

# THE Servant of India

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### TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Prime Minister's speech—to which we refer elsewhere—of course overshadows all other events of the week by its importance. But Mr. Chamberlain's Birmingham speech really runs it pretty close. He, the leader of the Conservatives, avowed himself "heir of the policy of Mr. Asquith and Lord Grey, and, subject to necessary modification, continuator of that policy." There we have the fatal weakness of "Coalition." For it is quite clear from the irresistible revolt of the Conservative rank and file, that they have had enough of the "continuation" and that they want, not "modification", but the substitution of a clear cut Tory platform. Mr. George at Manchester, contemplating his supersession, looked forward with malicious glee to the failure of any successor of his who would try his hand at combining a stronger Army, Navy and Air Force with having

"more houses for everybody, whilst at the same time rents are not being put up, strengthen your educational system and give more to unemployed and yet make taxation of this country lighter. I shall watch men who believe in denominational education working with those who say that the State and Church are essential to education. I shall watch men who believe that tariff reform is essential to national prosperity and those who believe that Free-trade is the only remedy, working together.

But the simple fact is, not only that it is difficult to combine contradictories, but that it is impossible: and the nation knows it by this time. The people either want Imperialism, Protection and the rest of the Tory programme—or else they want social reconstruction, pacifism and the Radical programme: and as they want either, they want leaders, who are pledged to their own programme, and not to a hotch-potch of both programmes. And since the Tory programme does not appeal to the country at large, we believe that Labour will come in, because Labour alone offers the undiluted Radical platform, untainted by "inherited poli-

cies of Mr. Asquith and Lord Grey." Mr. Chamberlain, knowing that a pure Tory programme has no chance of success at the polls, tries once more to evoke the Red Bogey—to rally the Liberal middle classes to his party. But the trick is stale and Liberals, like everybody else, are no longer taken in by it.

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**Princes' Protection** THE official reports of the debates on the Princes' Protection Bill in the Assembly and the Council of State which are now available to the public, enable one to judge for oneself the quality of the evidence that has come to the knowledge of Government subsequent to the report of the Press Act Committee. Sir William Vincent in the Assembly and Mr. Thompson in the Council of State gave some examples of the writings which in the opinion of the Government have made the protection necessary. Mr. Thompson said:

Another paper which complains of harassment, says that the people will see to it that the present system of administration is 'smashed to pieces within five years,' if things do not improve. Again I find a warning 'to the 700 odd gilded puppets in India to put their houses in order lest the flames of popular movement should gut the old and moth-eaten fabric.'

Sir William Vincent also referred to these two examples. Mr. Thompson mentioned the case of another paper which had described the States as boils on the body politic. We feel confident that if these instances had been brought to the notice of the Press Act Committee, they would certainly have refused to recommend the protection sought for. Whatever the feelings of autocrats unused to criticism may be, such instances will not make any impression on members of Parliament and others used to vigorous newspaper writings. The Sultan of Turkey is often referred to as the sick man of Europe. A similar reference to an Indian Prince would become 'sedition' in the eyes of the Government of India. The case for the protection of the Princes must be very weak indeed if such criticisms are the only justification that can be adduced.

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WERE the committee, appointed by the Gurukabagh Enquiry Committee, the Working Committee of the Congress to enquire into the Gurukabagh question, serious in inviting the Punjab Government to send its officials to give evidence or cross-examine the witnesses? It is difficult to believe that they were, being appointed by a non-

co-operating organisation and being individually non-co-operators; difficult to believe that gentlemen who on grounds of conscience refuse to co-operate with a 'satanic' Government, did really seek the co-operation of that 'satanic' body to help them to find out the truth. If, however, they were serious, we hasten to congratulate them on beginning to abandon an infructuous and impossible attitude. But whether they were serious or facetious, certainly, they could not have expected the Punjab Government to accept their invitation. The latter in its reply has pointed out that the Congress Working Committee has already prejudged the case in its resolutions and therefore it is of no use to appear before a committee appointed by it. That reason no doubt came in handy; but if it had not, we dare say, some other reason would have been found. It would have been more straightforward and dignified to have declined the invitation on the ground that the committee was a non-co-operating body which the Government could not recognise. The enquiry committee has issued a rejoinder, but though this game may be productive of some amusement it is hardly worth continuing. As to the result of the committee's labours, its report will of course not command the respect which an impartial mixed committee, appointed by Government, with power to summon witnesses, would have commanded. Such a committee, however, is impossible at present owing to the adoption of non-co-operation by the Akalis.

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**A Time Limit.** WITH reference to some criticisms, made against the Compulsory Education Bill, a valued correspondent who has made a special study of the problems relating to primary education writes:

It is foolish to ask that the whole programme should be incorporated in the Bill; it is also pointless to ask for the insertion of a time limit. If a time limit is at all mentioned in the Act—I know of no precedent for it—it cannot from its very nature be an inflexible limit; it will naturally have to be watered down by some expressions like "as far as possible" which would take away the very pith from the provision. This time limit of which we hear so much, not only in regard to compulsory education, is a will-o'-the-wisp which people will always be found fondly to pursue but which will always elude their grasp. It will be of little practical value. All that legislation can reasonably provide is provided in the Bill; other things must be left to executive action. If, under the popular government that we have installed in the matter of education, members of the legislature are unable to get the ministers to carry the programme recommended by the Committee into execution, members are not worth their salt. If failure results, it will not be due to any fault in the legislation, but solely due to a fault in themselves.

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**A Stupid Order.** STUPIDITY brings trouble upon its own head. Madras papers report that recently the subordinate Magistrate of Nellore, a district town in Madras Presidency, issued an order under Sec. 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code prohibiting an old lady of 65 years "and others from holding any meeting or delivering any speeches or carrying on any

processions or meetings in such assemblies or remaining therein, for two months from this date". The reason mentioned in the order was that the relations between non-co-operators and anti-non-co-operators of various communities in the town were strained, that a meeting had been convened without its object being mentioned and that there was a likelihood of 'a breach of the peace or a riot or an affray or obstruction or annoyance or injury &c. &c.' The wording of the order was so general that it could apply to any meeting whatever its purpose and whoever the conveners. As a matter of fact the relations between the various communities were in no way strained and there was no justification for fearing a breach of the peace. To vindicate their right of meeting and to disprove the assumption of strained relations, the leaders of the different parties and communities, headed by the Chairman of the Municipality, convened a meeting, which was presided over by their local representative in the Legislative Council. The latter observed in his speech that responsible Magistrates ought not to pass such orders on mere reports without verifying them by reference to the people or their acknowledged leaders and he hoped that such orders would be recalled by the officers concerned. We hope the Government of Madras will deal suitably with the Magistrate for issuing such a stupid order and creating needless excitement.

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**The Hon. Mr. Bhurgri.** WE are sorry that the Hon. Mr. Bhurgri has resigned his seat in the Council of State. He took this step on the 22nd September when Mr. Lloyd George's Government was about to declare war on Turkey as a protest against that policy. Mr. Bhurgri's action under the circumstances was perfectly justified; but since then the situation has changed completely. Not only have peace negotiations at Mudania progressed satisfactorily, but Mr. Lloyd George is about to relinquish his office, the proximate reason being the British nation's disapproval of this very policy of his. We think Mr. Bhurgri should therefore withdraw his letter of resignation if that be possible, or stand for re-election, so as not to deprive the Council needlessly of his undoubtedly valuable services.

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**Constitutional Reforms in Mysore.** WE trust that the article on constitutional reforms in Mysore which is published in this number, though somewhat lengthy, will be read with interest. The writer is a well known journalist who has conducted with conspicuous ability the *Karnataka* and later the *Indian Review of Reviews*. Few persons in Mysore have given as much thought to constitutional reform as he has done. Mysore is one of the very few States where despotism does not exist. His Highness the Maharaja is a model constitutional ruler. Those Princes who are seeking vain protection against British Indian critics by means of unpopular legislation, will do well to emulate his enlightened example. Far from seeking protection against outside critics, he has abolished the Press Act in his State, which indeed but for a single case had already quite a dead letter.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

At last! If not actually the end of Mr. Lloyd George, at least its beginning—a beginning well marked and emphasized by none other than Mr. George himself. For in the speech delivered by him last Saturday before the Manchester Reform Club he speaks—and not lightly—of what may be “the last days of my premiership” before “I am driven alone into the wilderness”. He is on his defence; of course he knows that he is on his defence; but he does not even pretend to others that he is not. Whatever other pretences he is still keeping up, that at least he no longer pretends. It is as the man in the dock, that he makes his defence; arraigned by the nation, he makes his appeal to the jury. The verdict will come at the next General Election, an event of the immediate future. Come it now must, that even Mr. George acknowledges; no more possibility of dodging it any longer.

It is really only when thus considered, as the defence of one at last at bay, that one can bear with it at all. For how else put up with the colossal effrontery of this speech? Having brought England to the very brink of war, he says he alone has preserved the peace; having discredited England more than any man has ever had the power of doing within living memory, he defiantly exclaims that England’s “credit was now far and away the best of any in Europe”; having tried to stir up a Balkan War and called on Yugoslavia and Rumania to send an army against the Turks, he assures his hearers that he, and he only, has prevented the war from spreading into Europe; having sent the Greeks into Anatolia and then left them in the lurch there, thus necessarily provoking reprisals on the Christian populations of Asia Minor, he poses as the only defender of these minorities against the “unspeakable Turk.”

In his very speech he says: “You can only try bluff with cowards”: he will soon see that he is really not dealing with an Empire of cowards, nor of imbeciles either. Out of his own mouth he has refuted himself; out of his own mouth has judgment come already. “I throw myself on the people whose cause I never betrayed during 32 years of strenuous public life.” If that is all the hope left to him, on whose mercy can he then throw himself? What cause has Mr. George never betrayed? What cause—Pacifism? Land Reform? Single Chamber System? Making the world safe for democracy? Making England a land fit for heroes? Self-determination of nations? Free trade? Protection? Squeezing Germany till the pips squeak? Anglo-French Entente? Greek Imperialism? Panarabism? Zionism? Equal Status of Indians? The Indian bureaucracy? Which of these causes has Mr. George “during the 32 years of his strenuous public life” not betrayed? Is there a cause, one, single cause, that he has not betrayed—always excepting the cause of David Lloyd George?

Mr. George to whom more than to anybody else is due the Versailles Treaty and the consequent moral and material disintegration of the whole world, to whose account—when as absolute dictator of the world at the Armistice he could fashion nothing but this “peace”—must surely be put down “the greatest and most calamitous diplomatic failure that the world has ever seen”—yet dares to apply these very words to Sir Edward Grey! “Standing on a cairn of gigantic failures” himself, he dares to throw stones at others! There is something fateful about the very expressions he uses, something almost uncanny about the obvious application to himself of all the “measures wherewithal he metes others.”

The “leadership” of Mr. George has been found out. Neither Conservative nor Liberal nor Labour could trust him again. The nation demands a general election and the chance of sending to Westminster a house which will reflect the national mind. As matters stand, there is a possibility that neither of the three parties (Conservative, Liberal, Labour) will be able to command an absolute majority. In that case Government will have to be carried on by the consent of an alliance of two parties. These might be Labour plus left-wing Liberals (Independent Liberals); they might be right-wing Liberals (Coal. Lib.) plus left-wing Conservatives (Coal. Union.). Mr. George’s only chance is the latter combination, of course. Hence his endeavour to detach as many Liberals as he can from the Independents; hence his posing as the only true heir to the liberal tradition; hence his choice of the Manchester Reform Club for making his defence before an “indulgent, kindly audience of my native city”; hence the raising of his hat to the statue of John Bright—so sedulously reported by his press propaganda through Reuter. He made his defence at the Reform Club, where only a few days previously the Independent Liberals had met under Lord Gladstone and Sir Donald Maclean to re-affirm that Liberalism, if true to itself, could have no lot or part in the hybrid species of Georgian “liberalism”. And to prove that only he, David Lloyd George, was the true heir to the Gladstonian tradition, he began by a most vulgar and vicious personal attack on Mr. Gladstone’s son! He who called Lord Gladstone’s reference to himself “peculiarly offensive,” retorted by calling him “the dwarf strutting before the footlights in the garments inherited from the giant”; and he who had just referred to Mr. Chamberlain’s “hereditary point and force”, taunted Lord Gladstone that the only service he had ever rendered to Liberalism lay in being “the best living embodiment of the Liberal doctrine that quality is not hereditary.”

After this happy beginning, he had to go on proving himself the great protagonist of Eastern Christianity against the terrible Turk. Almost incoherent, he sobs that but for him “The Turks would have been in Constantinople.”

You know what would have happened—think of it; it is too horrible—if we had allowed them to pass." Now the fact is that on March 26th of this year the Allies had already agreed at a Conference "on which I was consulted and to which I assented" that Constantinople and the best part of East Thrace were to be given back to the Turks, the Allied troops withdrawn and the freedom of the Straits entrusted to an International Commission. What then has Mr. George achieved by his call to the arms of Britain, the Dominions, France, Italy, Roumania, Yugoslavia and Greece against the "Unspeakable Turk", what he had not already pledged his Government to acquiesce in six months ago? But no, he must go on talking about "the alacrity and enthusiasm of Australia and New Zealand, ready to come over to prevent the graves of Gallipoli from being desecrated"; he has the audacity to say that his "firmness and resolution" "impressed the Oriental mind," and that he, alone, with his bluster has saved the situation. Yet these tirades against the Turks notwithstanding, he agrees to the Mudania agreement, which again guarantees to the same Turks all they have ever asked for!

Most naively Mr. George admits that "when I came into office in 1916 I found a series of agreements with Russia, France, Italy and even Greece, which completely partitioned Turkey." Does he say, how wicked and stupid such agreements were; how glad he was to tear them up and rather to guarantee the Turks their homelands in Anatolia and Thrace, as he did in 1918? Oh no—the only reason he has got for being glad that the force of circumstances (not his own wit) has obliterated these agreements, is that otherwise "you would have had the Bolsheviks this moment in Constantinople and the Straits"!

Not so many weeks back Mr. George sanctimoniously vowed to devote the rest of his life to peace. "Watch!" he said; "the war germ is abroad. Take it by the throat when it is about to get you. Especially put those who drop matches under lock and key." Last Saturday, with a different audience, he swore that "I am not that sort of Christian—and as long as I have a sword in my hand and God gives me strength to use it, I will." Let all other people, then, thank God, that at last that sword is being taken out of that man's hand.

Abraham Lincoln's epigram tells us that one may fool all people some time—Mr. George certainly did that at the 1918 Elections; and that one may fool some people all time—and certain Coalition Liberals seem to prove that; but that one cannot fool all people all time.

For which relief much thanks.

#### CO-OPERATION IN THE PUNJAB.

THE Punjab has loomed very large in the public eye during the last three or four years on account of the political happenings there—the martial law

regime, the gurdwara movement and, to a smaller extent, communal differences between the Hindus and the Mahammadans. It is very natural that these events should obscure everything else; but it becomes all the more necessary that the remarkable progress which the province is making in another and peaceful direction, one in which there has been great harmony between the Government and the people and between the different communities, should be widely known and emulated in other provinces: we mean the growth of agricultural co-operative societies. It is true their number and transactions have multiplied remarkably all over India, but while one is extremely doubtful of their having inculcated thrift or promoted a real spirit of co-operation among their members in other provinces, there is no such doubt regarding the achievement of the Punjab in this respect. The co-operative year 1920-21 was one of exceptional financial stringency owing to drought, general depression in trade and contraction of credit. The central banks in almost every province found it exceedingly difficult to finance the primary societies. In Madras the rates of interest had to be raised all round to attract deposits, while in the Central Provinces the Government had to come to the rescue. But in the Punjab the members of primary societies girded up their loins, formed special committees to tour the villages, collected no less than Rs. 20 lakhs of new deposits, passed on a considerable portion of it to their unions and thus gloriously overcame the crisis. Their assimilation of the true spirit of co-operation is shown by their having organised a large number of societies for the consolidation and redistribution uneconomically small holdings—an evil which the people of other provinces have not been bold enough to tackle seriously—and societies for the settlement of disputes by arbitration, for conducting night schools, by cutting down expenses on ceremonial occasions, by helping educational institutions and other activities. Containing a description of these, the report of the Registrar for the year ending July 1921 is of unusual interest and importance.

Between 1919 and 1921 the societies and their membership and working capital all increased by as much as 50 per cent, the number of societies at the end of the period being no less than 8,453 of which 7,605 were agricultural credit societies—larger by far than those in any other province. The most prominent feature of these societies is the large proportion of their own capital. Their reserve fund, including the sum added out of the profits of the year 1920-21, amounted to Rs. 62 lakhs, while the share capital was about Rs. 52 lakhs and deposits from members about Rs. 14 lakhs. As the loans due from members amounted to Rs. 178 lakhs, it will be seen that the primary societies depended on the central banks only to the extent of one third of their requirements. The share capital is withdrawable after ten years, but the reserve fund is the indivisible

property of the society. This large accumulation of the reserve fund has been rendered possible by not allowing dividends on the share capital and keeping down the cost of management. It is this that enabled nearly 200 societies during a year of financial stringency to reduce their rate of interest on loans to members, who, Mr. Calvert, the Registrar, says can now borrow at lower rates than Government—a feature which Mr. Darling found to be common in Germany. This principle of "no dividends" is not confined in the Punjab to agricultural credit societies, but is extended to banking unions, i. e., central banks whose membership is limited to primary societies, and also to non-agricultural credit societies with limited liability; and it is perhaps due to this fact that there are so few societies of the latter kind. A most noteworthy experiment in agricultural credit that is being carried out in the Punjab is the Jhang Mortgage Bank. The demand for land mortgage banks is heard from every province, but as substantial Government support has been considered essential for their success, in no other province, so far as we are aware, has a bank of the kind been started. The Jhang Mortgage Bank was started only about two years ago, but so far its working has been quite hopeful. By the end of July 1921 it had redeemed 870 acres of land for Rs. 58,890 and the borrowers had repaid much more than the instalments due.

A very interesting event mentioned in the report under review is the enquiry conducted by the Co-operative Department into the effects of co-operation on the members of 246 societies which had worked for ten years. Though full particulars are not available, we are told that over 3,600 members of these societies have become free of debt, that their debts have been reduced by about Rs. 11 lakhs and that their assets have increased by about Rs. 13 lakhs. A careful inquiry in a tahsil revealed the fact that the average debt of the members of the 24 societies in that tahsil had decreased in ten years from Rs. 466 to Rs. 127 and that in another area 608 members had bought 1353 acres for Rs. 2·8 lakhs. Mr. Calvert further adds:

"The figures suggest that the members of a co-operative credit society improve their financial position by one thousand rupees per society per year; in view of the undoubted increase in rural debt throughout the province, as shown by the statistics for mortgages, and income-tax for money-lenders, it again becomes clear that co-operation here as in Europe is the one remedy for rural ills".

We wish that this could be said of every province.

There were 409 agricultural societies for non-credit purposes. Their objects and distribution are interesting:

purchase and sale societies	171
production and sale	19
arbitration	87
consolidation of holdings	60
night school	45
cattle-breeding	11
cattle-purchase	2
silt clearance	3
reclamation of waste lands	8
lift irrigation	1
thrift and saving	2

The purchase and sale societies, or stores, did not work satisfactorily. The same should be said of production and sale societies. Belonging to the latter class were three *Ghi* societies but they were at a standstill, because, according to the report, "the railway officials regard *Ghi* as intended for themselves, and it is not prudent to tempt them." The growth of the arbitration societies during the year was remarkable—from 6 to 87—their membership exceeding 10,000. They decided about 400 disputes and are reported to have given satisfaction. The report says further:

"It has been objected that the bylaws are open to legal criticism; but the sanction behind these societies is not the power to enforce the award in Court, but to expel a recalcitrant member from a society of his fellows. Success will depend not upon rules but upon just decisions. Hitherto the decisions have been accepted, and no award has been taken to Court. If there is any real prospect of solid success, it may be desirable to initiate legislation to facilitate the working of this very interesting experiment."

Of extraordinary interest are the 60 societies started for the consolidation of small holdings. We are told that in addition 31 societies had been formed whose registration was purposely delayed. During the year under report repartition was completed in 44 villages; but a caution is given that all the lands in every village were not repartitioned; in some cases only certain blocks being dealt with as an experiment. In those villages the lands of 1,613 members, measuring 6,350 acres, were reduced from 10,783 to 2,044 fields. The report says that the owners appreciate the advantages, that there is no difficulty in organising societies, but that the practical work is full of pitfalls. "The Patwaris are generally hostile and persuade the people to reject the scheme; mortgages and minors present difficult problems, occupancy tenants discern a trick to deprive them of their cherished rights; old men dislike the idea of being disturbed, and so on." It is noteworthy that the possession of land has been exchanged permanently and not for a period of years only. Though excessive fragmentation of land is felt as an evil in all ryatwari provinces, it is only in the Punjab that a fairly large number of people have consented to exchange and consolidate their lands. It is yet too early to speak of the economic results. But the progress of these societies will be watched by all with the keenest interest. In addition to the 45 registered night school societies there were 55 unregistered ones, all of which are reported to have been working well. The cattle-breeding societies were started in order to get the members to follow the advice of the veterinary officers. There was nothing specially noteworthy in the working of these and the other societies mentioned above.

In respect of non-agricultural societies which numbered 303, the Punjab does not occupy a proud place. It had 116 credit societies of which 100 were of unlimited liability and only 16 of the usual urban bank type. The report is silent about their working, from which we should infer there

was nothing noteworthy about them. There were 106 supply (or store) societies. Some of them are said to have worked well but the majority fared badly. In this the experience of the Punjab is by no means unique. The most noteworthy non-agricultural societies were the weaver's societies which numbered 57 and in addition there were 3 unions and the Central Stores. The last named society which is at Amritsar finances the primary societies, supplies cotton and silk yarn to their members and considerably helps in the disposal of their products. The Government have given the free services of the manager. Fluctuations in the price of yarn created great difficulties but the demand created by the non-co-operation movement for hand-woven cloth helped the Stores as well as the primary societies to clear their stocks and work at a profit.

A very remarkable housing society that has been registered is the Model Town Society. Its object is to build a small "Garden City" at a short distance from Lahore. It is surprising that the report gives so little information about it, though it is the largest co-operative housing attempt yet made in this country, as a perusal of the pamphlet issued by its Secretary, Diwan Khem Chand, will show. The Government have agreed to sell to this society nearly 2,000 acres of land on a site which is reported to be exceedingly healthy and on which the society intends to build 1,000 houses. In May last more than 400 members, including such influential elements as High Court Judges, M. L. C.'s &c., had joined the society and applied for 700 houses. The object of the promoters is to provide the Town with all the amenities of modern civilization such as tram and telephone services, underground drainage, flush latrines, electric light, co-operative stores, schools &c. At first sight, it must be admitted, the scheme looks ambitious; but when it is remembered that some of the ablest men of the Punjab are among its members, that the members are all highly educated men who can appreciate and afford these conveniences, the realisation of the scheme looks quite possible. The society proposes to build the houses under its own supervision, manufacturing its own bricks and getting the other materials in bulk. This will not only ensure good quality but keep down the cost to the minimum. It is expected that about 100 houses will be made ready every six months. This is an excellent opportunity to form at Lahore a labour society of builders. Such a society would immensely benefit the workers as well as the Model Town Society.

## CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN MYSORE

### A CRITICISM,

There can be no two opinions among the un-biassed as to the spirit and the value of the reforms in the constitution of Mysore recently outlined—only outlined—by the Dewan, Mr. A. R. Banerji: the spirit is altogether one of sympathy

for the popular cause and the value is sufficiently real to be consequential and appreciable. A good deal would, of course, depend on the recommendations to be made by the mixed Committee\* that has been appointed to work out the details, and on the decisions taken in regard to such recommendations. But there is no reason to fear that what is given by the will would be taken away by the codicil; and if we may hope so, there is every cause for our feeling thankful to H. H. the Maharaja and his advisers. This really is a measure of reform for which the present Ruler may be held to be personally responsible in a very special sense; for the Representative Assembly had been established long before he came to the Throne, and the Legislative Council was formed at a time when he could not have had very wide or varied experience of affairs. The democratising activities of Sir M. Visveswaraya were not so much constitutional as personal; and they were preparatory for reform rather than actually reformatory in themselves. Thus, the present instalment of constitutional changes must be taken to represent the political ideals and the statesmanly wisdom of the present Maharaja more clearly than any previous act or measure connected with His Highness's name.

It would be easy to pick holes in the present scheme; and where on earth is to be found to-day a constitution that is invulnerable in every part? Neither the democracy of England nor the Republicanism of America, nor even the Sovietism of Russia, has yet proved itself impeccable; and while constitutional idealism has everywhere been a succession of experiments and makeshifts, the only reliable guide to the sober-minded reformer anywhere can be (1) the previous working of the existing institutions and (2) the direction and velocity of the forces that have newly sprung into action in the community. The first would mark the line, and the second the extent of the reform that is to be introduced anew. Judged by these tests, the present scheme in Mysore must—with certain reservations—be pronounced to be satisfactory for the time being. *For the time being*, let it be marked; for practical statesmanship—unlike political philosophy—has to deal not with things as they well might be at some unapproachable distance of time in the future, but with what can be accomplished immediately in its own time to facilitate progress towards the ideal of the future. A constitution is not brought to a state of perfection all in one day and once for all; even as one does not attain a state of absolute bodily purity all in a day and once for all. We have to take a bath day after day: and perhaps three times

\* The personnel of the Committee is singularly free from tough or ticklish elements. There is hardly one among the members noted for any serious study of constitutional developments, or for any recognisable record of work in the popular cause. The sectarian ardour of some members must, we suppose, be taken to condone their innocence of political science.

daily. So also with Governments. What may be to-day's perfection may not be tomorrow's. That being the fate of all human improvements, let us not insist on having to-day a scheme that would be good enough for tomorrow and the day after also. This may sound very much like the plea of moderation in the ears of the go-a-heads. But a nickname is not necessarily an argument.

#### PREVIOUS HISTORY.

It is necessary here to go a little into history. The principles on which the constitution of Mysore—such as it is—has so far worked, were first indicated a little over forty years ago, in the correspondence that took place between Sir James Gordon, then Chief Commissioner in Mysore, and the Government of Lord Lytton, touching the conditions on which the State was to be restored to native rule. The Government of Mysore, during the fifty years of British occupation, had been an unmitigated bureaucracy. It was replaced in 1881 by "Council Government" in a modified form. The "Council" form is an adaptation of the British Cabinet type; and the first hint for such an adaptation is probably that which Bacon relying perhaps on the scriptural maxim that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety"—threw out in the course of his suggestions for the management of Colonies. The "Council" is comparable to the Cabinet in that it is an antidote to one-man rule; and its principle is that its several members would play the sentinel upon one another. This had been the principle accepted for the Government of British India in the Provinces, as well as at the Centre, and the same was therefore naturally introduced into Mysore at the time of the Rendition. Together with a recommendation towards this end, Sir James had coupled another proposal which, however, the Government of India of that time could not persuade itself to sanction, and which it was reserved for Sir James Gordon's trusted adviser and lieutenant, Rangacharlu, to carry out immediately after he took charge of the office of Dewan, Lord Ripon having then taken office as Viceroy. That proposal was that a Representative Assembly should be established to influence the policies and methods of administration. The object of the first framers of Mysore's constitution was thus to lay the foundations of a popular body which in the course of time, would develop into an effective guide and constitutional check to the executive power. It is also worthy of note that the Members of the Executive Council were at that time drawn not from among the officials in active service, but from among such non-officials as were then available in the State. These two principles of (1) ultimate popular superintendence and (2) admixture of some popular element in the highest executive organ of the State, have not been kept in view to any extent in later times: and therein lies the explanation of all the political backwardness of Mysore.

The Legislative Council was a premature and pompous "copy" made by Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao;

and it is hereafter to find its proper place in the constitution of the State. When there is already a comparatively large popular body in existence, the need for a smaller body can arise only after the larger body has been entrusted with powers, the exercise of which would require revision by another more minutely working agency. The necessity for a legislative council or committee would truly arise only after, and not before, legislative business is handed over to the Representative Assembly. But this is not to deny the good work that the Legislative Council has been able to do during the last fifteen years to bring the administration frequently under the eye of the public. Its structure is more compact than that of the Assembly; its meetings are held at shorter intervals; and a part of its non-official wing is chosen by the Assembly. These circumstances have given it an influence, or aspect of influence, which the popular Assembly has never possessed. This obviously is an anomaly which needed rectification.

#### REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thus, the points that called for attention in the constitution were three; (1) the raising of the Assembly to a position of effective influence, if not of power; (2) the ensuring of some sense of responsibility to it on the part of the Executive Council, by making the latter shiftable in part—this by the inclusion in it of some members from non-official ranks; and (3) the adjusting of the Legislative Council into its proper place as a revising or modifying agency.

All the three points have been recognised in the scheme, announced by Mr. Banerji, but with varying degrees of liberality. In regard to the first, the new scheme proposes to concede, not exactly influence, but certain advisory or criticising function to the Assembly. It is of course true, in a sense, that the Assembly has always had this power;—but that with a difference. The Executive was not bound, hitherto, to bring up all proposed legislation before the Assembly. Nor were there formal resolutions passed by the whole Assembly. It made representations; or to be more accurate, one or two of its members individually made representations which a few others supported vocally and the rest by silent acquiescence. In future, there will be no tax or law about which the Assembly has not been duly consulted beforehand; and there will be no act or measure of the administration about which the Assembly will not be competent to make specific recommendations or comments, with the formal authority of its entire body or at least a majority of it. True, the consultation and the recommendation may have no binding effect upon the Executive; but it would require much more than ordinary courage in any Executive to set its face wantonly against the express wishes of the Assembly time after time. The hope is that by a diligent and intelligent discharge of the limited advisory and critical functions now conceded, the Assembly would, in the course of time, acquire

that effective influence, if not power, which should properly belong to such a body.

The reform in connection with the Assembly is thus not fictitious; but it is by no means as large and generous as it should have been. It would not have been going too far if the assent of the Assembly had been made essential for all fresh taxation and legislation with a provision made for the over-coming of all dead-locks and impasses by means of the Royal veto or certification. At all events, it would be a withholding of legitimate reform if the Executive were not made to receive as binding any resolution or recommendation that has the support of the both the Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

It is vain ceremoniousness to say that the Representative Assembly will be given a definite place in the constitution. The Assembly has always had a place in the constitution, though one not defined by statute. An unwritten constitution having the roots of its being in long established usage and in the deep-seated attachment of the people cannot be said to be less strong or less stable than a written constitution. Every one knows what wide spaces in the British constitution are covered by unwritten convention and what a solid reality the British Cabinet is though it is altogether unknown to law. If the absence of statutory sanction could have been construed as doubtfulness of tenure, Sir K. Seshadri Iyer and Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, who had no small trouble from the Assembly should have found it easy to abolish it, particularly the latter after he started the Legislative Council. After the institution of a bi-annual session, and the recognition given to it as an electorate for the Legislative Council, the Assembly's position was secure enough and any attempt to lay hands on it hereafter would be universally regarded as nothing short of a revolution. As regards the extension of franchise all who value the spirit of democracy more than its form will view it as a mere theoretical improvement, the practical advantages of which are still open to honest and serious doubt. It would be more to our present purpose if the educational qualifications of the candidates are reasonably raised. The cutting down of the numerical strength of the Assembly to two hundred would be a clear retrogression. For one thing it would cause a lot of heart burning, for nearly a third of the present members would then have to go without seats. For another thing, it would lessen the proportion of representation. For a third, it would affect the value of the House as a Centre of publicity, criticism and debate. Further, expansion of the electorate and contraction of the candidacy are manifestly inconsistent reforms. There is no justification whatsoever for diminishing the strength of the popular house when there is another smaller body to perform the duties of correction and improvement. On the other hand, there are some clear advantages in letting the present number remain. It reduces the chances for the formation

of cliques and cabals; it provides wider room for the freelance who is everywhere the one hope of unpopular truths and neglected ideals; and it helps to open out the range and to amplify the viewpoints of discussion. The only limit to the numerical strength of a popular house should be that imposed by a consideration of its wieldiness. The Assembly at present is by no means unwieldy for *its present purposes*; and it would, as it is, be a better safeguard against rash or hysterical changes than in a reduced form.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The addition to the numerical strength of the Legislative Council—another of the three vital points of the constitution above mentioned—is a trivial gain, if gain it is. Width increased generally proves to be depth decreased. The Legislative Council, to be an efficient and statutory second chamber, should represent all that is best in the intelligence and experience of the State. It is some disservice to dilute its quality by the addition of indifferent material. The reforms sought were not in regard to numbers at all; and it would be a great pity if qualification for the membership of the second chamber were not kept high. The only concession of any importance to this body is that of the right to vote on the Budget with of course certain exceptions as to jurisdiction and with a reservation of power for the Executive to restore a grant refused by it. This is no doubt an addition of some new power. But it would have the effect of confirming the old notion that the less popular is the more important house. Money power is everywhere generally in the hands of the lower chamber; and if in Mysore the Executive would take some more time to trust to its judgment, the best course here would be to make the financial powers of both the chambers equal. When both vote alike on any item, it would be binding upon the Government, unless vetoed or certified (as the case may be) by the Sovereign. This would have been a safer course; and it is a pity the Government has not shown sufficient trustfulness in regard to the Assembly.

The other proposal under this head is that relating to the appointment of joint standing committees of both houses to influence the every day administration, as the Dewan puts it. This is avowedly a borrowing; and how it will work will have to be judged after some experience. It is quite possible that this reform will prove useful, if not in influencing the administration, at least in acquainting a certain number of our public men with the business details and problems of the administration. This experiment will necessarily have to depend for its success upon the sympathy and good-will of the members of the Executive Council; and since that is an unknown quantity, one will have to be on one's guard in hoping that the committees will not be invoked for service only as tools to shelve inconvenient questions and to draft numerous schemes for the wonder and amusement of the world.

In any case, the proposal is not one of first-rate importance. It is a matter to be left to convention rather than to be incorporated in the constitution.

#### NON-OFFICIALS IN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

In regard to the third of the three cardinal points of constitutional reform above set forth, namely, the opening out of the Executive Council to non-official talent and public spirit, Mr. Banerji's announcement leaves us wistful rather than hopeful. Nothing, he says, stands in the way of the proposed appointment, "at His Highness's pleasure and when circumstances permit." This is like giving an appetizer without fixing the time for dinner. To Mr. Banerji's plea that the appointment must be left to His Highness's "unfettered judgment and selection," we may well submit in reply, in language fitting to the perfect constitutionalist, that even legislation and administration are matters lying entirely within the jurisdiction of the Sovereign and that just as he has been persuaded to accept the advice and assistance of others in those matters, so should he be persuaded by his ministers in this one also. The king's "judgment and selection", unfettered always, are yet arrived at not without the advice of others in a constitutional Government; and that phrase therefore cannot be used effectively for putting off reform. It is true, however, that the field for the selection of a non-official minister is at present not very wide in Mysore. But such men as there are to be thought of should not be left unutilized, if more men should be induced to come into the field of public life and do well. It would have been a step in the right direction if the present scheme had provided for the election by both the Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council, of a panel of some ten or twelve of their members, from among whom two or three would be selected by His Highness for the office of ministers. The joint standing committee of the present scheme, too, might serve as a sort of panel for this purpose. And if His Highness's present ministers will not make a recommendation to the Maharaja in this behalf, there is nothing to prevent the Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council, when the new reforms come into force, from making the desired recommendation of their own accord, with a list attached of their own nominees for ministership.

#### LACK OF PUBLIC SPIRIT.

After all, any scheme devised officially is bound to seem inadequate from one point of view or another to the non-official. The most satisfactory reform, if it can ever be achieved, can be achieved only by the people themselves. They have to take possession of the ground that is vacated, and press for more from the position so established. It is on this aspect of the matter that Mysoreans have need to hear strong and emphatic words. There is nothing to flatter them in the present offer of concessions. There was nothing compelling in their political life to force these concessions out

of the Government's hands. A stray voice in a newspaper or in the Assembly does not make an agitation such as could frighten a Government; and those who would condemn the present scheme as inadequate would do better to be a little candid to themselves first. What has anybody, excepting the solitary Mr. Venkata Krishnayya, ever achieved or even attempted to rouse public spirit, to diffuse political intelligence, to create those agencies of corporate civilized existence without which a democratic constitution can only be like a house having no foundations underneath? By their systematic apathy and callousness, the educated Mysoreans have succeeded in killing the one or two independent journals and political associations that came forward to serve them. We have a handful of the sort of fussy upstarts and flaming demagogues that spring into existence everywhere at the sight of some opportunity for making themselves known. But of patriots of a more modest and less gaseous type, Mysore has too few. It does not lie in the mouth of a people so backward in civic virtue to belittle the present scheme. Added to this is the fact that the ranks of our non-officials have of late been split into factions by caste and communal jealousies. While no one ever moved his little finger to educate the electorates, one party has recently gone about deliberately "mis-educating" the electors. If on the one side it is true that the best cure for such distempers is the popularising of the constitution, so that it may divert attention from Government offices to polling booths, it is equally true on the other side that reform can best succeed only when there is a well-developed sense in the people of their political integrity and solidarity. In this also, then, is some justification for caution in constitutional re-making.

#### APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

It must also be remembered that the instincts of conservatism are still not much shaken in the bulk of the people. There is great distrust in most quarters in regard to multitudinal wisdom and collective effort. The history of our public and municipal bodies has not been very reassuring and we must therefore be content for some time with something short of the very best. There is something after all to be said for conservatism as a preservative and restorative factor; and there never was greater need in the world than to say it with emphasis and effect. Conservatism should not be smothered with theories of popular rights; it should be dispersed by the warm rays of proved popular capacity. Another difficulty in the way of constitutional reform in Mysore is Clause 19 of the Mysore Treaty which requires the approval of the Governor-General in Council for any change in the existing system of administration. It is well-known how the Government of India habitually views movements of political reform; and it should be easy to guess how that Government would regard a rapid forward movement in a Native State when the cause of reform is so handicapped under its own

auspices. The public cannot know how far the shortcomings in the Mysore scheme above noticed would have to be attributed to the attitude of the Government of India. We can only pray and hope that H. E. Lord Reading will have the good sense and the love of justice to see that the people of Mysore should not be made victims to extraneous considerations. Only an egregious doctrinaire would reject the Mysore scheme on the ground that it does not possess the features of some other constitution or that it does not fit in with an *a priori* notion prevailing somewhere else. The call for reform in Mysore is not imitative, but indigenous—so to say; and the method of progress should be not eclectic, but evolutionary. This is not to deny that there is some influence of external example in the demand and that there must be some process of adaptation in the methods of meeting it. Evolution may very well be along certain familiar and accepted lines, because these embody the wisdom of the experience of others. But that cannot on that account be regarded as not different from copy. Adaptation involves the functioning of intelligence with due reference to particular environment, whereas copy involves no such discriminative activity. It is to be hoped that this principle will be kept in view by the mixed committee that is to work out the details.

All things considered, the scheme should be pronounced a judicious one. In what it explicitly holds out it is distinctly gratifying; in what it hints at as possible, it is full of encouragement; what it marks out as not to be coveted immediately by Demos, it should serve as an incentive to better effort on the part of the people. It is usual for us to bemoan the sorry state of our Government as compared with the Government of other countries. But why do we not contrast the effort made by the people here with the effort of the nation in other lands? If we should have Responsible Government as Canada or Australia has, should we not work and prepare for it as Canadians and Australians worked and prepared? Let critics turn their light a little inwards.

So long as there is the British Power in India there will be Princes in the Indian States. And when there are Princes, it is not practical politics to dilate on the glories of a republic apart from the seamy side of republican politics as disclosed by America and France. Monarchy being thus a "settled fact" and an inner framework of bureaucracy being indispensable in every form of administration—even in that of the most republican country—the best ideal now conceivable for an Indian State seems to be a harmonious blending of the three factors—the Prince, the permanent official and the popular representative. In other words, a "limited monarchy," or a "limited democracy" seems to be the ideal most suitable; and if Mysore should succeed in furnishing a successful illustration of that ideal to her sister States, she will have won no small title to distinction. The Ruler of Mysore has shown commendable patri-

otism and statesmanship in having made the present advance possible. Let us trust that his people will show equal patriotism and civic conscientiousness in making use of the enlarged opportunities.

### A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 28, 1922.

IN an interesting letter to the "Times" Sir Thomas Bennett refutes the allegation made by certain ill-disposed persons when the reforms were on the anvil that the net consequence would be that the Brahmins would sweep the electorates and control the Legislatures. He shows by facts and figures that where they were supposed to be strongest and most influential, namely, Madras, they have been overwhelmed, and that in no single Legislative body do they hold anything approaching a majority of the seats held by elected Hindus, let alone of the Legislatures themselves. "Whatever other significance there may be in these figures, they have, for the time being at all events, shown that the predominance of the Brahmin oligarchy is a myth," says Sir Thomas. That half-forgotten Anglo-Indian diehard, Mr. J. A. Sharrock, emerges from his well-earned obscurity to try to show by percentages that the Brahmins are in excess of the seats that they would be entitled to in proportion to their numbers. I wonder if it ever occurred to him to wonder why the property-owners in this country and the lawyers were in excess of their numerical proportion in the House of Commons. He wonders what we should think if the Roman Catholic clergy held from 20 to 40 per cent. of the seats in the Dail. In return, we may wonder what on earth it has to do with us, if the Irish people so prefer it, and, in addition, what is the relevancy of this argument, since everyone who knows anything about the matter is aware that the political Brahmins are not those of the priestly class. However, any argument is good enough in the mouth of a Sharrock.

Sir James Wilson, another "dugout", appears in the lists of the "Asiatic Review" on behalf of the Civil Service with the extraordinary argument that Indianization of the services ought not to exceed the 48 per cent. to be reached at the end of the first ten years. That, of course, would entirely fit in with the Prime Minister's pleasing simile of the "steel framework" as a perpetual ingredient of the Indian constitution.

By far the most important matter of interest this week to the majority of Britishers is the defeat of Carpentier in a boxing bout with a Senegalese boxer named Siki. The public are excited as to whether Siki defeated the erstwhile favourite by tripping him or not, and thousands of pounds and of words have been employed to prove or disprove the assertion. It will interest you to know that, in spite of a great deal of feeling that these black and white matches ought not to be

encouraged, most people are of opinion that Siki fairly defeated his opponent. The episode, however, shows something of the mentality of the average man in both France and Britain at this great juncture of world-history.

On what is, after all, the gravest issue of the day, Sir Abbas Ali Baig has a very moderate, but none the less important article in the current "Asiatic Review", in which he resumes, for the benefit of the lay reader, the history of Anglo-Turkish relations since 1907, and urges a return to the old pro-Turk attitude, if Indian and Asiatic sentiment generally are to be kept sympathetic to this country. He regards Mr. Sastri's view that "among the Muhammadan population of India many were ready to forswear their allegiance to the British Empire" as overcoloured and not to be taken seriously but as conveying a warning.

It was with the utmost relief that the news of Lord Curzon's success in Paris was received in this country. He had a very difficult task. It fell to him to maintain Britain's determination that the Straits should be and remain effectively free and he also had to conciliate offended French sentiment and make clear that Britain was not desirous of stirring dirty water in the Near East by fighting a lone hand to support the Greeks against the Turks. At one time it looked as though all his attempts at reconciliation would fall through owing to the reported decision of the British Cabinet not to give any assurances to the Nationalists at Smyrna, but later it was learnt that instead of committing the folly of delivering separate Notes to Mustapha Kemal, the three principal Allies had come to an agreement on the lines of the Joint Note whose terms have, of course, long since reached you. It was generally felt, when this news reached here, that, until after the negotiations with the Kemalists had been completed, one way or the other, the Cabinet would receive the support of the majority of the nation, who would not want to swap horses in the middle of the stream; but there is no doubt of the determination of the electorate to call the present Administration to account at the earliest possible moment.

Meanwhile, many things have happened in the Near and Middle East. There is a new Government in Athens. Constantine has finally abdicated in favour of the Crown Prince, the Duke of Sparta, who was married not long ago to a Roumanian Princess. Bulgaria has suggested that, as all are agreed that she should have an outlet on the Aegean Sea, Western Thrace should be internationalised and placed under the League of Nations, like the Danzig enclave. This would have the effect of removing direct contact between the Greeks and the Turks, thus diminishing the prospects of war between the two countries, and it would also result in equal treatment of the three races that occupy Western Thrace in almost equal proportions. It is important to note that the Turkish National Pact does not lay claim to Western Thrace, and there is therefore a good deal

to be said for the Bulgarian proposal, which would give her a Mediterranean outlet, without any other country suffering. In Turkey itself there is natural anxiety and unrest. Now that the Turkish Cabinet has resigned—and it will be difficult, if not impossible to find a successor,—the Kemalists may insist upon the abdication of the present Sultan. Mustapha Kemal is said to have returned no reply to the former's warm congratulations upon his victory, a significant silence. Russia which was left out of consideration in the Allied Note to Kemal, has determined not to be forgotten. She very naturally claims that she and the other Black Sea States are more interested in the settlement of the question of the Straits than are powers further west, and she insists that she and her proteges should be admitted to the Conference when it meets.

The Irish Constitution is being passed with fair rapidity. There are said to be eleven clauses which the Provisional Government regard as vital to the proper implementing of the Treaty. Of these ten have already been passed, including those relating to the position of the Crown. Mr. O'Higgins, who had earlier said that the Treaty was forced upon Ireland and would not bind a later majority of the nation that might hold a different view about the relations of Ireland to the British Commonwealth, in opposing a Republican motion to leave out the King, said:—"We propose to accept the Treaty, and we have been unable in the past to maintain that within the four corners of the Treaty you could draft a Constitution that would leave out the King. Not because of any personal predilections or rooted convictions against Republicanism, or personal fear as to the consequences to ourselves, but simply taking a serious view as to our responsibilities towards the Irish people and not having a high opinion of their prospects of getting anything better, we stand for this Constitution and for certain vital clauses in the Constitution, not particularly pleasant to ourselves personally." It is all very frank; but what is more important is that the Provisional Government has announced its intention to establish, at the request of the Free State Army leaders, courts-martial, to deal with the military situation more effectively. The irreconcilables will in future not be treated as prisoners of war. It will be of interest to watch the results of this significant decision.

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