

"vested interests." It is almost entirely the result of the mind of the small man with a piece of land of his own; he is anxious to escape the landlord's tribute, but with the abolition of landlordism his interest ends. Collectivisation of the land makes no appeal at all; even co-operative farming is distrusted. Food control was abandoned by Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, the agile Food Minister, who, though a professing socialist, emerged as the friend and advocate of free enterprise. The explanation was simple. Mr. Kidwai, and through him, the Prime Minister, are more astute as politicians than they are consistent as philosophers. They accepted the popular mood rather than attempt to convert it to the socialist faith.

The idea that the people of India ardently wish additional powers to be assumed by the government in order to quicken the rate of economic development is now being increasingly discounted. And there is a significant reason for this to be found in some of the interesting figures contained in the First Report of the National Income Committee for the official year 1948-49. According to this Committee, 61.3 per cent of India's enterprises are to be classified as "small"; only 12 per cent are large; and as many as 26.7 per

cent are "unclassified" and may possibly be taken as medium. It is an essentially property-respecting attitude which lies behind the cautious judgement of the Indian people in the last general elections. It is likely that this will continue to prevail as against the demand for economic "progress" at any price. In any case, the government's present plans envisage a doubling of per capita income about twenty-five years from now. Even the First Five Year Plan is designed to secure a per capita advance at the rate of 1 per cent per year. The Second Five Year Plan, now under preparation, will more than double this rate. There is not likely, therefore, to be a choice presented in the form of Stability against Economic Progress. The average Indian may fairly hope to have both.

The fact that the stability of India rests in the impersonal character of the Indian countryside detracts somewhat from the political romance which surrounds Jawaharlal Nehru. But at least it makes unnecessary the frantic search for a successor, which has occupied so much time in the last two years. All in all, if the weather continues no worse than it has already been, this ship will safely come to port, even, if necessary, without its captain on the bridge.

Eric da Costa

WINTER

No sound ; no breath ;
 Snow fell. Snow fell on me,
 Not from the sky on which a child looks up
 Like an enclosing cup.
 Snow fell from outer space,
 Kissing continually
 With calm, uncaring death
 My upturned face.

Frances Cornford

THE DEATH PENALTY

SIR—I am not exactly clear what the denial by Signor Silone and his friends to the State of a *right* to inflict capital punishment may mean. But, in any event, as an opponent of capital punishment I cannot but feel that it is not the best line of approach to the problem—at any rate, in non-metaphysical English-speaking countries. Whether the State has such a right or not, we have to face the fact that the majority of people believe that it has this right, and that therefore merely to state the proposition that it has not got such a right does not make converts to the cause of abolition. No one disputes Beccaria's proposition that a hanging does no good to the man hanged, but many people think that it does good to the rest of society in that it deters other murderers. Surely, therefore, the real point to make, if we wish to carry the issue, is to show from experience and statistics that capital punishment is not a necessary or an effective deterrent. The details of the experience of countries where experiments of abolition have been tried, which have been so carefully collected by the Royal Commission and published in Appendix VI of their Report, most convincingly demonstrate this. And, while my object is the same as that of Signor Silone, I feel that that object is far more likely to be attained by directing attention to the consequences in practice rather than by enunciating a metaphysic which, whether it be valid or not, is not universally accepted.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS, M.P.

*House of Commons,
London, S.W.1*

ENGLISH IDEAS ABOUT SEX

SIR—Mr. Geoffrey Gorer's sex questionnaire—as given in his article, "English Ideas about Sex," in the December issue of *ENCOUNTER*—was, I believe, addressed exclusively to the readers of the Sunday newspaper, *The People*. "Tell me what you read and I'll tell you what you are," wrote Sainte-Beuve. Although it is not a foolproof axiom, I doubt

whether the "typical" reader of *ENCOUNTER* has many attitudes in common with the "typical" reader of, say, *Reveille*. (A comparison of the results of a poll run by the two magazines on the subject of capital punishment would, I think, be instructive.) This, of course, is the old highbrow/lowbrow classification which can be applied easily enough to the field of Sunday newspapers, *The Observer* as opposed to *The People*, for example. But even if attention is restricted to the so-called "popular" field, and when suitable allowance has been made for an overlapping in readership, it is clear that the general outlook of the readers of *The People* will differ in many respects from that of readers of the *Sunday Express*. *The People's* politics are left of centre and may be defined loosely as socialist; the *Sunday Express* is avowedly conservative. In neither paper is its political outlook limited to the editorial columns. Compare the attitudes of the two papers to society: Arthur Helliwell, *The People's* columnist, treats it as a kind of *demi-monde*, dominated by show-people and speculators. Ephraim Hardcastle, in the *Sunday Express*, is primarily interested in the peerage. Unlike Helliwell, his observations are wide-eyed and approving. These columnists and their respective papers cater for two conflicting bodies of public opinion which differ not merely politically. Dr. H. J. Eysenck, with whose work Mr. Gorer is no doubt familiar, has amply demonstrated how considerably a person's political opinions affect his normal moral judgements, and vice versa. Thus, drawing on the evidence of surveys made in this country, he has concluded that the conservative has a greater tendency towards anti-semitism than the socialist. The point I wish to make is this: had Mr. Gorer conducted his survey among readers of the *Sunday Express* his results would have been appreciably different. With his present data, his brisk generalisations about so complex a topic as "English Ideas about Sex" are, to say the least, premature.

GEOFFREY MINISH

Hove, Sussex

[Geoffrey Gorer replies:—Mr. Minish is incorrect in a number of his assumptions. By no means all the