

INDIA FACED WITH DEFICIT OF ABOUT \$100,000,000 LAST YEAR

Government Report, Recently Published at Delhi, Shows Condition Unprecedented in Country's History.

London April 10.—Financial difficulties are now adding their burden to the political troubles which India is undergoing. The Government of India's budget, recently presented at Delhi discloses a state of affairs that is quite unprecedented in the history of the country. The year ends with a deficit of 34 crores of rupees, or about \$100,000,000. This may seem a small sum when compared with the figures dealt with in the budgets of the United States and England. In the case of India it is a very serious deficit, being about a third of the entire annual revenue of the state. It has arisen from a number of contributing causes.

India has been badly hit by the world depression in trade. She has had several seasons of short rainfall, sufficient to reduce the value of the wheat, raw cotton, rice and other agricultural products which she exports to below that of all the cotton-picking goods, cutlery, matches, glass, and other manufactured articles she imports from overseas.

All this has had a most serious effect upon her prosperity. It has also completely upset the exchange value of the rupee currency of the country. This value depends mainly upon India's continuing to send abroad a greater value of goods than she brings in, since this alone enables her Secretary of State to regulate exchange by fixing the price in sterling at which merchants in London are supplied with rupees in India, to enable them to pay for such portion of India's imported produce as is not covered by the sum India has to pay in Europe for foreign goods. The sum in sterling thus received by the Secretary of State is used to cover India's annual indebtedness to Europe for capital invested and for the services of Europeans employed.

Short-Lived Trade Boom.

The way this operates is most easily seen by an actual example. A London merchant, through his agents in Calcutta buys, let us say, 1,000 tons of rice from cultivators in the valley of the Ganges, who require to be paid in rupees upon the spot. The merchant supplies his Calcutta agents with these rupees by taking sovereigns to the Secretary of State in London, and from him receiving in exchange an order upon the Government treasuries in India to supply the rupees. The Secretary of State for many years past has been able to hold out for approximately 1s. 4d. in London for each rupee so supplied in India. In the short-lived trade boom which followed the war, the price of rupees went up to more than twice this rate, so large were the exports of indigenous produce from India as compared with the imports of overseas goods. Since then Indian exports have diminished so greatly in value that their excess over imports has disappeared, and rupees

have had to be exported in one form or another to pay the country's sterling liabilities overseas. The rupee, no longer sought after as a means of buying Indian produce, has thus gone down in value, and is today worth only about 1s. 3d., as compared with a normal rate of 1s. 4d., and the rate of 1s. 8d. at which the Government of India made their calculations for the budget of the year which is now ending, this being itself far below the abnormal rate reached in the post-war boom when rupees changed hands at the extraordinary price of 2s. 10d. apiece.

Great Fluctuations in Value.

These great fluctuations in the value of rupee currency have played havoc with every kind of business transaction in India. The country thus finds itself in the position of having to pay heavy additional taxation to meet the Government deficit at a time when the devaluation of business renders the burden far heavier than would be the case under ordinary conditions. Political disturbances are making the situation worse, since they are interfering with the collection of the Government revenue and retarding the recovery of trade.

It might be expected, under these circumstances, that an effort would be made to reduce the cost of the Government, which is now far higher than it has ever been before. Unfortunately, however, this is difficult for two reasons. The complicated system of semi-democratic administration recently introduced as a halfway house to self-government, is growing vastly more expensive than the simpler method of British autocracy which it replaces. At the same time the disturbed state of the country makes it very difficult to reduce the military services employed. Speaking on this subject at a recent meeting of the Legislative Assembly at Delhi, Lord Rawlinson, commander-in-chief in India, explained that the troops were already 9,000 below their pre-war strength, and they were being "almost daily called out to preserve the peace" in consequence of the activities of revolutionists. In these circumstances the Government of India have not seen their way to any very considerable economies under this heading, and they have instead gone in for a bold scheme of additional taxation to meet the situation.

Smallness of Indebtedness.

This has roused loud protest, and is no doubt regrettable as adding to the difficulties of trade and industry at a time of great general depression. It is sound in itself, however, and, if only tranquility could be restored, the outlook would not be discouraging. Thanks to careful and cautious admin-

POLICE BARRACKS HAVE BEEN EVACUATED

Turned Over to Free Staters Who Have Difficult Task Ahead.

Belleek, Armagh, Ireland, April 10.—The Belleek police barracks was evacuated today by the garrison consisting of an inspector and 30 men. This is the first place to be given up by the six-county authorities. The barracks is situated in Belleek town, on the Fermanagh-Donegal border. The former barracks in Belleek was a fort on the Donegal side, which is now occupied by free staters, who have received reinforcements of forty men.

The position of the police became untenable owing to the gathering of followers of Shamán De Valera at an adjacent Sinn Féin camp where there are 400 men, whose numbers are growing daily. The garrison obtained permission of the free staters to use the road passing through Donegal territory in their retreat to Keshillish. Otherwise they would have been compelled to abandon six motor lorries and go down the Lough Erne in boats.

The free staters were interested spectators of the evacuation, which makes their own position more difficult as the police in the barracks had assisted them in keeping watch on the Republicans.

Ireland for many years in the past, under the much-abused British bureaucracy which is now to be superseded, India is still unique amongst all the countries of the world for lightness of taxation and for smallness of national indebtedness. Until the war, she could boast that the loans she had raised had practically all been spent upon such reproduction works as canals and railways, which more than paid their way, and were thus actually a profitable investment to the taxpayer, besides enormously increasing the cultivated area and affording the cheapest means of transportation in the world. This is still true of the canal, which have turned 17,000,000 acres of more or less desert country into profitable agricultural holdings. It has ceased to be true of India's 30,000 miles of railway only because of war enhancement of running expenses, an enhancement which it may be hoped will not continue indefinitely. So long as India continues to be torn by political dissensions, her economic recovery cannot be counted upon. Her basic position, however, is so sound, the fertility of her soil is so great, and the industry of her teeming population is so untiring, that dark as her outlook now may seem, she is still capable, given only restoration of the efficient government she has enjoyed in the past and the return of a few good agricultural seasons, not only to recover the measure of prosperity she has lost, but to advance continually to higher levels.

BUT FEW BIG COAL STRIKES

The Five of National Importance in U. S. and Their History.

Indianapolis Ind. April 10.—(By the Associated Press)—Great coal strikes, such as the country is now facing, have been few, although for 75 years the coal industry had been marked by almost numberless state-wide and local strikes, often involving several thousands of workers. All of the big strikes have continued more than a month, the longest having been that of 1902 in the anthracite industry which continued 33 weeks.

The big strikes—five in number—are summarized as follows: 1904—First general strike in the soft coal industry, called by the United Mine Workers of America, the purpose being to restore wage scales that had been decreased during the panic of '03; 100,000 to 150,000 men engaged and militia called out in four states; first attempt at a compromise failed, but second conference of miners and operators ended with adoption of a scale agreement.

1907—July 4th walkout of 150,000 miners, called by D. M. Hatchford, president of the U. M. W. of A. to complete an overlooked coal market, which union officials feared would result in wage reductions on account of the slow coal trade; strike was called off after 13 weeks' duration, at the end of which the market had been depleted; first great successful strike of the U. M. W. of A.

1909—Anthracite strike in September and October, engaged 122,000 and ended with miners getting 10 to 16 per cent. increase in wages.

1910—Great anthracite strike, led by the late John Mitchell, as president of the U. M. W. of A., lasted 23 weeks, May to October; 140,000 men engaged, and finally called off when President Roosevelt appointed a commission that afterward gave the miners a 10 per cent. wage advance, and

made their contract for three years, ending April 1, 1916.

1913—Nation-wide soft coal strike in November and December of 1913, miners called off by union in compliance with a court injunction, obtained by Attorney General Palmer under the wartime Lever fuel control law; commission later appointed by President Wilson gave miners an increase of approximately 27 per cent. in wages—their largest single increase.

Unlike the last great strike, the present one begins with warm weather approaching, while the 1913 shut-down came with winter. Stocks now are more ample than then, but the present situation is much like the Fourth of July walkout of 1897. Out of the strikes, both large and small, the workers as a general proposition have won many benefits in increased wages and improved working conditions. But victory has NOT always been theirs, though the big strike

settlements have favored them. The operator successes, however, include wage reductions, denial of increased wages, changed working conditions, and the crushing of two unions—the first national organization of miners, founded in 1840, which perished in a series of strikes at the close of the civil war, and the Workmen's Benevolent Association, an organization of anthracite workers, which was demoralized in 1876 after 16 years' existence.

The first coal strike in the United States occurred in 1849 in the Pennsylvania anthracite field when a British miner, named Bates, organized a local union and sought to increase wages and better working conditions. His strike failed and Bates was forced to leave the field and for eleven years the workers made no further attempt at organization.

Since Bates' day, many leaders have been developed among the workers and strikes of various sorts for varied purposes have been carried on, the early fight being largely confined to small areas, occasionally including an entire state coal field.



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(Beauty Culture)

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