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The Servant of India

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Topics of the Week.

Late Mr. D. Laxminarayan.

The news of the death of Rao Bahadur D. Laxminarayan of Kamptee in C. P. which came to us as very disagreeable surprise caused us, as we are sure it must have many others, great grief. He was a keen business-man and though at the time of death he was master of lakhs, it is necessary to remember he began life in poverty. He was thus a completely self-made man and rose to affluence by sheer dint of hard work and perseverance. In this respect his life was a model which might be copied with advantage by many young men to whose lot it falls to struggle with difficulties. Since his retirement from business he had been interesting himself in public affairs and had proved an acquisition to the public life of C. P. As a member of the Council of State to which he was elected, he would, we are sure, have made a name for himself; but alas! that was not to be. The late Rao Bahadur Laxminarayan was a great philanthropist and made extensive charities and that too in a manner which did not allow the left hand to know what the right hand did. Heavy though no doubt is the public loss caused by his passing away, it is a special loss to the Servants of India Society of which he was a staunch friend.

* * *

Kenya.

IT may be expected that soon after Parliament meets about the end of the month the Joint Committee to consider British policy in Eastern Africa will be appointed, and will proceed to take evidence. The representatives of the British planters in Kenya are already in England, canvassing public opinion, and specially seeking the sympathy of Gen. Hertzog of South Africa. They are hard at work already. The Indian delegation from Kenya is still in the making, and it is doubtful if it will ever get ready and if it will get the necessary support, material and moral. Apart from the Indians in Kenya, the people and the Government of India are vitally interested in the right solution of the Kenya question. The Government of India will, we have no doubt, arrange for their point of view being given full expression before the Joint Committee. It is also true that there will be in England several non-official Indians with intimate knowledge of the subject, who could be trusted to defend our point of view and press it home. They are, for instance, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Sastri and Mr. Vaze. There are, besides Messrs. Andrews and Polak. Nevertheless, it is desirable that a special un-official mission should be sent from India devoted solely to the cause and without other pre-occupations. There is the danger that, the Round Table Conference holding the centre of the stage, the Kenya question might not receive adequate attention. It has been decided to depute of Mr. Hirday Nath Kunzru, Vice-President of the Servants of India Society, to London on the Kenya mission. He commands in a rare degree the confidence not only of the people of India but of the Indians in Kenya and Eastern Africa. He presided over the Eastern Africa Indian National Congress in April, 1929, and went to England last winter on behalf of the Kenya Indians to place their views before the British Government.

Since writing the above, we learn that the Indians in East Africa have decided on sending to London a deputation led by Mr. Kunzru and consisting of Messrs. A. B. Patel and B. S. Varma as his colleagues. We welcome the decision.

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Treatment of Political Prisoners in Jails.

As satyagrahi prisoners are coming out of prison on completion of their terms of imprisonment, we are getting some realiable and firsthand information as to the way they or their comrades were treated in jails. Quite a number of such statements have seen the light last week and they agree in maintaining that the treatment of political prisoners is not all it should be. Indeed Mr. S. C. Bose thinks it is much worse than in 1921 and he is not alone in holding that view. While during the non-co-operation days every political prisoner, even convicted of violence, was given special treatment, i. e. we suppose treatment now accorded to A class prisoners, they are now classified in A, B and C classes, only a very few being lucky enough to get A class. A few more are placed in B class ; and the "vast majority" in C class. There is apparently no principle on which this classification is made ; for there are cases in which members of the same family have been placed in different classes. The wearing of Gandhi caps is no longer an offence ; but inside a prison it is objected to with the result that even political prisoners entitled to wear their own clothing are not allowed to have that head-dress. But this three-fold classification works mischief in another direction, as Mr. Bose points out. His cal-

culated to create heart-burning and set up one class of prisoners against another. As a remedy he suggests that all prisoners convicted for non-violent offences should be placed in the first class and those for violent crimes in the second.

According to Mr. Mohan Lala Saksena, who seems to have served his period in the Lucknow District jail, the lot of the C class prisoners is really deplorable. They are treated like ordinary criminals and are not allowed the use of their own clothes and other articles of dress nor are they allowed any private books or newspapers. The food served to them is bad, ill-cooked and unwholesome and the long interval of as many as fourteen hours between their evening meal and morning refreshments is found very inconvenient by them. But this is not the whole catalogue of their grievances. Most of them are locked up immediately after their evening meal and no facilities for recreation are given to them. They are made to work at the flour mill and are awarded punishments, even fetters with bars, for their inability to finish the task. Even when barracks are most uncomfortable owing to extreme heat, their sleeping in them is insisted upon and when they tried to protest, Mr. Saksena says "they were forcibly removed and were also kicked and beaten with batons." When the matter came to his notice he tried to interest the Superintendent in it with the result that Mr. Saksena himself was punished with ten days' solitary confinement, which was later converted into forfeiture of eight days' remission! We cannot help remarking that revelations made by some of the released prisoners during the last few days are very damaging to the Indian jail administration. The case of the C class prisoners is from all accounts particulary bad and needs looking into by the authorities with a view to prevent their getting needlessly bitter against the Government owing to their ill treatment in jail.

Repeated complaints about the ill-treatment of satyagrahi prisoners in Hyderabad (Sind) jail have led the Commissioner in Sind to issue a press note and state facts regarding the health of prisoners. Whether the information given in the press note will reassure the public mind, as it is apparently intended to do, we cannot say. One thing however is clear. It is that the hunger-strike of seven prisoners in Hyderabad prison which is duly recorded in the note and may be taken to be a fact is by no means calculated to create confidence in the public mind that the treatment meted out to prisoners in that jail is altogether humane and just. We wish the Press Note had enlightened us as regards the causes of the seven prisoners deciding to starve themselves.

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Harbouring of Satyagrahis : An Offence ?

STRANGE things are happening in the Madras Presidency—prohibition of wearing Gandhi caps, ban on national flags and last but by no means the least, prohibition even to give food and shelter to satyagrahis. One Mr. Sreeramamoorty of Razole was actually sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000, with six weeks' rigorous imprisonment in default, by the Taluka First Class Magistrate, Amalapuram, for the alleged offence of harbouring satyagrahis at his residence on June 16 last. The accused denied having entertained them on that day or their having come to his house on the day mentioned; but the magistrate relying on police evidence found him guilty under section 157 Cr. P. C. The case went up in appeal to the Court of the Sessions Judge, where, we are told, after arguments the Public Prosecutor stated that he had been instructed not to oppose the appeal. In other words, this means that the Government thought it wrong to have instituted proceedings at all against the accused with the evidence they had. If so, it is a question why this process of self-introspection did not begin when the case was heard in the lower court. Or did they presume too much on the accused's unwillingness to appeal as a matter of principle, taking him to be a non-co-operator of the orthodox style? This does not speak well for their sense of justice which should have revolted as soon as they got news of the proceedings against the accused for such an absurd offence. It appears from the Taluka Magistrate's rather incoherent remark "I find him guilty...but he refuses to express regret and tender apology" that Mr. Sreeramamoorty might have purchased his release by offering an apology. But first to expect him to do so and then to inflict this severe sentence for an absurdly insignificant offence, if it can at all be so called, perhaps because he failed to apologise, is most unbecoming and unjust. Section 157 refers to members of an unlawful assembly, whose harbouring is prohibited thereunder. But even supposing that the police witnesses were reliable and truthful and what they alleged against the volunteers viz. they were non-co-operation volunteers, was a fact, it is difficult to see how they could be regarded as members of an unlawful assembly. The prosecution case was that as the volunteers in question attended a meeting at which the breaking of salt laws was preached, they constituted an unlawful assembly, a proposition which the Sessions Judge found more than he could swallow, of course, on the evidence that was placed before him, with the result that the accused was acquitted.

By the way, may we enquire what has happened to satyagrahi prisoners suffering imprisonment for wearing Gandhi caps and carrying national flags? After Mr. Justice Pandalay's judgments in the two famous cases to which reference was made in these columns at the time, they should have been automatically released, for the wearing of Gandhi caps and the carrying of national flags can no longer be regarded as a crime. Were they so released or are they still rotting in jail? We would like the Madras Government to look into the matter and to tell us what has happened.

* * *

Minorities Problem.

FACED with our own minorities problem, it is of perennial interest to us to watch how the problem is being tackled in Europe, and by the League of Nations. There is a large volume of well-informed opinion that the League has failed to secure in practice the protection it had guaranteed to the post-war minorities in Eastern Europe. The Union of Democratic Control had actually asserted, in its recent Memorandum submitted to the British Prime Minister, that the Minorities Treaties had failed in the great majority of cases and suggested that the League should be asked to appoint a special commission to investigate the working of the Minorities Treaties and to constitute a Minorities Commission on the lines of the Permanent Mandates Commission. The position of the minorities should be brought into line with that of the populations in the mandated territories, and the mandatories should be called upon to submit annual reports which should be scrutinised by the Minorities Commission and the League. The suggestion was brought up before the League at its last session and was the subject of animated, if inconclusive, debate, a summary of which will be found in "Our European Letter" published elsewhere.

Articles.

MR. SASTRI IN ENGLAND.

THOUGH the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri went to England primarily as a member of the Royal Commission on Indian Labour and though the work on the Commission has been arduous enough, particularly in view of his chronic ill-health, he has not hesitated to impress every moment of leisure that he could snatch in furthering the cause of the political progress of India. Since his arrival in England he delivered several important addresses on the constitutional problems of India, which, because of his personality, his eloquence, his sweet reasonableness, and mastery of the subject, attracted wide attention and created deep impression. In his speech at the Manchester Luncheon Club on the 16th September last he seemed to have excelled himself. "No event of the past few days," said the *Spectator*, "in connection with India, however, has been comparable in importance, we think, with the speech delivered in Manchester on Tuesday by Mr. Srinivasa Sastri." Of that speech the *Manchester Guardian* said that "there was an obvious sincerity about it, an obvious earnestness, which would give to most people of this country an entirely new conception of India and Indians."

Mr. Sastri made the position of the Indian Liberal Party quite clear. "Like the Congress Party it stands," comments the *Manchester Guardian*, "essentially for Indian independence. Those people who imagine that Indians like Mr. Sastri, who are wise and cool enough to see the worthwhileness of co-operating with the British Government, will tamely accept anything that is offered to them are greatly mistaken. There is no single Indian alive of any consequence who will do this. Nor is there, in truth, any substantial difference between the substance of the demand put forward by the moderates and those put forward by the extremists . . . they both want the same thing and will accept nothing less." The *Spectator* also understood that Mr. Sastri's "speech made it clearer than ever that there is not a great deal of difference in substance between the demands of the Congress and those of the Liberals or Moderates. There is, however, one difference which is of immense range and significance. Mr. Sastri's speech was eminently reasonable in spirit and courteous in form."

Mr. Sastri pleaded for a status for India not in any way inferior to that of the other Dominions. "If I may mention any one point," he is reported to have said, "as being absolutely necessary to recognise in any future conception of what India's status shall be, it is this: that the Indian people have made up their minds that they cannot accept permanently within the Commonwealth a position of inferiority... We may be willing to temper our progress with safeguards, and to look forward with an eye to safety all round; but we cannot admit that we are fit only for forms of political institutions somewhat less advanced than those, for instance, that obtain in South Africa and Ireland." It is not without significance that Mr. Sastri instanced South Africa and Ireland: it is they that have laid emphasis on the right of secession of the Dominions.

The temporary reservations which Mr. Sastri would agree to were the control of the army, until Indianisation made greater progress, of foreign affairs and relations with the Indian States and the protection of minorities. These reservations, he frankly acknowledged, would be serious deductions from full Dominion Status; but in view of the circumstances of the case he was willing that India should submit to the delay.

The impression created by Mr. Sastri's speech was remarkable. The *Spectator* admited that "it would be impossible to govern permanently against the will of Moderate India as well as of Extremist India." It is obvious that if the demands of Moderate India are acceded, the Extremists also will be satisfied, because, as has been admitted by the *Spectator*, there is no substantial difference between the two. The *Manchester Guardian* has taken a bolder stand and a more radical one. "If the Round Table Conference fails to evolve a scheme which satisfies moderate Indian opinion, the British Government will be forced either to govern India by force, with no considerable ally in the country, or to leave India to its fate, knowing only too well what that fate will be. . . We must dare to give way to a demand for independence based on the very principles which we ourselves prize most highly and which India has learnt from us." It asks Britishers to realise that "Indians are no longer a subject people, that they demand real power and must be given it."

The conversion of so influential a journal as the *Manchester Guardian* to the full support of our case is indeed a great achievement, for which Mr. Sastri deserves the thanks of India.

INDIAN DELEGATION: MORE BRITISH CRITICISM.

IT is of interest to note some more comments by the British Press on the personnel of the Indian Delegation to the Round Table Conference. The *Spectator* describes it as "an impressive list," while the *Observer* continues its ill-natured criticism of the same and the Government responsible for it, a sample of which was given in these columns last week. "So far as it has depended on Simla" says it "these names are an earnest attempt to put the best face on a bad business after the fiasco of the negotiations with the Mahatma and the Pandits.... In the staging of "Hamlet" nothing is lacking but the title part." We are then reminded of the circumstance that "the whole object of the Conference plan" was to bring the Congress party "to a real compromise"—the Congress party which "has been the source and origin of the whole trouble." "That dream is done" and the Congress party remains out of the Conference in order to repudiate any sane settlement which it might reach" of which, we are warned, there is very slender chance in the circumstances. "But if by remote chance it does so, all

representatives of constructive reason will be denounced as "Simony"—if we may be allowed that title jest." The usual gibe at the poor "Moderates" follows from whom, the British nation is plainly told, it will "get no more practical help" "than we have received before." We are sure the accursed "Moderates" will survive this attack! Public memory is indeed short and it is no wonder if the *Observer's* knowledge of recent Indian history has become somewhat rusty. Unles the paper has become impervious to enlightenment and is not open to correction, its editor would do well to spend a half-hour with Lord Reading who was Viceroy of India during the non-co-operation period and was responsible for the working of the Montagu constitution in its early stages. But this is not all. It says that "the Moderates are much over-represented in proportion to their influence in India, where hardly any of these delegates could win any election against the Congress. In no case can Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar and their friends 'deliver the goods." Its diagnosis of the trouble in India is "that British policy for the last twelve months has not been guided by deliberate far-sighted reason, but has allowed itself to be pushed weakly from one unintended position to another."

In its issue of September 13 the *Nation & Athenæum* has a leading article on the failure of the peace negotiations. It recognises that with the Congress inner circle from the first regarding any participation in the Conference as "a tactical mistake" and Mr. Gandhi fearing, as explained by him in an interview published in the German Press, "that the Conference, containing many Indians of strong sectarian views, would merely advertise to the world the communal difficulties inherent in any constitution-making for India" the task of the mediators was "one of extreme difficulty." The British Press, not excluding this paper, has somehow persuaded itself that Mr. Gandhi's influence is less strong in the east than in the west of India, with the result that it has "little doubt" that Mr. Sen-Gupta "would be prepared to co-operate with the Government on the sort of terms which were offered to Mr. Gandhi." What reason it has for holding this view or for believing in the possibility of "one or two individual members (of the Congress Party) attending" (the Conference) we do not know. About the Congress leaders' demands, its view is :

> Theoretically, there is nothing inherently absurd in the chief demands. The "right to secede" is really an academic point, implicit in the ultimate attainment of full Dominion status. Control of the Army is an essential part of complete self-government. The justice of charging India with certain sums, which now form part of her national debt, is a subject which may legitimately be brought up for discussion in the near future. The demands however, not only included many matters which are outside the Viceroy's powers, but were made in a form which rendered further discussion impossible.

It then emphasises the need of 'the very widest publicity" for the Conference in Britain, India and, as far as possible, in other countries" and of the utterances of British statesmen being "clear-cut and free from verbiage." "Another most important point" in its opinion, is that no attempt should he made to hide the fact that the Conference is necessarily lop-sided." By way of easing the situation, the paper would like the Government to "make it quite clear from the beginning of the Conference that we are pledged to grant Dominion Status, and that we do not intend to hold up that grant a moment longer than is necessary for the discharge of our responsibilities to the Indian people as a whole." "It would also help to remove a multitude of misunderstandings" it believes "if the "right to secede," which is likely to be accepted as an inherent right of the Dominions, could be recognised as an inevitable accompaniment of the attainment of full Dominion Status. It is probable that in Inda, as in South Africa, the admission of the "right to secede" would give the deathblow to the secession movement." Time will show whether the Government shows the wisdom to profit by this wholesome advice.

With regard to Dr. Gilbert Slater's plea for the grant of the right of secession to India which was quoted at length in these columns last week, Mr. H. H. Kingsley asks :—

> To whom does he (Dr. Slater) suggest the right of secession be granted? Surely such a right can be granted only when India has an assembly truly representative of all her peoples. Congress, however important, represents but a minority.

Dr. Slater's reply is statesmanlike and we need not apologise for quoting it here at length :

> The procedure which seems to me desirable would be on some such lines as the following :—
>
> 1. The Government to submit to the Conference at its opening a statement that the Indian right to secede is recognised, and an invitation to the Conference to consider by what representative body or bodies it should be exercisable.
>
> 2. During the proceedings of the Conference the possibility should be kept in mind (a) of an adjournment to India, or (b) of a report being made to a purely Indian conference to be held in some convenient centre (I would suggest Bangalore), or (c) of a temporary adjournment in London to enable the Congress party, if it so decides, to take part after the above announcement.
>
> The fundamental mistake in the proceedings of the last year or two is, I think, that the appointment of the Simon Commission was putting the cart before the horse. The right method, it has always seemed to me, would have been to get the Indian leaders to formulate their desires and then for the Government to consider how far they were acceptable to us.
>
> If the Indian people choose independence they have, I think, an undeniable right to it. But if they prefer a partnership with Britain, we, as well as they, must have a voice in determining the terms of the partnership. The sooner these fundamental principles are recognised, the sooner we shall get to real business.

To this there was a rejoinder by Mr. Kingsley; but therein he merely repeats himself at greater length. Hence its reproduction or any further reference to it is unnecessary here.

In his letter published in the *Spectator* of September 20, Mr. J. W. Poynter compares India with Ireland and expresses the view that "*the underlying principles* of the Irish and Indian controversies are the same: a determination to have autonomy, on one side, and a hesitation to grant it or as to how far it may be granted on the other." There is "quite surprising likeness" in Mr. Chamberlain attempting to

open negotiations with "the prisoner in Kilmainham" (Mr. Parnell) and Lord Irwin allowing the same to be done with the Congress leaders in Yerrowda and Naini. According to Mr. Poynter the methods in both cases are similar: "boycotting, intimidation and so on: and on one occasion (see Morley's *Gladstone*, III, 243-4) even Lord Salisbury recognised boycotting as a weapon natural to 'the passing humour of the population' and hard or even impossible to put down. It is now plain that, deplorable though those old Irish conflicts were, the agitations led to remedy of evils" which was in effect what Mr. Sastri said a few days ago. But what follows is even more interesting.

> "'Suppose I am told he [Gladstone] said in notable and mournful words, 'that without the agitation Ireland would never have had the Land Act of 1881, are you prepared to deny that ?' " (*Morley*, III., 410). There even was (*Morley*, III., 366-8) an attempted Round Table Conference, but it failed, and "coercion was the key to the new situation." Thereafter the struggle went on, until it was settled in 1921 on terms practically equivalent to independence: and the evils expected even from moderate home rule have failed to appear under a far wider scheme.
>
> Looking at these matters from a historico-philosophic viewpoint, the student is probably lead to conclude that when a nation (and no nation is entirely homogeneous) desires independence, neither denial nor compromise will be a solution; that struggles and vain efforts will result from the demand; and that eventually that demand will succeed, with advantage to both sides in the conflict.

Pitched in a very different key is the following extract from a letter published in the *Spectator* of September 20 by a writer who signs "A. R. N." It will be seen that he is furious with the Editor for his sympathy towards Indian aspirations:

> For utter ignorance of India and the mentality and psychology of its varied people and religions your article of July 19th and its conclusions is hard to beat. Had this article appeared in the Indian Extremist Press or emanated from Moscow or any of the other enemies the British Empire possesses, the reader would be able to appreciate its general sentiments. That it should appear in a paper of the standing as the *Spectator* is a grave indictment of its Editor and Directors, not only as regards their lack of understanding, but above all on account of their lack of patriotism.

The outburst is too absurd to need comment.

D. V. A.

THE SIMON COMMISSION REPORT.*

BY SIR P. S. SIVASWAMY AIYER, K. C. S. I., C. I. E.

THANKS to the methods of propaganda skilfully devised and vigorously carried out and to the attention widely attracted by the Indian unrest, the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, otherwise known as the Simon Commission, has secured a measure of publicity far beyond that achieved by any other Commission or Report in the United Kingdom. Several impressions of the publication have been issued and it bids fair to compete with some of the best sellers among the works of fiction. Wide and steady advertisement is generally followed by a belief in the virtues of the thing advertised. It should be no matter of surprise if the British public has begun to believe in the profound wisdom of the Report and in the cussedness of the Indians who have decried the Report and refuse to accept its conclusions. It is unfortunate that, like the Donoughmore Commission on the constitutional reforms of Ceylon the Simon Commission should have adopted the attitude of admiring the merits of their scheme as an inter-dependent whole and insisting that the framework must be taken or left as a whole. Reforms in the political constitution of a country cannot be carried out in one part of it without affecting the rest of the machinery to some extent. While the Commission are prepared to admit the possibility of modifications of their scheme in details, they cannot conceive the possibility of any alteration of what they consider to be the main principles underlying their scheme. It is nevertheless true that this idea of inter-dependence of the proposals may be carried to the point of making a fetish of it. It may be quite possible for the critics of the Report to accept some of the proposals, while rejecting the others. But if it comes to a question of taking or leaving the scheme of the Commission as a whole, people in India would rather throw the whole scheme overboard than accept all its main proposals. For the benefit of readers, especially in Britain, it is desirable to examine and analyse the scheme of the Commission and point out why it has met with such severe condemnation in India. We consider the scheme unacceptable, not merely because it fails to satisfy national aspirations, but also for the reason that it is constitutionally unsound in principle and bound, in working, to be injurious to the best interests of India. It may perhaps be useful to clear the ground by saying that the proposals of the Commission with regard to the provincial governments may be made acceptable by an alteration of some important features. Their recommendations with regard to the Central Government are so radically vicious that they cannot possibly be accepted. I will therefore begin with an exmination of that part of the Simon scheme which deals with the Central Government. The Report of the Commission is throughout dominated by their conception of the future ideal of the Government of India. This must necessarily be the case and we agree also that any scheme that is put forward must be conditioned by the historic background of the Indian polity. These considerations, however, lead us to entirely different conclusions from those at which the Commission has arrived.

THE HISTORIC BACKGROUND OF INDIAN POLITY.

Let us first consider the historic background of the present organisation of Government in British India. It has become a commonplace in the histories of India that, prior to the advent of the British power, the country was parcelled out among a multitude of rulers and chieftains more or less constantly at war with each other, except during the rare and short periods when the country was under the sway of mighty emperors like Asoka, Harsha or Akbar. How India, peopled as it was by men of diverse races, creeds, castes and languages, was torn by internal dissensions and communal jealousies, how its incapacity for union rendered the country an easy prey to every foreign invader, how India was rescued from internal strife, disorder and chaos by the growing ascendancy of British power, how the consolidation of British rule has conferred on India the blessings of peace, order and security, the benefits of Western education and an improvement of her material condition, how the British administration has incidentally developed political capacity and how the spirit of nationalism which

*Reproduced from the *Triveni*.

has been growing in recent years is the product of British administration, have been the favourite theme of every writer on the British period of Indian history. There can be no doubt that the growth of the sentiment of nationalism has been largely fostered by centralisation of the government, by the uniformity of methods of administration and laws, and by the employment of the English language as a medium for education and inter-change of ideas. If there has been a tendency for the provinces of British India to rise to the same level of administrative efficiency and general progress, it has been the result of the co-ordination and control exercised by the Central Government of India. It is the highly-developed unitary character of the Government of India that has enabled it to exercise such a potent influence for all-round development of the country. The disruptive influences of castes and communities, creeds and languages have been curbed by the power and influence of a centralised system of government. Communal loyalties are being superseded by loyalty to the nation and the country at large, and a parochial outlook is being replaced by a national outlook. If the separatist tendencies of the Indian peoples have still to be counteracted, it can only be accomplished by the development of Indian nationalism by the centripetal forces which can be exercised only by a government of the unitary type. Superficial observers may be disposed to think that a country of the size and population of India cannot possibly be administered by a central government with any approach to efficiency or popularity. It would be a mistake to imagine that a unitary government is incompatible with decentralisation. As a matter of fact, the Government of India has in the past largely delegated the administration to provincial governments and these latter have in their turn brought into existence local authorities with powers of local self-government. Devolution of authority to local governments and local bodies has been the accepted policy of the Government of India and the demand for provincial autonomy only calls for an extension of the same policy. But this demand does not require any deviation from the unitary character of the Government of British India and the course of political evolution up to this moment points to the unitary type of government as the one best suited to the circumstances and needs of this country.

THE FUTURE IDEAL OF INDIA.

Let us now see whether, apart from the exigencies of past history and present needs, there are any considerations arising from our conception of the goal or ideal of India in the future. Here it is necessary to observe that the question should be examined first from the point of view of British India, and secondly, from the point of view of the Indian States. It is conceivable that the ideal from the two points of view may not be exactly the same. Should there be a difference between the two ideals, the question would have to be considered how they can best be reconciled in the interests of the unity of All-India. Whether it should be by the surrender of one ideal for the sake of the other, or by the adoption of some form of polity which will harmonise the two, it goes without saying that what every ardent Indian nationalist desires is the union of All-India in some form or other, so that the people of All-India may be united as a strong nation speaking with a single voice to the outside world. The exact shape of the future of India as a whole, or of All-India as we may call it, has not been precisely forecasted by any one. Even the Simon Commission have not ventured to lay down the principles of the constitution of All-India, though they feel sufficient confidence to be able to predict the type to which it should conform. But before examining these conceptions which are nebulous except in one respect, let us first proceed to consider the ideal of British India itself. Though the political destiny of British India and the States may be involved with each other, an analytical study of the subject will help us to a better grasp of the problem and a more satisfactory solution.

THE IDEAL OF BRITISH INDIA.

Let us therefore now proceed to consider the goal of British India. Fortunately for us, the aspirations of the people of British India have been accepted by the British Parliament and embodied in the solemn declaration of the 20th of August 1917. The policy of the British Government has been declared to be "that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

THE PLEDGE OF PARLIAMENT AND ITS INTERPRETATION.

To arrive at the true intention of Parliament the language of the announcement has to be scanned with attention. It was at one time suggested by high officials in India that the responsible government contemplated by the announcement was not necessarily the same as Dominion Status. Even at this time of day, it is urged by British politicians inimical to India that the expression 'Dominion Status' is not a term of art and that the British Parliament had no intention of promising any status equivalent to that of the self-governing Dominions. But all these quibbles have been completely set at rest by the pronouncement of Lord Irwin made on the 31st of October 1929 with the full authority of His Majesty's Government. It can admit of no controversy hereafter that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as contemplated in the declaration of 1917 is the attainment of Dominion Status.

DOMINION STATUS FOR BRITISH INDIA OR ALL-INDIA ?

What is the India contemplated by Parliament in the announcement of 1917 ? Was it British India or All-India, including the States ? It can be easily shown that the term 'India' has often been used and understood in official documents as referring to British India. Reading the announcement of 1917 as a whole it is obvious that the India which was dealt with was British India and not All-India. The reference to the increasing association of Indians in the administration, the gradual development of self-governing institutions, the omission of any reference to the Indian States and Princes, the reference to the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service would be conferred and the extent to which confidence could be reposed in their sense of responsibility, place the matter beyond any doubt. The Government of India could not develop self-governing institutions in the Indian States, could not take substantial or progressive steps in the Indian States for the realisation of the ideal, could not confer any opportunities of service on the people of the Indian States by the reforms contemplated; and the people of the Indian States could neither obtain new opportunities of service, nor give proof of their sense of responsibility. The India to which responsible government was solemnly promised could only be that portion of the country whose administration was in the hands of the Government of India and the British Government. It is not possible for the British Government to interfere in the internal administration of the Indian States, or to coerce the States to become associated with British India in any constitutional structure. To clinch the interpretation

of the declaration, it is enough to put one question: what, according to this declaration, is to happen if the States are unwilling to be associated with British India? Is British India to be barred from the goal of responsible government, because the States do not choose to join? That the relations of British India with the Indian States introduce complications into the problem may be conceded. That these complications have been aggravated by the theory of direct relations with the Crown set up by the Princes and their counsel to which the Butler Committee and the Simon Commission have lent a too willing ear may also be conceded. But it is quite clear that Parliament did not intend the progress of British India towards the goal to be blocked by the reluctance of the Indian States to join her.

MONTFORD REPORT MISCONSTRUED.

Reference may now be made to some passages in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report upon which reliance is placed by the Simon Commission. In paragraph 21, they quote a sentence from paragraph 120 of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, in which the distinguished authors say:

> "Granted the announcement of August 20, we cannot at the present time envisage its complete fulfilment in any form other than that of a congeries of self-governing *provinces* associated for certain purposes under a responsible government, with *possibly* what are now the Native States of India finally embodied in the same whole in some relation which we will not now attempt to define. (The italics are mine). For such an organisation the English language has no word but 'federal'."

On this passage the following remarks have to be made. It has been taken by the Commission out of its context so as to convey a very different meaning from what the two authors intended. They state that the goal of responsible government could not be contemplated without self-government being granted to the provinces. That the Native States were not an indispensable part of the responsible government of India contemplated by them is quite clear from their use of the word 'possibly', thus indicating that it was only a *possible* contingency and not a *necessary* development of the policy of His Majesty's Government. If the Native States made up their minds to come into the union, it could only be on a federal basis. But the form of the union and the ralations between the States and British India could not be outlined. That as between the Central Government and the provinces, the two authors of the Report did not contemplate any federal union is quite clear from the sentences which precede and follow the extracted passage. In the previous sentence the Report says that the existing relation between the provinces and the Central Government afforded a plain warning to those who were disposed to be misled by false analogies from federal constitutions. In the sentence which follows the extract they observe:

> "We are bound to point out that, whatever may be the case with the Native States of the future, into the relation of provincial and central governments the truly federal element does not and cannot enter."

They went on to describe the necessary process of decentralisation and uttered a warning against the ready application of federal arguments or federal examples to a task the very reverse of that which confronted Alexander Hamilton and Sir John Mac Donald. The same ideas were repeated in paragraphs 300, 340 and 350 of the same Report. However desirable it may be that the Indian States should enter into a close association with British India, their unwillingness to do so cannot be a barrier to the attainment of responsible government by British India. The true position between British India and the States and between British India and the provinces has been correctly described in paragraph 120 of that Report.

RELUCTANCE OF STATES CANNOT BAR BRITISH INDIA FROM THE GOAL.

It may be said that the Montagu-Chelmsford Report is not the last word on the subject. Let us now turn to the announcement of Lord Irwin in October 1929. He stated:

> "In the full realisation of this policy (the attainment of Dominion Status) it is evidently important that the Indian States should be afforded an opportunity of finding their place, and even if we cannot at present exactly foresee on what lines the development may be shaped, it is from every point of view desirable that whatever can be done should be done to ensure that action now taken is not inconsistent with the attainment of the ultimate purpose which those, whether in British India or the States, who look forward to some unity of All-India, have in view."

Here also the attainment of Dominion Status by British India alone is not barred or ruled out. It is, of course, common ground between the two schools of thought that it is eminently desirable, though not indispensable, that the Indian States should also join British India. As to the exact form of the union between the two Indias, if and when it takes place, no one has ventured to predict the lines on which the association should be carried out. All that has been suggested is that nothing should be done now which would create an obstacle to the adhesion of the Indian States and that the door must be left open to the larger integration of British India and the States. There are many conceivable forms of association between British India and the Indian States. There may be a federation of the Indian States as a solid federal body as pictured by the Maharaja of Bikaner, alongside of the organisation of British India as a unitary government and a machinery for the co-ordination of the two separate bodies. Such a conception of the future would not interfere with the evolution of the Government of British India on the established lines. Again, it is conceivable that the constitution of the future Central Government of India might be of a hybrid or anomalous type not strictly conforming to any existing type. What is important is that there should be no assumption as to the future type of the Government of All-India, that we should not now be called upon to make alteration in the existing structure of Government on the basis of uncertain assumptions made with reference to a remote future and that we should not do anything to arrest the political development of British India towards the goal for the sake of this distant prospect.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT ESSENCE OF THE IDEAL AND THE TOUCHSTONE OF ALL REFORMS.

There are some conclusions, however, to which one is inevitably led by the foregoing discussion. Whatever may be the form of integration of India, the goal to which Parliament stands committed, to which the people of India have been looking forward and whose attainment they have a right to expect, is the goal of responsible government. This is the cardinal fact which has to be borne in mind in every attempt to frame or outline a constitution. It cannot be too strongly emphasised and it must be gripped by the reader as the one fundamental test which must be satisfied by any constitutional proposals, whether complete or sketchy.

With becoming diffidence the Commission disclaim again and again any intention of devising the constitution of the future Central Government of India. They point out that its form must depend upon the wishes and opinions of the constituent members of the future All-India,

which, they conceive, must be united in a federation. While they concede that the integration of India cannot conform to any known pattern, they put forth certain analogies and propose certain steps for immediate adoption on the assumption that they will serve to keep the door open for future developments, or, to adopt another metaphor, to throw out the first strands of a solid and enduring bridge across the gap that divides the Indian States from British India. How far their three concrete proposals will serve the purpose and may be acceptable is a question which we may discuss later. The more important point to be considered among the suggestions made by the Commission is their proposal for demolition of the existing structure of the Central Government. They say that their first duty is to break up the existing structure so that the edifice of a united India might be built on new foundations in accordance with the plans of a future architect. In support of their destructive proposals they claim the authority of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. But paragraph 120 of that Report to which reference is evidently made lends no support to the proposals of the Simon Commission. What the authors of that Report mean when they speak of demolishing the existing structure is the necessity for devolution and decentralisation, for cutting the rigid ties between the central and the provincial governments and for giving the provinces the largest measure of independence compatible with the due discharge by the Government of India of its own responsibilities. They took care also to point out that the federal conception could not enter into the relation of the provincial and central governments even in the future.

WHAT KIND OF FEDERATION?

The popular conception of federation is very loose and ill-defined and the word has a soothing effect on many minds. But for the purposes of political discussion we must understand the term in its accepted technical sense. Federation may be of various forms; it may be of the type that is prevalent in the United States of America and in Australia; it may be of the type that has found favour with Canada; it may be of the unique type of the German Imperial constitution which was in force from 1870 till the inauguration of the German Republic; it may be of the form that has been found suitable for the unique conditions obtaining in Switzerland; or it may be only a federation in name like the federation of the Leeward Islands. In what sense exactly the word is understood by the Commission is not very clear. But it is obvious that, in whatever sense they might have used the term, the federation conceived by them is of an extremely nondescript type and does not satisfy any of the tests of a genuine federation. What exactly is at the back of their minds may be inferred from the constitutions which they rely upon as furnishing useful analogies. The associations which they refer to by way of analogy are the old German federation and the League of Nations. It is an irony of fate that the Commission, while not tired of warning against false historic analogies, should themeselves fall into the mistake of proposing for serious consideration such false analogies. Let us consider whether either of the associations referred to by the Commission can possibly furnish any useful model for India.

ANALOGY OF THE LEAGUE MISLEADING.

Every tyro in politics knows that the League of Nations is not a federation in any sense of the term and is still less a State. It has again been pointed out that the League of Nations is not a super-State, imposed upon the member-States. The member-States have not sacrificed any part of their sovereignty. It is merely an association for the purpose of pacific settlement of disputes and the prevention of war by mutual agreement. Its resolutions do not bind the member-States, until they are ratified. The League has no coercive powers over its members and its decisions are ineffective for want of sanctions. Nobody would dream of calling the League a State or a super-state or a federation of states. Is this the sort of tie that the Simon Commission wish to bring about between British India and the States in the future? Is it the tie which any nationalist would desire to see formed in the future? It is conceivable that a closer association between British India and the States may not be possible; but nobody would care for such a loose association or call it a federation.

ANALOGY OF GERMAN FEDERATION ALSO MISLEADING.

Let us now consider the other analogy of the old German federation. Evidently the old German federation referred to by the Commission is the loose federation of German States established in 1815 which continued to exist till it was superseded in 1870 by the Imperial constitution. Here again the association between the various States is usually described as a confederation or confederacy rather than as a federation. Every tyro in politics knows that a confederation is only a congeries of states which do not make a State at all. The internal sovereignty of each State was quite unimpaired and the Diet, the only organ of the federation, was nothing more than an assembly of ambassadors of the various States of the League. It had no central (or federal) executive with real power over all the citizens within the area concerned. The only mode by which the Diet could carry out its orders was by calling on one or two members of the federation to attack the recalcitrant State and, by invading its territories, to compel submission. It is needless to dilate further upon the features of the German federation which seems to have appealed to the Simon Commission. It had only one virtue, that of preventing a closer association of the various States into an organic whole. The federal constitution of the German Empire which succeeded it was, in the words of Dr. Preuss, one of the most eminent German constitutionalists, successful in preventing the emergence of an independent and politically responsible government. Perhaps the very defects of the old German confederation constitute its merits in the eyes of the Simon Commission. Here again let me repeat that it is quite conceivable that the Indian Princes, though not perhaps their peoples, may be unwilling to draw into a closer association with British India. It would then be folly to suggest the alteration of the structure of the Government of India in view to the prospect of the very loose and unsubstantial fabric pictured by the imagination of the Simon Commission. Admitting the necessity of visualising the future ideal of India and of keeping that ideal in mind in any alteration of the constitution, I have pointed out that *responsible government* must be the true ideal of India and that it is not advisable to make any changes in the constitution of British India with an eye to the shadow of a federation held out by the Commission.

UNSUITABILITY OF FEDERATION.

In arguing for the ideal of federation it is urged by the Commission that, apart altogether from any question of an ultimate federal union between the Indian States and British India, there are very strong reasons for the reconstruction of the Indian constitution on a federal basis. Before examining in detail the arguments advanced by the Commission in support of this opinion, let us note some important admissions made by the Commission. It is admitted

that the present constitution of India, as it has been gradually evolved and established since the commencement of British rule, is of the unitary type as opposed to the federal. It is admitted that a change from a unitary type to a federal system is unusual, that federation has often been the intermediate process whereby independent States have agreed to relinquish part of their sovereignty before they were ready to merge their separate identities in a unitary state, and that the general tendency of federations once formed has been towards increasing centralisation. It is admitted that federation schemes usually postulate a number of clearly-defined States, each with a distinct provincial consciousness, and that this condition does not now obtain in the provinces which are only administrative areas. It is admitted that the proposals of the Commission involve a radical alteration of the structure of the Central Government. It is admitted that the provinces derive their measure of autonomy from a common centre and already form part of a single political system, while the Indian States, possessed of internal sovereignty, are completely independent of one another and that, while the provinces have a long tradition of over-riding central authority with wide powers, the limited powers of intervention possessed by the Government of India in Indian States are derived from a very different source, and carried out in a different way. It is further admitted that the Commission are trying to federate elements, some of which have not been finally de-limited, while others have yet to express their willingness to enter.

THE MECHANICAL CONVENIENCE ARGUMENT FOR INDIRECT ELECTION.

Let us now turn to the arguments of the Commission in favour of their position that, in the interests of British India itself, a federal as opposed to a unitary structure is called for. One main argument is based upon the practical difficulty of applying the principles of Western democracy to such a large unit as British India. In one part of their Report the Commission call it the argument from mechanical convenience. They point out that representative democracy as understood in Britain depends upon the possibility of a close contact between the elector and the member and that this cannot be secured with constituencies of the size and population that have been created in British India, especially for the Central Legislature. Let us grant that representative democracy of the British type involves limitations upon the size of the constituencies. What is the remedy suggested by the Commission? They seem to think that a system of indirect election would be a solution of the difficulty. They think also that the system of indirect election is bound up with a federal system. Each of these positions requires to be carefully scrutinised. The system of indirect election is proposed only for the constitution of the Central Legislature and not for the provincial legislature. The difficuly of applying the principles of Western democracy has not therefore been removed in the case of the provincial legislatures. It may be said that the difficulty upon which stress is placed by this argument is more or less the mechanical difficulty of a candidate getting into touch with a multitude of electors spread over a vast area. So far as the administrative arrangements for elections are concerned, they have to be provided for in connection with the elections to the provincial legislatures and they will not be aggravated by popular election to the Central Legislature, the franchise for which will certainly not be wider than that adopted for the provincial legislatures. As regards the difficulties of a candidate or member securing contact with the electors, they undoubtedly do exist under the present system. But they can be reduced to a considerable extent by an increase in the number of seats and the consequent reduction in the present size of the constituencies. The true remedy, however, is the growth of an efficient system of party organisation. In no large country in the world would it be possible for a candidate or member to get into touch with all the electors, except with the aid of a well-developed party organisation. It is a truism of political history that the development of party organisation depends upon making the government responsible to the people. But the scheme of reforms proposed by the Commission makes no provision for rendering the Central Government responsible to the electorate. If the system of direct election by popular constituencies fails to secure contact between the elector and the candidate or member, a system of indirect election by the provincial legislatures is *a fortiori* open to the same charge. Under a system of indirect election it would be quite unnecessary for a candidate to the Central Legislature to approach any popular constituency and educate any popular electorate to understand the significance of the issues arising before the Central Legislature and form their opinions on such issues. The system of indirect election recommended by the Commission must be condemned for the very reasons which have led them to condemn the system of direct election.

IS INDIRECT ELECTION ESSENTIAL TO FEDERATION?

Apart from the argument referred to, the Commission seem to have become enamoured of the system of indirect election for other reasons also. They seem to regard indirect election as of the essence of the federal system and they advocate its adoption as paving the way for federalism. This is apparently all that they mean when they talk of leaving the door open for an ultimate federal union. There seems to be not a little confusion in the minds of the members of the Commission as to the connection between the federal system and the system of indirect election, between a system of direct election and the Parliamentary or Cabinet system, and between the federal system and the Presidential system. To clear this tangle of misconceptions, it has to be pointed out that the federal system does not involve the principle of indirect election as an essential requirement. Even in the United States of America, which is the earliest and most conspicuous example of a large country which adopted the federal system, the principle of indirect election for the constitution of the Senate was for very good reasons abandoned in 1913 in favour of the system of direct election. The examples of Australia and Canada are sufficient to show that a federal union is not incompatible at all with the Cabinet system and does not involve the Presidential system. It is needless to go further in disproof of the assumption made by the Commission.

PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM INAPPLICABLE.

The Commission frequently repeat the statement that the British Parliamentary system is not the only model for the Central executive and that the Cabinet system which is a peculiar product of British history, tradition and habits of thought is not suitable for transplantation in other countries. The Commission do not care to point out what the other alternatives to the British model are. The two models to which they refer are the old German federation and the League of Nations. We have already seen that these analogies are false and misleading. The only other model that we can think of is that of the United States with its Presidential system. Apart from the fact that the Presidential system is workable only because of the American traditions and habits of mind, it cannot be copied in any country

which is not prepared to adopt a republican constitution. Though the American executive is irremovable for a period, its responsibility to the people is secured by the periodical election of the head of the Government. It is obvious that the Presidential system cannot possibly be applied to India.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT NO PART OF COMMISSION'S IDEAL.

Failing the British model and the American model, what is the expedient by which the deadlocks which are bound to arise between an irremovable executive and an elected majority in the legislature can be solved? The Commission are not prepared to throw any light upon this question. It must be pointed out, with reference to their conception of a federal union of India, that it is open to the fatal objection that there is no element in their scheme, now or in the future, of any responsibility to the people. There is no federal system in any civilised country of the world which is not based upon the principle of responsibility to the people. Federal systems generally involve a bi-cameral legislature. Whether the Upper House is constituted by the principle of direct election or indirect election, the lower and the more influential House is always formed by direct election by popular constituencies and serves to maintain the responsibility of the government. The necessity for an upper chamber may be open to doubt in the opinion of some theorists, but the necessity for a popular chamber in a federal system has been universally admitted. Yet the whole trend of the scheme of reforms recommended by the Commission is in the direction of making the Lower House non-popular (not to say unpopular). If the Commission did not feel hampered by the existence of the Council of State and had felt themselves at liberty to suggest a brand-new constitution, there can be no doubt that their leanings would have suggested a single house of legislature formed by a system of indirect election. Their proposals amount to a negation of the principle of responsible government to which the British Government has solemnly pledged itself.

INDIRECT ELECTION INCOMPETENT FOR COMMISSION'S PURPOSE.

The Commission seem to be under the impression that the principle of indirect election proposed by them will result in making the provinces the ultimate units of federation. This assumption seems to be the keystone of the Commission's edifice of a Central Legislature and therefore invites an examination as to whether it is desirable and whether it will be brought about merely by the expedient of an indirect election. The reason why, in the view of the Commission, the ultimate units of federation should consist of provinces is that, inasmuch as it is assumed to be possible in the future to bring in the Indian States as political entities but not the peoples of the States, the provinces of British India should also be brought in only as entire units and the people of British India should cease to have either part or lot in the composition of the Central Legislature. The Commission may perhaps be right in supposing that the rulers of Indian States may at present be unwilling to give their peoples, as distinguished from the rulers, any voice in the Indian Legislature. But it does not follow that there is any justification for depriving the people of British India of any direct voice in the constitution of the legislature. This would be a contravention not merely of the pledge of responsible government and the democratic principle, but also of the very essence of the federal system as understood in the modern world. The principle of federalism is not intended to curtail or affect the sovereignty of the nation, but to reconcile this fundamental principle with the desire of the constituent States to retain some of their individuality. Granting, however, that this reactionary proposal may have the merit of serving as a bait to draw in the Indian States, it must fail of its purpose, unless the Commission are prepared to go further and lay down that the representatives of each province who may be elected by the respective provincial council shall record only single block vote in accordance with the instructions given by the provincial council by which they were elected, just in the same manner as the members of the Diet in the old German federation or the members of the Bundesrath in the German Empire were required to vote. A further difficulty in the accomplishment of the object of the Commission is created by the principle of proportional representation by which the provincial councils are to be required to elect their representatives to the Federal Assembly of the Central Legislature. An election in the ordinary way by a majority vote by a provincial legislature might be regarded as an election by the majority who may be supposed to hold certain views in common. But the very object of the system of proportional representation is to secure the representation of groups and sections of opinion. And apart from the many other objections which can be urged against the principle of proportional representation—which have stood in the way of its being adopted even in England—it would be impossible to decide which of the groups voting in the provincial legislature, or the representative of which group, is entitled to speak in the name of the constituent legislature. For it may very well happen that the various groups and their representatives differ among themselves. The principle is inconsistent with the object so dear to the heart of the Commission.

ARGUMENT OF ELASTICITY.

The next main argument for a federal ideal is that it is only a federal structure that will possess sufficient elasticity to allow of the union of elements of diverse internal constitution and of communities at very different stages of development and culture. It is claimed that this form is the best suited for the union of backward or excluded areas and of special provinces like the North-West Frontier Province. Here again there is a confusion of thought in the mind of the Commission. For the purpose of attracting the autocratic States of India into some association with British India, it may perhaps be conceded that the federal structure which allows internal autonomy to the constituent members may be desirable. But when the position of British India is examined, it will be found to be incompatible with the needs of the situation and the professed aims of the Commission. The very fact that there are communities at different levels of education and political development, and that there are areas which require special treatment, shows that the relations between the Central Government and the local governments cannot possibly be the same throughout. While provincial autonomy might be feasible in the case of the major provinces, it would, in the opinion of the Commission itself, be unsuitable in the case of the back-ward tracts and special provinces. The internal autonomy of the constituent provinces enters into the very essence of the federal structure, or at any rate, far more so than in the case of a government of the unitary type. It is quite clear from various passages in the Report of the Commission that they do not propose the abandonment of the central control over these special areas and tracts. This second argument must be rejected as tending to establish the very contrary of the conclusion which the Commission seek to justify.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF NATIONALISM

The next argument of the Commission is that it is only under a federal system that the sentiment of nationalism can be given effective expression. It is not a little surprising that the Commission should claim a superiority in this respect for the federal structure. A federal system is by its very nature one that encourages a divided loyalty among the people. It is unquestionable that a government of the unitary type is far better calculated to promote the sentiment of nationalism. The defects of federalism are well known and acknowledged by all political thinkers. The promotion of a provincial outlook and provincial loyalty as opposed to a national outlook and the recognition of the claims of the country as a whole, the want of uniformity in methods of administration and in laws in regard to which uniformity is desirable, weakness in the conduct of external affairs, liability to dissolution by the secession or revolt of States, the weakness of the Central Government in enforcing observance of its laws and decrees and treaty obligations, the evils arising from the greater complexity of administration, the duplication of government machinery and services, the absence of a power of intervention in the event of breakdown of the State machinery, and the absence of any power in the central authority to check the oppression of minorities are among the many defects of the federal system. It is because nationalism is of recent growth in India that it is all the more necessary to make no alterations in the structure of government which may interfere with the growth of the sentiment.

FEDERALISM NOT FULLY FOLLOWED EVEN BY COMMISSION.

Let us now see whether the federal ideal is strictly adhered to by the Commission in their scheme of reconstruction of the Central Government. In the first place, they propose to vest a power of intervention in the provincial Governor for such purposes as the protection of minorities and the preservation of order. In so intervening, the Governor will be under the superintendence of the Governor-General, for they say it is on the strength of the central administration that the peace and safety of India ultimately depend. In the chapter in which the Commission deal with the relations between the centre and the provinces, the Commission provide for the control of the Governor-General in Council over the provincial government in a field defined by certain categories. Though I consider the provision for such control to be desirable and necessary, it may be noted that this provision is more consistent with a government of the unitary type than with a government of the federal type. The power which the Commission wish to reserve with the Central Government to settle the distribution of subjects between the centre and the provinces and to prevent any challenge of its action in the courts may also be considered to be not quite consistent with federalism.

(To be continued.)

Our European Letter.

THE LEAGUE ASSEMBLY.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

GENEVA, September 25.

THE COMMITTEES AT WORK.

THE Assembly settled down to work after the preliminary discussion of the Report on the working of the League for the year was finished. It became evident early that the champions of the Minorities were working for the establishment of new machinery for dealing with this question, preferably a permanent Committee of the Assembly. Germany, which has taken upon itself the role of the mouthpiece of the discontents, figured again in that capacity this year. So great was the excitement that not only did M. Briand put in his appearance at the meeting of the Committee when the subject was discussed—a rather unusual step on his part—but he also spoke twice. The long debate brought into relief the divergent veiws; on the one hand, that minorities are assimilable and should be absorbed gradually but certainly by the majority, and on the other that, according to the treaty of Versailles, the League recognises the fact of their separate entity and exists to protect them. There was no doubt as to which thesis the French representative favoured. The German Delegate contented himself however with the public attention that the discussion had attracted and did not insist on his arguments for changing the existing procedure which had been decided upon at the Madrid session of the Council. It must be noted that this incident has been widely commented upon in the Press, and coming immediately after the rather startling German election news, the inference has been drawn that Germany loses no opportunity of emphasising the discontent due to the order established at Versailles.

The other important subject, still under discussion, like the proposals for bringing the Covenant in line with the Kellogg pact and giving financial aid to States in case of aggression, is the re-organisation of the Secretariat of the League. It will be recollected that Mr. Henderson took the initiative in last year's Assembly in this regard, and a Committee, which has since become known as the Committee of Thirteen, was set up to examine the question. Our own High Commissioner was a member of this Committee. The Thirteen have treated the question of the constitution of the staff of the Secretariat, of the period of the contract, of a pensions scheme and of the higher appointments. Unfortunately they could not come to a unanimous agreement, specially with regard to the last of these points

There are two rival theses: that of the majority according to which the direction of the Secretariat should rest with the Secretary-General assisted by an increased number of Under-Secretaries, and that of the minority, including the representatives of Germany and Italy, which would entrust policy-making to a consultative Committee of the five Under-Secretaries assisted by the five Directors of Sections.

Obviously, the moot point is how to ensure international impartiality and it has arisen largely because of the political considerations such as prestige, rivalry between small and great powers, which have influenced the League, almost inevitably, in proportion to the lead it assumed in international affairs. It must be recognised at the outset that this is a most difficult and delicate problem with regard to which a theoretically perfect solution is as easy as it would be useless. The only safe guide

in this regard is experience and no change should be undertaken in the existing system unless circumstances necessitate it. Judged from that point of view, much has to be said for the thesis of the majority. It introduces certain reforms in the League organisation which the circumstances of the outer world, with which it has to deal, entail. For the League to ignore political considerations in a world which seethes with such rivalries or to set up a novel procedure for insuring international impartiality when admittedly the conduct of the existing administration has been beyond serious reproach, are equally hazardous courses. No one who has taken the trouble to follow the evolution of what has been called the Geneva spirit can doubt that there is such a thing as a genuinely international tradition which is being formed in the international organisations situated here; it is a tradition which grows with time and circumstances and cannot be mechanically manipulated. Mr. Bajpai took part in the discussion in the Committee on this subject and on the whole ably defended the position of the majority. He was convinced of the need for permanence of appointment and pensions for the staff of the Secretariat, and he pointed out, very rightly, that the consultations with the Under-Secretaries in matters of policy should depend more upon precedents and administrative exigencies rather than be made into a formal rigid procedure.

The contribution which the Maharaja of Bikaner had said that the Indian delegation would make at the proper time with regard to agricultural and industrial matters has taken the form of a resolution brought forward by Sir Jehangir Coyajee for an enquiry on the part of the League of Nations into the nature of the existing world-wide economic depression. 'It is a matter of gratification that another attempt should have thus been made to resuscitate the proposals put forward by the World Economic Conference by one of our delegation.

The election of Ireland to the Council was a bit of a surprise. It is significant of what a permanent National delegation at Geneva can do and it is also interesting to note that immediately after the election a message from Dublin contained anticipations of increasing interest in League affairs among the Irish people on that account.

Review.

TRIUMPH OF COOPERATION.

A CENTURY OF LONDON CO-OPERATION. By W. HENRY BROWN. (The Education Committee of the London Co-operative Society London.) 1928. 20 cm. 179p. 3/—

TO-DAY Co-operation as a type of business organisation has spread in different forms practically over the whole world. Its progress in the different countries has made it possible to hope for extensive application of this principle into the international sphere also. To such as doubt its success this interesting little book provides an answer. The author describes vividly the story of the vicissitudes of co-operation in London over a period of a century. We read of "the reaching out of the pioneer minds beyond the possible response of their day and generation; the disillusionment and apparent failure because of the absence of material results at particular times; and eventually the emergence of the stimulating fact of the indestructibility of the idea." And today we have the London Co-operative Society —practical realisation of the ideal.

At present the L. C. S. sends out daily 700 vehicles carrying food and fuel to the members. Its 300 shops are located in different parts of the Capital of the Empire; and every week a million and a quarter purchases are recorded! The annual turnover exceeds £6,250,000 and the membership is more than a million—women predominating "for they are the main spring of the growing trade."

After the War, as a result of the amalgamations of similar concerns the business has greatly increased. But a more remarkable change has been the levelling of social differences to a very large extent. Before the War the members were drawn from manual workers mainly. The salaried class, the residents of the suburban villas and semi-detached houses stood outside. But the War shattered many of these old notions. All sections of the people discovered that they were exploited by those who saw in the distribution of commodities a source of profit. In the common suffering they found the mutual soul of cooperation. Women of every social grade meet now on terms of equality in their own store and the guild rooms where they discuss common economic problems. "There are today few comprehensive organisations with a membership so representative of every human occupation as is that of the L. C. S."

Apart from establishing the unlimited possibilities of the Co-operative Society, the success of the L. C. S. has emphasised the co-operative consciousness of its members. It is this that brings in the human element into operation resulting in greater understanding and appreciation among the community.

The best is yet to be. For the Co-operative Store in London "appears to be a democratic oasis in the desert of Capitalism." But the story of the past is full of encouragement. May we not then hope for a future where cooperative business would as far as practicable eliminate capitalistic business?

The Education Committee of the L. C. S. are to be very warmly congratulated on the publication of this book.

S. GOPALASWAMY.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

THE BALANCE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS. Vol. I.—Western and Northern Europe. By ROBERT R. KUCZYNSKI. (The Brookings Institution, Washington.) 1928. 20cm. 140p. $. 2·00.

FACING THE ISSUE SQUARELY. A Plea for Supremacy of Law over Violence. By ROBERT C. HALL. (Putnams.) 1930. 20cm. 190p. $1.75.

TO-MORROW'S AMERICANS. A Practical Study in Student Self-Government. By A. O. BOWDEN AND IDA CLYDE CLARKE. (Putnams.) 1930. 20cm. 200p. $2.00.

AMERICA CONQUERS BRITAIN. A Record of Economic War. By LUDWELL DENNY. (Knopf, London.) 1930. 25cm. 420p. 12/6.

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