### THE

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CON	TENT	s.		•
	_			PAGE
Topics of the Week	450	101		265
ARTICLE :-				
Responsibility of Minis	ters		•••	266
SPECIAL ARTICLES :	,		i	
The Reforms Report.	By the Ho	n'ble <b>M</b> irza	Sami	
Ullah Beg		•••	•••	267
Indian Constitutional F	leformsI.	By H. N.	Kunzru	268
The Reform Scheme: R	ejection o	r Acceptai	ice.	
By Prof. V. G. Kale	·	•••	•••	272
Reform Proposals and	Native St	ates. By	G.R.	
Abhyankar, B. A., L	L. B	***		273
REVIEW :-		•	•	
A Pamphiet on Co-oper	ation. By	Rao Bah	adur	
S. S. Talmaki, B. A.,	LL. B.	•••		275

### TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Allied advance on the Western front during the last week will bring comfort to many an anxious heart among the Allied nations. The people of the Allied countries believed in the justice of the cause in defence of which they were fighting. They were equally confident about the resources of the Allies and their final victory. But for the last few months day after day and week after week, it was the same old monotonous story of the enemy advance with only a slight variation as regards the sector, and some sceptics had gone the length of concluding that the initiative had finally slipped out of the hands of the Allies. So the advance of the Allies has come as a great surprise, and a most agreeable susprise as well, especially as it was a counter stroke to the enemy offensive. It is perhaps too early yet to refer to this as the beginning of the end. But we do believe it can be made the beginning of the end if the Alliednations and especially the British Empire does not allow its efforts to be relaxed in any way. This is not the first instance in the history of a victorious career, that promised to be witnout end, being dramatically cut short. We hope the present advance will mark the turn of the tide and the efforts of the Allies and their generalship will finally free the world from the menace of German domination.

In the last issue of the SERVANT OF INDIA were pointed out some of the inaccuracies in Mrs. Besant's analysis of the reform scheme. In doing so, the writer of the notes used some expressions which would imply wilful misrepresentation of the scheme on the part of Mrs. Besant, which was not

the meaning intended by him. We regret that those expressions crept in.

MR. GANDHI'S advice as to the best course to follow on the reform scheme will, we hope, sink deep into the hearts of the people. He says: "Both Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford have been inspired by an honest desire for a due fulfilment of the declaration of the 20th August and for the welfare of India. They have taken great pains over their most difficult and delicate task, and I cannot but think that any hasty rejection of the scheme will be a misfortune for the country. In my humble opinion, the scheme deserves a sympathetic handling rather than a summary rejection. But it would need to be considerably improved before it is accepted by the reformers." Mr. Jinnah's viewsare substantially the same. He observes: report and proposals are weighty and well-considered and cannot be rejected summarily. Great effort has been made to face the problem, but I cannot say that I am satisfied with the scheme as it stands, and that it will not be acceptable to the people unless it is modified in important respects."

On the provisions in the report regarding the supply for reserved and transferred subjects, the Indian Social Reformer says: "At first sight, no doubt this strikes one as an extremely one-sided arrangement, whereby the Government of India and the Governor-in-Council are rendered secure in the enjoyment of their revenues, while to the unfortunate Indian ministers, entrusted with such nation-building functions as education, sanitation and local self-government, is left the odious task of raising the money for the whole show. nation-building, in other words, is to be carried on with the leavings of the reserved services. But there is another point of view from which the question may be looked at. If the reserved services are exorbitant in their demands, the Governors will not be able to find ministers to carry on the nation-building operations. The resignation of a minister on the ground that he cannot carry on his functions because of the extravagance of the executive council will make it practically impossible for any other minister to take his place. Unless the Governor is prepared to dissolve the legislative council, he will, we may be sure, bring pressure to bear upon his executive council to abate their demands."

#### RESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTERS.

A conference in Bengal, after considering the Chelmsford-Montagu scheme, arrived at the resolution that the proposed scheme did " not present any real step towards responsible government." It is worth while to examine this proposition and see what justification it derives from the contents of the joint report of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. It would indeed be surprising if, after laying aside the Congress-League scheme as based upon principles "essentially unsound" inasmuch as it did not provide for responsible govvernment, the scheme now offered for discussion by Government could also be assailed on the same ground. The most serious criticism, urged in the report, against the scheme of reforms put forward by the Congress and the Muslim League was that under it the legislature and the executive would derive their power from, and be responsible to, different authorities, issuing perhaps conflicting mandates. It was argued that in those proposals there was no connecting rod between the executive and the legislative wheels of the machine which would ensure that they would work in unison. In order to secure this accord it was necessary, so the reasoning went, that ministers, called to office because they commanded the confidence of the legis. lature, should be turned out when they had lost it. We need not pause here to consider this argument or to show how, under a periodical executive as contemplated in the Congress-League scheme, the essence of responsible government could be attained. But we would see whether any measures are proposed for adoption in the new scheme now placed before the country with a view to the initiation of responsible government in any of the spheres of administration, or whether the scheme, professing as it does to take substantial steps towards the progressive realisation of responsible government, only seeks to perpetuate the present form of government, as is implied in the resolution of the Bengal conference.

The question of responsible government does not at all arise in the Government of India, for the third of the formulæ, on which the scheme, as drafted at present, is based, has it that the central Government must remain wholly responsible to Parliament and only contemplates giving increased opportunities to its legislature of influencing Government. We should look for a beginning of responsible government, according to the basic conception of the authors of the scheme, in the provinces, for it is laid down in the second formula that the provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps towards progressive realisation of responsible government should be taken. What then are these steps? It is proposed in the scheme that certain functions of government in each province should be transferred to popular control and that decisions with regard to those functions should rest with the ministers appointed by the Governor from among the elected members of the legislative

council. Their decisions would be final, subject only to the Governor's advice and control. Here comes in a reservation, for it is said in the report: We do not contemplate that from the outset the Governor should occupy the position of a purely constitutional Governor who is bound to accept the decisions of the ministers. Our hope and intention is that ministers will gladly avail themselves of the Governor's trained advice upon administrative questions, while on his part he will be willing to meet their wishes to the furthest possible extent in cases where he realises that they have the support of popular opinion. ... We should expect him to refuse assent to the proposals of his ministers only when the consequences of acquiescence would clearly be serious. " In order to limit the Governor's discretion in this regard, it is recommended that an Instrument of Instructions be issued to the ministers on appointment by the Secretary of State in Council. The Governor is allowed in the beginning wider powers than in constitutional countries, for it is the intention of the authors of the scheme that at the outset the ministers should not be removable. They propose a preliminary period during which the ministers would be sure of their seats, but this period is prescribed. For after five years' time from the first meeting of the reformed councils it is open to the legislative coucil to propose that ministers' salaries should be put upon the annual budget and voted. Such a resolution of the legislative council will have to be given effect to. Or, alternatively, the Government of India on its own initiative may direct that ministers' salaries should be voted annually by the legislative council. The council would have power to refuse the salaries, with consequences 'which constitutional convention attaches to such a vote. The important point is that the legislative council in each province has it in its power to determine when, after the five years, the ministers will become responsible in the parliamentary sense, and that that matter is not left to the discretion of the Governor. The Bengal conference's resolution therefore can be true only so far as the five years of the preliminary period are concerned, for during this period there will be no responsible government, but after it there will be in some of the branches of provincial government, and it is strange in the extreme for a conference to pass the verdict on the reform scheme as a whole that it does not present any step towards responsible government.

It is claimed in the report that during the preliminary period ministers will be responsible to the constituents though not to the legislature, for in so far as the choice of ministers is restricted to the elected members of the legislative council, the voters have the power to refuse to re-elect a minister if they are dissatisfied with him. This, however, will not go a long way, especially as there are some special constituencies through which it will perhaps be easy to obtain entrance. The justification of prescribing a period, during

which ministers will not be liable to be turned out of office, from the point of view of those who think that responsible government is the best form of government, can only be, as indeed is stated in the report, that the legislative councils have had no experience of dismissing ministers and may not realise the responsibility incurred by so doing, and a short period should thus pass during which the displacement of ministers may not take place. But there are those who think that responsible government will not be completely successful unless certain conditions prevail. As the Calcutta Weekly Notes says, "At the same time, we recognise and deem it only fair to note that full ministerial responsibility works satisfactorily only in countries where the legislators fall broadly into two well-defined parties, a state of things which it will take time to develop in Indian politics." It was this consideration which led Indian politicians to frame a scheme in which a fixed executive was provided. In the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme it is stated that ministers will be appointed for the term of the legislative council, which has been interpreted in certain quarters to mean that, even after the preliminary period of five years, the ministers will remain in office for three years. It is clear however from the other provisions in the scheme that this is subject to the resignation or dismissal of ministers. Again, the scheme also contemplates the passing of a vote of censure by the legislature and the consequential quitting of office by ministers. It will thus be seen how misleading and unjust is the judgment passed by the Bengal conference on the reform scheme.

#### THE REFORMS REPORT.

I.

#### GENERAL IMPRESSIONS. .

NEVER before in the history of the world, a wiser and more liberal statement of policy was made by a ruling nation than the one made by Great Britain on the 20th August, 1917, with reference to India; never before in the history of India a greater and more sincere desire was manifested by the Ministers of Great Britain to act up to their statements than the one shown by Mr. Montagu in coming over to India with a small group of liberalminded advisers within a few days of making that declaration and in devoting days and months together in solving the most complex and difficult problem of so changing the present machinery of Government as to suit the requirements of that policy without causing a shock which may result in a total breakdown of administration; and never before a more dispassionate and statesmanlike document was produced as a result of thoughtful deliberations of several months than the Joint Report of the Secretary of State and the Government of India to carry out the same policy. Such is the document which at the request, nay, at the

insistence and call of India was placed before the public on the 8th July, 1918, and we, as the sons of India, as the best custodians of the interests of her future generations, are called upon to give our opinion after mature thought and deliberation unswayed by the idea of pleasing one party or the fear of displeasing another. Difference of opinion there is bound to be in a matter like this, but so long as the good of India is at our heart, I do not think that any harm will result by these divergent views and expressions of opinion which we see either in the Press or meet in our private talks and conversations. I believe that harmony will arise even out of discord. I am not therefore much afraid of the commotion that is being produced in the political life of India by this most historic document. We must give expression to our views fearlessly and conscientiously. I frankly confess that when I finished reading the last sentence of the Report, I came to the conclusion that it was a splendid exposition of the situation, that it was inspired by a sincere and genuine desire to help India forward, that its keynote was sympathy and co-operation.

It has been suggested in some quarters to reject it, because it is so different from our Congress-League scheme. It would have been marvellous if it had not been different from a scheme conceived at Bombay in 1915 and brought into being at Lucknow in 1916 at a peculiar stage of the development of our ideas of reform in India. We are now at a stage of constructive work. The whole machinery of administration has now been placed before us and we are asked not only to give our note of approval or disapproval by sweeping remarks of a general character, but as practical men to suggest ways and means of overhaulting the whole machinery in such a manner as to work it on the lines of new policy without causing any shock which may result in a ruinous collapse. To attain this object, we may have to chip off the Congress-League scheme at one place and add to it at another place. It cannot new be treated as our final word for all purposes. I am prepared to accept the Report as a basis of discussion and future construction, because I cannot imagine a better foundation on which to construct this new edifice, our differences of course lying only in the height or the stage up to which this edifice should be built immediately. I am prepared to accept the Joint Report as the basis of discussion and future construction because I see that the lines on which it has proceeded are such that its halting stages from the very nature of them can never be final and permanent, and that they must necessarily lead to the goal which is at the heart of every one of us. our differences of course lying in the measure of time required to pass those stages. I am prepared to accept the Joint Report as the basis of discussion and future construction, because in reading through its lines the effect on my mind is that those who have prepared it and placed it before us for discussion, opinion and criticism seem open to

conviction and have shown sufficient degree of eagerness to help us in reaching our common goal, our differences lying only in the degree of fear and apprehension of absolute deadlock by adopting shorter cuts than those laid down by the Report itself. I feel that it is our duty to respond to the great and noble impulses that flow from the Report. Under no circumstances would I think of rejecting it. These are my general impressions as to the Report as a whole. I will try to deal with the different heads covered by the Report in my subsequent letters and show where, in my opinion, the authors of the Report have become unnecessarily overcautious and where shorter cuts can reasonably be taken.

# • II. PARLIAMENT AND THE INDIA OFFICE.

In my first letter, I have given reasons for accepting the Report as a basis for discussion and development of the scheme. It implies that I am not prepared to depart from the basic principles underlying the Report. The authors of the Report feel that, so far as transferred subjects are concerned, the Parliament "must be prepared to forego the exercise of its own powers of control, " and that" a wider discretion ought henceforth to be left to the Governor-General in Council, " even as regards reserved subjects, a list of which should be prepared indicating the "specified matters" the control of which should be taken away from the Secretary of State and left to the Government of India. There cannot be two opinions as to the principle of it, but everything will depend upon the number and class of such "specified matters." India is poor because she has not been able to protect and develop her industries. India is entirely dependent upon other countries for the ordinary comforts of her daily life, because she has no power to regulate her tariffs and customs. strongly hope that these "specified matters" will include those subjects which are so closely connected with her future material development and expansion and of which she alone can be the best judge. There are two alternatives before England. Will it be her future policy to be at the head of a vast Empire or will it prefer to remain a trading country? England seems prepared to make large sacrifices for establishing a vast Empire, and if so she will have to make material changes in her trade policy in future. I therefore hope that the Parliament will frame the contemplated list of "specified matters" in such a manner as to concern itself mainly with foreign affairs "with large matters of policy "and to let India .develop herself in her own way under the guidance of Government of India in all matters which relate to her internal growth and expansion.

As far as the constitution of the India Office is concerned, it should be borne in mind that the ultimate claim of India will always be to reduce the Secretary of State for India to the position of a Secretary of State for Colonies, but as I have "lready accepte the basic principles of the Report

for this period of transition, it will be unnecessary to discuss the merits of the Congress-League scheme relating to the constitution of the Secretary of State in Council. It is our earnest desire to interest the British public in Indian affairs. For this very purpose the British Congress Committee started the paper India in England. We tried to force Indian questions on the minds of the great liberal statesmen of England, who up to the present time did not find sufficient time to devote to Indian affairs. For this very purpose the people have for the last 30 years been passing resorvi lutions from the Congress platform to place the salary of the Secretary of State on the British estimates so that India may be brought before their eyes at the time of budget debate in Parliament. I am therefore glad that the Report recommends the appointment of a Committee of the House of Commons to deliberate on Indian questions and also proposes "that the Secretary of State's salary like that of all other ministers of the Crown, should be defrayed from Home revenues and voted annually by Parliament." The Report further recommends that in order to enable the Secretary of State to arrive at speedy decision he may have men near him, who have up-to-date knowledge of the changing conditions of India and therefore it suggests "to modify the present constitution of the Council of India and to arrange, if not for the recruitment of the India Office staff from the Indian Civil Service, at least for some interchange of personnel between the staff of the India Office and the public services in India." Nobody can object to this wish on the part of the Secretary of State who is the best judge of his own requirements, but I would only say that it would not be desirable to limit the recruitment from the Indian Civil Service. The system should not be rigid but elastic. The Secretary of State may find it necessary to establish such a practice of selection from the general Public Services in India that he may be able to see both sides of every picture which may be drawn before him, and therefore the latter alternative of interchange of personnel will probably work more satisfactorily.

SAMI ULLAH BEG.

#### INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS.—L.

THE report on Indian constitutional reforms which embodies the veiws of the Secretary of State and his Excellency the Viceroy regarding the changes that should be made in the machinery of government in order to bring it into accord with public sentiment and opinion and to promote the realisation of full responsible government is a document of historic importance. It is notable for its thorough grasp of the Indian problem, its clear and unbiased account of the various stages of constitutional development through which India has passed and its close and lucid reasoning. The plan which it sketches out for the enfranchise

ment of the Indian nation may fail to excite enthusiasm and its arguments may not always carry conviction, but its freedom from prejudice and its sincerity of accent will be admitted almost on all hands. Broadly speaking, its urbanity and detachment are in agreeable contrast to the selfcomplacency and narrow-mindedness that mar the pages of official documents. Its authors take no pride in pointing out our weaknesses. On the contrary, they admit the responsibility of the Government for our deficiencies and recognise that we have not been given opportunities for the display of those qualities, with the lack of which we are taunted. They have tried to see themselves as others see them. Their criticism of the Morley-Minto councils is as frank as one could expect it to be. "Responsibility is the savour of popular government and that savour the present councils wholly lack." The Government is still a monarch in durbar." To the objection that reforms are desired only by a microscopic minority they reply, "but what is perhaps more important to appreciate than the mere content of political life is its rate of growth. No one who has observed Indian life during even the past five years can doubt that the growth is rapid and real," Referring to the report that Indians are only for literary callings they observe that "even if there is substance in the count, we must take note also how far the past policy of Government is responsible. We have not succeeded in making education practical. It is only now, when the war has revealed the importance of industry, that we have deliberately set about encouraging Indians to undertake the creation of wealth by industrial enterprise and have thereby offered the educated classes any tangible inducement to overcome their traditional inclination to look down on practical forms of energy." They have tried to make an impartial survey of the political situation, and although one may not always agree with their estimate of events or tendencies, it is impossible to accuse them of partisanship. Nor is it possible to doubt the genuineness and honesty of purpose that underlies their proposals. Whatever their precise value, they represent an earnest and serious effort on the part of their authors to grapple with the Indian problem and to lay the foundation of responsible government. They are conceived in a liberal spirit and sincerely designed to promote the political advancement of the

In order to test the value of the scheme propounded by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford we should bear two considerations in mind. We should examine carefully whether it is a substantial step in the direction of responsible government, which has been declared to be the aim of British statesmanship, and what provision it makes for ensuring smooth and uninterrupted progress until the goal is reached. Our attitude towards it should be determined by the extent to which it satisfies those conditions.

#### PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE.

Let us begin with the changes proposed in the provinces. The provincial executive Government is to be made up of three parts, the executive council, a minister or ministers and an additional member or members without portfolios. The executive council will consist of two members, one of whom will be an Indian. They will administer the subjects over which the control of the provincial Government will be continued. The ministers will be chosen from the elected members of the legistative council and be responsible for the administration of subjects which will come under the complete control of the legislature. The additional members will be chosen from senior officials, and their functions will be purely advisory. They will have no vote. As they will not be directly responsible for the efficiency of the administration or for the policy of the Government, it is difficult to understand what useful purpose they will serve. As the advice of his officials is always at the disposal of a ruler of a province, it is not necessary to appoint any of them formally as the counsellors of Government. Ordinarily counsel must be taken with the members of the executive council, who are the constitutional advisers of the Governor and whose self-respect ought not to allow them to share their responsibility with anybody else. That the Governor of a province should make it his normal practice to consult outsiders on all administrative matters appears to be a violation of constitutional principles and calculated to impair the dignity, if not also the authority, of the members of the executive council. The appointment of additional members is also objectionable from another point of view. It gives room for suspicion that its object is to provide a counterpoise to the Indian element which will otherwise predominate in the executive Government. The ministers cannot decide issues relating to reserved subjects by their votes. They can only influence the Governor-in-Council. As it has been irrevocably settled that sooner or later power shall be completely in the hands of Indians and as it is essential in the public interest that during the transitional stage two halves of the Government, which are to be responsible to the people and the British Parliament respectively, should be in harmony with one another, the future and the immediate present alike demand that the ministers should be. allowed to exercise as wide and unrestricted an influence as possible. The Governor ought not to fortifiy himself against it. He should expose himself to it as much as he can. To appoint additional members is to exhibit distrust of Indians and to weaken the foundation of mutual confidence and co-operation between two sections of the executive Government.

#### PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

The legislative council is to contain a substantial majority of elected members. The election is to be direct and on a broad franchise. The size of the council, its composition, and the qua-

lifications of voters will be determined by a committee which will "consist of a chairman chosen from outside India, two experienced officials and two Indians of high standing and repute." In each province it is to be joined by "one civilian officer and one Indian appointed by the provincial Government." The extent of the power of the council will be determined by the recommendation of another committee which is to delimit the spheres of authority of the provincial Governments and the legislative council. This committee will consist of a chirman appointed from England, an official and an Indian non-official, and in each province an official and Indian non-official are to be added to it. Legislation regarding reserved subjects, if certified by the Governor to be necessary for the maintenance of peace and order or for the proper administration of these subjects, will be removed from the purview of the legislative council and referred to a grand committee. a bare majority of which is to be nominated by the Governor and the rest to be elected by the legislative council. As for finance, the budget will be framed by the executive Government as a whole. The needs of the reserved departments will be considered first. If the revenue which remains after satisfying them is insufficient for the transferred subjects, the minister will have to shoulder the responsibility of proposing new taxation. The legislative council will be entitled to discuss and vote on the budget allotments. If, however, the council rejects or alters any of the items relating to the reserved subjects, the Governor will, on certifying the necessity of such a course, have the power to insist on their being restored to their original form.

These proposals are open to a great deal of criticism. The institution of a grand committee, even with the nominated majority reduced to the lowest dimensions, arouses legitimate suspicion and does not appear to be necessary. If the supply for the reserved subjects is to have priority it is feared that the transferred departments will be starved. Again, the odium for imposing extra taxation will have to be borne entirely by the ministers. This will, to a certain extent, strengthen the position of the ministers, but by adopting for the division of funds between the reserved and transferred subjects the method which has been recommended for determining the contributions to be made by the provincial Governments to the Government of India, all cause for friction between the executive council and the ministers over the allocation of revenue will be avoided and the Government will not be able to transfer the burden of levying fresh taxation, when it is rendered necessary by increased expenditure on the reserved subjects, on to the shoulders of the ministers. The power given to the Governor to insist on the retention of any budgetary allotment is too wide and can well be curtailed, without encroaching on his degitimate authority. One way of doing

this would be to assimilate the procedure in regard to certificated financial proposals to that which is or may be prescribed in the case of certificated bills. I shall elaborate these points and discuss other features of the reform scheme in subsequent articles, but the scheme, even as it stands, establishes the control of the representatives of the people over the executive and the purse in regard to the transferred subjects. It is true that to begin with the minsters need not resign on an adverse vote of the legislative council, but as they will be chosen from the elected members, it may be presumed that they will be generally en rapport with the council. Besides, at the end of five years they can be made completely responsible to the council by the Government of India either at its own discretion or at the request of the legislative council, which it will be bound to give effect to. In regard to finance also the council will have full control over the budget of the transferred subjects and will be able to considerably influence the financial policy of the provincial Government also. In order that these powers may be regarded as substantial, it is, of course, necessary that the field over which they are exercised should be as wide as circumstances permit. It is obvious, therefore, that a great deal will depend on the decision of the committee which will advise on the separation of provincial functions into reserved and transferred subjects. Pending this division, the views expressed with regard to the value of the reforms can only be tentative, but as committee will contain a strong Indian element the result of its labours may be looked forward to with hope. In order that it may take up its duties in the right spirit, it should be instructed, as has been already suggested by the SERVANT OF INDIA, that it should reserve only the minimum of subjects to the control of the Governor-in-Council.

IMPERIAL EXECUTIVE & LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS.

The situation is much less satisfactory when we come to consider the proposals for reforming the Government of India. The imperial executive council is to contain one more Indian. In consequence of the proposed redistribution of duties betwe en the imperial and provincial Governments, the greater freedom given to provincial legislative councils and the enlarged conception of the function of the Government of India in economic matters, its size may undergo a change. But whatever its size, we must press strongly that half of it sh ould be selected from Indians. The Government of India will in future be the arbiter between the provincial Governments and legislatures and on its policy will depend whether the Council of State will serve the fuctions of a revising chamber or thwart at every step the wishes of the Legislative Assembly. It is more than ever necessary, therefore, that there should be a strong Indian element in the body which can influence largely the course of future events and which will have in its hands the shaping of policies.

The imperial legislative council is to consist of two chambers, the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. The former is to consist of 100 members, of whom two-thirds will be elected. The latter is to consist of 50 members, of whom only 21 will be elected. The present council has been ex-. panded and the elected element made preponderant, but this change has been accompained by the addition of a second chamber. In essential respects, no increase has been made in the powers of the elected members, although their influence will be considerably augmented. "The budget will be introduced in the Legislative Assembly, but the Assembly will not vote it," and in the sphere of legislation the sanction of the Council of State will be sufficient to pass certificated measures into law. The Government of India has thus not been liberalised. In fact, it is claimed that it could not be liberalised at this stage, for it is alleged to be a necessary consequence of the announcement of the 20th August, 1917, that "the capacity of the Government of India to obtain its will in all essential matters must be unimpaired." It certainly makes the British Government and the Government of India "judges of the time and measure of each advance," but it does not rule out all proposals for reforming the Government of India as inadmissible. Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford have put upon it an interpretation which is inconsistent not only with the spirit but also the letter of that declaration. What is still more disquieting is that they seem to contemplate that the Government of India may remain irresponsible to the people of India even if responsible government has been achieved in these provinces. They appear to have borrowed many ideas from Mr. Curtis. His opinion on this point may, therefore, prove instructive to them. He regards the view that "provincial executives can be made responsible long before a similar change need be made in the sphere of the Government of India" as untenable. The primary function of the Government of India, he says, is the maintenance of law and order. It is principally for the performance of this duty that the Government of India is responsible to Parliament, aud "that Government can remain responsible to Parliament, only so long as the provincial Governments remain responsible to itself for the final control of police . . . But whenever the final transfer of this force is made to elective Governments in the major provinces, the Government of India itself must then be made responsible to their electorates. The transfer of police to executives responsible to electorates is tantamount to the consummation of responsible government, to the attainment of the final goal set forth in the pronouncement." Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford hesitate to go even so far as this, though their acceptance of this view will not absolve them from the duty of taking steps to transfer some power to the representatives of the people in the immediate future.

COMMISSIONS OF ENQUIRY.

In order that future progress may not be

blocked by vested interests, it is proposed that periodical enquiries should be constituted in order to review the working of the imperial and provincial councils. The Commissions of enquiry will report to Parliament and their members will be chosen with the approval of that body. The proposal is in its essence a sound one and deserves to be welcomed. The All-India Congress Committee and the Council of the All-India Muslim League represented strongly to the Secretary of State and His Excellency the Viceroy in November last that the determination of future progress should not be left entirely to the British and Indian Governments. But they also urged that "it ought to be recognised that the people of India themselves, as the party principally affected, have a right to an effective voice in the decision of a question which is of such supreme moment to to them." This is a just and reasonable request and should be given effect to. One way of doing this would be to lay down that not less than onehalf of the members of the Commissions of enquiry shall be chosen from the elected members of the Legislative Assembly. Modifications can be proposed in other ruspects also, but it is unnecessary to go into details just now. The most important thing is that the right of the people of India to have an effective voice in determining their future should be acknowledged.

CONCLUSION.

It will be a source of regret to every Indian that the Secretary of State and the Viceroy have not seen their way to adopt the Congress-League scheme, not because of any abstract merits which it may possess, but because its acceptance would have made our power felt over the entire range of provincial administration and placed the Government of India also under our control. Apart from this the official proposals will have to be substantially modified, particularly with reference to the Government of India, in order to meet the requirements of the situation. But one would have expected every fair-minded man to admit that with all their imperfections they represent a substantial advance on the existing state of things and that although they do not plant our feet on the goal yet bring us within measurable distance of it. Nevertheless, it has been said that they are so unsatisfactory in their nature that it is waste of time and energy to discuss them and their wholesale rejection has been advised. Besant asserts that they "do not even suggest that responsible government is a future goal" and that the Government of India "is disimproved." Another influential exponent of public opinion is equally unrestrained in its denunciation of them. It feels sure that they "cannot constitute any scheme or part of a scheme of responsible government," and that provincial legislative councils have been relegated to "a very much more subordinate and impotent position" than they now occupy. Perhaps it has been so much incensed by a certain resemblance between

the proposals of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford and those of Mr. Curtis that it has forgotten to examine the official scheme and occupied itself with denouncing Mr. Curtis's plan. Or perhaps these critics do not intend that their remarks should be taken in a literal sense. Our position worse, according to has been made in the Government of India, and, according to the other, in the provincial legislative councils. The explanation of these startling and discrepant statements may be in the difficult situation in which the leaders find themselves in Madras. They live in an atmosphere of suspicion and calumny. If they happen to say anything that is distasteful to any powerful group their motives are freely impugned and, in the words of Mrs. Besant, who has been foully traduced, they are accused of "being bought over by Government." It is no wonder, therefore, if under these conditions even the most clear-headed of them are swept off their feet. But those who are more happily circumstanced have, on this very account, a special duty resting on them. They should do all in their power to acquaint the public with the important features of the reform proposals, to make constructive suggestions for improving them and to impress upon the people that to exaggerate their defects and to adopt towards them an attitude of unreasoning hostility is to betray the best interests of the country. We have been often told that the has set a new value on liberty and created, throughout the British Empire, an atmosphere favourable to the realisation of Indian aspirations. Let us not then throw away this priceless opportunity which may never recur. There is a tide now in our affairs which, if taken advantage of, will lead us on to fortune. But if we fail to profit by it, our political voyage for many a year to come may be "bound in shallows and in miseries." We are now afloat on a full sea,

"And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures."

H. N. KUNZRU.

# THE REFORM SCHEME: REJECTION OR ACCEPTANCE.

it is denied to them, whatever the grown scheme or reject it, I would reply that I am not prepared to do either. The scheme ought not to be rejected. It has been placed before the country for criticism and suggestions and it is the duty of leaders to point out its defects and propose modifications. Nothing will be gained by saying that we shall have the Congress-League scheme and nothing but the Congress-League scheme. It may be possible to reshape the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals in such a way as to bring them up to the level of our expections in substance, if not in form. If the British public is made to realize that India will not have the reform scheme in the form in which it has been presented and that ex-

tensive changes are indispensable for its acceptance by this country, it is quite likely that we shall secure much if not everything of what we desire. It will also be a tactical mistake to reject the scheme wholesale. The British public will be led to believe that a generous offer was made to Indian leaders and that they would not even look at it. It is by negotiation, discussion and compromises that political rights are secured and granted and let not our leaders give an opportunity to the opponents of Indian aspirations to prejudice the British mind against them and to spoil all chances of success.

It is not likewise possible to accept the scheme as it is, nor the fundamental principles on which it is based. If those principles are agreed to, the very ground will be cut off from under the feet of the critics of the scheme. It appears to me, for instance, that the authors of the scheme make a great point of postponing all substantial reform in the Government of India indefinitely. And the necessity for this postponement arises logically out of the ideas they propound as the basis of the introduction of an element of responsible government in the provinces. All constitutional changes proposed in the scheme will be nugatory if representatives of the people are allowed to exercise no control over national finance. tariffs, industries, railways, currency and banking. To secure popular control over these functions of the executive government has been one of the most important objects of the constitutional. agitation of the people for the past many years. I am afraid there is too much logic in the exposition of the reform scheme to make it generally acceptable to the Indian public. Rigorous logic isnot very helpful in the development of institutions.

The Congress-League scheme was based on the idea of evolution and was designed to build on existing foundations. The difficulties of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme are due to the framers' desire to scrap the old machinery and set up a new one in its place. In doing so they do not seem to have realised that their scheme would be tested by what the people claimed and not by what would logically follow from the pronouncement of 20th August last. The people want greater power and some real control in government. If it is denied to them, whatever the grounds on which it is done, they will not be satisfied. It must be frankly admitted that the proposed scheme is an advance on the existing state of things and that the demands of the country have been conceded in certain particulars. But this is not the standard by which the reforms will be and ought to be judged. The criterion should be, what have the Indian leaders been agitating for and to what extent have their demands been met? So far as the Government of India is concerned, there is little advance and that is the most vital point to be borne in mind. Whatever changes may have been proposed in the provincial Government, do

We must make it clear to the British public and the Cabinet that unless a considerable measure of popular control is provided in the central Government, the scheme as a whole will not be accepted by the country and there is no reason why the leaders should shirk this duty. The apprehensions that such a suggestion will wreck the whole scheme are groundless and we ought to use the opportunity of criticism that has been given to us to the full. I am prepared to accept the partial self-government that is granted in the provinces, with certain modifications, of course, if substantial changes are made in the constitution of the Government of India. We should urge that at least in the advanced provinces, the reserved services should be very few and that the power of provincial taxation should be real and full. We should also urge that as little as possible should be left to the committees to decide and that the powers to be given to the people and the legislatures should be definitely and clearly laid down in the statute.

With these reservations I am inclined to accept the reform scheme relating to the Government of provinces. But in the constitution of the central Government, drastic modifications are essential. I repeat that the country should not reject the scheme, though its framework differs from the Congress-League scheme. At the same time our leaders should not shrink from pointing out how defective the reform proposals are and how they must be modified to commend themselves to the public. It will be misleading to say that the scheme is acceptable and that its principles are liberal and generous. The acceptance of the proposals depends upon the introduction of important changes. But it will be blunder to reject the scheme in toto. It will be worse than suicide. The work that now lies before us is that of agitation for the modifications which the country wants. Let not the British public and Government be led to think that we are satisfied with what has been offered nor to feel that we are unpractical people that will not calmly and seriously discuss the proposals placed before them. There is danger in both directions.

V. G. KALE.

# REFORM PROPOSALS AND NATIVE STATES.

So far as the subjects of Native States are concerned, the report is disappointing and retrogade in its character. The authors of this voluminous report have deliberately avoided the consideration of the question of responsible government so far as it bears on Native States. The reasons given are, to say the least of them, unworthy of the high statesmanship disclosed in the body of this document. The report says: "We feel the need of caution in this respect. It would be a strange reward for loyalty and devotion to force new ideas

upon those who did not desire them." This is a pregnant sentence and reveals clearly the motives which led to the concessions which have been promised to ruling princes. 'The lavish help in men and horses, in material and money,' which ruling princes have given at this critical juncture and of which mention has been made in the report, seems to have induced the authors to make the generous suggestions about Native States which they have adumbrated in their report. But in this they have made a serious mistake. They have . not thought of those whose money, resources and materials the princes have so profusely contributed to the paramount Power. Can it be said that any single ruling prince has practised the virtue of self-denial during these trying moments and has given anything from his private coffers? Everything which has been contributed by the ruling princes to the war has come from the pockets of the subjects of Native States. And as a matter of right it belongs to them primarily. If everything which has been contributed is to be repaid in some form or another the question arises who are to be requited for this generous help? If the princes are to get anything as a reward for loyalty and assistance would it be just and proper to ignore altogether the claims of the subjects on whom the entire burden of these contributions has fallen?

The authors have been labouring under two misapprehensions in dealing with Native States; one is that the British Government has no right whatever to interfere with the internal administration of Native States, however high and noble the purpose may be, and that there is a corresponding obligation on the part of Native States to refrain from interference in British matters. The second misapprehension is that the Native States are to be left studiously alone and their improvement is to be left to fate and time. The theory of obligation of mutual abstention is not warranted by the terms of any treaty and by precedents in the constitution. Writers on constitutions have reiterated that the paramount power has the right to interfere in Native States on the score of good administration. It has been the fashion of some feudatories to advocate this principle in recent years. Ruling princes do not deserve that the paramount Power should interfere in their internal affairs and their desire is mainly generated by their propensities of autocratic and personal rule. They think that their despotic powers should have a full sway and that they should be unhampered in their career. Interference in their internal affairs is therefore very galling to them, and they are constantly smarting under it. It is therefore very convenient for Indian Princes to advocate this doctrine of mutual abstention, but so far as the paramount Power is concerned to countenance this suggestion is highly detrimental to its interests and would necessarily lead to its surrendering the power of interfering in the affairs of Native States to secure good government to the people under

their control. If His Majesty's Government has declared that responsible government is to be the goal of British administration is it not imperative upon these representatives of the Crown to place this noble ideal before the princes as worthy of their acceptance? It may not be expedient to impose this upon the ruling princes against their But why should it deter these sagacious statesmen from advising these ruling princes to accept this ideal with all the powers of persuasive eloquence and superior influence at their command? No prince would have taken any offence to be told that responsible government is the modern ideal of good administration and that the foundations of stable and popular rule are based on the same. It should certainly be left to the good sense, foresight and statesmanship of individual rulers to follow out the ideal in their own States.

But they could certainly have encouraged the acceptance of this principle by placing some premium on it. They should have restricted the admission to the Council of Princes only to those princes who have conferred substantial powers on popular representatives in the States, and who carry out the principle of responsible government in practice in their territory. They ought to have reserved nomination to the standing committees of the Council only to those who were fitted to occupy this exalted position by their liberal and progressive policy in their individual States. The honour of selection to the Imperial War Cabinet should be conferred only on those who are prepared to accept the goal which His Majesty's Government have declared after great consideration, experience and thought. In numerous ways the paramount Power could have signified its approval or disapproval of those princes who are prepared to follow their lead and who are not so disposed. This was the the bounden duty of the highest representatives of the Crown. It certainly shows a lamentable lack of statesmanship and courage in the authors of this joint report, when through mistaken notions of non-interference and still more mistaken interpretation of treaty rights, they have swerved from the clear and unfaultening duty of placing responsible government as the noble goal to be achieved both in British India and Native States alike. We therefore, feel greatly disappointed that the subjects of Native States who form nearly seventy millions of His Majesty's Indian subjects have been summarily dismissed from consideration in this bulky report on this flimsy ground.

As regards the second misapprehension that the Native States are to be left to fate and time to develop themselves, we have to make this remark that it shows a very narrow and perfunctory conception of the solidarity of British Empire. If Native States are to be allowed to develop according to their own fancies, if accepted principles of administration in British India have got no bearing whatever on the adjoining territories of Native States, if the highest canons of morality and politics are not to guide and influence the feuda-

tory princes, what hope is there that the Empireat large would be of one mind, one impulse, onethought and one conjoint action? It is the duty of highest authorities to hasten this consummation. They cannot maintain a laissez faire attitude in. this matter. Only the paramount Power can educate and advise, guide and control the Indian princes in such matters. If they cannot undertake this task who else can take it up? The authors of the joint report have not thought it fit. even barely to state that the ideal of responsible government is worthy of being followed by the Indian princes. That such an attitude should be assumed by a radical statesman of Mr. Montagu's liberalism must be considered as misfortune by the subjects of Native States.

The conservative statesman Lord Curzon who once wielded the destinies of this country has undoubtedly laid down very correct principles so far as the policy towards Native States is concerned. The report has stated their policy in the following words: "Our business however is to observe our treaty obligations and to refrain from interference and to protect the States from it. We must leave the national forces at work to provide the solution in due course. If change comes in Native States it can only be by permeation of ideas and not as a direct result of constitutional changes in British India." In another place they say that "the last thing we desire is to attempt to force this pace...There can be no intention or desire to accelerate the growth by artificial means." How different is the ideal which Lord Curzon placed before the Indian Princes.

"It is obvious that they must keep pace with the age. They cannot dawdle behind and act as a drag upon an inevitable progress. They are links in the chain of imperial administration. It would never do for the British links to be strong and the native links weak or vice versa. As the chain goes on lengthening and the strain put upon every point increases so is uniformity of quality and fibre essential. Otherwise the unsound mills will snap. I therefore think-and lose no opportunity of impressing upon the Indian Chiefs-that a very clear and positive duty devolves upon them. It is not limited to the perpetuation of their dynastics of the maintenance of their Raj. They must not rest with keeping things going in their time. Their duty is not one of passive acceptance of an established place in the imperial system but of active and vigorous co-operation in the discharge of its onerous responsibility.'

It is really an irony of fate that we have to invoke the aid of a conservative minister in opposition to a radical statesman who has championed the cause of British Indians so vigorously, so courageously and so impartially in this report. But so far as Native States' subjects are concerned we cannot help concluding that the authors of this joint report have not brought to bear real and broad statesmanship on the problems of Native States and have accepted doctrines which have become out of data at the present juncture. This great opportunity, unprecedented in the annals of British India, has left the subjects of Native States where they were with no prospect of the better-

ment of their position in the near future and this is sure to fill their minds with gloom and despair.

G. R. ABHYANKAR.

#### REVIEWS.

#### A PAMPHLET ON CO-OPERATION.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT by V. Venkatasubbaiya and Vaikunth L. Mehta. Servants of India Society's Political Pamphlets—No. 4. The Aryabhushan Press, Poons. Re. 1.

To the meagre stock of books of Indian authorship-on co-operation, the pamphlet on "The Co-operative Movement" by Mr. V. L. Mehta, Manager of the Bombay Central Co-operative Bank and Mr. Venkatasubbaiya of the Servants of India Society is a welcome addition. Though the book is styled a pamphlet, it comprises 200 pages of much useful information, consisting of a brief history of the movement brought up to date and a lucid explanation of the principles underlying the different systems of co-operation.

The book is divided into two parts, the first being introductory to the second. Of the four chapters of the part I, the first puts forth the justifica-tion for including the book among the series of Political Pamphlets edited by the Servants of India Society, with a brief survey of the economic position of the Indian ryots. The second chapter gives an idea of what a co-operative society is, distinguishing it from other forms of associated action. The third chapter contains a brief survey of the movement as found in the important European countries, those selected for study being England as the type of Distributive Co-operation or the Store, Germany as the type of Credit Co-operation of the two famous schools of Schulze-Delitzsch and Raiffeisen, Denmark as the model of Agricultural Co-operation, and finally Ireland as the land populated largely by agriculturists whose condition, though till recently it was similar to that of their confreres in India, underwent remarkable improvement through the medium of -co-operation.

The fourth chapter deals with the progress made by co-operation in India and describes the indigenous forms known as Kattu-chits or Chit funds and the Nidhis of Madras, the latter being a fuller development of the former with features to be met with in the case of the English Building Societies. It further notices the various stages of the Indian agrarian problem leading to the introduction of the Co-operative Societies Act of 1904, and later on to that of 1912, and the appointment of the Committee on Co-operation with a discussion of the merits of the important recommendations made by that body.

Part II of the book deals mainly with the principles underlying the various systems of cooperation. It is divided into six chapters, forming as it were the broad divisions of the subject. Each chapter naturally deals with numerous topics arising out of the treatment of the subject under its respective divisions. To facilitate reference to these topics and to concentrate the attention of the reader thereon, they might have been conveniently marked off by cross headings or marginal notes, an absence of which is a drawback of an otherwise valuable book.

For instance, chapter I on Agricultural Credit Societies treats of such topics as the main principles underlying rural credit, membership, liabili-

ty, area of operation, the functions of the general meeting and of the managing committee, capital and its composition, deposits and thrift, the purposes, period and security of loans, and the conditions which ought to regulate the rate of interest thereon, punctuality in repayment, division of profits, the reserve, and so on. Chapter II on Non-Agricultural Co-operative Credit Societies treats not only of the topics dealt with in the previous chapter so far as they are applicable to this form of credit, but also of shares, votes, dividend, fluid resources and types of the societies that can be formed to suit the different grades of the urban population. It need scarcely be pointed out that the treatment of such a variety of matters like these needed appropriate headings.

The first two chapters having dealt with credit in all its forms, chapter III proceeds to deal with Non-Credit Co-operation under six divisions of societies: 1. for purchase of agriculturists' and artisans' requirements, 2. for sale of produce, 3. for production, 4. for purchase and distribution, 5. for acquisition of dwelling houses, and 6. for insurance. The subject of credit dealt with in the first two chapters of the book forms only a small part in the vast field of co-operation, the rest of it being covered by the topics dealt with in the third chapter. These topics therefore required a more detailed treatment than they have received in this chapter, especially non-credit agricultural co-operation which, on account of its overwhelming importance to the country, deserves greater attention than it has received up to now either from the department or from the non-official workers. doubt credit must be allowed to form the foundation to the other types of co-operation; but we are labouring too much at the foundation without sufficient regard for the superstructure. It is therefore high time we turned our serious attention to the latter. For if ampler and cheaper credit will not soon lead our ryots to the practice of better farming and better business, the hope of better living will recede farther and farther away The case cannot be better from their view. put than in the following famous words of His Majesty the King-Emperor: "If the system of cooperation can be introduced to the full, I see a great and glorious future to the agricultural interests of this country."

The remaining chapters of the book are somewhat ancillary to the topics dealt with in the first three chapters of the second part, though not of less importance. The fourth chapter deals with central institutions, such as Unions, Central Banks and Provincial Banks; the fifth chapter treats of State aid and control and incidentally of federation of societies; and the sixth and the last chapter with organization, supervision and audit.

Thus the book covers the whole field of cooperation in all its diverse branches and topics, and will no doubt form a useful guide both to students and workers in the line, and its authors, therefore, deserve to be warmly congratulated on the valuable task they have performed.

S. S. TALMARI.

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