

his successful demand for an assurance that, should there ever be a decision to publish the *Monthly Summary* in Chinese or Japanese, it should equally apply to some Indian tongue, such, for instance, as Urdu ; or, very far from trivial, the firm reservation entered by Sir William Vincent against the proposed use in the 1926 Slavery Convention of a phrase whose effect, however unintended, might have been to place Indian ships in a category different from, and inferior to those, say, of Britain or France. In defending India's interests these Englishmen showed themselves, if anything, more Indian than the Indians. Their zeal and tenacity were sometimes such as, in an Indian born, might almost have bordered on the unbecoming.

As it would plainly not be possible, within the limits of this chapter, to follow the detailed doings of India's delegates through every varied phase of Geneva activity, no more will here be attempted than a brief glance at some of the subjects on which India's views have been heard with particular frequency and especial effect. Foremost among these are world economics, drugs, health, intellectual co-operation, and, not least important, the League's own organisation and finance.

In opium and connected questions, India is interested for more reasons than one. Most obvious, of course, is the fact that she herself is

Topics of
interest to
India
① opium

"one of the principal sufferers" from the "scandalous traffic" in drugs. If mankind is ever at last to get the drug situation under real control, it will be by skilfully concerted measures on a virtually universal scale ; and, were international machinery wanted for no other reason, some such means as the League provides would have to be created to this end. India's concern in what may yet prove a long and difficult matter is as direct as that of any country in the world. Had all Governments from the first set their hands to the common enterprise in the willing, even altruistic, spirit displayed on behalf of India, the outlook would be brighter than it is. In these matters, India claims to have gone far beyond the simple fulfilment of obligations solemnly assumed. The figure given as representing the fiscal sacrifice involved in her reduction of opium exports is as high as £72 millions, covering a period of eighteen years. The attendant loss to Indian cultivators will have been very much more.

From time to time, India has pleaded that certain other countries should in return give at least their full effect to the conventions already in force. On this point, Lord Lytton, in 1927, and Sir Venkata Reddi, in 1928, were particularly explicit.

The matter has yet a further side. Granted that all who take part in public debates be

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perfectly honest, not everyone even in Geneva knows fully the relevant facts. India has her fair name to consider. Her representation by such spokesmen as Mr. Sastri and the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, advised by such an expert as Mr. (now Sir) John Campbell, must in the early days have averted many an unwarrantable judgment. How many of the "ladies and gentlemen who stay at home and merely make public opinion" would have supposed that, for millions of the Indian people, opium eaten (not smoked) in moderate quantities was no poison, but "a solace, a sedative, a household remedy"?

"India," wrote the delegates in 1922, "was on this occasion free from ill-informed attack and can apparently now enjoy the position which she deserves as a loyal and scrupulous observer in the letter and the spirit of the provisions of the Hague Convention." So much for drugs.

Like a policeman at a crossing, the League has its eye on more than one stream of traffic at a time. While its right hand is enjoining the illicit drug traffic to stop, its left hand is insistently signalling to almost every other kind of traffic to move on. In 1933 this latter facet of its work gains in urgency every day.

Let us trust that the past years of often apparently fruitless discussion may prove in the end to have not been altogether wasted. Talk

② Economy + trade

has its results, be they only of the negative kind. When new and often plausible proposals are constantly taking shape, it is well that they be set out on a table, their insufficiencies exposed, their merits, if any, acclaimed. India, in Geneva, has taken an appreciable part, both as critic and as dealer in constructive ideas. In 1925, the first World Economic Conference being at that time but a project, an Indian speaker, Khan Bahadur Shaikh Abdul Qadir suggested—too diffidently, alas—that the disparity between manufacturers' and agricultural prices was a portent deserving of study. In 1931, Sir J. C. Coyajee politely surmised that "it would have been better policy" for the conference "to have concentrated rather on the advancement of co-operation than upon a direct attack upon the tariffs." He submitted that the best way to lower tariffs was by organising consumers in each country on co-operative lines. "Once the consumers are organised . . . they will bring their pressure to bear on their Governments to lower their tariffs." Not that this was a particularly seductive argument to have offered to the Governments themselves!

Proposals on which the Indian Delegation, with the backing of representatives of other extra-European countries, felt justified in throwing cold water included the "Warsaw" scheme, in 1930, for Continental preferences

on European cereals, and an ambitious project, in 1931, for an International Agricultural Mortgage Credit Company. "As regards preferential projects," observed Sir J. C. Coyajee, "... if such a policy is carried out within the framework of the League it would tend to break up the economic solidarity of that body." And so said all the Dominions. "The important matter from the Indian point of view," wrote the delegates in 1931, "was that, for the first five years, the scheme is confined to European countries, and that provision for the entry of non-European countries after that period is subject to such conditions as the Council may impose." This, after all, is a world crisis, in which Asia is permitted to share: well for Asia that there are voices to make this known with the necessary combination of tact and technical precision.

One remembers also a word of warning spoken by India in 1928, on behalf, as it were, of the less-industrialised countries at large. "There must be no tendency," declared Mr. Mallik, "to stabilise the *status quo* as between manufacture and the production of raw materials." India claimed as legitimate "the right to adjust her tariff system so as to maintain the balance between agriculture and industry." He further indicated the necessity of "not allowing the impression to be created in any State that their material interests were being

overridden or neglected in a hurry to bring about an economic millennium." And Sir Geoffrey Corbett in 1929 was hardly less outspoken. He was aware, he said, that the resolution before them limited the proposed undertaking to "protective" tariffs but "any experienced person" (his actual words!) would admit that in practice it was not easy to distinguish definitely between a revenue and a protective duty. (And so on in the same strain.)

One of India's more positive contributions was her insistence on the need for scientifically established data as a condition of sound remedial action. It was this that led to the preparation, in 1931, of the League's invaluable report on "The Course and Phases" of the economic depression.

It is well to have touched here on the work of the Economic Organisation. For this is one of the three so-called "Technical" organisations (the other two being respectively concerned with Health and Transit questions); and ever since, by a neat bit of verbal wrist-work, the Jam Sahib assured the Fourth Assembly that the "technical" efficiency of the League's work in all its departments would be jeopardised by illiberal budgeting for the "Technical" organisations, those particular portions of the League's establishment have been constantly noticed by India. Health

India vs.
European
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scheme
(- reflects tension
of UK re Europe
vs. Empire
preference)

expresses
news of
less developed countries

③ Health

- US
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side of
League

problems have plainly a world-wide distribution, with an incidence more serious, if anything, in the East than elsewhere. It is natural, therefore, that the League's "universality" should find plentiful expression in this field. Mr. Mallik, in 1928, paying on this account a special compliment to the Health Organisation, said he hoped that "other organisations of the League would be inspired to qualify themselves for a similar compliment in the near future." Actually the Indian Delegation was that year opposing a supplementary credit for the Transit Section (and international transit problems indeed have little peculiar interest for India). At the same time, of the Economic and Financial Organisation they wrote: It "is perhaps the most practical and efficient part of the League machinery. It has shown marked sympathy lately towards India." ("It"—in the distinguished person of Sir Arthur Salter—was later, under League auspices, to make a study in India of the question of economic councils.) One captiously wonders exactly who was being invited by Mr. Mallik to earn compliments, and exactly for what. Probably he was referring to intellectual co-operation. The fact, at any rate, is that both by its works and by its possibilities the Health Organisation has quite special claims on the sympathies of Indian delegates. Justice can hardly here be done to this very remarkable theme.

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So too with intellectual co-operation—as contemplated by the League. Of this it is almost, though not altogether, accurate to say that it has had India's support from the first. Not entirely accurate because, at the first Assembly, India, along with the other "Empire" Delegations, opposed (albeit with signal non-success) the "nebulous resolution" on this matter—on the ground, if you please, that no attempt should be made to discriminate between manual and intellectual labour . . . and that, if and when intellectual labour was to be assisted, the Labour Office could take the matter up. But that was the end of that. Two years later, when the British, and three other delegations objected to spending anything at all on this subject, not only did India "revolt," but, against the strenuous resistance of the rest of the Empire, she helped in getting the vote doubled at the last moment, even without the acquiescence of the Finance Committee. The Jam Sahib—heedless of his reputation as the one-time "protagonist of the economy party"—declared that it was "no good spoiling the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar."

As one studies the numerous passages in which Indian speakers have treated of intellectual co-operation, one can only be struck by the faith they have shown in its future. India is frequently declared to feel a great interest in the subject. In 1931, Dr. Hyder

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(a) described it as "the essential element of the League" and "in consonance with the whole philosophy of India." Two great hopes have their part in this attitude. First there is a conviction that here, through a "disarmament of ideas," is the road to permanent peace. There is also the belief that from the present beginnings is destined to emerge the "cultural synthesis," the "international culture" of the future—to which Indian scholarship will rightly contribute a not unimportant ingredient.

(b) If all the nations could show themselves equally imbued with the Indian eagerness to see the League produce "suitable literature" for educating "the masses" in its aims and objects, the problem of international appeasement would already be of different proportions. There is in Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar's speech on this topic, in 1926, a splendid tribute to the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements as well-proved agencies for internationalising the juvenile mind. Nowhere more vividly than in this series of speeches do we see how truly it had been said in the Assembly that "the Indian bows his head in worship of the ideals of the League."

(5) A word may here be added on some of the principles for which Indian delegates have steadily contended in debates on the League's domestic affairs. To anyone conversant only with the tactics of the Fourth (Finance)

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Committee in more recent years it must seem hardly believable that, in 1920, "the general attitude of the Assembly in regard to economies was . . . clearly apathetic." The Indian Delegation stood forth as a shining exception. From the first they have battled sternly for the sounder practices, including: the Assembly's assumption and exercise of a genuine say in the budget policy of Geneva (not forgetting the International Labour Office); a thorough sifting of annual estimates by a qualified outside authority, coupled with a not less thorough auditing of final accounts; and, in general, an effective recognition of the Assembly's responsibility for keeping the League's total expenditure within reasonable limits and equitably distributed over its several spheres of work.

It is nowadays a commonplace that the Assembly has come to occupy in the Geneva structure a position far more authoritative than had at first been foreseen: in 1920 and in 1921 it was India that most jealously fought any tendency to circumscribe the Assembly's "rights." Nowadays, in the light of some sobering experience, the League has adopted the philosophy of *festina lente* in the framing of new international instruments: India could be pardoned if on this point she murmured, "I told you so." All the world agrees that for its uniquely important duties the Secretariat

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has need of an international "spirit": India has contended that this can only be had along with an international "outlook," which she conceives as a "synthesis" of the standpoints of as many member-nations as possible. The higher posts, with their undisguisable influence on policy, must not, in her view, be reserved to the nationals of any limited group of countries: an element of rotation should rather be secured. Then, again, as regards the non-permanent seats on the Council, a mode of election should be sought such as will open to every member of the League a real prospect of being from time to time represented on that, the League's, "board of management." Sometimes India's evident interest in her own greater participation has been pressed on the simpler ground of justice, and she would perhaps have done better to rest her case consistently on this sufficient consideration. For the "synthesis" argument is calculated to convince only those persons who, too lightly perhaps, concede that the non-national, i.e. the specifically "League," standpoint at which the Secretariat should aim is necessarily the same as an omni-national standpoint. May it not be that a wholly Indian Secretariat, animated by India's lofty idealism, could serve the League even better than a bureaucracy recruited among the "die-hards" of every country in the world?

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It is possible that old-fashioned people may still include some who consider that "children should be seen and not heard." Diplomats, as a tribe, are said to be old-fashioned people. To European diplomats the Dominions and India, when in 1920 they made their début in Geneva, may well have seemed children—diplomatically. In India's case some of them may even have had doubts as to whether—for diplomatic purposes—she could properly be considered to have yet been born. Humanly speaking, to be sure, her many hundreds—or was it thousands?—of years of history were an undeniable qualification. But, diplomatically speaking—?

As we have seen, however, Sir William Meyer and his colleagues were troubled by no such doubts. India, for them, was old enough and big enough, in every sense, to be both seen and heard, and even to take the lead, in a Geneva milieu which at that time was novel to all alike. She is certainly fortunate to have commanded, in 1920, the services of a delegate so alert and accomplished as Sir William. By his pioneering efforts he set a standard that his successors will all have been anxious to maintain.

As a League member, India's record is excellent. While punctually performing her obligations, she has not been backward in accepting new ones, provided only she could clearly see her way to their fulfilment. Her

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representatives, with their buoyant faith in the League's ideals, have been an ennobling factor in the debates. Courage, dignity, and distinction have at no time been lacking in their speeches.

It is common knowledge that, when in Paris the Covenant was being drawn up, the Japanese made a proposal that in some form it should affirm the equality of races. The move was not successful. Though this has been widely regretted, one sometimes wonders whether, in the long future, certain nations would have been glad of such a monument to the fact that their equal status had formerly not gone without saying. How much immediate practical difference the gesture could have made no one of course can tell. Colour prejudice, though doubtless amenable to treatment, would hardly have been eradicated by a stroke of the pen. In the meantime, so far as least as India is concerned, it is hard to suppose that any grudgingly conceded formula could have done more to elevate her people in the world's esteem than has the now familiar spectacle of her delegates playing their part in active and beneficent association with Western statesmen in Geneva. That the individuals concerned have technically been nominees of a British Secretary of State has not at all prevented their performing a brilliant service to their country. No patriotic Indian will regret the things done

in India's name by such personalities as Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar, Mr. Sastri, Mr. Bajpai, Sir J. C. Coyajee, Sir Atul Chatterjee, Their Highnesses of Nawanagar, Palanpur, Bikaner, Kapurthala, the Aga Khan—to mention at random only some of the more outstanding examples.

In 1924, after observing in its report that its part in the "Protocol" discussions had been relatively small, the Indian Delegation added the opinion that its presence had yet been a useful reminder to the European States of the magnitude of the problems in which they were involved. These modest words, of course, are very far from conveying all that India's membership has meant to the League. If, as some say, that membership had first been agreed to in virtual absence of mind, the other countries can have had no cause subsequently to regret their decision. And what has it meant to India? From certain of the League's activities, India derives, or stands to derive, direct and tangible benefits. In others, it is often observed that her interest is only of an "indirect" or "secondary" kind. This last remark is heard perhaps a little too often. There is no country whose interest in the League can be truly evaluated merely by totting up what it gets out of all the several activities. That is a crudely amateurish conception of the matter. In Europe one could find countries, firm supporters of the

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India equally
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League, for whom the answer so computed would amount to just about nil. A second, and sounder, criterion is the effect of her membership on India's "national" position and on the growth of a sense of unity among her as yet somewhat loosely integrated populations. Prestige and collective self-esteem, though easily overdone, remain realities in the modern world, even if they do not lend themselves to measurement with what in hackneyed language is known as a "yardstick." Lastly, it is conceivable that to many Indians these latter considerations will seem petty beside the knowledge that India has an interest in the future of mankind, a future which may partly depend on the extent of the authority and support accorded to the League in a critical period of history. "India," said Sir Muhammad Habibullah in 1929, "has experienced enough of the effects of the Great War to be able to visualise the havoc a new war would work, and she is as anxious as any other country to see peace perpetuated on a basis of disarmament."

India's thirteen years in Geneva have not, of course, been a uniformly very gratifying adventure. Disappointments have been common enough. Often an excellent suggestion from the Indian Delegation has come, for the moment, to nothing—though in some instances the same idea, revived in some other quarter, has ultimately been adopted with good results.

She has, on the other hand, had her share of successes.

One is led to consider : What, in this strange contest of arguments which so largely constitutes the Geneva game, are the particular cards on which India has been able to rely? Her population is bigger than that of any other member except China—so that she stands for the happiness of just so many more human souls. Is her influence in Geneva correspondingly great? The mention of China at this point reminds one that influence, in Geneva, is not in direct proportion to population. What, then, shall we say? On occasions, it is true, India's position has been potentially very strong. When, in the interests of the League, it was "vital" to supersede the Postal Union scale of payments, India's threatened intransigence certainly seems to have caused a flutter. But that was a rather exceptional matter. In reporting to the Secretary of State, the 1927 Delegation quoted, with concurrence, M. Motta, a Swiss delegate, on the *de facto* difference, as regards influence, between the Great and the Small Powers. Members of the League, you may say, can be classed in four categories : Great and Small Powers, British Dominions, and India. If there be any status that is as fraught with anxieties as is that of a Small Power, it is that of a Great Power. The Dominions and India—happily, no doubt, for

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them—escape some of the inconveniences of both these positions, while sharing in some of the amenities of each.

One asset India has of her own : namely, a grievance, well-advertised and presumably solid enough, against her present assessment in regard to contributions. When, in 1928, Lord Lytton made his challenging Assembly speech on the budget, nobody can have felt : Who are these Indians, to complain of the League's extravagance? It must have been seen that, with so few of her nationals in League employment, with a faultless record for the prompt payment of a contribution greater than that of any other member not permanently on the Council, said to be directly interested in only a few of the League's activities, never elected to a Council seat, India had a quite special claim that her protest should not be cavalierly brushed aside.

Apart from this, India, like any other member, draws strength from the support of her friends. Sometimes we find her contentions underlined by a Japanese or a Chinese delegate ; sometimes she heads a movement of many extra-European countries. But, if we study the speaking and voting on matters especially affecting India, we shall notice that the best of her backing has been within the Empire group. This, for example, particularly applies to the help of the British Delegation in

opium debates. The words of the 1927 Delegation, "the delegations of the British Empire exercise a very great influence in the League so long as they are united," are not open to dispute. The formal independence of Siam or Persia, for instance, may look very large on paper beside India's mere partnership in the Empire ; but, save perhaps for purely sentimental reasons, it is probably better to be a moderate-sized gunner associated with a large-sized gun than a giant brandishing a toy. Through her voice in the "Empire" group of delegations, through her peculiarly intimate liaison with the Delegation from Britain, and through the Secretary of State as her ambassador within the British Cabinet, India's interests can often obtain the protection of a relatively influential gun.

Meanwhile, she is all the time building up in the Assembly, by her day to day work in the League, an independent moral influence of her own.

It has not been the purpose of this chapter to offer unsolicited recommendations. The series is ostensibly concerned with the "analysis," not with the transformation, of India. One word, however, may perhaps be excused. To whatever intensity Indian national consciousness may deepen ; however world-minded the average Indian may become ; whether the India of to-morrow remain within or quit the

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British Commonwealth,—the Indian Government, whatever its form, will do well, in determining its Geneva policies—though paying all possible heed to the broad aspirations of the Indian public—to go on relying very largely, as the British do, on expert official advice. At present that specialised advice is afforded partly in Delhi, but mainly in London, in the India Office and in the British Foreign Office. On paper the system may seem less than ideal, if only to the sentimental mind. But, while it persists, the true test of its goodness is to be found, not in its form, but rather in the results it secures. The function of any present or future Indian Government is to look after the interests of the peoples of India in the existing system, while it lasts, may reasonably expect us to judge it according to this test.

3. INDIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

By DR. LANKA SUNDARAM

A study of India's place in the International Labour Organisation involves consideration of two important aspects. The first is the status of India in the industrial and social councils of the world. The other relates to the actual co-operation of India with the work of the Organisation and the benefits derived by her in the common task for the acquisition of social justice to the vast millions of our country. I propose to discuss these two points separately.

I

The position of India in the I.L.O. is of immense interest both from the national and the international points of view. From the purely territorial standpoint, India's permanent place on the Governing Body of the Organisation was fraught with momentous consequences in so far as her constitutional and quasi-political relationship to Great Britain is concerned. In effect, a dependency of the

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