrangements as much as, if not more than, the public itself.

From the details of the report, and from previous action on the part of the Local Government, it is quite clear that our contemporary does not in the least particular overstate the importance of the meeting or the breadth of its representative character.

A fortnight ago (Sept. 13) we quoted part of the reply of the Government of India to a recent remonstrance of the Governor in Council, denying the truth of certain allegations, and in particular stating that they were "not aware that at any time any attempt ever has been made to establish them by examination of the facts and figures bearing upon them." We could not imagine that the Madras Government had omitted such an elementary duty. The Memorial adopted at the meeting sets forth that "it is an unquestionable fact that the percentage of revenue allowed for Provincial purposes is lower in Madras than in any other Province, the percentage being, as far as can be ascertained, as follow: Central Provinces, 52.12; Punjab, 46.02; Bombay, 44.14; Bengal, 40.26; North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 30.88; Madras, 28.60." These figures represent the facts, or they do not: it is now for the Government of India to admit them or to rectify them. It is in any case perfectly clear that Madras has been bled very drastically, and has been kept financially alive only by occasional injections of supplementary lakhs. How hopeless it is for the Province to conduct its business in this exhausted condition is apparent in the Memorial and in the speeches delivered in support of it; but the Government of India ought to have recognised this without being told so by a public meeting of remonstrance. The Viceroy, replying to an address from the Madras Chamber of Commerce last December, acknowledged the existence of the "widespread feeling" now voiced so emphatically, and stated that "this is a subject which we are now occupied in examining with the Secretary of State, and which the Government of India has no desire to approach in any but a generous spirit." Very well; but the examination seems to take rather a long time, and meantime the country is suffering painfully while the authorities at Whitehall and Calcutta are coming to "generous" conclusions on their plight.

Mr. G. Subramania Iyer, who has devoted special study to the subject, set forth the miserable history of the Provincial Contracts. Mr. Ananda Charlu enforced Mr. Iyer's argument, and cited opinions of high officials as to the remedies for the bad system. Mr. G. L. Acworth gave the view of the producers throughout the province—one of the very ablest of the speeches on the occasion. Mr. Eardley Norton spoke with authority on the mischievous results on the working of the administration of justice. The Memorial quotes from a speech of Sir Arthur Havelock's in the Legislative Council in April, 1898:—

It appears to me that the contract system, so called, is bad in itself. It is demoralising to the Provincial and Supreme Governments. It is bad in that each revision that takes place has a terribly disturbing and dislocating effect on the Local Administration, especially in the important department of Public Works, to which the pruning knife has to be suddenly and ruthlessly applied. It is demoralising to the Provincial Government, because it tends to impair the sympathetic co-operation between the Supreme and Provincial Governments, which is so desirable, and because it tempts the Provincial Government in its financial relations with the Supreme Government, which is master of the situation, to have recourse to the tactics of the weak. When we are well off, we try to hide our money and spend it recklessly lest the Supreme Government should lay hands upon it. When we are poor, we try to give undue emphasis to our poverty. The system is demoralising to the Supreme Government because it relieves that Government from the consequence of extravagance.

Sir Arthur says "the Contract system, so-called," and "the Supreme Government is master of the situation." "So-called," indeed; for the Local Government have no share in the bargain! Whoever heard of such a "contract" before? The Memorial shows how the public bodies "are cruelly starved," how "the police force is lamentably insufficient in quantity and dangerously unsatisfactory in

quality," with the result of an "excessive amount of crime," how "the provision of Primary Education is cramped and stunted for want of money," and so on in all other departments. Clearly, as Mr. Acworth said, "the policy of the Government of India really stultifies itself, because if we were allowed more money it would probably get more"—and that with a vast improvement of the condition of the province. We fear Mr. Iyer is only too correct in his forecast: "for myself" he said, "I see no prospect of what we call fair and liberal treatment being accorded to Madras any more than to other Provinces which have suffered more than Madras has done during the last five years." The only course is to bring all pressure to bear on the extravagant policy of the Supreme Government.

In our issue of August 16, we commented on the purpose and machinery of the Australian Immigration Restriction Bill. The intention of the Ministry appears to be to exclude "undesirable immigrants" only, and the Bill is framed in general terms so as to avoid offence to England or to any friendly foreign Government. Mr. Barton, according to the Melbourne correspondent of the "Times" (Sept. 13), has expressed the willingness of the Government to accept an amendment substituting any foreign language for the English language in the educational test proposed. Of course, there is no desire, as Mr. Deakin stated, "to exclude Scandinavians, Germans, or other white people." The object is to draw the line against "Asiatics." The Labour party, however, the Sydney correspondent of the "Times" tells us (Sept. 13), wants "to stop all immigration, no matter whence, so that wages may be kept up from want of sufficient labour." It "dislikes the idea of immigrants from the United Kingdom as much as from elsewhere."

We are glad to observe that the "Englishman" (Sept. 2) stands up for the British Indian emigrant. It says—

It is not true that the Natives of India as a class are uncivilised, that they have no religion or moral codes, or that they are anything but peaceable and orderly in their behaviour. . . . Every Hindu who crosses the seas proves by the mere fact that he has had the courage and intelligence to break loose from the prejudices which in the past have done so much to retard the progress of his race. He is eager, active, and adventurous, without losing his respect for law and authority—the very qualities most needed in the opening up of a new country.

The "Englishman," indeed, thinks that, apart from all considerations that may be called sentimental, "it may be shown that it is to the best interests of Australia to admit Indian emigrants." The remedy, it points out, lies "in the wise application of domestic, and not of prohibitive, legislation." The Bill is not yet passed. The Melbourne correspondent of the "Times" (Sept. 21) reports that Mr. Barton declares the Government will drop the Bill "if the amendment favouring direct prohibition were carried as against the imposition of an education test."

The operation of the Indian Tariff Act of 1899 should guarantee an Indian interest in M. Yves Guyot's little volume on "The Sugar Question in 1901," which has just been translated into English by M. Jules Hedeman (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd.). Sir Neville Lubbock, who contributes a preface, makes just "recognition of the very clear manner in which he (M. Guyot) has explained the intricate details of what is probably at once the most complicated, as well as the most absurd, instance of protective fiscal legislation existing in the world." Sir Neville means the existing system of sugar taxation in France; but M. Guyot also deals incidentally, for comparative purposes, with the analogous state of things in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, with large references to Great Britain and the United States. The brochure shows in detail the process whereby, as Sir Neville aptly puts it, "the French Legislature extracts £4,000,000 annually from the pockets of French taxpayers as a contribution to enrich some 350 sugar growers." It is a sufficiently absurd business, and M. Guyot exposes it unsparsingly. The mass of figures that he handles so lightly may repel some readers, but at all events they may test his exposition here and there and give weight to his conclusions on the results. If the preposterous and oppressive could be killed by argument, there ought now at least to be an end of it.

The French system rests on the bounties on production granted by the laws of 1884, and on the direct bounties on exportation granted by the law of 1897. There are in France 339 factories and 36 refineries. Of the factories 282, or 82 per cent., are found in five Departments (Aisne, Nord, Somme, Pas-de-Calais, and Oise), and the same Departments also give 82 per cent. of the sugar manufactured; the other 80 odd Departments have the pleasure of supporting the sugar industry of these favoured five. Is it true that the agriculture of France depends on beetroot? Why, only three hectares grow beetroot as against 100 for wheat; only 16 as against 100 planted with vines; only one as against 700 of cultivated soil in France. Never since 1879 has the sugar export "amounted to 4 per cent. of the whole exports of our special trade." As M. Guyot says in reference to another aspect of the case, "it is political economy à la Panurge." In summary:—

To stimulate production, to arrest consumption, to disturb commerce; to consider the act of getting up prices, at which the whole legal machinery works, an offence; to bring about a fall in prices by an exaggerated production combined with diminished outlets; to create in a democratic country an artificial industry which hardly counts 400 employers; to put on the shoulders of the consumer a tax, the amount of which is double the price of the commodity, and of which nearly a third is going into the pockets of sugar manufacturers; lastly, to place that industry at the mercy of the financial policy of foreign countries—such is the system of the legislation of 1884.

We add M. Guyot's demands by way of solution of the problem:—

- (1) The suppression of bounties.
- (2) The reduction of the home consumption duty to 30 francs—i.e., to be equal to the value of the commodity itself; the suppression of the refinery tax of 4 francs, and the manufacturing tax of 1 franc.
- (3) The prompt adherence of the Government to a conference which will abolish the bounties in every country, which will prevent England from imposing countervailing duties, and which will do away with those already existing in the United States.
- (4) The guarantee of liberty of transactions on all markets and exchanges, with the repeal of article 419.

That is Article 419 of the Penal Code, a century-old absurdity, obsolete except for occasional harassment—like the Bombay Regulation of 1827 raised from the dead to control the Natus. M. Guyot, we suspect, has still a longish period of agitation before him.

We record with much regret the rather sudden death of Sir Charles E. Bernard, K.C.S.I., at Chamonix, where he had gone on holiday, at the premature age of 64. The son of a medical practitioner at Clifton, Bristol, he was educated at Rugby and passed through Addiscombe and Haileybury into the Bengal Civil Service. He rose steadily with an extremely wide experience in all the important departments of the Indian Government, to be at last Chief Commissioner of Burma. On his retirement from the Service in 1888, he was appointed Secretary in the Revenue and Statistics Department of the India Office—a post that he held till March last.

Mr. J. M. Parikh, Barrister-at-Law, will address meetings on Indian questions as follows:—
 December 15th—At a Church Society off Harrow Road, at 8.30 p.m.
 „ 22nd—At South Place Institute, at 4 p.m.
 January 13th—Before the Congregational Church Society, Anerley.
 „ 29th—At the Church, Pelly Road, Plaistow, Essex.

In the third paragraph of the letter printed under the heading "Land Assessments and Middlemen," in our last issue (p. 139), "sowcar" was, by a printer's error, substituted for "sarkar."

Remittances on India for 40 lakhs were on Wednesday offered for tender by the India Council, and applications amounting to Rs. 9,94,45,000 were received at 1s. 3d. and 31-32nds, and 1s. 4d. The following amounts in bills were allotted—viz., Rs. 26,61,000 on Calcutta, Rs. 6,98,000 on Bombay, and Rs. 6,41,000 on Madras, all at an average of 1s. 3.999d. Tenders at 1s. 3d. and 31-32nds will receive about 4 per cent. Later the Council sold bills for Rs. 1,00,000 on Calcutta at 1s. 4d. Last week remittances for Rs. 35,45,000 were sold for £235,896, making the total disposed of from April 1 to Tuesday night Rs. 8,95,78,653, producing £5,946,147. Next week 40 lakhs will again be offered.

THE REPORT OF THE FAMINE COMMISSION.

THE delay in the issue of the Famine Commission's Report reflects little credit on those who are responsible for it. It was signed as long ago as May 8; but days lengthened into weeks, and weeks into months, and yet it had not reached the public. On July 25, Lord George Hamilton, replying to Mr. Swift MacNeill, said that he did not think it would be possible to issue the Report in time for the discussion on the Indian Budget. The official excuse for the delay was the need of waiting for the Resolution of the Government of India. Among the Indian public another reason for deferring publication was widely believed. It was hinted that the Report contained some drastic criticism of the methods of the Bombay Government, and that the delay was intended to give that Government an opportunity of anticipating criticism by legislation, so that when the suggestions of the Commissioners were published, they might have already lost their sting. The haste with which the Bombay Land Revenue Bill was hurried through gave some colour to these surmises. On August 8, Lord George Hamilton informed Mr. Field that he had received the Report of the Famine Commission a few days before, together with the comments of the Indian Government; but he required time to consider them in Council. Under date August 31, the Resolution of the Indian Government appeared as a supplement to the "Gazette of India." But at the time of writing (September 26) the Blue-book has not even yet been published.

Nevertheless we are able to give in our present issue a running analysis of the Report which, after a brief introduction, discusses first the relief administration and the Famine Codes and then, in more summary fashion, a limited though valuable series of "protective" measures. The earlier portion contains some recommendations of great importance, such as those suggesting the abolition of a minimum wage for the able-bodied on relief works, and the enlistment of non-official agency in the distribution of relief. In towns the officials should associate themselves with a committee of townspeople, "and the heads of village society should be referred to for advice in admitting their fellow-villagers to relief." The Commissioners think also that the establishment of relief-works may be delayed till there is clear evidence of the existence of distress, provided that everything is ready for the starting of works at once. To this end they suggest the preparation of plans long beforehand, and even the accumulation of tools. Nor is it among the least noteworthy features of the Report that they recommend the establishment of small village relief works wherever possible in place of the large centres hitherto preferred. A summary of the main recommendations will be found in "Notes and News." Upon the whole, they have been anticipated in a remarkable way by non-official critics.

The Report passes a very severe judgment on the Bombay Land Revenue system. It is, indeed, declared that the amount of the land-tax is light, and that the proportion of the produce taken is small, but the rigidity of the collection is strongly condemned. The indebtedness of the cultivators is noted, it being estimated that only one-fifth are out of debt, while at least one-fourth have lost their lands. As to the cause of this, the Commission has no doubt. "The rigidity of the revenue system forced them into debt, while the valuable property which they held made it easy to borrow." Various recommendations are made to avert the ruin of the peasantry, such as the arrangement for the payment of the mortgagee's claim by instalments, or the handing over of the holding to the mortgagee for a term of years. In the case of holdings in which the nominal owner has no longer a real interest, it is suggested that those who actually possess the land should

be compelled to record their names. The very strong remarks of the Commission on the indebtedness of the peasantry give some colour to the view that recent legislation was intended to anticipate their verdict, but their remedies are very different from those of the Bombay Government. The Commission declares that the rayats have been compelled to borrow by the stringency of the revenue-collection, and have been able to borrow because they held a valuable security. The Bombay Government propose to use that stringency as a means of taking away this valuable security from defaulters, and thus to increase the difficulty of borrowing, while maintaining that rigidity of collection which makes borrowing needful.

There is another point in connexion with the Bombay Land Revenue which calls for notice. The Commission insists with great force on the need of putting heart into the people; but the treatment of remissions of revenue by the Bombay Government is not calculated to have that effect. It is true that in the famine-stricken area as a whole, only two-thirds of the land revenue was collected, and nowhere save in Berar was the collection too stringent. But in some Provinces the concession was not announced till long after the Famine was established. In fact, the revenue spoken of as remitted or suspended should rather have been described as "not collected." Thus the encouragement which would have been given to the rayats, if the amount allowed had been made known in the early days of the Famine, was lost. In Bombay this was in great measure due to the practice of only granting remissions after individual enquiry—a practice which deprived the concession of all its grace, and threw immense power into the hands of the village officials. "The action of the Bombay Government," says the Report, "was directly in conflict with the principles which we consider to be vital in times of famine."

In regard to the terrible mortality in Gujerat, the Commissioners are no less decided in their remarks. They say:—

But making all allowances, it is not possible to dissociate the mortality from the famine or to regard it as inevitable. We have no doubt that the mortality in the period up to May would have been less had more works been opened near the people's homes in the Kaira and the Panch Mahals districts, and had the provisions of the Famine Code in regard to the distribution of gratuitous relief in the villages been acted upon with due liberality.

Moreover, the great mortality from cholera might have been avoided had there been a scheme of village works in reserve, so that the people might have been returned to their homes, and the large aggregations broken up. Individual devotion and self-sacrifice among the local officers did not make up for the want of forethought and pre-arrangement by the Government.

In Part III of the Report the Commission make several suggestions for the improvement of the condition of the agricultural classes, such as "greater elasticity in revenue collection, the establishment of agricultural banks; the encouragement of land improvement; the expenditure of a larger share of State funds on irrigation works, and generally wider attention to measures for increasing the knowledge, the intelligence, and the thrift of cultivators." Now it is not a little remarkable that all the SPECIFIC items in this list, taken from the Resolution of the Government of India, have been for years urged on the authorities by the Indian National Congress. The need of elasticity in revenue collection, of the establishment of agricultural banks, and of greater proportional expenditure on irrigation, have been the subject of resolutions in the National Congress for years past, and year after year. But the advice was ignored, and it was fashionable for a time to brand the advisers as seditious. It was considered an impertinence for Indians to advise the Indian Government in matters relating to India. And now the same advice comes from another quarter, written in letters of blood. How absurd is it to declare that famines in India are inevitable while the Government refuses to listen to the opinions of the people or to put the recommendations of their leaders into practice! It remains to be seen whether the same recommendations when they come from the Government's own Commission will have a better chance of adoption.

NOTES FROM BOMBAY.

THE ANGLO-INDIAN PRESS AND LORD G. HAMILTON.

MR. COTTON AND THE TEA PLANTERS.

BOMBAY PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE.

[FROM AN INDIAN CORRESPONDENT.]

BOMBAY, September 7.

The mail having brought the full text of Lord George Hamilton's ecstatic speech on the elasticity of the Indian revenues and the wondrous recuperative powers of the Indian people, it seems that criticism thereon will be more severe than when a summary reached the country through Reuter. To-day's "Times of India" has set the ball rolling. Its analysis of the speech is as fair as could be conceived, despite the well-known tendency of that journal to tread as gently on his Lordship's toes as possible. If Lord George Hamilton wishes to see himself as his best friends see him, it is to be hoped he will carefully read the article just referred to, as well as the one which lately appeared in the "Pioneer" on the same subject. He seems to have a peculiar knack of constructing castles in the air which are no sooner built than they collapse. But why all these meaningless phrases and shibboleths? Why all this thumping of the big drum of official optimism? Why all this bombast on nothing in particular? Evidently Lord George prefers to live in a house of his own construction which is so designed as to be impenetrable to outside light and fresh air. He does not mind outside criticism, however scathing and however just, so long as the permanent officials at Westminster surround him and he is able to rely on their knowledge and infallibility. Outside criticism, living and genuine, is distasteful. No wonder that in such an environment his Lordship, even after more than six years of unlimited autocracy, is exactly where he was when he first assumed office as regards Indian finance and Indian economics. There are those who are above learning.

The planters of Assam are exceeding wroth with the Chief Commissioner. That redoubtable official, whose principal fault in so many eyes is the calling of a spade a spade, has excited the wildest indignation of the tea-planting fraternity by the strictures he has made in his annual report on their behaviour towards the coolies. It is in reality a mortal combat between the David of the oppressed labourers' interests and the Goliaths of the much pampered planting colonies in Assam. The storm which blew over for a time in the Supreme Legislative Council has now burst in all its fury. It will be in the recollection of the reader that Mr. Cotton moved the Imperial Legislature to increase the wages of coolies by a rupee per month. That motion was strenuously, nay hysterically, opposed by the representatives of the planters in the Council. A compromise was effected. The Viceroy, in his desire to lull the storm, weakly yielded to an increase of eight annas which, again, was not to be put into force for the next two years (when the tenure of Mr. Cotton as Chief Commissioner will expire). Angry feelings were thus allowed to subside. But Mr. Cotton seems to have excited them once more by his frank expression of opinion on the general attitude and behaviour of the planters towards the coolies. Whether that behaviour is confined to a few black sheep or whether it is common is the question raised. Perhaps a strong and impartial Commission of Enquiry may settle the point. Meanwhile Mr. Cotton's statements have excited the fury of the planters, and a bitter war is now raging between them. Where it will end remains to be seen. It is the old, old question of the task master and the slave, but in its modernised and refined garb.

The Eleventh Provincial Conference of the Bombay Presidency is to take place on September 14 and 15 in the city of Bombay. Mr. Tahilram Khemchund, C.I.E., of Karachi, and formerly President of the Karachi Municipal Corporation, has been approved as Chairman. He is well known in Sind as a leading lawyer and a man of great public spirit, who has for years been discharging his public duties with unobtrusive modesty. His excellent work in connexion with the Karachi Municipality and in combating plague has won for him the decoration of C.I.E. Under the presidency of such a Chairman the Conference will undoubtedly be a success like its predecessors. The principal topics of discussion will be the Land Revenue Act recently passed, Provincial Contracts, Plague Expenditure and Education.

CHRONICLE OF THE WEEK.

THURSDAY, September 19.—Lord Kitchener, in a telegram of last night from Pretoria, reported a serious disaster to British troops in Natal. On Tuesday three companies of Mounted Infantry, with three guns, under Major Gough, were reconnoitring to the south of Utrecht from De Jager's Drift, in conjunction with the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles under Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart. Gough sighted a body of the enemy, about 300 in number, retiring from Scheepers Nek on Blood River Poort. He made for a ridge overlooking the Poort, at the same time summoning Stewart, who was an hour behind, to co-operate. The Boer move was evidently a trap, for when close to the ridge Gough's force was suddenly attacked, both in front and on the right flank, by a large force of the enemy, and after severe fighting was overcome. The guns were lost, their sights and breech-blocks being first destroyed. Two officers and 14 men were killed, and four officers and about 25 men wounded, while five officers and 150 men were taken prisoners. Stewart fell back on De Jager's Drift. Major Gough and another officer escaped during Tuesday night to De Jager's Drift. They reported that the Boers were over 1,000 strong and were under the command of General Louis Botha. Lord Kitchener sent a report from General French Bat to the Boer Commandant Smuts, who was being hemmed in in the neighbourhood of Tarkastad, about 50 miles south of Stormberg, had rushed a squadron of the 17th Lancers at Elands River Poort, killing three officers and 20 men and wounding Major Sandeman and 30 men.

The body of the murdered President was interred yesterday in the cemetery of Canton, Ohio, in the presence of an enormous assemblage of people, and amid manifestations of mourning which may be said without exaggeration to have extended over the whole civilized world. More than 70,000 persons had gathered at Canton from all parts of the United States to take part in the ceremony. In London the suspension of business was general, and memorial services, attended by vast congregations, were held in Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Saviour's, Southwark, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and many other churches and chapels. Similar services took place in most Cathedral cities and towns throughout the country, in other parts of the Empire, and in many Continental cities.

The Tsar and Tsaritsa, with President Loubet and his party, left Compiegne for Reims by special train at eight o'clock this morning. They alighted at Fresnois, and drove thence in open carriages to the scene of the manoeuvres, where they were met by General Brugere, the Commander-in-Chief, with whom the Tsar had a short conversation. His Majesty then mounted a charger and rode for some distance in advance of his escort, inspecting the troops. Subsequently the Tsar rejoined the rest of the party, who all witnessed from the Fort of Fresnois the closing operations of the manoeuvres. They then drove to Fort de Vitry, where luncheon was served. M. Loubet, in drinking to the Tsar and Tsaritsa and the Russian army, dwelt on the gratification inspired in the French army by the Tsar's presence at the manoeuvres and the interest his Majesty had shown in them. The Tsar, in reply, said the manoeuvres had enabled him to appreciate personally the degree of perfection attained by the French army, and he rejoiced greatly on this account, as it was a ground of legitimate pride for friendly France. He drank to the gallant French army, which it gave him pleasure to regard as a powerful support of the principles of equity upon which reposed general order and the peace and welfare of nations. After the luncheon the Tsar and Tsaritsa, President Loubet, and the other members of the party, drove back to Reims, where they visited the Cathedral and the Hotel de Ville. The town was brilliantly decorated and illuminated. In the evening the Imperial visitors and their host returned to Compiegne.

FRIDAY, September 20.—Lord Kitchener, in a telegram of yesterday, stated that two guns of the "U" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, which had left the Waterworks under an escort of a company of Mounted Infantry, were surrounded by a superior force of the enemy at Vlakfontein, 15 miles south of the Waterworks, and captured. Lieutenant Barry, of the Royal Horse Artillery, was killed. Columns were in pursuit of the enemy. A strict investigation was being made.

The Tsar and Tsaritsa passed a quiet day at Compiegne, taking part in no public function. During the day M. Delcasse had a long conversation with Count Lamsdorff. In the evening a State banquet and soiree were given at the Palace. Although the Tsar had made no response whatever to the invitations of M. Dausset, the President of the Paris Municipality, to visit that capital, the possibility of his coming was still much discussed there, and large crowds of people gathered during the greater part of the day in certain of the principal thoroughfares, in the hope of being able to greet his Majesty.

SATURDAY, September 21.—Lord Kitchener reported that Colonel W. H. Williams captured almost the whole of

Koch's commando to the west of Adenburg yesterday morning, taking 66 prisoners, as well as all the enemy's transport. A report received from Colonel Benson announced that he had captured the Carolina commando 45 miles south-east of Carolina, taking 54 prisoners, including P. J. Botha, 48 wagons, and a large number of Louis Botha's cattle. Kruit-zinger, while endeavouring to force the passage of the Orange River near the Herschell border, rushed the camp of a party of Lovat's Scouts early yesterday morning. He failed to cross the river, but the casualties among the Scouts were heavy, and Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. Andrew Murray, and Captain Murray, his adjutant, were both killed. The Boers managed to carry off a gun, but were promptly followed up, and the gun was recovered in a sharp engagement in which Kruit-zinger lost two killed and 20 prisoners. The casualties at Vlakfontein were approximately reported to be one officer and five men killed, 23 men wounded, and six officers and 100 men "missing." Of the latter, four officers and 95 men had been released in Basutoland, and the wounded were brought into Waterworks. A Cape Town telegram reported an incursion of Boers under Stoffel and Myburgh into the Barkly East district. The commandos of Smuts and Van der Venter were engaged by Colonel Munro on September 12, and driven south-west towards Dordrecht. The 13th Hussars, under Colonel Smithson, engaged a body of Boers on September 11 at Lemonfontein, in the south-east of the Orange River Colony, and captured 11 prisoners, all their ponies, 140 horses, six wagons with their teams of oxen, 200 cattle, and a number of carts, mules, and donkeys.

The Tsar and Tsaritsa, accompanied by President Loubet, arrived at Betheny, and witnessed a review and march-past of four army corps. After the march-past the Imperial visitors were entertained at a luncheon. President Loubet, in drinking the health of the Tsar and Tsaritsa, said the alliance of France and Russia had had time to affirm its character and to bear fruit. It had contributed powerfully to the maintenance of the balance between the forces of Europe. The questions which had arisen had found it watchful and resolute, moderate because it was strong, and won over in advance to settlements inspired by justice and humanity. The Tsar, in reply, said he and the Empress would ever retain the precious memory of those days, so full of impressions profoundly engraved upon their hearts, and should continue to associate themselves with all that concerned friendly France. The ties uniting the two countries had received fresh confirmation in the manifestations of mutual sympathy which had been so eloquently made in France, and had found so warm an echo in Russia. The intimate union of the two Great Powers, animated by the most pacific intentions, who, while able to make their rights respected, did not seek to injure in any way the rights of others, was a precious element of appeasement for the whole of humanity. He drank to the prosperity of France, the friendly and allied nation, and to her gallant army and splendid fleet. Shortly after the luncheon the Tsar and Tsaritsa left in a special train for Kiel, where they were expected to stay for a few days before returning to Russia. According to reports from Paris, the Tsar promised to pay another visit to France, and on that occasion to go to Paris.

MONDAY, September 23.—The trial of Czolgosz on the charge of having murdered President McKinley began at Buffalo. A jury was empanelled without delay. The prisoner pleaded guilty, but at the request of his counsel this was not accepted, and a plea of "Not guilty" was entered. The hearing of evidence was then proceeded with. A proposal for the erection of a monument to Mr. McKinley was taken up with great enthusiasm at Atlanta, Georgia. A New York Correspondent said that President Roosevelt's democratic ways were making him most popular in Washington. The Republican leaders had assured the President that they were ready to give him hearty support; they had made no conditions and had asked for no concessions. As the result of several conferences between the President and General Wood, Governor-General of Cuba, it was determined that a reciprocity agreement between the United States and Cuba should be sent to Congress in December.

The Tsar's visit to France was generally interpreted by the Vienna Press as being a demonstration of an essentially pacific character. A Vienna Correspondent expressed the view that the Franco-Russian Alliance was taking the place of the Triple Alliance as an instrument for the preservation of European peace, and quoted the opinions of Count Albert Apponyi and a leading Vienna journal to the effect that the Triple Alliance had been materially weakened.

TUESDAY, September 24.—The trial of Czolgosz was concluded at Buffalo. He was found guilty of murder in the first degree. A New York Correspondent said that the attempt of the Chicago police to prove that a conspiracy for the assassination of President McKinley was hatched in that city had been a failure. Nine Anarchists were liberated yesterday because no evidence could be found against them,

and Emma Goldman was discharged to-day for the same reason. President Roosevelt held another Cabinet meeting, at which he intimated his purpose of devoting his attention to the question of reciprocity.

Lord Kitchener, in a telegram of yesterday, said that since September 16 the columns had reported 29 Boers killed, 16 wounded, 350 taken prisoners, and 48 surrendered, with the capture of 245 rifles, 17,800 rounds of small-arm ammunition, 55 wagons, 1,000 horses, and 5,500 cattle. The enemy's movements in the Vryheid district had led to the despatch of reinforcements into Natal, where General Lyttelton was dealing with the situation. In the Eastern Transvaal most of the columns were moving to the line to retit. They had met practically no opposition in the Ermelo district. Generals Featherstonhaugh and Kekewich were operating against Kemp to the west of Rustenburg, and Lord Methuen was moving east from Zeerust. By the construction of lines of blockhouses the Gatsrand and Vaal Valley were practically cleared. In the Orange River Colony, General Elliot's columns were near Bethlehem. The country west of the railway and south of Bloemfontein being now practically clear, the columns had crossed to the east, and were following the enemy near Dewetsdorp in conjunction with General C. Knox's force. In Cape Colony, Myburgh and Fouche were near Ladygrey. Smuts, after breaking through the columns, had moved south to near Bedford, followed by Colonels Gorringe and Doran, while Colonel Haig was directing other columns against him. In the south Sचेepers and Theron evaded our forces with great assiduity. The Midland district was quiet. In a telegram of this morning Lord Kitchener said that, according to the latest advices from Natal, the raiding force of Boers appeared to be returning to the east and north-east.

WEDNESDAY, September 25.—The King and Queen, accompanied by Princess Victoria, left Flushing this morning on board the new Royal yacht Victoria and Albert, reached Sheerness about 5 p.m., and travelled by special train to London, arriving at Charing Cross Station at 6.40 p.m. They drove to Marlborough House in a closed carriage, being greeted with hearty cheers as their carriage left the station-yard.

Lord Rosebery was presented with the freedom of the Royal Burgh of Stranraer. In the course of the speech in which he acknowledged the honour, he dwelt on the increased responsibility of municipal bodies nowadays, the improvement in the standard of municipal life, and the need for constant vigilance to preserve municipal purity. Lord Rosebery proceeded to refer to the project of the construction of a tunnel between Great Britain and Ireland, and expressed the opinion that the existence of such a tunnel would work a great change in the relations between the two countries, and would bind them together more effectually than any treaty of union.

A Mafeking despatch of Tuesday stated that on the night of September 18 50 mounted men of the Northumberland Fusiliers proceeded from Lichtenburg to a farm at Duikersfontein with the object of capturing General Delarey, his staff, and family. The farm was rushed next morning, but Delarey had fled overnight; 11 Boers were captured. From Pretoria it was reported that sentence of permanent banishment from South Africa had been pronounced on ten Boer leaders who had been captured since September 15.

THE INDIAN FAMINE COMMISSION.

I.—SUMMARY OF THE REPORT.

The Report of the Indian Famine Commission, which was appointed in December last under the Presidency of Sir Antony MacDonnell, has not yet been issued as a Blue-book, though it was signed on May 8. It has, however, been published in India, and the following is an outline of its contents. The Report consists of three parts, containing respectively, (1) an Introduction, (2) an Examination of the Relief System, and (3) Suggestions for Protective Measures.

I.—INTRODUCTION.

The preliminary chapter points out that during the ninety years preceding the transfer of the government to the Crown India in one part or another suffered from twelve famines and four severe scarcities, while since 1858 there have been seven famines and one severe scarcity in British India. The Orissa famine in 1866 marked a turning-point. The Commission to whose appointment it led laid the foundations of the relief system, which has undergone successive amendments in 1873, 1876, 1880, and 1898. The Commission of 1880, the present report says, recognised to the full the obligation imposed on the State to offer to the necessitous the means of relief in time of famine, but the cardinal principle of the policy laid down was that this relief should be so administered as not to check the growth of

thrift and self-reliance among the people. The Commission of 1898 recommended a more liberal wage and a freer extension of gratuitous relief. But the famine of 1899 occurred before these recommendations had been incorporated in the Codes, and so found the local governments without a settled policy.

Having sketched the scope of their reference, Sir A. Macdonnell and his colleagues call attention to the peculiar circumstances of the famine. In the first place, the failure of the crops was attended by a failure of the water supply and of fodder, which told heavily on men and cattle. In the second place, an unprecedented number of persons came on State relief, the increase being, in the judgment of the Commission, greater than was to be expected from the fact that the famine followed so soon after the preceding famine. In the third place, the famine was marked by a steady and unbroken rise in most provinces in the number relieved. "In certain districts," the Commissioners report, "people in sore need of relief were denied it in the early stages of the famine owing to defective administration; but in the main, and taking the famine period as a whole, the relief distributed was excessive. . . . We have no doubt," they add, "that the excess is to be accounted for by an imperfect enforcement of tests on relief works, by a too ready admission to gratuitous relief, and by a greater readiness on the people's part to accept relief owing to the demoralising influences of the preceding famine."

The total expenditure is estimated at 100 millions of rupees (70 millions on relief works and 30 millions on gratuitous relief), or, if advances and losses of revenue be added, 150 millions of rupees—that is, ten millions sterling. The Commission would make the relief policy cheaper without making it less humane.

II.—THE RELIEF SYSTEM.

Coming to the relief system, and combining narrative with recommendations, the report says recent experience has shown that no part of India, if unprotected by irrigation, can be considered free from the risk of deficient rainfall and consequent failure of harvest. Hence the danger of unpreparedness, against which the safeguards are (1) an efficient system of intelligence, (2) effective programmes of relief works, (3) reserves of establishments, and (4) reserves of seed and plant.

As regards the first of these, the various Administrations were in 1899 "warned in time of the coming pressure"; but it is "of urgent importance in Bombay that the village accountant should be placed under the supervision of the circle inspector, who in his turn should be brought more immediately under the control of the district authorities. The mortality statistics are the gauge of distress as well as of disease, and the present Bombay system keeps the gauge out of the hands of the Collector." District establishments need to be strengthened. Item (2) "is no province were well-considered programmes of public or village works ready at the beginning of the famine." The Commissioners consider it essential not only that public works should be clearly mapped out in advance, but also that full and detailed programmes of village works, whether they are to be conducted by the revenue authorities or by private persons, should be prepared, and that every year enquiry should be made and information recorded as to the private persons able and willing to undertake the construction of such works. Item (3) "It would be easy to multiply instances in which the policy of the local government was hampered by the insufficiency of establishments." The "disasters" due to this cause are said to accentuate the importance of maintaining lists of all persons suitable for employment when the emergency arises. And (4) "the want of tools was felt at the outset not less than the want of establishment." A large reserve of tools should be maintained by the Public Works Department in every province.

EARLY PREPARATIONS.

Dealing next with "lessons of experience," the Commissioners give first place to the maxim, "Put heart into the people." It is scarcely possible, they say, to overstate the tonic effect upon the people of early preparations—an early enlistment of non-official agency, liberal advances in the earliest stages, and early action in regard to suspensions of revenue. Accordingly the report bids the authorities proceed from the beginning on a comprehensive plan and publish it, make liberal preparations in advance of pressure, wait on events when once preparations have been made, bring from the outset influential non-official interests into touch with and support of the official action, appoint a Famine Commissioner where the head of the local administration cannot be his own famine commissioner, and create from the outset a thoroughly efficient accounts and audit establishment. Under the first of these recommendations the report says that in Bombay (unlike the Central Provinces) "the apparent absence of a clear appreciation on the part of its officers as to what the real administrative policy of the Bombay Government was led to hesitation and misunderstandings." The remarks on the report on the extreme importance of private agency are still more emphatic. "We were struck by the little use made of non-official agency in every province in the recent famine." The appointment of Famine Commissioners was recommended in 1880, but no provincial government carried out the recommendation, and "in Gujerat the Chief Secretary's ill-defined position led to misunderstanding and failure in action."

"Make your preparations and wait on events," the report says, "it passes on to enumerate the danger-signals of famine—the contraction of private charity indicated by the wandering of paupers, the contraction of credit, feverish activity in the grain trade, restlessness shown in an increase of crime, unusual movements of flocks and herds in search of pasturage, and, lastly, unusual wandering of people. The last of these warnings is a sure sign that famine has begun. Then the Intelligence Department must bestir itself, especially to get early and correct estimates

of crop failure. But what is to be the order of the relief measures? The report proceeds to sketch a "standard plan"—its main recommendation is that early and liberal advances should be given for the construction or repair of wells and other village improvements. "This," it says, "was recommended by the Commission of 1898, but little action was taken in any province. It is only necessary here to say that we attach special importance to advances at this early stage." Moreover liberal advances should be given for the purchase of seed for the ensuing crop, and enquiries as to suspension of revenue should be begun early. In the organisation of private charity, the district officer should take the lead at the earliest stage. Coming to the important question of test works, the report makes a series of detailed recommendations. The power to open test works, it says, should rest with the Collector, and they should be managed, if possible, by an officer of the Public Works Department. "At no stage of relief is the vigilance of the Revenue authorities more incessantly required, as experience in the Bombay Decan shows." Again, the test should be stringent though not repellent, and—a recommendation of vital importance—"labour should be the only test. Neither a distance test nor compulsory residence should be imposed." The Commission agrees with the Commission of 1898 that payment should be strictly by results without a minimum, but differs in holding that in no case should power be given to earn beyond the normal Code wage. "When it is desirable to permit additional earnings the time has come for conversion into regular relief works." "In the last famine," the report adds, "in Ajmer the tests were admittedly too lenient; in Bombay they were unduly prolonged. The result in the former case was extravagance, in the latter inadequate relief." On test works, moreover, the Commission recommends a slight increase in the task, except "in the case of metal-breaking, for which special practice is required."

The second stage of famine begins when the numbers attending relief works indicate that further relief measures are necessary. There should be no delay in converting test works into relief works directly they have served their purpose as test works. "Conversion should take the form of the addition of relief to dependents either by cooked food or by cash doles." The Commission regrets "the unfortunate delay in conversion in the Bombay Decan, where in some cases the test works were maintained for three or four months, and were only then converted when the Chief Secretary came round on tour." Simultaneously with conversion the distribution of gratuitous relief should begin. "We were struck," the Commission says, "by the failure of the local officers in Bombay to take the action in this respect which the Government required—a failure which was one cause of the great mortality in Gujerat." On the other hand, there was undue liberality in the Central Provinces. "It is necessary at the outset," the report adds, in a significant paragraph, "to be strict in the administration of gratuitous relief, but the existing categories of persons entitled to such relief are sufficiently strict, and while we should strongly condemn as demoralising any relaxation in this matter, we attach great importance to bringing on gratuitous relief at an early stage for all those who, on a fair interpretation of the rules, are entitled to it."

ADVANTAGES OF VILLAGE WORKS.

Until 1898 relief works were classified as "large" and "small." The Commission of that year suggested a revised classification of "public" or "village" works. The present report combines the two in a new scheme of (1) public works, subdivided into (a) large and (b) small departmental works, the former containing one or more "charges" of 5,000 people each, and (2) private works, subdivided into (a) non-departmental or civil and (b) private works. The last class consists of works constructed entirely by private individuals or communities, and is further subdivided into "aided" and "unaided" works, the terms depending upon whether the State does or does not bear part of the cost. The Commission holds that there is no more important question in the scheme of famine relief than that which has to do with the respective merits of public and village works, and it lays "great stress on the fact that there is a large and influential body of opinion in favour of village works, as being more economical, more useful, less exposed to outbreaks of cholera and epidemic disease, more easy to control, less open to the objections of interference with the labour market, of neglect of agricultural dwellings and stock, and of hindrance to the early resumption of agricultural activity, and less likely to loosen moral and domestic ties." The Commission points out other advantages as well, and is in favour of village works over departmental works in general. But in a district where a sufficient number of them can be found, it would save them from undue "attractiveness" by insisting on a lower wage, a higher task, no relief to dependents, and, if necessary, some system of individual selection. Also the scheme of works must be prepared in advance. "We believe that had such a scheme been in reserve in Gujerat, for instance, much of the panic and some of the mortality would have been avoided." Villages may with advantage be grouped together. "We think that the good results of village works were heavily discounted in the recent famine by the universal absence of a programme, and that in consequence the system has not yet been given a proper trial." This part of the report concludes with a reiteration of the advantages of private works, both aided and unaided, at all stages, and especially at the beginning of distress, and the need for their encouragement by periodical enquiry in ordinary times and by advances and by personal influence in times of famine.

Dealing next with the number of public works required, the Commission observes that many factors enter into the problem. Harsh conditions are not necessary where establishments are strong enough to enforce the performance of a sufficient task. Much, again, depends on density of population, the character of the people, and the previous famine history of the particular

tract. The report refers to the policy adopted in the Broach district of Gujerat as exemplifying (1) the danger of relying on safeguards where subordinates are not efficient and the weakly gangs have not been separated, and (2) the danger attaching to a general reduction of wages, which affects the weak and the needy more than those who do not require relief. The real safeguard is "first to separate the weakly gangs, and then to raise the task for the able-bodied, or, in extreme cases, to draft the able-bodied to works at some distance from their homes." But drafting needs to be carefully done as is shown by the warning example of Hissar, whence 11,000 persons were drafted to the Jhelum canal, of whom cholera carried off 1,000. Panic is said to have caused 1,260 to desert, and more than 2,000 "cannot be accounted for."

CONTROL OF WORKS.

As for the control of works, the moral of experience is to have strong establishments well under control, and the Collector supreme in his district. Officers of the Public Works Department are not to interfere with the Collector's authority and responsibility in matters affecting relief. The Commission recommends the appointment for each "charge" of a special civil officer of good position and education, who is to receive not less than 50 rupees a month and discharge an enormous variety of duties. A lower class of man, upon a smaller salary, was appointed special civil officer in Bombay, and often proved unfit even for his restricted position there. The Commission renews the recommendation of 1898, which was neglected in Bombay, that the number of persons employed on a "charge" system much of the idleness in the Deccan, which led to the penal wage and much of the panic during the cholera epidemic in Gujerat. "To keep the workers up to their work requires the constant efforts of an establishment to whom, by daily intercourse, they are accustomed, and the steady control of officials whom they know is the only means of averting or restraining panic." For purposes of discipline the numbers in a gang should not be more than 100 nor less than 50. Members of the same family or inhabitants of the same village should be ganged together. The Commission adds that a full establishment is specially required for the working of what it believes to be the proper system on relief works, for it strongly recommends the abolition of the minimum wage, which it finds both superfluous and demoralising in the case of the able-bodied, and proposes instead the "New Code system" of pure payment by results, supplemented by relief to dependents, with a maximum limit to daily earnings. But the condition of success are that relief is started in time, that the establishment is strong enough to keep the people to their work, that the weakly persons are put in separate gangs, that there is no delay in admitting new-comers, whose work should be specially light for the first few days, that the tasks are elastic and suited to the different classes of soil, and that a fixed wage is given on rest-days and days when it is impossible to work, as also on occasions when the absence of a worker is unavoidable. Inspecting officers should "devote special attention to the formation of weakly gangs."

On the whole the Commission finds that the tasks last year were fair. It would raise the standard for Class 1—that is, three-quarters of the task commonly performed by labourers—except on village works where, it thinks, the full task commonly performed by labourers should be required. Class 2 does not more than two-thirds and Class 3 not more than one-third of the task of Class 1. The tasking should be carried down as near the individual as may be. New comers should be temporarily placed in specially small gangs. In Bombay, not knowing that they were exempt from fines for the first few days, they often over-worked their strength. In the New Code system there is no time for fines, the task is to be carefully regulated from time to time, especially in the hot weather. But the "key to the whole position" is to place the weakly persons in separate gangs. A system of daily measurements and payments is to be introduced in order to avoid vicarious punishments, working children being no longer privileged but "placed, in the matter of earning their wage, on the same footing as adults." Payment, as a rule, is to be made to the individual and in cash.

The Commission proceeds to draw up a new scale of wages on public works, starting from the rate of 1883 that "while the duty of the Government is to save life, it is not bound to maintain the labouring community at its normal level of comfort." The report rather asserts than shows that the wage was unduly raised by the Commission of 1898. It holds that workers should not be provided with the means to save, and recommends, as against the Commission of 1898, that women should be paid at a less rate than men. To be treated as adults children in future must be over fourteen years old (the present limit being twelve years), while the interval between the ages of ten and fourteen will be called working children, and it is also being added that if the appearance of the working children suggests that they have not been receiving their full share of the family meal they should be paid for a time by means of cooked food. Under certain conditions a rest-day wage will be given, and the penal wage will disappear. A considerably lower wage is to be given on village works, and under no circumstances is it to be possible to earn "more than the full wage."

The recommendations of the Commission regarding gratuitous relief have been to some extent anticipated. It began too late to be needed by being too profuse in the Bombay Presidency. The report recommends that a poorhouse should not accommodate more than 500 persons. The maximum attendance at the Ajmer poorhouse last year was 3,400. Stress is laid on the value of early gratuitous relief in villages, which saves expense and suffering later on. Lists should be made out of persons eligible for gratuitous relief, and in the preparation of the lists more reliance should be placed upon non-official agency.

MEDICAL AND SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS.

Having discussed the "rains policy," the closure of relief, the treatment of aboriginal tribes, and immigration from Native States, the report devotes a special section to medical and sanitary arrangements. The difficulty of collecting sufficient trained establishment, it says, was one of the greatest difficulties of the recent famine. Events in all provinces, especially in Bombay, showed the unfortunate results occasioned by delay in the appointment of hospital assistants. "We consider," the Commissioners observe, "that the authority of the Sanitary Department in all matters affecting the public health was duly recognised in the recent famine, and that the want of success which was noticeable in most provinces, but particularly in Bombay, was entirely due to deficiency in the numbers and the quality of medical subordinates." The report recommends that a list of qualified candidates should always be maintained by the chief medical officer, that higher salaries should be offered, and that payments should be punctually made. In some cases hospital assistants were not paid for months, and were put to great hardship. "We also think it very probable," the Commissioners say, "that where Native practitioners can be employed they will be found more acceptable to the people than superannuated pensioned medical subordinates, or the young men to whom in its straits the Administration is forced to look, and whose professional attainments are often grossly deficient, the notions they have picked up in their old occupations as druggists' shops." An important section of the report deals with the mortality due to famine, where the Commission remarks the difficulty of accuracy. Having reviewed the death-rates in the various provinces, the Commission ascertains the total number of deaths actually recorded in 1900 in the famine-stricken districts, and contrasts it with the decennial average of recorded deaths for the same areas, arriving at the conclusion that the toll was in some instances, as in the Punjab, one and a quarter million and a quarter lives." Of these it is estimated were not British subjects. Of the total excess mortality the Commissioners consider that at least one-fifth was due to cholera. With reference to the great mortality of cattle in the famine, the report recommends (1) the stimulation of the growth of fodder crops during the period of distress, especially by the grant of loans; (2) the importation of fodder, and the grant of loans to purchase it; (3) the depopulation of cattle to the forests; and (4) the preservation of cattle in camps. As to the importation of fodder, the report points out that neither of the usual conditions of success—namely, that the railroads should be proclaimed at a very early date, and that the railways should be able to cope with the traffic—was fulfilled in the recent famine. "It is in evidence that large stocks of fodder, State and private, were kept waiting at the railway stations for want of waggons to carry them away." This recommendation is followed up in the section on railways, where it is stated that, though the railways as a whole did their best under conditions of severe trial, the results were not adequate to the urgent necessities of the time. "To increase the rolling stock is, in our opinion, one of the most urgent questions of famine insurance."

III.—PROTECTIVE MEASURES.

The remarks of the Famine Commission upon suspensions and remissions of land revenue and advances by the Government may be noticed conveniently in connexion with the closing chapter on protective measures. Suspensions and remissions are necessary, the report says, in ordinary times, but in time of famine they should be specially liberal. "Any harshness in the collection of land revenue, particularly in a ryotwari province, goes far to reduce, if it does not obliterate, the gratitude which the people feel towards the Government for their rescue from starvation." The Commission lays stress on two conditions which should be observed in time of famine—(1) Very early enquiries should be made regarding suspensions, as a measure of moral strategy and to put heart into the people; and (2) official orders in the matter should be widely made known before the first instalments of revenue or rent fall due, in order that the people may know how they stand and may not be exposed to harassment and loss. In the famine of last year suspensions are found to have been very liberal, though somewhat late, in the Central Provinces. In Berar, where they amounted to only 2 per cent., they were "altogether insufficient," and were accompanied by enquiry (which the Commission repeatedly and emphatically condemns) into the circumstances of individuals. As for Bombay, "the policy of the Bombay Government in regard to the collection of land revenue is stricter than that of the Government in India." Here part of the revenue was not so much suspended as "not collected," and the action of the authorities is said to have been "directly in conflict with the principles which we consider to be vital in times of famine." And not only were enquiries made into the circumstances of individuals—a practice which opens the door to extortion and corruption—but local officers were restrained by the limit assigned by the Government to the estimates of suspension, especially in Gujerat. "We feel bound," the Commissioners write, "to record our opinion that much misunderstanding and much harassment and loss to the people would have been avoided had the local government fixed definitely at an earlier date what the limit of suspension was actually to be, and had fixed that limit on a liberal consideration of the existing pressure." More recently the Bombay Government has shown more liberality in this respect, though it persists in making personal enquiries. In Ajmer suspensions were liberal, but were not announced early enough. In the Punjab they were liberal, and the Commission remarks here with satisfaction the practical abandonment of the attempt to differentiate between rich and poor revenue-payers where the crop failure had been widespread. The general conclusion is that great liberality

was shown (except in Herar), but avoidable defects in administration detracted from the results.

So too in the case of advances by the Government, the Commission emphasises the importance of their being made at the proper time—for example, for the purchase of seed grain at the beginning of a famine and the purchase of plough cattle and seed in May and June. The report notes with approval two methods adopted in the Central Provinces—namely, the separation of the process of selecting recipients from the process of actually distributing money and the system of taking a joint bond from the cultivators of each village. The Commission finds that advances were on the whole liberal last year, but in consequence of untimely distribution much of the money advanced was not "agriculturally effective." These conclusions are carried further in the chapter on protective measures, which begins by raising two questions concerning the land revenue—(1) whether the land revenue demand in the various provinces is fair in amount, and (2) whether it is sufficiently elastic to be payable year by year without risk of causing indebtedness. Roughly, it may be said that the answer to the first question is "Yes" and to the second "No." The pressure of the land revenue is found to be extremely moderate in the Central Provinces, moderate in Ajmer and Delhi, and full in the Deccan districts. Of the last named the Commission says:—"We have no doubt that it cannot be collected in short years without forcing the rayats into debt." The pressure is also found to be full in Gujerat. The report says that on the whole, except in Bombay, where it is full, the incidence of land revenue is low and moderate in ordinary years and should not be in itself a cause of indebtedness. A footnote adds that the demand was far more severe in the time of the Moguls. On the other hand, as cultivators fail to lay by in good years in order to meet their obligations in bad years, "there is in adverse years peculiar need in India for elasticity in the demands made on the cultivator, whether these be revenue or rent. Unless, therefore, provision for suspension and remission of revenue and rent (and in the case of rent for a proportionate relief to the receiver of the rent) be an integral part of the revenue system in any province, the cultivator will be forced to borrow on conditions incompatible with his solvency and independence." The use of suspension and remissions do not go to the root of the matter. The true preventive of indebtedness, the report says, is to be found "in the promotion of education, in the development of proper and popular institutions for organised credit and thrift at the very door of the cultivator, in the removal of the causes inherent in the agrarian system of the country, which force the cultivator into debt, and in the advancement of agricultural efficiency in all its branches."

Passing over education as not coming within the reference, the Commissioners give prominence to suspensions and remissions of revenue as a preventive measure of constant application in adverse years. A considerable advance, they say, has been made in this direction in the last twenty years, except in Bombay. Having examined the different rules adopted in different provinces, they lay stress on two conclusions—(1) That it is of cardinal importance to relieve the cultivator, whether he be the revenue-payer himself (as in ryotwari tracts) or the tenant of the revenue-payer (as in zemindari tracts); and (2) that consequently in zemindari tracts the wealth or the poverty of the revenue-payer, who is a rent-receiver should not influence the question of suspension or remission. It is necessary to give relief to him in order to relieve the cultivator. The report refers with disapproval to a suggestion that money-lenders should be excluded from this mode of relief. Apart from the practical difficulties in the way, it says that money-lenders "have their uses, and we think it very bad policy to alienate them from the cultivator, and to put the principal capitalists who are willing or able to finance the cultivator." A detailed scheme is then mapped out in accordance with the principles here laid down.

The Commissioners proceed to recommend the formation of agricultural banks. "We attach the highest importance," they write, "to the establishment of some organisation or method whereby cultivators may obtain, without paying usurious rates of interest and without being given undue facilities for incurring debt, the advances necessary for carrying on their business. Therefore they look forward to the institution of mutual credit associations, founded on the idea that a number of persons by combining together create a new and valuable security which none of them previously possessed as individuals. The rules of the Raiffeisen associations are recommended, "mutatis mutandis." The associations would exist only for agricultural purposes, and the State might finance experimental village banks, should the latter be found to availed of, in part, at the expense of the State, of wells, tanks, or other artificial sources of irrigation should be permanently exempted from assessment to revenue. It is suggested that an expert staff should be appointed, with power to disburse loans on the spot, in order to encourage well-sinking; that the rates of interest on Government advances should be reduced; that waste land reclaimed should be exempt from assessment for 15 years, and then be assessed at half rates; that loans should be exempt from the duty of approval of joint personal security, and that help should be not from non-official agencies.

Coming to the special question of indebtedness in the Bombay Presidency, the report says:—"Nothing can be more useful in anticipation of famine than improvements in the material condition of the cultivators whereby they may be enabled to with-

stand the pressure of hard times, and nothing more impedes such improvements than an agrarian system under which the cultivators fail to reap the full fruits of their industry and are kept in a state of indebtedness." In Bombay the agrarian system introduced by the survey settlement is declared to be an accentuating cause of indebtedness, and especially the unrestricted right of cultivators to transfer their holdings. The rigidity of the revenue system forced the cultivators into debt, while the valuable property which they held made it easy to borrow. The Commission estimates that probably at least one-fourth of the cultivators in Bombay have lost possession of their lands, that less than one-fifth are free from debt, and that the remainder are indebted to a greater or less extent. Legislation since 1875 has done little good and some harm, and it is time, the report says, to reorganise facts. It proceeds to deal in detail with (1) those who have completely lost their lands, and (2) those who have only mortgaged their rights. With regard to the first class the report observes that it is common in Bombay for the money-lender owner to maintain the name of a cultivator on the village proprietary register and keep his own name off it. This is a bad system, and the Commission recommends that money-lenders should, where that is the fact, be recorded as the owners of the lands which have passed away from the tenants, and that the latter should be protected against rack-renting by a suitable Tenancy Act. With regard to the second class both executive and legislative measures are necessary. The executive measures are two—(a) elasticity in collection of the Government demand, and (b) improvement in the system of land records. Legislative measures are recommended—(a) to enable the tenant to compound for existing debts, and (b) to limit the transfer of his property in future. In this last suggestion Mr. Nicholson was unable to join. The report says that the whole scheme will be helped by the establishment of the mutual credit associations already mentioned.

Finally, the report makes some interesting recommendations under the head of "Agricultural development," including in that term irrigation and the expansion of the provincial agricultural departments, as well as improvement in agricultural processes. "Re-irrigation construction," the Commissioners hold, "has played its part in the policy of famine insurance." On the other hand, there is a wide field for the construction of irrigation works. "All provinces," the report says, "do not indeed present practicable schemes for the construction of great canals, but the possibilities of smaller protective works have in no province been exhausted, while in some provinces they have as yet hardly begun to exist." For storage tanks, reservoirs, and improvements in irrigation wells, the scope and the necessity are very great." Confirming the opinion of the Commission of 1898, the present Commissioners express their "cordial approval of a new departure in famine policy which would place irrigation works in the place that protective railways have hitherto occupied in the famine insurance programme." Some remarks are added on the work which may be done by agricultural departments in correcting the deficiencies of the cultivator. The report says of the famine of 1899-1900:—"Like other famines, it had its successes and its failures, which convey lessons of encouragement and warning. But through all one fact stands out very clearly—that almost every responsible officer did his best. There has rarely been so great a call on the officers of the Government, European and Native, for devotion in the service of humanity, and there has never been a readier response to the call."

THE REPORT OF THE FAMINE COMMISSION.

II.—RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

The following is the full text of the Resolution of the Government of India upon the Report of the Famine Commission. The date of the Resolution is August 26—

In December last the Government of India, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, appointed a Commission to enquire into the administration of relief during the famine of 1899-1900, with instructions more especially to examine the light thrown by fresh experience upon the recommendations of the Commission of 1898, upon the working of the various systems of relief works or gratuitous relief, and upon the assistance given by Government by means of takavi advances and the suspension or remission of revenue; to investigate the questions of famine mortality and immigration from Native States; and to record any recommendations or opinions that might be of use in the case of future famines.

2. The Commission was composed as follows:—

The HON. SIR ANTHONY MACDONNELL, G.C.S.I., Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, President.

The HON. MR. F. A. NICHOLSON, C.I.E., Member of the Board of Revenue, Madras.

The HON. MR. J. A. BOWDILLON, C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

RAO BAHADUR KANTI CHUNDER MUKHARJI, C.I.E., Chief Member of the Council of the Jaipur State in Rajputana.

On the lamented death of Rao Bahadur Kanti Chunder Mukharji his place was taken by Rai Bahadur Shyama Sunder Lal, Member of the State Council and Diwan of Kishangarh.

Before proceeding to the consideration of the Commission's Report the Governor-General in Council desires to express his sincere appreciation of the services rendered by these gentlemen to the State, of the wide and exhaustive range of their investiga-

tions, and of the conspicuous ability of their Report, which will be of permanent value in its effect upon the famine relief policy of the Government of India in future years.

3. The most important of the Commission's conclusions are that, if the Government is watchful and prepared, relief measures need not be undertaken till clear evidence is forthcoming of the existence of distress; that admission to relief should be regulated somewhat more strictly than has always been the case in the past; that the rates of famine wages and gratuitous allowances may reasonably be reduced; that able-bodied workers should be compelled to earn their wage, being paid in proportion to work done, and that, save in the case of the weakly, the grant of a minimum wage, irrespective of work done should be abolished; that small village works should be preferred in certain circumstances to the large public works which have hitherto been regarded as the backbone of relief schemes; that for the distribution of gratuitous relief money doles are preferable to cooked food; that an effort should be made to enlist more largely the services of non-officials in the distribution of relief; and that there should be special provision for the executive control of famine by the appointment in the Presidency or province affected of a Famine Commissioner with practical duties of inspection and control. These conclusions will each be briefly examined, but it may be stated at once that the Government of India are in general agreement with them and consider that, in view of the weight of experience and authority by which they are supported, they may, with one or two reservations, be accepted as principles of Famine policy for the future.

PREPARATION FOR RELIEF AND ITS COMMENCEMENT.

4. The recommendation that relief should not be offered until concrete signs are forthcoming of the existence of distress is made conditional on the readiness of the Government to open relief measures directly they are required, and with this safeguard the Government of India accept the recommendation as a security against the waste of public money. In paragraph 37 of the Report the Commission indicates the nature of the signs, which, if carefully and promptly read, will enable the State to time the grant of its charity to the actual needs of the sufferer. The value is insisted upon of test-works and poor-houses, and the Government of India acquiesce in the suggestions which are offered for their management. The acceptance of this policy is, however, strictly conditional on the existence of the preparations upon which the Commission lays so much stress. Not only should a special district relief scheme be drawn up as soon as famine threatens, but Local Governments should provide against hurry and uncertainty by maintaining in full detail lists of village and public works to offer sufficient employment for at all events the first six months of a famine. Notes should be maintained of the classes on which Government can draw for a staff of famine officials and of the numbers for which it can look to each class; and a most practical recommendation is that a stock of tools should be kept in reserve. As regards the collection of statistical information, the Government of India understand that present arrangements are satisfactory in the Punjab, the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, Ajmer, the Central Provinces and Madras. The Government of Bombay will be requested to consider the recommendation that agricultural and vital statistics should in future pass through the Collector's office, and that the superior Land Record staff should be brought into closer relation with the village and district administrative staff.

NEED OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE GRANT OF RELIEF.

5. In regulating the relief which is offered on works a serious difficulty arises from the inadequacy of the work-test as a means of discrimination. It has been a cardinal principle of the policy hitherto pursued that the Government cannot attempt to discriminate personally between the undeserving and the deserving, and can do no more to exclude the one from its relief works and admit the other, than prescribe the performance of a certain quota of work. It is clear that this test is far from satisfactory, and that it admits of the grant of State charity to large numbers who have no proper claim. It is a matter of notoriety that famines are to be seen on relief works who are plainly not dependent for food upon State assistance, and, indeed, a conclusive proof of the insufficiency of the work-test as a regulator of charity is the very marked degree in which resort to relief works depends upon their vicinity to the homes of the people. The failure of the work-test is no doubt in some cases largely attributable to the failure of those in charge to enforce it properly. But experience has shown that the performance of a task, which must in the interests of the really distressed be very leniently forced, does not deter the able-bodied from resorting to relief works before they are at the end of their resources, especially when the works are easily accessible; and the Commission, in view of this difficulty, is of opinion that in the case of village works a departure might be made from the principle hitherto accepted, and that admission might be controlled by selection, either to relief after admission remaining conditional on the performance of a task. Practical trial has been given to such a system in the Punjab and the Central Provinces with successful results; and though the Commission suggests its adoption for the control of village works only, the recommendation of the more extended use of village works in localities where they are feasible would result in its introduction over very large areas. The Government of India are disposed to welcome a suggestion that would facilitate discrimination in the grant of relief, and would check the waste of public money and the demoralisation of the people which existing safeguards appear inadequate to prevent, and they would indeed have it further considered whether by a substantial expansion of the agency for village inspection, it might not be possible to insist on local selection as a condition of admission

to relief works of all classes. The question is one of the most important of those connected with the possible improvement of the existing system of relief; and its consideration will be commended to the careful attention of Local Governments. However, it may be with admission to work relief, it is clear that the grant of gratuitous relief must be in all cases subject to individual discrimination, that there are no automatic tests which can be safely relied upon, and that careful enquiry is necessary to prevent the extension of State charity to those who have natural claims upon persons able to support them.

WAGE RATES.

6. In regard to wage rates for relief workers, the Commission would generally maintain the scale in force in 1896-97, slightly reducing the rate for able-bodied male adults, and raising that for working children. It is opposed to the increases recommended by the Commission of 1898 on the very practical grounds that the increased wage rates have, as a matter of fact, generally proved to be excessive and were abandoned or modified in every province, and that in the Central Provinces the workers maintained themselves in good condition, though they received only 77.5 per cent. of the full wage recommended by the Commission of 1898—a proportion equivalent to the case of male adult workers to a daily allowance to adopt for male adult workers is equivalent to a daily allowance of 31 ounces of grain. The wage which it is now proposed to adopt for male adult workers is equivalent to a daily allowance of 36 ounces. The Commission maintains the working classification into diggers and carriers recommended in 1898, but would differentiate wages according to sex, reverting in this matter to the procedure of 1896-97. For adult dependents it would fix rather lower allowances than those hitherto accepted, adopting the equivalent of 24 ounces for a male and of 20 ounces for a female, and it would slightly reduce the allowances for non-working children. The Government of India recognise that experience is the safest indication of the sufficiency or insufficiency of a famine wage, and, while hesitating to accept the revised wage scale until they are in possession of the views of Local Governments regarding it, they appreciate the weight of authority that attaches to recommendations based on the wide experience which the Commission has had at its command. But they are impressed by the consideration that the reduced rates, though adequate to keep people in health and strength, may prove insufficient if relief is not granted in time to prevent deterioration. The Commission has shown its appreciation of this point and the Government of India desire to emphasise it.

ABOLITION OF THE MINIMUM WAGE IN THE CASE OF THE ABLE-BODIED.

7. A further most important recommendation in this connexion is that the "minimum wage" should be abandoned in the case of the able-bodied, and that relief workers should be no longer exempted from the ordinary rule that pay should be proportionate to the amount of work done has led to demoralisation and serious scandals; it was retracted without injurious result during the North-Western Provinces famine of 1896-97 and was withheld altogether last year in the Central Provinces. The Commission carefully safeguards its recommendation by insisting on an exception being made for the benefit of the weakly, who are to be gaged separately, assigned specially easy tasks, and to be never paid less than is allowed for adult non-workers. Subject to this exception and provided always that care is taken to limit rates to the capacity of the workers, the Government of India are disposed to consider that fixed payments irrespective of work done might be safely abolished, and that the State would run no risk in abandoning a rule which actually encourages idleness on relief works. But this, again, is a question on which the Government of India must seek the advice of Local Governments.

CHARACTER OF RELIEF WORKS.

8. As regards the general character of relief works, the Commission advises a more extended use of village works for the weighty reasons given in paragraph 56 of their report. It is urged that village works are generally more economical and useful than public works, that they are more easily controlled, less liable to the outbreak of epidemic disease, interfere less than public works with the general demand for labour, offer less interruption to village life, and are less subversive of moral and domestic obligations. The Government of India accept this conclusion and consider that village works should form a more prominent feature of famine relief programmes than has hitherto been the case, and that in localities offering suitable scope they should be regarded as the principal means of famine labour, public works being opened merely as a safeguard against a breakdown of the village organization or for the relief of wanderers. It is, however, apprehended that such localities will not be found to be sufficiently numerous to obviate extensive reliance on public works. A great objection to village works has hitherto been their attractiveness to those in no immediate need of relief. But this objection will be met if admission is limited by selection as recommended.

USE OF COOKED FOOD AS A MEANS OF GRATUITOUS RELIEF.

9. The Commission expresses a very strong opinion against the substitution of cooked food for money doles as a method of gratuitous relief, notwithstanding the success which some local authorities hold to have been obtained by the wide establishment of village kitchens. It has been proved that the distribution of cooked food in localities is open to great abuses unless strictly controlled, but the Government of India hesitate to definitely pronounce against the use of this means of charity in all cases until they have consulted Local Governments.

ENLISTMENT OF NON-OFFICIAL AGENCY IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF.

10. The Commission emphasizes the importance of associating unofficial agency in the distribution of relief, and it is manifestly desirable that in the administration of State charity the Government should make every possible use of the knowledge of individual conditions which can be gained by enlisting the kindly agency of those who are interested in the people and sympathise with them in their afflictions. In the distribution of gratuitous relief in towns Government officials should invariably associate with themselves a committee of towns-people, and the heads of village society should be referred to for advice in admitting their fellow villagers to relief. The Commission rightly insists on the importance of increasing the demand for labour, especially at the commencement of a famine, by encouraging the undertaking by private landholders of works for the improvement of their properties, and of assisting them by grants of Government money on their consenting to conform to conditions which will secure that their expenditure relieves the destitute and is no larger than this object requires.

FAMINE POLICY AFTER COMMENCEMENT OF THE MONSOON.

11. If the State has brought the labouring classes through the hot weather months in fair working condition, it may reasonably look to private employers to support them when the commencement of the rains opens employment in the fields. The Government of India agree with the Commission that at this time able-bodied labourers should be induced to return to their ordinary avocations by greater stringency in the conditions on which relief work is granted, and that it is inexpedient to offer the able-bodied gratuitous relief. In view, however, of the reduced purchasing power of wages in a time of high prices, the Government of India consider that during the rains labourers of the poorer class who are supporting themselves should not be held prima facie capable of supporting their families, and that their children—or a certain proportion of them—should be admitted to gratuitous relief till the harvesting of the earliest principal crops brings a substantial increase to their earnings.

APPOINTMENT OF A FAMINE COMMISSIONER.

12. The Government of India accept as one of the most fruitful of the Commission's recommendations that a Famine Commissioner should be appointed for the executive control of relief measures whenever relief operations have attained considerable extent or it is evident that a serious famine is impending. They are impressed with the value of the services which a chief inspecting authority would render in the formulation in detail of adequate schemes of relief, in safeguarding the policy of the Government from defeat by inattention or misapprehension in the methods of its execution, and by ensuring uniformity of procedure between district and district. There may be occasions when the head of a Local Government may himself be able to act as his own Famine Commissioner; but the Government of India conceive that such occasions will be rare, and they are of opinion that the appointment of a Famine Commissioner should be a normal feature of famine policy whenever relief operations are on a considerable scale.

REVISION OF THE PROVINCIAL FAMINE CODES.

13. The recommendations of the Commission which are concerned with the details of relief administration may, in the opinion of the Government of India, be regarded as decisive. On one point—the maintenance of nominal lists of relief workers—Local Governments will be consulted, since the suggestion would add in some Provinces very greatly to the clerical work of executive subordinates. With this reservation and those referred to in paragraphs 5, 6, 7, and 9 above, the conclusions of the Commission are definitely accepted as a basis for the revision of the Provincial Famine Codes, in regard to which Local Governments will now be addressed. The suggestions of the Commission for the formulation of a simple system of famine accounts which will assign to local check the importance that it merits will be referred to a Committee representing practical experience in famine relief as well as in accounts procedure.

MORTALITY OF THE FAMINE YEAR.

14. The Commission has concluded that the adverse conditions of the famine year resulted in the death of about a million people, three-fourths of whom belonged to the Bombay Presidency. These are large and deplorable figures. But they must be considered in reference to the conditions inseparable from famine even more than to famine itself. A failure of the water-supply in India compels people to resort to impure sources, and the replenishment of these sources in the ensuing monsoon is usually attended by fever of a peculiarly fatal type. Cholera is epidemic during the famine period and attacks the crowds on relief works with devastating effect. The conditions of life that there prevail and that combine continuous and unavoidable exposure to the sun with an unaccustomed diet are unfavourable to health and tend to swell an inevitable mortality. In the Central Provinces where the death-rate was lowest, being 58.80 per mille,* and where the Local Administration was very successful in saving life, there were few of the signs which indicate general want. Emaciation was rarely seen except amongst immigrants or infants-in-arms, poor-houses were commonly unnecessary, and the condition of those admitted into the jails showed no wide-spread deterioration amongst the poorer classes. In the affected districts of the Punjab and the more distressed of the Decan districts of Bombay the death-rates were, respectively: 63.53 and 64.23, and the Government of India accept these

figures as indicating a satisfactory measure of success. In individual districts the rates rose as high as 80.35 (Hissar), 90.71 (Khandesh), 75.05 (Nasik), and 67.41 (Ahmednagar). But death-rates as high as these were reached in six districts of the Central Provinces; and having regard to the effect of local outbreaks of cholera, the deficiency in the water-supply, and migration of labourers in search of work, the Government of India consider that famine mortality should be judged with reference to a larger area than a district. In Berar the death-rate was 82.26, rather more than double the normal. But here also there was but little to be seen of the signs which are commonly associated with acute famine. Relief was less successful in Ajmer and Gujerat, where mortality was lamentably high. It is clear that in Gujerat thousands died of cholera, which raged with extraordinary ferocity during the hot weather months, that the death-rate was swelled in both tracts by crowds of moribund immigrants from the adjoining Native States, and that the relief of a large aboriginal population was attended with quite exceptional difficulties. The high mortality of Ajmer was due in great part to an epidemic of virulent fever which prevailed during the autumn months and which is a common sequel of famine.

LOSS OF POPULATION SHOWN BY THE RECENT CENSUS.

15. In connexion with the question of mortality a reference may be expected to the serious decline which the recent census shows to have occurred in the population of the Bombay Presidency, Berar, the Central Provinces and Bundelkhand. The decrease in numbers suffered by the Bombay Presidency and Berar is accounted for approximately by the losses suffered by the population during this famine, the birth-rate of the preceding seven years having been below normal, the deficiency from this cause in the Bombay Decan accounting for a loss during the seven years of 2 per cent. of the population. The decline in the population of the Central Provinces amounts to 8 per cent., which is equivalent to five-fold the excess mortality of 1900. These Provinces suffered very seriously during the famine of 1896-97, losing about 3 per cent. of their population, and the falling birth-rate of the past seven years has involved a further loss to the population of about 3 per cent. It is less easy to find in statistics an explanation of the still larger decline in the population of the Bundelkhand districts of the North-Western Provinces. They suffered famines for two years in succession, 1895-96 and 1896-97, but no considerable excess mortality was shown to have occurred, and the losses that they have sustained must be ascribed to the prejudicial effect of a succession of bad seasons on the health and fecundity of the people, to deterioration of the soil and, in part no doubt, to emigration to more favoured tracts.

IMMIGRATION FROM NATIVE STATES.

16. It has already been stated that the mortality which occurred in Gujerat and Ajmer was very largely due to their invasion by crowds of destitute wanderers from Native territory, and that immigration from Native States added to the difficulties of famine administration in the Punjab and Central Provinces. Relief was not withheld from the refugees because they were foreigners, and though the like treatment of strangers and British subjects must complicate famine administration by attracting immigrants, the Government of India see no reason to modify accepted policy in this respect. The enquiries of the Commission have not enabled it to formulate recommendations for the check of this immigration, which must be accepted as the inevitable feature of a famine in Native territory. The country and the people are generally poorer than across the border in British India; wandering in search of pasturage for cattle is common and has accustomed the inhabitants to the idea of leaving their homes; and, on the failure of a scanty water-supply, migration is the only alternative to certain death. When immigrants become very numerous, efforts are made from time to time to return them to their States, if arrangements are possible for their reception by responsible officers, and the Commission recommends a continuance of this procedure, refugees to relief works in British India being, as far as possible, ganged in separate bodies according to the States to which they belong. It is satisfactory that the Commission should have been struck by the advance made in this famine by most of the Darbars towards bringing their relief into line with the humane policy of the British Government. The recommendation that Native States should be encouraged to maintain complete programmes of relief works will receive separate consideration; it accords with the policy of the Governor-General in Council that the investigations of the exact nature of cold weather into the possibility of extending irrigation should, as far as possible, include such Native States as desire advice in this matter.

CATTLE MORTALITY.

17. Amongst the most melancholy results of the famine was the great loss of cattle, which it is feared has crippled for some time to come the once flourishing province of Gujerat. Extraordinary efforts were made in the Central Provinces to provide hay from the Government forests, and transport to Bombay, and enormous stocks of hay were collected, in great measure fruitlessly, since the railways were unable to carry it and the cost of carriage raised its price beyond the resources of the ordinary cultivator. The concession of specially low rates of freight for fodder would have been a little advantage at a time when the transport of food-grain was beyond the carrying capacity of the railways. The recommendations of the Commission for the formation of a reserve of rolling-stock will be separately considered. Various suggestions are made for increasing the stock of fodder locally available, which will be commended to the attention of the Provincial Departments of Agriculture.

(To be concluded.)

* The death-rates for 1900 as given by the Commission have been recalculated on the basis of the population of that year as deduced from the recent census.

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