Planned Prosperity for the Peasant.*

SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER was one of the few Finance Ministers of India who took a comprehensive view of Indian finance and studied it in its larger relation to Indian economic life. Hence his interest in Economic Planning and Economic Councils, which he sought to prepare by inviting to India, two experts to report on the collection of economic statistics in India. In the stimulating lecture he recently delivered before the Royal Society of Arts, Sir George believes, as all those must who have given the problem any serious attention unaffected by prepossessions of one kind or other,—that "the vast masses of the Indian population must be based on rural economy and no conceivable degree of industrialisation can alter this within any period that can be foreseen". It is, therefore, of vital importance to the prosperity of the country that Indian agriculture should take advantage of recent developments in mechanisation of agriculture. But the increasing product of agriculture that will follow must find a sale abroad, but sales abroad are only possible if India will buy industrial goods in return, and a serious obstacle arises in the form of India's own industrial ambitions. If India will not buy from abroad, she cannot sell abroad, and if she cannot sell, her rural population is doomed to continued poverty. The dilemma is resolved, and the interests of a prosperous agriculture with the growth of Indian industrialisation are reconciled by the argument that "there are certain more elaborate forms of industrial products for which the Indian market alone will not give an economic foundation for independent manufacture, and for which India will not, for a long time to come, have the necessary skilled labour and technique"; among such are "motor-cars, telephones, wireless machines, gramaphones, etc." The category exists, though the list may be questioned. India can proceed along her own industrial advance in the direction of production of cotton piece-goods, iron and steel manufactures, sugar, and so on. Thus Sir George Schuster rests Indian prosperity upon the tripod ot improved agriculture, increased industrialisation, and imports of goods that India cannot expect to produce for herself in the near future on anything like an economic basis.

People are too often inclined to judge a country's prosperity by reference to figures of production and trade alone, and are either indifferent to problems that affect the standard of the life of the poor or are openly impatient of proposals like Factory and Social Legislation that are calculated to transfer to the workers some share of the gains in production. Sir George is emphatic in his view that "there is a great need for policies which will increase the material wealth of India, but this will be valueless unless they also secure the proper distribution of that wealth, and the greatest need of all is to raise the standard of living of the masses of the people". The problem is how to bring about a higher standard of life, and "somehow or other to get the rural masses of India out of the rut of their present low standards". This can be done partly by Government action and partly, as Sir George Schuster says, by convincing "public opinion of the need and getting all those who have any influence in the villages—landlords, District Councils, Municipalities, Universities, etc.—to work upon it. Mass psychology needs to be moved in the matter."

In view of the recent repudiation of economic planning by the present Finance Minister, it is of much significance that Sir George Schuster reaffirms his faith in economic planning. He holds that "some foresight" is necessary "as to what is to be produced, and an intensive effort to maintain production and presentation for marketing at the highest level of efficiency, so as to produce the best quality at the cheapest price." He believes that "Governments and especially the Government of a country like India, must take thought and give the lead and impetus in these matters". The first duty of the Government, in the absence of "sufficient statistical records" and their interpretation and co-ordination, is to arrange for "a map of its own economic country", and for this purpose a Central Organisation of Economic Intelligence and Statistics must be created. If an intelligent public opinion is to be created, "knowledge must be disseminated". In the light of this emphatic reaffirmation of the need for a scientific and ordered basis of study of economic data for the development of the

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* "Indian Economic Life: Past Trends and Future Prospects", by Sir George Schuster: Sir George Birdwood Memorial Lecture, Royal Society of Arts.

country, it is to be hoped that the Government of India will take early steps to give effect to the recommendations of the experts and arrange for an Economic Census of India at an early date, even if the Economic Advisory Organisation recommended by Sir Arthur Salter is to wait till the new Constitution is in operation.

The Baluchistan Earthquake of May 31, 1935.*

By W. D. West,
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THE earthquake which occurred in Baluchistan on May 31st was remarkable in two respects. It was of high intensity at the epicentre, causing great mortality and much damage to property, yet it was felt over a comparatively small area, a little over 100,000 square miles. This is a rather characteristic feature of earthquakes in Baluchistan, and indicates that they must have a shallow focus. The epicentre, where the greatest damage was sustained, extended from the north-west of Quetta to half-way between Mastung and Kalat. Its position is shown on the accompanying map, together with the epicentres of the earthquakes of 1931 and 1909.

Since most of the inhabitants were asleep at the time of the earthquake, little information was forthcoming regarding the beginning of the shock. It so happened, however, that night operations were being carried out that night at a place about 4 miles to the north of Quetta, and it appears from the evidence of those taking part that about 5 to 10 seconds before the main shock started there was a preliminary tremor sufficiently strong to be recognised as an earthquake shock. The main shock came from the south and was accompanied by a noise like the roar of a train in a tunnel. The motion was described by the same observers as being like the action of a small boat in a choppy sea. People in Quetta itself generally described it as a sharp horizontal shake.

The shocks seem to have lasted nearly half a minute. During this time the whole of Quetta City, part of the Civil Lines, the Railway Quarters, the Police Lines and the R. A. F. Lines were laid in ruins. The northern and north-eastern part of Quetta, in which are situated the Cantonment and the Staff College, was much less affected; and although the city must have suffered a shock of almost intensity 10 on the Rossi-Forel Scale, at the Staff College, distant only 3½ miles from the city, the intensity was only 6. In fact, many people living in the Staff College area went back to bed after the earthquake, and were surprised the next morning when, on going towards the city to do their shopping, they found the whole place in ruins. This was almost certainly due to the varying nature of the ground, the area where destruction was greatest being situated on water-logged alluvium, while the Cantonment and the Staff College are situated on dry alluvium.

One striking feature of the earthquake, which caused many people to think that it had a volcanic origin, was the great quantity of dust which arose from the surrounding hills, and specially from Chiltan mountain, both at the time of the main shock and also on the afternoon of June 2nd, when a very severe aftershock occurred. Needless to say the "smoke," which was thought to have been seen ascending from Chiltan, was only dust caused by the collapse of thousands of tons of limestone as a result of the severe shaking which the mountain received.

Another feature of the earthquake which aroused much interest was a line of fissuring in the ground which extended on and off for over 70 miles, from the south side of Chiltan to near Kalat. In places along this line the alluvium was severely fissured, in other places the ground had subsided two or three feet on one side or the other, while elsewhere the ground had heaved up a foot or two. Careful examination of this area, however, showed that the fissuring was purely a surface phenomenon, coinciding with the line of greatest intensity of shock, and it was clear that it did not penetrate the solid rock beneath. Where this line of fissuring crossed the railway line from Quetta to Nushki, the rails were severely crumpled.

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