

# The Servant of India

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## Topics of the Week.

### Liberals on Capitation Payments.

IN our comments last week on the Government decisions on the findings of the capitation tribunal we had ventured to express the fear that Indian opinion would be far from regarding the decisions with satisfaction or even as a lasting solution of a complicated and controversial problem. The resolution passed by the Liberal Federation—the first conference to be held since the publication of the decisions—on the subject fully confirms that fear. It will be seen from this that the Indian Liberal Party is unable to reconcile itself to the payment of any capitation charges. And its grounds for its opposition to them are easily intelligible. The presence of British troops in this country is, in the opinion of the party, unnecessary if the sole requirements of India's own defence are taken into consideration. If Britain insists upon their employment by India, it is due to considerations of Imperial defence. As such equity requires that India should not be asked to bear a burden which is legitimately not her own.

Equally unsatisfactory to the Party is the proffered financial aid of one and a half million pounds to be paid every year towards India's military expenditure. The considerations on which its protest is founded may not however be equally easily discernible. To some its action in this behalf might even appear quixotic. At a time when India is groaning under the crushing burden of military expenditure, it may be thought she should really have welcomed any financial relief, be it ever so little, from any quarter whatever. Instead the Liberal Party speaking in the name of the country goes to the other extreme and condemns the action of those who wish to run to her rescue. Such a line of thought will however emanate only from those whose vision is restricted by the immediate necessities of the situation. The Liberal Party on the other hand is happily not so

short-sighted. It sees in such a subsidy a device to delay the nationalisation of Indian defence almost indefinitely and therefore resists it. Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao, who moved the resolution at the Conference, said as much. Once India accepted any such system of subsidies or subventions, he felt sure that the control of the British authorities on the Indian army would never be relaxed. He stated but the naked truth when he made it clear that the only relief for which India really cared was that which may be occasioned by the reduction of the British troops. Despite any official asseverations in a contrary sense, it could be shown, as was done by Mr. Ramachandra Rao, that the number of British troops instead of decreasing had actually increased. In 1858 the numbers of British and Indian troops were respectively 28,000 and 1,60,000 while to-day they stood at 58,000 and 1,58,000. These figures are more telling than any wordy assurances from authoritative quarters that the number was going down. Opposition to the continuance of British troops was, as Pandit Kunzru who supported the resolution aptly explained, based on two grounds; (1) finance and (2) national self-respect. If England was determined to wound our national self-respect by continuing the British army in India in defiance of our protests, the least that is expected of her is not to charge India with any part of the cost of its maintenance.

### Dr. Ansari and the I. M. S.

THE Indian Medical Service came in for strong criticism at the hands of Dr. Ansari, president of the tenth session of the All-India Medical Conference. The Service originally organised for military purposes has a civil side whose continuance, despite strong and united protests from the non-official medical profession, is officially justified on the ground of its being a military reserve. Dr. Ansari had little difficulty in showing that the argument was not worth much. He pointed out that actual experience had shown that this so-called military reserve is unable to satisfy even a fraction of the medical requirements created as a result of war conditions with the result that the services of the civil medical practitioner have to be invariably requisitioned in war-time. True he needs some training for the duties he is called upon to perform; but according to Dr. Ansari, this has to be of the "briefest" and "simplest" kind. When the private medical practitioner is thus trained, his efficiency as a part of the military machine compares favourably, in Dr. Ansari's opinion, with that of any member of the civil side of the Indian Medical Service. That was the lesson of the great war, which also coincided with Dr. Ansari's own experience of the Balkan war. To him as also to Indian opinion in general the continuance of the military reserve was thus quite superfluous.

What amounted to its virtual permanence was sought to be ensured by its so-called necessity for

the medical relief of the British members of the service. In this connection, it is pointed out that British officials and their families are unable to trust Indian doctors to the same extent that they would those of their own race. The argument is frankly based on racial prejudice and really merits very little attention. If the 500 and odd Indian doctors that are at present practising in England find no difficulty with the people of England, it seemed strange to Dr. Ansari that Englishmen in India should regard the Indian doctors too unworthy of their confidence to be medically attended to by them. If however they cannot feel themselves safe except in the hands of medical attendants of the same colour as their own, why should poor India be saddled with the cost of the satisfaction of their colour prejudice? If they must be treated by none but white doctors, it is only fair to expect them to find the necessary funds.

#### Indian Women in Conference.

IN her presidential address to the All-India Women's Conference held at Calcutta last week Lady Abdul Qadir dwelt at some length on the unsuitability of the present system of education to the needs of women. The system has indeed been found to be inadequate for the present-day requirements even of boys; but it is much more so in the case of girls, most of whom, under our present social conditions, are expected to lead married life. The education that is to be imparted to Indian girls should, Lady Qadir urged, be such as will fit them for their duties as wives and mothers, besides giving them some general knowledge which would widen their vision. While there cannot be any serious dispute as regards her contention, it is on the cards that the problem of educational reform must await handling at the hands of the more representative and responsible governments which are expected to be installed in the provinces as a result of the present constitutional revision. But that is not to say that its discussion should also stand over till then. Such a course is to be strongly deprecated, for its public discussion from the platform of such conferences tends to a clarification of ideas and formation of well-informed opinion. But the Conference, it seems to us, would be giving tangible help in the right solution of the problem if it could succeed in evolving a practical scheme which would seem to it to satisfy the peculiar needs of girls intending to settle down in domestic life. If the time between now and the inauguration of provincial autonomy is spent in the formulation of such a well-considered scheme, the interregnum could not have been put to better use.

Among the resolutions passed by the Conference was one asking that every child should be guaranteed free primary education as a matter of right and that compulsory physical training by qualified instructors be provided for all children from the primary stage onwards. The present administration of the Sarda Act has failed to satisfy the women reformers assembled in the Conference which urged Government not only to enforce the provisions of the law more stringently but pressed for its amendment with a view to making child marriages impossible. The resolution dealing with the necessity and desirability of birth control as a partial solution of the economic difficulties of people of limited means seems to have evoked keen controversy but was ultimately carried by an overwhelming majority.

#### Social Conference in Madras.

POLITICAL and social reform go so closely together that there is much to be said for the practice of holding social reform conferences as adjuncts of

important political gatherings. It will be remembered that in pursuance of this practice the Indian National Social Conference, which was brought into being in Madras in 1887, used to meet every year along with the Indian National Congress in the same place in which the latter was held; but the practice has somehow fallen into disuse in recent years. The custom undoubtedly carries with it the serious disadvantage of the Social Conference being cast into the shade and failing to receive the public attention which its importance merits. This consideration may have been, at least partly, responsible for the discontinuance of the Social Conference accompanying the Congress wherever it went. The emergence of communal organisations and of those devoted to the popularisation of different planks in the platform of the Social Conference has also to some extent served to distract attention from the Social Conference and to lessen its popularity. This is far from implying that the work which the Conference had set before itself is fully accomplished and that it may safely rest on its oars. It would be a mistake to take such a complacent view of the situation. The time has indeed come when the problem of social reform must be considered from a wider viewpoint than has been in vogue so far. In the words of Mr. C. V. Krishnaswamy Ayyar, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Social Conference held at Madras on Dec. 29, "it must be equated now with everything that makes for the social well-being of every citizen, in the manner in which that term is understood in other countries." This reorientation of its policy provides such a wide field for the activities of social reformers that the more such conferences are organised, the better for national progress.

If only the social conferences held in connection with the sessions of the Liberal Federation are taken into account, the one held at Madras last week is the third one in the series and the second to be presided over by Mr. Devadhar. The first Conference was held at Poona in 1923, followed next year by the one at Lucknow which had Mr. Devadhar himself as president. Since then, unless we are greatly mistaken, there has been no session of the Conference, much to the detriment of the cause of social reform. Mr. Devadhar's presidential address, extracts from which appear elsewhere in this issue, will be found to be concerning itself with social reform in its wider aspect to which reference was made by the Chairman.

#### Kapurthala Reforms.

THE Maharaja of Kapurthala, who is shortly withdrawing from the Chamber of Princes, seems to have introduced what would in the circumstances be generally thought to be liberal reforms in the constitution of his State. The proposed Legislative Assembly will have a total membership of 45, two-thirds of which would be elective. What is more, the electorate would be joint and based on adult franchise. The nominated element, it is stated, will include two non-officials representing special interests and two women. Does this indicate the existence of a sex bar in respect to the election of women? If so, the Maharaja, in view of the progressive spirit of the times, would do well to consider its removal. The Assembly, will have full freedom to make laws touching the civil and criminal field subject to the assent of the Maharaja. Out of the total budget of Rs. 35,00,000, more than half, or Rs. 20,00,000 to be exact, will be votable, whereas the rest representing the ruler's privy purse, his personal estate, etc., will be outside the purview of the Assem-

bly. The Assembly will have the right to refuse or sanction a grant subject to its restoration by the Maharaja. There will be two ministers not selected by the ruler but elected by the Assembly who will be in charge of the nation-building services and their salaries will be votable by the Assembly. A vote of want of confidence in them duly passed by it will automatically lead to their dismissal. All this is of course in the right direction. But why saddle such a representative body as is proposed to be set up with a nominated

official like the Chief Minister as President? This provision takes away from the otherwise progressive character of the reforms. For this reason we would urge the Maharaja to invest the Assembly with the right of electing its own President. If this should be found impossible right at the start, it should be brought about as soon as the next Assembly comes into being. The elections to the Assembly are to be held next month and the Assembly is expected to start functioning from March.

## INDIAN LIBERAL POLICY.

THE Liberal Federation's principal business this year was to pass on the White Paper; and the statement of its views contained in the resolution on the subject shows how carefully the Liberal leaders have considered the whole matter. The policy that the resolution unfolds will be, we are afraid, under cross fire in two opposite directions. First, Congressmen will cry it down as very remote from reality. Liberals are extraordinarily clever, they will say, in analysing and exposing the weak points in the published documents of Government; they are also very good at making detailed constructive suggestions for improvement. These faculties they have exhibited in a remarkable degree in formulating the resolution which the Liberal Federation adopted. The resolution itself leaves very little to be desired. It embodies demands to which the most extreme politicians can subscribe with little scruple. But how are Liberals going to follow it out? What will they be doing to implement it? What, in other words, are the sanctions which they will apply if the improvements which they recommend are not given effect to, as they themselves know and say will not be given effect to? And what are these resolutions worth if they have no force at the back of them? This will be the criticism that will be offered in one quarter. The Liberal Party has no convincing reply to make to it. But this is not the fault of the Liberal Party, but the misfortune of every single party in the country. For the Liberal Party may address the same question to other parties including the Congress, and none of them will be able to return a satisfactory answer. The fact is that we are all in the depths of political depression and it will serve no useful purpose for one party to be twitting another with inactivity and impotence. The wiser course will be for all of us to put our special gifts in the common pool and thus help, each in its way, to fill the deficiencies of the other and make the country at least a little stronger than it would be with our isolated efforts in different and even opposite ways. If the Liberal Party has a gift for constructive criticism, let it not be jeered at for serving the country by placing that gift at the feet of the motherland. The Congress will better employ its talents by bringing to her service its own especial gift for driving power and mass energy. Even if the present emergency will not teach us to sink our petty differences and unite our forces in an organised National Army, nothing will.

We do not therefore attach any value to the cheap jibes of those who, doing nothing themselves, take a special delight in decrying everything that others do. But the criticism that will come from the quarter of those who have taken a prominent part in the constitutional discussions is of a different order and must be given due weight. Our readers will perhaps be surprised to hear that the Liberal Party's resolution will be open to attack in this quarter, but it is. The policy generally favoured by the Round Tablers is embodied in the memoranda of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and the British Indian delegation. The Liberal Party's resolution, it will be seen on a careful comparison, goes much beyond the demand contained in these memoranda. To say that one is in excess of another is not necessarily to say that one is opposed to another. For instance, the Liberal resolution lays down that "no scheme of reforms can meet India's requirements or satisfy national aspirations or allay political discontent which does not confer the full power and status of a Dominion on India within a short period fixed by statute." This is a very radical demand which neither Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru nor the British Indian delegation deemed it expedient to make. Perhaps they thought it rather extravagant to prefer such a demand. What the Liberal Party wants is not merely constitutional arrangements which, by their own momentum and in the natural course of development, will tend to bring about Swaraj at any early date, but an express provision in the constitution prescribing the establishment of Swaraj at a specified date, which must be sufficiently in the near future. Perhaps it may be said that the difference observable in this respect between the Memoranda and the Resolution is a kind of difference which is always to be found between what one says in the more responsible role of a negotiator and in the somewhat less responsible role of an agitator. We do not however agree in this view. The difference is real and has to be reckoned with. Still it is a difference which will not be felt to be particularly embarrassing by the authors of the Memoranda. For the Resolution goes farther in the same direction as the Memoranda; and in these matters it is the direction that counts more than the distance that is to be covered. Similarly it will be observed that in its clauses regarding the Railway Board and the Army or in its clauses laying down that the Central Government should be responsible solely

to the lower chamber, or that the second chamber should have no right to consider demands for grants or money bills, the Resolution goes very much beyond the Memoranda. Here again the difference is not to be explained away by the difference in tone adopted by a platform speaker laying down a general policy and a practical statesman engaged in bringing about an actual understanding. But here again the authors of the Memoranda will not have much to quarrel with, for the spirit underlying the Resolution and the Memoranda is identical. The difference between the two is not qualitative, but only quantitative — not a very serious matter.

After this we come to differences which represent two opposing outlooks on the political situation, and here the differences concern not only the quantum of reform desired, but its nature. We refer to the clauses in the Liberal Resolution touching the States. It must have been noted by everyone that the Memoranda of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and the British Indian delegation have alterations to suggest in the White Paper only in so far as it affects the British Government; they have none to suggest in so far as it affects the States. The Round Tablers say in effect: We accept the Princes' conditions, but we don't accept the British Government's. The Liberal Party repudiates this position. It sees grave danger in the attitude of the Princes as well as of the British Government. If we get the latter to relax or even eliminate all the safeguards mentioned in the White Paper, even then the terms on which the Princes are willing to come into the federation will destroy both self-government and popular government. This is the plain meaning of the resolution the Liberal Federation has adopted. See how heavy are the demands it makes on the Princes. It asks that—

- (i) all the representatives of the States in the Assembly be elected members, indirect election being permitted in their case as a transitory measure for a fixed period;
- (ii) that fundamental rights of citizenship be guaranteed to the subjects of Indian States in the federal constitution;
- (iii) that the Crown's rights of paramountcy over the States be exercised by the Government of India, as at present, and not by the Viceroy, as proposed in the White Paper;
- (iv) that, under suitable safeguards, the federal legislature itself be given the power to amend the constitution, the consent of individual States not being required for such amendment to take effect in any constituent unit of federation.

Now these demands Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and most of the other leaders who have helped in shaping the constitutional reforms scheme will *not* make, and if others make them they will oppose them tooth and nail. Not because they think the demands unreasonable in themselves; but because they are convinced that the Princes will not accept them. If the Princes do not accept them the federation idea itself must be abandoned; and if it is abandoned British India will

have no central responsibility. It follows therefore from this chain of reasoning that British India must make no demands which the Princes will not agree to. Therefore the British Indian delegation as a body carefully avoided raising any questions which may be felt by the Princes to be inconvenient, however essential they may be to the formation of a right kind of federation or to the securing of real swaraj; but the Liberal Federation, it is clear from its resolution, does not believe in this one-sided exhibition of patriotism, which consists in shutting your mouths as tight as clams where the Princes are concerned and in making a hell of a row where the British Government is concerned. It will give a straight fight to either where a fight is needed.

Now these differences are fundamental and cannot be reconciled in any way. We can well imagine what Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and those who think with him will be saying to themselves on reading the Liberal Party's resolution. They will say: Liberal politicians do not understand the role which we have had to play in these discussions. It is easy enough to take up an extreme position and bring about a deadlock. But it is difficult to play the part which is assigned to us, the part of compromisers and conciliators. More than patriotism, which is a matter merely of emotion, statesmanship is required for the conduct of delicate negotiations, and for this what you need more than anything else is to know what to put forward and what to keep back. Such skill one would have expected to find in abundant measure in Liberal leaders, but the resolution that they have adopted on this occasion shows that they are lacking in it. They have been making such demands for the last three years. That may have been pardonable then, because at that time perhaps they were in hopes that the Princes might yield. But it is now clear as noon-day sun that they will not entertain any such proposals; and is it the part of wisdom at a time when bargain is to be struck for Liberal politicians to be stubbornly holding to the terms which they put forward when the negotiations were first opened? By taking up this intransigent attitude they are making federation impossible, and with federation swaraj for British India too!

The Liberal Party does not believe that British Indian Swaraj is at all dependent upon federation, and it has incorporated a clause in its resolution to make it clear. It runs thus:—

If for any reason the inauguration of an all-India federation should not materialise or be unduly delayed, there should be a responsible central government for British India concurrently with provincial autonomy, without prejudice to the effectuation of an all-India federation at the earliest possible date thereafter.

This means that the Liberal Party will go on making whatever demands it considers to be fair upon the Princes, without regard to what the effect of their not joining the federation may be upon British India. It will be prepared to make reasonable compromises both with the British Government and with the Princes, but it does

not believe that the essence of statesmanship consists in being truculent to one and all too yielding to the other. Even if the federal scheme does not go through the Liberal Party will not be unduly dejected. Rather it will be relieved to a certain extent, for it is its considered opinion that the scheme, if passed in its present form, "will, far

from appeasing unrest and allaying discontent, further aggravate the present unhappy conditions, alienate Indian opinion and greatly intensify the present acute and widespread discontent." In other words, the White Paper constitution will leave India worse off than at present.

S. G. VAZE.

## FEDERATION : VOLUNTARY OR FORCED ?

**H**OT upon the heels of the remarkable presidential address of Diwan Bahadur A. B. Latthe comes another address delivered from the presidential chair of the Rajputana States' People's Convention at Beawar last week-end by Mr. Amritlal D. Sheth, who is one of the foremost workers in the cause of the States' people. The two speeches differ widely in tone and form: Mr. Latthe's appeals more to the philosophical thinker and student of politics, while Mr. Sheth's appeals more to the man-in-the-street. But the same sentiment runs through both. That a hard-headed practical administrator and a visionary, fire-eating agitator should be of like mind is an eloquent testimony to the unanimity of opinion prevailing in circles intent upon bringing about a reform in States' administrations.

If any British Indians who have helped in the formation of the federal scheme are still under the delusion that the scheme is acceptable to the people in the States, these speeches should be enough to disabuse them of such a notion. I referred to Mr. Latthe's considered opinion last week. Mr. Sheth too in his speech endorses it in impressive language. He says: "So far as its (the federation's) present form as seen in the White Paper proposals is concerned,—and we do not think there is a chance of any substantial alterations,—let us the people of the States make our position clear by stating it in simple and unambiguous terms that **WE ARE OPPOSED TO IT. WE DO NOT WANT IT. WE WISH THAT THE WHOLE SCHEME WOULD FALL THROUGH. WE SHOULD MAKE ALL EFFORTS THAT ARE HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO DEFEAT THE IMPERIALIST OBJECT OF FORCING THIS FEDERATION ON US.**" And he gives vigorous support to Mr. Nariman's suggestion about sabotaging the White Paper constitution.

I would beg British Indian leaders who, by accepting the Princes' unconscionable terms, have made themselves parties to what Mr. Sheth calls a "nefarious imperialist plot" to take this as the final and definitive conclusion of the people in the States at large. The conclusion itself may be right or wrong. The leaders in British India no doubt think that the States' people are very ill-advised in disowning the Round Table Conferences and rejecting the offer of federation. Their own counsel would be that the people in the States should, in the larger interests of the country, refrain from raising objection to federation in itself or from making demands which for the moment are impossible and which would only result in opposing an insuperable obstacle to the formation of federation, such as election of the

States' representatives or the securing of their fundamental rights against attacks by the States' administrations. They should on the contrary welcome federation, for although at the beginning possibly it would not improve their position very much, still it would enable British India to obtain freedom from political thralldom, which would go a long way in the near future towards breaking their own fetters. This reasoning may be very sound and the advice tendered very sagacious, but the fact remains that neither is in the least acceptable to the States' people. That must now be taken as a settled fact.

And my question to the British Indian leaders is simply this: Taking it as a fact beyond question, what is their attitude going to be to federation? I will grant for argument's sake that the States' subjects had no right to be admitted to the Round Table Conferences and to be taken into consultation at any stage; that the British Indian leaders acted perfectly correctly in not raising this question at the Conferences or outside and in carrying on negotiations with the Princes on the footing that the Princes could speak both for themselves and their subjects. But now that their feelings are known, will our leaders take them into account or not? Will they still say: "The Princes are technically the spokesmen of the States. That is enough for us. We are not bound to consider the moral aspect of the question, particularly because we believe that federation will be ultimately to the advantage of the States' people. We will not be so squeamish as to abandon this cherished project merely because they are opposed to it. We shall have no scruples in forcing it upon them, if it came to that, for we know that eventually they will bless us instead of cursing us for what at the moment looks like an act of coercion. The States' people are admittedly backward in politics. They lack the experience which we have had. Would it be right then for us to be guided by them? We should on the contrary be false to the light within us if we, possessing superior knowledge, allowed ignorance to have the last word. Self-determination has no application in a case like this. In the early stages of man's development the use of force has a recognised place. The States' people are politically the child races of India, and we must mete out to them the treatment which is not only justified but required by their immaturity. If the British Government and the Indian Princes will impose a federation upon them, we cannot therefore protest against it, but rather help them do it, believing that it is all for the good—for our immediate good and their ultimate good."



This question stands out in all its nakedness from Mr. Amritlal Sheth's speech, and it is of the utmost importance that British Indian leaders should ponder deeply as to what their answer shall be. I cannot believe that all those who are in favour of federation, even if it be a federation from the advantages of which the States' people are to be wholly excluded, will be willing expressly or tacitly to be parties to jockeying the States into federation. They will feel that, whatever the legal theory may be regarding the sole right of the Princes to represent the States in all diplomatic negotiations, their partnership will really be with the people in the States, and that if these are unwilling to come into partnership on the terms which are now discussed, they must regretfully suspend federation. It will make no difference to their attitude that, in their opinion, the States' people are mistakenly opposing federation. They will therefore decide, I have no doubt, to put the federal plan on one side for the present at any rate. It has rarely been the case in the history of federations so far that as soon as federation was proposed it was accepted. There have always been prolonged negotiations about it, and in many cases it was after repeated adjournments that it came about at last. Very often prejudice and suspicion, even unreasoning prejudice and unfounded suspicion, have had to be allowed to kill federation for the time being, and patience had to be left to reap a tardy though a rich reward in the end. It may be that in India too, if federation is really to the benefit of all concerned, the people of the States will come to see the matter in the proper light, but some time must be allowed for their passions to cool off. Would it be too much to hope that the people of British India, instead of hustling their brethren in the States into a federation or of allowing them to be so hustled, will deal patiently with them and just put off federation for a time? It is true that India's political *malaise* must be put right as soon as possible, but is it not after all wise, in a matter like federation, in which no subsequent recalling of steps already taken is possible, to hasten slowly? Any delay that this may involve will be a very small price to pay for the real spirit of comradeship that it will create.

As I have said, I am clear that there will be many even among the ardent advocates of federation who will take this line, but it is necessary if their considerateness for the feelings of the States' people is to be of any real service that they should make their voice heard, and heard in time. The conspiracy between the British Government and the Indian Princes, assisted by federation-at-any-cost British Indians is thickening and with every day that passes it will become increasingly difficult to counter it. Let them therefore come out with a declaration in the plainest terms that though they favour federation, and favour it on the Princes' own terms, still their own assent will be contingent upon the States' people accepting it; that they will in no circumstances agree to enter a federation supported by the Princes but opposed by their subjects; that it must wait, be the period of waiting short or

long, till the States' people are persuaded to agree to it. It may be that in this period of waiting the Princes too may become willing to moderate their terms somewhat, and this is not a result which will necessarily be unwelcome to the hot-gospellers of federation. These may consider their present terms eminently reasonable, but there is still some room for them becoming even more reasonable. A firm stand must therefore be made at once for a VOLUNTARY as opposed to a FORCED federation.

Mr. Sheth has some very shrewd things to say about paramountcy, Princes' Protection Bill, and the Bikaner case, but it is superfluous to comment upon them. The Princes' Protection Bill will not suppress sedition and disaffection against the Princes, but will only promote underground sedition, according to him, which is very true. And what he says next is most interesting. Indians are by nature averse to violence, and they are extraordinarily tender to the Princes, even to the worst of them, however wild they may be against the British Government. Even so terrorists will arise in India and will try to lay their hands upon the Princes if the latter do not change the character of their rule and if the British Government gags their critics. Even the great school of non-violence will be unable to check the growth of the party of criminal violence. "If such legislation comes into force and if the conditions now prevailing in the territories of the Princes continue, let there be no surprise if terrorism invades the land. People like us who are reputed to be stormy petrels today will only exist as spent forces then. So far as our Gandhi cult of ahimsa is concerned, so far as our influence of that type on the general public is concerned, I am afraid we will be but broken reeds on which no one need rely." There is a ring of sincerity in this utterance, which should serve as a grave warning to our rulers, both Indian and British.

The charges brought against seven residents of Bikaner, who are rotting in gaol without trial for nearly two years, are the result, Mr. Sheth believes, of the Bikaner Durbar's suspicion that the accused supplied materials for the pamphlet on Bikaner State which was prepared by him in London for distribution among members of the Round Table Conference but whose publication was suppressed by Mahatma Gandhi. On this Mr. Sheth says: "Let me declare it publicly that it is I who have prepared and edited the pamphlet. It was I who was collecting all the material. And I declare it with the fullest sense of responsibility that I have never met, nor corresponded with, nor ever heard the names of any of these undertrials during my work on the pamphlet." Mr. Sheth strongly condemns the tendency in some quarters to discriminate between Hindu and Moslem States and to throw the weight of their influence on the side of Kashmir and Alwar because Mahomedans are agitating for reform in these States. And he appeals to States' workers to abandon their communal prejudices as the Princes themselves have done. Indian rulers have risen superior to their communal bias in grinding down Hindus and Mahomedans without discrimination. We must similarly rise above our

communal bias and help every one out of his shackles, whatever his religion. "Did Alwar spare his Hindu population when he wanted money for himself? Does Rampur spare his Moslem subjects when he has his own purpose to serve? Does Patiala spare his Sikhs when they come in his way? Rest assured, gentlemen," said Mr. Sheth, "these Princes are a community by themselves; they are neither Hindus, nor Moslems, nor Sikhs. So far we too are neither Hindus, nor Moslems, nor Sikhs when we are

thinking and acting in our interest. On one side are the tyrants, on the other are victims. On one side are the exploiters, on the other the exploited. On one side the powerful, on the other the underdogs." Following the excellent example set by this Princely caste, we too, as Mr. Sheth very truly says, must bring solidarity into our ranks by forming one comprehensive caste of emancipators.

A. V. PATVARDHAN.

## NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION OF INDIA.

### TEXT OF RESOLUTIONS.

*Following is the text of the resolutions passed by the National Liberal Federation of India at its fifteenth session held at Madras during Christmas:—*

**T**HE National Liberal Federation of India, reiterating its sense of profound disappointment at the White Paper proposals on Indian Constitutional Reform, records its emphatic opinion that the elucidation of the White Paper by the Secretary of State before the Joint Select Committee and the supplemental proposals made in the course of his evidence before that Committee have strengthened among the people of India the conviction that the proposals are not calculated to establish any real responsible government in India either in the Provinces or in the Centre and that the Secretary of State's declaration in the House of Commons that Dominion Status is neither the next stage nor the next but one violates the spirit of solemn pledges given with the sanction of the British Cabinet and has shaken their faith in the intentions of the British Parliament and people.

The Federation desires to make it clear once again that no scheme of reforms can meet India's requirements or satisfy Indian national aspirations or allay political discontent which does not confer the full power and status of a dominion on India within a short period fixed by statute.

#### CONTROL FROM ENGLAND.

(a) The Federation takes strong exception to the continued maintenance of the India Office, of the India Council under a different name and of the separate office of Secretary of State for India, and to the continued control of the Governments in India by His Majesty's Government in England as proposed in the White Paper. (b) In the opinion of the Federation such control should be strictly limited to subjects not transferred to the control of Indian legislatures during the period of transition and should be exercised by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. (c) In no event can the Federation reconcile itself to the continuance of the India Council in whatever form and for whatever purpose.

#### AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION.

The Constitution Act should vest in the federal legislature of India the right to amend its provisions subject to reasonable and necessary safeguards.

#### ALL-INDIA FEDERATION.

(a) The Federation is strongly in favour of All-India Federation on terms equitable to both British India and the Indian States and on lines consistent with responsible government, but notes with regret that proposals made in the White Paper and elabo-

rated recently by the Secretary of State as conditions precedent to the inauguration of the Federation not only make for undue delay but are neither necessary nor justified. (b) In the opinion of the Federation it is unnecessary and inexpedient to create a separate statutory authority called the 'Viceroy', and in any case the rights of paramountcy of the Crown, whatever they may be, should be exercised by the Government of India and not by the Viceroy, as proposed in the White Paper. (c) The Federation is emphatically of opinion that none of its constituent units should have the right of subsequent secession.

#### FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

The Federation is strongly of opinion that a declaration of fundamental rights of citizenship applicable to all component members of the All-India Federation, should be a part of the Constitution Act. **RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT FOR BRITISH INDIA.**

If for any reason the inauguration of an All-India Federation should not materialise or be unduly delayed, there should be a responsible central Government for British India concurrently with Provincial Autonomy, without prejudice to the effectuation of all-India Federation at the earliest possible date thereafter.

#### DEFENCE.

(a) While the Federation is prepared to accept the reservation for only a fixed transitional period of the subject of defence in the hands of the Governor-General, it cannot approve of the proposals in this behalf embodied in the White Paper as they contemplate the retention of complete control in the hands of the Secretary of State. It views with the gravest misgiving and apprehension the non-acceptance of a clear policy regarding the complete transfer of the Army to Indian control at the end of a limited period. (b) The Indian National Liberal Federation strongly urges that recruitment to the Indian Army, instead of being confined as at present to the so-called martial classes, should be thrown open to all communities and provinces. (c) The Federation urges that His Majesty's Government should immediately frame schemes for the Indianisation of the commissioned ranks of the Army within a period of twenty years. It is further of opinion that the replacement of the Viceroy's commissioned officers by Indian King's commissioned officers should be postponed till the present British officers in the Indian army have been replaced by Indian King's commissioned officers. (d) The amount of expenditure on defence should be fixed every five years by a committee consisting of an equal number of experts appointed by the Governor-General and of members elected by the legislature; and it should be at the disposal of the Governor-General without a vote of the legislature, which however shall have the right of discussion.

Any excess over that amount will have to be voted by the Legislative Assembly; but in the event of hostilities on the frontier the Governor-General should be empowered to declare a state of emergency and of appropriating supply to meet it without prior reference to the legislature. But he should report his action to it and it should have the right of discussing it. (e) During the period of transition the Defence Councillor should be a non-official Indian, preferably an elected member of the Federal Legislature, or one of the representatives of the Indian States in the federal legislature.

#### FINANCIAL SAFEGUARDS.

(a) The Federation, concurring with the Secretary of State that there can be no real transfer of responsibility without the transfer of financial responsibility to Ministers, regrets that this sound canon has been utterly disregarded in the White Paper proposals, which, while imposing upon them the duty of raising revenue, reserve excessive power in the hands of the Governor-General and virtually reduce the Minister to a position of impotence in the disposal of the bulk of it. (b) The Federation records its deliberate conviction that the proposed financial safeguards are both unnecessary and objectionable and that the Government and the Legislature should have the same power in the sphere of finance outside the region of reserved subjects as Dominion Governments and Legislatures.

#### COMMERCIAL DISCRIMINATION.

(a) The Federation, while not at all in favour of any needless and vexatious restriction on the freedom of British nationals doing or seeking to do business in or with India, cannot support the proposals against "commercial discrimination" as they will deprive the future government and legislature, in large part, of the power that must reside in every such authority to take from time to time such steps, legislative and administrative, as may, in their judgment, be required in the interests of Indian trade, and industrial development. (b) In this point of view, the Federation must object to the powers proposed to be given to the Governor-General to override the will of the legislature or the Government in the discharge of his responsibilities in the sphere of "external relations."

#### STATUTORY RAILWAY AUTHORITY.

The Federation objects to the creation of a statutory railway authority to replace the present Railway Board as it is calculated to deprive the future government and legislature of powers which they should possess in the interests of the tax-payer. In any event it should be left to them to decide the question if any provision in that behalf should not be included in the Constitution Act.

#### THE SERVICES.

(a) The Federation considers the proposals of the White Paper regarding the Services as wholly reactionary and objectionable and regards the Secretary of State's further commentary thereon, in the course of his evidence, as placing the future Provincial and Central Governments in an even worse position than the present dyarchic Ministries and rendering them practically impotent to maintain control and regulation of Services in a manner that would enable them to discharge their responsibilities to the Legislature for the carrying out of their policies and the efficiency of the departments under their administration in any satisfactory manner. The Federation, while quite willing to protect the rights of the present members of the Services, is wholly against any proposals which would give them inducements by way of enlarging the scope and character of the compensation for "existing and accruing

rights" and also of making such rights available for those recruited subsequent to the passing of the Constitution Act. (b) As recommended by the Services Sub-Committee of the First Round Table Conference, the recruitment, control, and the determination of the emoluments of the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police Service must in future be vested in the Government of India, subject to the safeguarding of the legitimate rights of present incumbents; and recruitment of the Indian Civil Service should not be made for judicial offices and no such offices should anywhere be reserved for officers of that service. (c) No member of any permanent service shall be appointed as Governor of an Indian Province.

#### POWERS OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND THE GOVERNORS.

The Federation condemns the proposal to confer on the heads of Governments, Central and Provincial, special powers under various names—powers financial, legislative and administrative—as being the negation of constitutional government. While agreeing that the minorities should receive all legitimate protection in the new constitution, the Federation is of opinion that these proposals if carried into effect will make the Governor-General and Governors even greater autocrats than at present.

#### FEDERAL LEGISLATURE.

While the Federation approves of a bicameral federal legislature, it is strongly of opinion that:—(i) The strength of the Assembly should be 450 as recommended by the Lothian Committee and not 375 as proposed in the White Paper; (ii) there should not be in the Council of State any member nominated by the Governor-General; (iii) all the members of the Assembly should be directly elected representatives from the federating units, some form of indirect election being allowed in the case of the States as a transitory measure for a fixed period; (iv) The responsibility of the Government should be to the Assembly and not to both Houses assembled in joint session; (v) A two-thirds majority should not be required for the success of motions of no-confidence; (vi) The representatives of the States should have no right of participation by speech or vote in the discussion and decision of subjects affecting British India alone, including motions of no-confidence arising out of British Indian subjects; (vii) The Council of State should have no right of considering demands for grants or money bills, and its power in respect of legislation should be limited like that of the House of Lords under the Parliament Act of 1911; (viii) The Governor-General should not have the power of recommending that any bill or part thereof should be passed in a particular form or should not be proceeded with or of certifying any bill so as to make it a law without the consent of both houses of the legislature; and (ix) The Governor-General should not have the power of certifying the whole or part of a grant refused by the Assembly. (x) This Federation is of opinion that the appointment of a Financial Adviser, if any, should vest in the Federal Government.

#### COMMUNAL ELECTORATES.

The Federation reiterates the resolutions passed at its previous sessions against separate communal electorates and deeply regrets their continued maintenance and strongly protests against the proposed extension of such electorates. The Federation re-affirms the opinion that equitable representation of important minorities will be best secured by reservation of seats—with reasonable weightage wherever necessary—in joint electorates.

#### WOMEN'S FRANCHISE AND COMMUNAL ELECTORATES.

(a) The Federation protests against the modification for the worse made by His Majesty's Govern-



ment in the Lothian Committee's recommendations regarding women's franchise. (b) And it cordially supports the almost unanimous objection of Indian women's organizations to the forcing of women into communal electorates against their clearly expressed wishes.

#### JUDICATURE.

The Federation is of opinion (a) that the jurisdiction of the Federal Court should be co-equal and co-extensive in respect of all units of the federation, and (b) that provision of a Supreme Court to function as a Court of Appeal of British India should be made in the Constitution Act itself. (c) The Provincial High Courts should be under the control of the Federal Government.

#### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT: TRANSITORY POWERS.

The Federation considers the proposal of the White Paper relating to the constitution of the Central Government in the interval between the introduction of "provincial autonomy" and of a responsible federal government to be wholly reactionary and unacceptable as the position created thereby will be worse even than at present, highly unsatisfactory as is the latter.

#### PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY.

(a) The Liberal Federation objects strongly to the extensive special powers proposed to be conferred upon Governors in the spheres of finance, legislation and administration, as they are calculated to render "provincial autonomy" a shadow of the reality. (b) This Federation urges that there should be no departure from the policy of transference to the Provincial Governments of all departments of the administration.

#### NEW PROVINCES.

The Federation is strongly opposed to the constitution of new Provinces except where they can support themselves.

In conclusion, the National Liberal Federation of India deems it its duty to record its strong conviction that the White Paper proposals as they stand cannot possibly satisfy even the most moderate section of progressive opinion and will, far from appeasing unrest and allaying discontent, further aggravate the present unhappy conditions, alienate Indian opinion and greatly intensify the present acute and widespread discontent. A generous and far-reaching measure of real reform on the lines of the Dominion Constitutions which will make India an equal member of the British Commonwealth of Nations will alone meet India's requirements and will satisfy the national self-respect of India.

#### RECIPROCITY BETWEEN INDIA AND DOMINIONS.

The Federation expresses its surprise that the Secretary of State for India should have declared himself against India being allowed the right of retaliation against countries which may discriminate against her and which may deny to Indian nationals the elementary rights of citizenship. In the opinion of the Federation the possession of such right by the Government and the Legislature of India is indispensable and a Constitution Act which withholds the right can never be acceptable to the people of this country.

#### RESERVE BANK BILL.

(a) The Federation, while welcoming the prospect of early establishment of a Reserve Bank, does not approve of the control by the Governor-General at his discretion of the Bank's policy and working, as thereby the domination of Whitehall and the city of London over India's monetary policy will be perpetuated.

(b) The Federation further deems it necessary that the Indian Legislature should at all times be free to so amend the Reserve Bank Act as may be found necessary.

#### EXCHANGE AND CURRENCY POLICY.

The Federation condemns the present currency and exchange policy of Government which, in its opinion, has largely accentuated the economic distress in the country and accords its fullest support to the country-wide demand for an immediate review of the rupee-sterling ratio and the adoption of prompt measures to meet the present situation entirely in the interests of India.

#### CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

The Federation authorises its Council to take necessary and feasible steps from time to time in co-operation with other organisations and parties to devise plans for joint work after the presentation to Parliament of the Report of the Joint Select Committee and the publication of the Indian Constitution Bill in its final form.

#### PARTY ORGANISATION.

In view of the political developments in the country the National Liberal Federation of India is of opinion that there is urgent need for the formation of country-wide Liberal organisation and the development of parties on national as opposed to communal lines and the Federation emphasises that it is the duty of the Liberal Party to so extend its organisation as to ensure the progress of the country on sound and healthy national lines and calls upon all members and associations belonging to the party to work for the collection of adequate funds and the constitution of suitable agencies for achieving all-round progress on the lines mentioned above.

#### ECONOMIC DISTRESS.

The Federation desires to impress upon the Government of India and all provincial Governments the imperative necessity of the adoption of measures for the relief of the acute economic distress among the people, including an appreciable reduction of the burden of taxation, and for planned economic development.

#### PRINCES' PROTECTION BILL.

The National Liberal Federation of India records its emphatic disapproval of the Princes' Protection Bill now before the Legislature as it makes further inroads on the freedom of the Press.

#### REDUCTION OF BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA.

(a) The Liberal Federation enters its emphatic protest against the decision of the British Government not to reduce the number of British troops in India and strongly urges that immediate steps should be taken to nationalise the Army in India within a fixed period of time.

(b) The Federation, while recognising that the recommendations of the Indian Defence Expenditure Tribunal will lead to some reduction in the capitulation charges, regards these charges as utterly unjust and objects on principle to their continuance.

(c) The Federation is strongly of opinion that relief should be given to Indian revenues not by means of Imperial subventions but in the following ways—

1. The size of the Indian Army should be strictly determined by Indian needs;
2. The number of British soldiers should be progressively reduced with a view to their speedy elimination;
3. Capitulation charges, which India should never have been required to pay, should be abolished.

## INDIANS OVERSEAS.

(a) This Federation strongly condemns the demands which the European settlers of Kenya, encouraged by the discussions between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and their representatives, have put forward for acquiring control over the Government of Kenya. It urges that the doctrine of paramountcy of native interests laid down by the Conservative and Labour Governments should not be departed from and that no further constitutional power be transferred to the European settlers either by the institution of a Finance Committee with an unofficial European majority as proposed by them or in any other way.

(b) The Federation presses the Government of India to watch over the interests of Indians in Kenya with special care in present circumstances. It further draws their attention to the complaint of the East African Indians that with the ostensible object of improving African agriculture, monopolies are being granted to Europeans, especially in Uganda and Tanganyika, for the purchase of special agricultural products from the Africans and that Indians are consequently being driven out of a business in which they were pioneers and have been engaged for generations past. The Federation urges the Government of India to take immediate steps to investigate and obtain redress of this grievance.

(c) The Federation extends its wholehearted support to the Indians of South Africa in their just fight for their elementary rights and assures them that India will always be behind them in their struggle to uphold the honour of the Motherland and protect the interests of Indian nationals.

## TERRORISM.

(a) The National Liberal Federation of India views with abhorrence terrorist activities wherever they exist and earnestly appeals to all classes to do everything in their power to check and prevent them as they are repugnant to all notions of humanity as well as injurious to the best interests of the country.

(b) The Federation expresses its sympathy with the bereaved relations of victims of terrorist outrages.

## PROTEST AGAINST REPRESSION.

(a) The National Liberal Federation of India records its strong protest against the Government's repressive policy which by its excessive and often uncalled for harshness has been adding to discontent

in the country. The Federation impresses on the Government the urgent need for the repeal of repressive measures and for the easing of the tense political situation by the adoption of a conciliatory policy.

(b) The Federation at the same time appeals to all who advocate or take part in the civil disobedience movement to abandon the movement and help in the creation of a peaceful atmosphere in the best interests of the country.

## UNTOUCHABILITY.

The National Liberal Federation of India accords its fullest support to the movement for the removal of untouchability and for the uplift of the classes concerned and earnestly appeals to all classes of the community to do everything in their power for its success.

## SWADESHI.

(a) The Federation again emphasises the supreme importance of the Swadeshi movement, and exhorts the people to support national enterprises in the field of Banking, Insurance and Shipping, and to prefer, even at a sacrifice, the products of home industry to imported goods.

(b) The Federation strongly urges the Government actively to encourage and support the Swadeshi movement in every possible manner.

(c) The Federation urges the Government of India not to allow Indian interests to be subordinated to those of Lancashire or Japan in the negotiations now going on between them and the representatives of those countries.

## SEPARATION OF JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS.

The Federation once more strongly condemns the combination of judicial and executive functions and urges the Government to separate the same and place the Judiciary under the control of the High Courts in the different provinces. In case the above policy is not adopted by the Government, the Federation requests its Council to take such steps as may be necessary to secure the acceptance of the policy and report the same to the next session of the Federation.

## TEMPERANCE.

The National Liberal Federation of India urges on the Central and Provincial Governments in India the necessity of adopting a clear and definite policy of temperance reform and calls upon the people to carry on a vigorous and systematic propaganda in favour of total abstinence.

## INDIAN SOCIAL REFORM.

## MR. G. K. DEVADHAR'S VIEWS.

*In the course of his presidential address to the Indian National Social Conference held at Madras during Christmas Week, Mr. G. K. Devadhar said :*

**S**Ocial Reform so far in this country had naturally to direct its attack against the citadel of orthodoxy and conservatism in which all reactionary and one-sided factors of the so-called national advance remained perched but now, in my opinion, the time has arrived when social reform could be freed from that narrow rut and placed on a wider and more constructive and less critical plane of social reconstruction in which several have been labouring without much moral support from the politicians. But luckily the spirit of the age and the shrinking of distances have caused even involuntary changes of heart and outlook, which would facilitate the work of amelioration of the society as a whole. In the

past it was quite necessary to deal with the elementary problems of social reform such as sea-voyage, women's education, abolition of caste, stopping of infant marriages, promotion of widow marriages, and of post-puberty marriages, and furthering the age of consent, interdining and even intermarriage, etc.

The bogey of untouchability and unapproachability still haunts us, but its days are numbered as its foundations are unmistakably shaken by the most powerful influence of Mahatma Gandhi whose work in this connection, I have always likened to that of a powerful and tremendous blast.

## PROBLEMS OF WIDER AND BROADER SOCIAL REFORM.

While, therefore, not neglecting work in these above-mentioned directions, we must now begin to

concentrate our attention on problems that embrace wider fields and touch the bottom and the top of the society. The justification for such widening of the outlook of Social Reform work lies clearly in the imperative necessity of flowing with the world currents of the rapidly advancing tide of what we call civilization—not necessarily a disease according to Edward Carpenter. India fortunately has not lagged much behind though the inevitable need for social reform is recognised by only the so-called educated few—using the phrase in its widest sense: it is a matter of no small surprise, however, that even after a century and a half of the spread of English education and contact with Western culture, improvement in evil customs and demoralizing superstitions has not yet taken place on a wider basis, and advanced view or higher thought in social life is today possibly the luxury of the comparatively small number of those who crowd into big cities and towns where reformed life has its attendant evils as well.

#### FAILURE OF SCIENCE TO SUPPLY GUIDANCE.

We are all increasingly anxious now to lead a higher, purer, and truly nobler national life, in keeping with the changing ideals of higher social being so as to secure advance of our society along lines of advance of the whole human race or humanity. In our search for truth of the science of human society we may in vain expect to-day, at any rate, any guidance to lead us safely to the goal, because among the many seekers after scientific truth and foundation for the human society there has not yet been reached any unanimity of basic principles that ought to regulate the conduct of human beings that constitute the society as we see it developing to-day. Science has very miserably failed in this direction of supplying the much needed guidance, though its vast, wonderful, and epoch-making achievements have surpassed the imagination of even those toiling long in the field with great faith and expectations.

Mr. Benjamin Kidd in his book "Social Evolution" has elaborately shown how Science in various branches of research has proved her impotence to offer any acceptable solution of the rapidly changing social phenomena of the day in various fields of human activity like history, religion, etc. He observes, "In whatever direction we look, the attitude presented by Science towards the social phenomena of the day can hardly be regarded as satisfactory." He further goes on to say in very terse language that "yet the social phenomena which are treated of under the heads of politics, history, ethics, economics, and religion must all be regarded as but the intimately related phenomena of the science of life under its most complex aspect."

If we go on worrying ourselves with the results of the so-called scientific research in the sphere of human society and wait till the guidance is forthcoming we may have to wait till Doomsday. We must, therefore, be prepared for the onward march to take stock of the progress which society has made so long with the help of historical records in various countries and in different times with special reference to the history and institutions of our race; we would be securing sufficient data for us to proceed in that way. Most of our trouble is due to the confusion caused by the mingling of the little spheres of religion and Hindu social polity and political public policy. If we could only avoid the confusion much trouble could be saved. I have already suggested in my previous remarks that we must bring our work, our social reform work, in line with the other national activities, each one working in its own sphere or domain. Politics up till now has attracted the largest attention, because, thereby is afforded a common platform and differences with regard to reli-

gious or communal interests are reduced to the lowest minimum.

#### SOCIAL EXPERIMENTS.

The country has been making experiments along social lines, and she will have to continue doing the same for many years to come. A change is an inevitable social factor, and reform is its necessary concomitant. I have not, therefore, ruled out of court the consideration of many of the modern problems—in fact I would be myself touching some of them briefly—making here and there my own independent contribution. But why I deferred that treatment in my address to a later stage is due to my desire to emphasise the need for a changed outlook on problems of social reform of to-day and distinguish them from those of yesterday that still loom large and to define what constitute the sheet anchor of social amelioration.

#### WOMEN'S PROBLEMS.

Now I shall deal with some of them very briefly alluding to several of the special features of development that need emphasis. Take the women's problem. Women of to-day have learnt to organise, to educate public opinion with regard to their needs, have now a regular net-work of their organisations all over the country. They have all along supported men in their advocacy for their wider franchise and some of them have also emerged out of their seclusion of purdah in a few places only to participate actively in the struggle for freedom, I hope not like the women of Turkey in the earlier days of her struggle for unity and progress, to go back into purdah again. But I would like to see them engaged in common with men in day to day spade work for the general amelioration of their sex to entitle them to secure the fullest possible measure of freedom and liberty from men who have also to learn to trust women as their equal partners in national and social uplift. Active participation in public life should not be a mere matter of momentary sentimental enthusiasm. They should not commit the mistake of devoting all their energies to some of the barren fields of politics but should take upon their shoulders sufficient responsibility of sharing men's national work in the spheres of education of the masses, social reform for their advancement and the economic and other improvements of the rural parts of our country. I am glad to notice that some of these ideas have found favour with the women of India that meet in a conference in Calcutta on the 27th of this month. While proclaiming their readiness to enjoy adult franchise, they claimed greater attention to widening of their rights and privileges in respect of inheritance and widening of their franchise, the necessity for building an army of whole-time workers for carrying on social reform activity and the need for effective propaganda with the judicious and wise use of the cinema and vocational education.

#### POLITICS AND SOCIAL REFORM TO BE BROUGHT IN LINE.

Thus, the arena of politics is more attractive to those that wish to carry on their public activity along more constructive lines, and be least critical. Now we shall have to examine whether the work of fighting, on destructive lines, so heroically done by the early venerable pioneers in this field is not sufficient and whether the time has not come to interpret now the correct scope or sphere of social reform in the terms of the changing conditions of the world which are sooner or later bound to affect us. This will establish the necessity not only for our familiarity with the culture and science of the Western Christian countries, but also that establishes a clear necessity for a living contact with the growing life under modern conditions in the Near and Far East

countries as well. India has always been a source of spiritual inspiration to many of these nations of the world and if now any of these nations have to supply any lessons to us it would be our right to receive them and their duty to give them, though, both the West and the Far East from Indian spiritual eminence which is her special contribution to the world's happiness, and which is being recognised in an increasing measure from day to day in fields of religious and philosophical thought. If Western nations have produced philosophies in common with India, more or less, a matter based on heights of reason, India has supplied a unifying philosophy in relation to life which the rest of the world described as religion as distinguished from philosophy. And this when interpreted in the terms of Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga, and in the light of Bhakti ought to be our country's beacon light to the world, and precious treasure to us. It might be argued that all this is sterile philosophy,

#### CASTE AND CREED GROUPS.

Of the communities formed into caste and religious and racial groups—the so-called caste groups—is, in my opinion, one of the most practical problems for solution before our country. Castes, like different creeds, have disintegrated completely our society, to which process momentum has been added by the preponderance of the widely different creeds in our social polity. The only solvent of this situation is the attitude to learn to look upon ourselves as our master the late Mr. Gokhale used to say, that we must be Indians first and Moslems, Hindus, Christians, Jains, Parsis afterwards. Some classes have to make a beginning to adjust their life along these lines, and it must be seen how considerations of larger self will propel some of them to practise these principles in life and realise the true unity of the society.

#### JAPAN'S NOBLE ACTION.

There was in Japan a class in existence called "Ita and Hinins" whose degraded social position was considered so low in their social polity that even a different set of numerals was used in counting that class corresponding to some such phenomenon in our part of the country in counting units of indigenous sports and games. But Japan woke up more than fifty years ago to this enormity of great scandal perpetrated on human nature and abolished all those barbarous distinctions among human beings by an edict in a moment. Cannot India do any such thing under the new Reforms now by state legislation? While on this topic, I would like passingly to refer to the furious controversy that raged round the question whether social reform should be pushed on in spite of people's wishes, with the help of legislation. But that controversy is buried now. It had poignancy when the spirit of the administration and controlling forces were mostly moulded by foreign spirit and outside considerations, but now all our provincial Legislative Councils and the central legislature are mainly Indian, composed of the representatives of the people and many provinces, like C. P., U. P., Bombay, Madras and the Punjab, have lost no time in introducing useful pieces of legislation for the improvement of the general masses of the people in social, economic and international spheres. Moreover, it is further very refreshing and reassuring to note that many of the leading Indian States have utilised their legislative machinery and their peculiar position of independence in getting social legislation enacted in many matters of domestic social reform. In this connection I would mention the names of Baroda, Mysore, Tra-

vanore, Indore, Cochin, Kashmere and Hyderabad (Deccan) and other States. But it is very interesting to note in this connection that the British Government, who were in the earlier days of their rule very keen or in any case friendly to the introduction of social legislation, have changed that attitude now. Their present attitude in this behalf seems to many of their admirers and friends as extremely halting if not quite hostile, and some of us would like the central legislature to be much bolder and imaginative in this behalf as they would be pushing on the cause of general upliftment of the vast masses of this country. One of the grounds in support of such an attitude being that society is advancing, and it would not carry out its functions vigorously with the old worn-out clothes in the form of institutions which may have justification in their own days, but which need constant repair and readjustment in the light of the growing bodies requiring new clothes for their full-grown bodies. We cannot ask a young man of 25 to be content with clothes made for him when he was merely a boy of 10. And we would like our countrymen always to be consistent in regard to their attitude towards the changes that are taking place in their daily life as a good guidance for their equally ready attitude to look upon changes that are taking place in the social environment on a large scale due almost to same causes.

#### RURAL RECONSTRUCTION.

There is another most important sphere in which a colossal amount of work lies ahead of us, I mean in the direction of the improvement of conditions of life in rural parts. It is a pity that the vastness of the subject and its many-sided solutions would require more detailed treatment. But I must content myself with briefly mentioning some of the salient points; the first and foremost, of course, is the education of the younger generation residing in more than 700,000 villages with the assistance of local leaders, giving them as far as possible suitable seasonal course as in Denmark. Modern improvement of course in agriculture, and cottage industries, should not be neglected, as industrial and vocational training should be gradually introduced to make education answer their daily needs. The education of the adults also by more attractive methods of cinema, magic lantern and the drama should be vigorously pushed on so as to change their outlook on life, give them a better grasp of the world situation of which they are perforce a factor. We may in fact give them a new philosophy of life. The improvement of the economic condition of the masses had engaged the attention of the State; the greatest impediment in the way of such reform is the chronic indebtedness amounting to over a roughly estimated figure of 900 crores if not more. Owing to the vastness of this problem the British Government have not dared to formulate any scheme of debt redemption; but it is refreshing to note in this connection that some well-meaning attempts are being made by small States, Bhavnagar under the leadership of my friend Sir Prabhashankar Pattani being the first to put into practice some well-defined plan with the help of the State machinery. But there is, however, a very important direction in which the Government of India, all Provincial Governments and many of the leading Indian States took active measures to secure partially this object of economic improvement by the introduction of the co-operative movement, which has yet to make a large leeway, considering the vast potentialities of this great lever.