

Off the Record

"SHADES OF MAY IN HADES"

BARRING the first, May is a month devoid of drama. Spring has merged into summer with its hot winds in the day and sultry nights. Political activities lose their edge and bite, and business conditions are dulled. Only acigrulture survives May. There is more in the climatic theory than people in their pride are apt to think. Those who have lived in the land of the *loo* are surprised how in ancient days it was the nursery of great intellects, but they console themselves with the information that the climate was different then. Be that as it may, the sages actually moved up to Badrihath and Kftilash. Mughal Emperors to Kashmir, British governments to the hills, and Tagore to Europe. So if today India's Premier leaves India for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London and proposes to spend a week in Switzerland on the way back, it will be climatically fit. Similar views we hold about the Sardar's mild exhortation to India's top businessmen to play the game, and their lazy willingness to do so. If one notices some panting, a little sweating and a few wet towels, let them be ascribed to the rigours of a game in summer. Who can blame the players if they choose to argue that such a game can only be pursued if May Day can be shifted a month earlier? Life must be quiet and sleepy in May, or we commit a crime against nature whose first law is that of *laissez faire*.

Pandit Nehru's visit has caused wild speculation, for which, however, there is little scope in view of the Congress resolution on foreign policy and the terms of

the Indian constitution, both of which he has done his best to explain. He is also not the man to be overawed by the advice of a Smuts or a Fraser. The former gentleman, who is the author of Holism, does not see any discrepancy between his biological theory of the whole and political action in parts. He has chosen to put his arguments in the shape of either or; that is, either India remains in or goes out of the Commonwealth. India does not subscribe to this logical position. Her neutrality if that phrase can at all be used is constructive. Which really means that India does *not equate* the British Com-

monwealth with the world, that Anglo-America *versus* U.S.S.R. is not the only political proposition, and lastly that political action is not exhausted by taking sides with either of them. At the same time, it *is* not a neuter's neutrality. It is a positive attitude, hard to conceive no doubt in terms of Aristotelian syllogisms, but utterly realistic. The only thing needed to overcome this difficulty is to be confident of one's self and realise that existence cannot be put into the strait-jacket of *either or* and *versus* relationships. Existentialist confidence is incorrigibly dialectic. An English summer should help Pandit Nehru in feeling young and making the old realise that Young India has, and must have, a life of her own. Linkage with the Crown is the least important part of it.

Britain has produced Plutonium, which is an alternative to U-235 so long used to create atomic power. At first only a theoretical possibility, it has now emerged as a by-product in the atomic pile out of the surplus neutrons remaining after splitting U-235. The new isotope, being unstable, becomes Neptunium by beta-emission, which, in its turn, is transformed into Plutonium. Under similar type of bombardment, Plutonium releases tremendous energy. At present this isotope is mixed up in the graphite slag of the pile in a dangerously radio-active fashion and cannot be isolated or handled. But the point is that Britain has made a chemical problem of it instead of the physical one of the old Atom Bomb. As such it has become economical in two ways;

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