

# Servant of India

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## Topics of the Week.

### The Role of the States.

IN expressing his opinion of the Joint Select Committee's Report, Mr. Jinnah made the following observation on the role which the Indian States are intended to fill in the proposed federation :—

With reference to the Central Government, I was fundamentally opposed to the scheme propounded therein from the very beginning as among the other defects in its results it leaves British India at the tender mercies of the nominees of Indian Princes, who, in their turn, will be under the whip of the Paramount Power. It will not work successfully, it will not secure real or wholehearted support from any responsible politician in British India who will command, and be able to concentrate, public opinion in its favour, and it certainly will not bring about good-will between British India and Indian States or between India and Great Britain.

### Take Elected Members' Verdict.

THE *Tribune* is in whole-hearted agreement with the suggestion of Col. Wedgwood that, in taking the verdict of the Legislative Assembly on the Joint Select Committee's report, all nominated members, whether official or unofficial, should be excluded from voting. It says :—

There are only three courses open to the Government : to consign the report to the dust-bin and to frame a new scheme of constitutional reforms in accordance with the well-known wishes of India and the solemn pledges of the British Government; or to refer the J. P. C. Report to the elected members of the new Assembly and abide by their verdict; or else, to rush the India Bill through Parliament in utter disregard of its vehement condemnation by all sections of politically-minded Indians.

If the present British Government, which are dominated by Tories and diehards, are anxious for their own ends, to force a wholly retrograde and unacceptable constitution on India, let them at least give up the pretence of ruling Indians with their consent. As has been amply demonstrated by the criticism to which it has been subjected, no patriotic Indian is prepared to accept the proposed constitution. If the Government think otherwise, let them place the question before the elected members of the new Assembly.

### Labour Party's Vote.

IT would appear from the speeches and writings of prominent members of the British Labour Party that while they would move amendments calculated to improve the India Reforms Bill, they would still vote in favour of the Bill as it is if their amendments are thrown out. The *Tribune*, like our contributor Mr. P. G. Kanekar (vide last week's issue), urges the Labour Party to vote against the measure, in the following passage :—

Major Attlee's draft report does not concede to India all that she is entitled to expect in fulfilment of the solemn pledges of the British Government; but it goes very much further in that direction than either the White Paper or the majority report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. It is to be hoped that the Labour Party will not submit weakly to the Tory majority in Parliament, but will put up a strong fight in defence of the principles of international justice which it has always espoused. The Labour Party owes it to India, no less than to itself, that it should firmly oppose any attempt on the part of the so-called National Government, which is dominated by Tories and diehards, to foist an utterly unacceptable constitution on India. If the Cabinet refuses to accept even the recommendations of Major Attlee's report, the Labour Party should have the courage to dissociate itself from the India Bill.

### Will the Official Bloc be kept out ?

THE *Statesman* of Calcutta is apparently in favour of the essence of Col. Wedgwood's suggestion, viz. that if it be found, as a result of voting on the rejection motion in the Legislative Assembly, that public opinion in India is against the projected reforms, they should not be foisted upon India. Only it quarrels with the method, suggested by Col. Wedgwood, of finding out public opinion on this question. Col. Wedgwood had proposed that the voting be confined to the elected members of the Assembly. The *Statesman* sees a flaw in this suggestion, viz. that "it ignores the fact that so restricted is the existing electorate that multitudes find their only representation through the nominated members. The depressed classes, now at last to be enfranchised, are at present represented by one nominated member. For the whole of India there is only one Labour member, and he too is nominated."

THE *Statesman* would therefore insist upon counting nominated non-official members along with elected, but it is at least clear that, according to it, there is no justification for the official bloc being ordered to vote down the rejection motion. May we take it then that it agrees to Col. Wedgwood's suggestion, amended as above, and that if a majority of elected and non-elected non-official members vote for the rejection motion it would urge the Government in England to drop the India Bill? We remember that, some time ago, the *Statesman* said that if a rejection motion be passed, Government would be compelled for very shame to take this course. The *Times of India* too said so, but it is now resiling from that position. Where does the *Statesman* stand? Is it for submitting the J. P. C. Report to the decision of the non-official part of the Assembly?

#### Mending or Ending?

THE *Tribune*, a non-Congress paper, dissents strongly from the criticism contained in the Sapru-Jayakar statement of the negative and destructive policy pursued by the Congress and from the advice given by these leaders to seek detailed improvements in the Joint Select Committee's report. It says in its issue of 2nd December:—

Nor can we for a moment accept the view that the effort of the country should be directed to bringing about certain amendments which may tend to improve the Constitution. In the first place, one need not go beyond the Sapru-Jayakar statement itself to see that it is utterly impossible by ordinary means to make those responsible for the J. P. C. Report so change the Constitution produced by them as to make it acceptable to Indian opinion. Most of the omissions and commissions of the Committee, of which the two leaders, along with the rest of the country, complain, are deliberate; and it is sheer self-deception to imagine that India has only to make one more reasoned representation to the British Government or the British Parliament for these omissions and commissions to be rectified. They can be rectified only by bringing the pressure of Indian opinion to bear upon the authors of the present proposals with irresistible weight. Secondly, the proposed Constitution is so vitally defective and so fundamentally vicious, that it is impossible substantially to alter its character by any mere process of tinkering. The question here is one not of mending the Constitution, but of ending it; and in order to end it a destructive and negative policy is just as essential as a positive and constructive policy. Indeed, here, as in all similar cases, destruction must go hand in hand with construction; the rejection of what is unacceptable must go hand in hand with the production of what is acceptable.

#### Anglo-Indian Opinion.

"It is absurd to suggest," says the *Pioneer* "that the result of the elections is a verdict on the reform proposals, which were announced after the elections had taken place." Does the *Pioneer* suggest that the country which, by returning Congress candidates in overwhelmingly large numbers, endorsed rejection of the White Paper proposals, will refuse to endorse rejection of the J. P. C. Report embodying reactionary changes in them? — "Neither the Congress nor any other party in the Assembly," says this paper, "is in a position to reject the reform proposals. If Parliament so chooses, the reforms will come into existence whether any party, however powerful it may be, likes them or not." If rejection is impossible, why does the *Pioneer* waste its breath in advising the Congress against it? May not the nervousness betrayed by it and other Anglo-Indian papers give the Congress an impression that

rejection has a chance and induce it to press on with its programme the more vigorously?

#### Incitement to Disloyalty.

THE *Hindu*, like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar, practically invites the Congress to be disloyal to the pledges it gave to the electorate and abandon its rejection policy. The paper says, in its leader of the 1st inst.—

It is no use disguising from ourselves the fact that on important issues there are acute divergences of opinion among Indians. In the circumstances, a simple formula advising either the acceptance or the rejection of the Report will not carry us anywhere. Again, this talk of acceptance or rejection is premature. As Sir Abdur Rahim pertinently points out, "when eventually Parliament has passed such an Act as it likes, it will be time to consider what should be our final attitude."

The precipitate haste of a few Moslem leaders of Bengal, for instance, to declare their readiness to work the scheme of reforms proposed by the Joint Select Committee is not only futile, since we do not know what that scheme as it finally emerges from Parliament, will actually look like; it may give a positively wrong impression to outsiders as to the general attitude of the Indian public, and is on that account greatly to be deplored.

Any outright rejection of the Report by the Congress will, by the same token, be sedulously misrepresented as indicating that the Congress was intent on ploughing a lonely furrow, since there are undoubtedly features in the reform scheme—the Communal Award is a prominent instance—which are as cordially accepted by some sections as they are violently condemned by others. Common action based on common opposition to the unprogressive features of the scheme will therefore necessitate not only subordination of differences of opinion on secondary matters of domestic importance, which must be left to mutual adjustment, but also the putting forward of concrete alternatives which will be solidly supported by all parties.

IN the opinion of the *Hindu*, acceptance or rejection is premature at this time and will remain so till the Act is finally passed. While the proposals are still under discussion, we might offer criticisms in detail and suggest modifications, but must hold our final judgment in suspense till we know just what it is on which the judgment is to be passed. Thus it is impartial in its distribution of blame to those who express themselves either in favour of accepting or rejecting Government's proposals. They incur blame, not because acceptance or rejection is in itself wrong, but merely because it is expressed at the wrong time.

IF this is the opinion of the *Hindu*, one wonders why it held its peace all this time, while the Congress was formulating its policy and while it was fighting elections. All the circumstances which it mentions as necessitating suggestions of modification without acceptance or rejection existed then as now. Why then did it support rejection at the time? Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar were at least silent about rejection. The *Hindu* supported it all along and only when the Congress is getting ready to put the policy into execution, this paper sees fundamental objections to it. We hope there will be no one who, however strong he may himself be against rejection, will now advise the Congress to be untrue to its pledges and to abandon its rejection policy. Honesty in politics is a much higher good than the adoption of any particular programme.

**Release of Mr. M. N. Roy.**

WE trust that the public demand for the release of Mr. M. N. Roy will be sympathetically considered by the Government. The very fact that the demand has the backing of people in no way sharing his politics shows that it is based not on political, but humanitarian, considerations. The fact is that Mr. Roy's health has during his incarceration gone from bad to worse and from all accounts it is at present giving cause for serious anxiety. Facilities for medical treatment in our jails are deplorably deficient; while Mr. Roy's case is such that unless proper medical help is made available to him, there is every likelihood of his malady getting the better of him. In these circumstances the Government would be taking a heavy responsibility upon themselves if they unwisely persist in keeping Mr. Roy in detention.

THERE is also another strong reason why he should be restored to liberty without delay. As is well known, Mr. Roy is a convict in the notorious Meerut conspiracy trial, the protracted nature of whose proceedings was little short of a public scandal. The result is that though the trial saw its end last year Mr. Roy has been under restraint, first as an accused and later as a convict, for nearly three years, the maximum sentence inflicted on any of the accused in the Meerut case. He may thus be said to have paid the full penalty for his crime, even though, strictly speaking, he may still have some sentence to serve. Looking to the public anxiety on the score of Mr. Roy's health, the Government would do well to take the public into their confidence without delay by the issue of an official press note giving information about the present condition of Mr. Roy's health, the provision made or his medical treatment so far, and their attitude to the question of his release.

**Zanzibar.**

WITH the concurrence of the Standing Emigration Committee which was recently called together specially for the purpose of considering Mr. Menon's report on the anti-Indian legislation in Zanzibar, the Government seems to have decided upon not releasing the report for publication, at any rate for some time. We cannot compliment either the Committee or the Government on this decision. It was in view of the deep public concern felt in this country at the adverse effect which the legislation might have on the fortunes of Indians settled in Zanzibar that the Government deputed Mr. Menon there on the special duty of collecting facts and information and suggesting means of getting over the impasse. The decision to postpone publication of his report will only serve to heighten this anxiety which it should have been the endeavour of Government to allay by all means open to them.

ACCORDING to press reports, the decision to keep the report from the public is said to have been rendered necessary by Mr. Menon's alleged strong criticism of the Zanzibar Government. We do not know what ground there is for such a belief. If Mr. Menon's report contains some uncomplimentary remarks about the Zanzibar Government, which the Indian Government did not want the Indian public to know, the publication of only the informative part would have solved the difficulty and would have enabled the public to judge, on the strength of authentic information, about the justifiability or otherwise of the recent legislation in Zanzibar. It is a puzzle to us why this obvious course was not suggested to the Government by the Emigration Committee.

ACCESS to Mr. Menon's report having been thus denied to the public, it is necessarily thrown back

on the wholly unsatisfactory and misleading alternative of anxiously scanning newspaper columns for any information that may trickle down from New Delhi by the doings of enterprising press correspondents. If the *Hindu* correspondent is to be believed, Mr. Menon does not seem to regard anything specially reprehensible in either the Land Alienation Decree or the money-lenders legislation. That some such legislation was called for in the conditions existing in Zanzibar, he seems to grant. Only he would substitute the racial distinction by the less offensive professional one. Instead of drawing the line between Africans and Arabs on the one hand and Indians on the other, he would have it drawn between agriculturists and non-agriculturists. What he vehemently objects to is the decree relative to the Clove-Growers' Association which, in his opinion, "was calculated to cause irretrievable damage to Indian interests and would eventually oust the Indian trader from Zanzibar." It is difficult to say how far this version of the contents of Mr. Menon's report accords with facts. If unfortunately it does not and if owing to inadequacy of reliable information Indian interests in Zanzibar are prejudiced, the blame must lie at the door of the Government and the Emigration Committee which failed to insist upon sharing Mr. Menon's report with the Indian public.

**Railway Advisory Committees.**

OBVIOUSLY the object of associating advisory committees with the different railway administrations in the country was to enable the latter to know, through the former, something of the grievances and hardships from which the travelling public suffers. It goes without saying that such knowledge was to be followed by action designed to secure a redress of such complaints. If the idea underlying the formation of such committees was just to give to the railway authorities concerned an opportunity merely to listen to a catalogue of the inconveniences from which people using the railway systems suffered without any obligation upon them to take any remedial action, there was absolutely no point in bringing them into existence. But that is exactly how railway administrations seem to be looking at the doings of these bodies. With proper formality they are assembled together at the appointed time, and allowed to pour forth long lists of complaints and hardships for the edification of the railway authorities. As for the practical result it is very disappointing.

EVEN a cursory look at the quarterly publication brought out by the Railway Department which details the recommendations made by these committees and the action taken thereon is enough to convince any dispassionate observer that these recommendations are considered by the railway administrations only to be rejected. This is very deplorable and discourages non-official co-operation in any official attempts to improve travel facilities. Even though the status of the committees is only advisory and their recommendations admittedly in no way binding on the administrations, it behoves them to make every possible endeavour to meet their wishes. From the way however in which their recommendations have in the past been generally disposed of, a desire on the part of officials to enlist unofficial help must be said to be clearly lacking. It follows that, in its absence, the expenditure of time and energy in holding their meetings is generally regarded as sheer waste. It is up to the railway authorities to prove by their conduct in a practical manner that such an impression is entirely without foundation. Vague assurances will not avail to dispel such an impression. What is needed for the purpose is practical action.

## “WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE” &c.

IT has often happened before that the Liberal Party did its best to wean the country from the paths of extremism and unreasoning hatred and bring it to those of moderation and good-will, but with singular ill-success. The Party has for this reason often earned the taunts and jibes of Anglo-Indian newspapers and British politicians for its ineffectiveness in politics. In fact the impotence of the Party could in every case be proved to be directly due to unresponsiveness on the part of Government, and the Liberal Party has suffered the fate which all centre parties are bound to do when placed between two opposite forces equally heedless of the voice of reason. But it is not our immediate purpose to make a complaint about this. It will be agreed on all hands that, however little influential the Liberal Party may have been in moulding the nation's course, it has never failed to warn and protest, even at the risk of grave unpopularity, against policies and programmes, which it considered to be injurious to the best interests of the country. Government may occasionally have had cause to deplore the Party's weakness, but they would ever give it the credit for having used its influence, for all it was worth, on the right side and never pandering to popular prejudices.

In the present crisis in the country's fortunes, however, the Liberal Party is not powerless, but unwilling to give to Government the help which they may want of it. One can imagine Government saying to the Liberal Party: "We are offering to India a far-reaching measure of reforms. You take an unduly adverse view of it. Give it a trial, and you will find that most of your apprehensions are unfounded. But even assuming that some of the provisions require improvement, cannot you realise the difficulties of our position? Believe us, we would have gone farther if it were possible. But, in the present temper of the British public and in face of the opposition we have to meet, any further advance than that indicated in the Joint Select Committee's Report is entirely impracticable. Even the Report itself it will be difficult to implement unless we are backed up by influential opinion in India. It will not do for us to rely only upon communalists. We need the support of nationalist opinion. Will you not give it? The reforms measure may be insufficient; yet it is substantial. Will you put that in peril for want of Indian support and face the only other alternative of being content with the *status quo* for one does not know how long?"

This is the kind of appeal that is being made to the Liberal Party from all sides. It is a question how far its support will go to shore up the collapsing structure of reforms. There is such widespread and intense hostility exhibited all over the country to the Government proposals that even if the Liberal Party could bring itself to give Government all its support, it would avail them nothing. But the fact of the matter is that, conscientiously, it cannot give them support, let the consequence be what it may. It is no use for

anyone to frighten the Liberal Party with a picture of the harm that will come to the country by the present proposals being withdrawn or defeated. The Liberal Party too, small as it is, has internal differences, but the differences on this particular question are limited to this extent, that while some of its prominent members will welcome this result, others are indifferent to it. The Party as a whole does not believe that the proposals are worth bothering about or that the country will sustain a serious loss if they are either withdrawn or thrown out. We would like British politicians to believe Mr. Chintamani and Dr. Paranjpye implicitly when they say that they would prefer the *status quo* to the reform proposals now under discussion. This is not to say that the proposals do not constitute an advance in any respect. But on the whole they are of such a nature as to impede instead of promoting future development. The view may be right or wrong, but it is sincerely held.

Government cannot therefore look to the Liberal Party for support. One is not sure that they want the support of nationalist opinion at all. Perhaps they intend to go on with the measure, get it passed in Parliament and then impose it upon India, whatever the country's wishes may be. If it be so, we have nothing to say. But if they want the backing of at least a section of nationalist opinion, they cannot get it from the Liberal Party. They are perhaps entitled to get it from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar and whomever they represent. Even Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru at one time threatened non-co-operation if the reservations proposed in the White Paper were not relaxed or were further strengthened. Speaking at the Royal Institute of Internal Affairs on 20th June, 1933, he concluded his address on the White Paper thus: "If you think the safe-guards must be stiffened and cannot be broadened in the manner you want, then you must ask yourself the question which the Prime Minister put in the House of Commons: What is the good of imposing a constitution on a people when they are not prepared to work it?" He seems, however, to be in a different mood now, though the safeguards have been stiffened and broadened. For, to a representative of the *Hindu*, he said:

"Notwithstanding much that I dislike and disavour, I am not prepared to endorse the view which has been expressed in some quarters, that we are much better off under the existing constitution; nor, frankly speaking, can I understand what exactly is meant by the scheme of rejection, if the idea of rejection is divorced from any idea of non-co-operating with the constitution or refusing to accept responsibility to the extent to which it goes. I should not stake much on the mere chance of Labour coming into power a few years hence. A Labour Opposition will not be the same as a Labour Government. It will find its hands full with domestic problems which will take precedence of the Indian question. Although I do not think it very probable that Liberals and Labour men in Parliament, some of whom at any rate will try, will succeed in liberalising to any large extent the proposed constitution, yet I think that the collective weight of more or less united opinion in India, not for rejection or for any destructive methods, but for improvement, may strengthen the hands of our friends in Parliament."

He has no hope of enlarging and liberalising the pro-

posals now put forward, but it is clear that he is anxious to have them saved if they cannot be amplified and extended. Mr. Jayakar too probably holds the same opinion, and they are surely representative of others. If the saving of the present proposals requires nationalist support, it is this body of opinion which must come to Government's rescue. We hope that Government will not find it to be as much of a broken reed as the Liberal Party was in the past.

The Liberal Party could conscientiously stand up for the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, although they too fell short of its demand. It incurred much unpopularity in commending them to the sympathetic interest and support of the people and also in coming forward to work them in the midst of a cry of non-co-operation. Those reforms, though not fully satisfactory, were worth while to accept as a stepping stone to larger reforms. The reforms now offered do not belong to that category. The Liberal Party can never be tempted into accepting and supporting them. It is no use asking this Party as any other to say how the menace is to be met. No one can be dogmatic about it. The present duty of all progressives in the country is to say with one voice that they do not want these reforms. The future will show how best they can come out of the tribulation. This much is certain, that this is going to be the beginning of a period of stress and strain for India. The Liberal Party must willingly take a share in it. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

#### SAPRU-JAYAKAR STATEMENT.

SO far as we are aware, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar were amongst those who threw cold water on the proposal for an All-Parties Conference that was mooted in Bombay some months ago under the distinguished auspices of men like Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, holding political opinions very close to themselves. It is with no small amount of surprise therefore that we find them now urging leaders of Indian opinion to take concerted action on the Joint Select Committee's Report with a view to its radical improvement. "While we do not expect," they say, "from the present Parliament, which is overwhelmingly conservative in its composition and overcautious in its outlook, that it will in any material degree liberalise the constitution, we strongly urge that this is an occasion on which a concerted demand for alterations in the desired direction may possibly have some chance of success." Yes, may possibly have some chance! Our leaders certainly are not too pessimistic about it.

If concerted action is to be taken, would it not have had a much better chance before the Joint Select Committee had concluded its labours and presented its report? But at the time when such a proposal was made Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar were afraid that some rather irresponsible politicians would, at such a conference, call for amendments which might be regarded by Round Tablers as going too far and wreck the work that they had done. Sooner than hold a conference which might not

wholly endorse their action, they thought they would leave the Joint Memorandum alone to speak for India. But the Joint Memorandum has had no effect upon the Joint Select Committee. They now fall back therefore upon an All-Parties Conference or some other similar body which can take concerted action. But now it is the eleventh hour and more than the eleventh hour. They themselves realise that nothing is really practicable. Nor can one call an All-Parties Conference now and keep out the wild elements from it, of which they were afraid when Sir Chimanlal Setalvad made the suggestion.

Towards the end of the statement Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar have a fling at the Congress. "We are clear," they say, "that a negative and destructive policy may seriously affect our future for a long time to come as indeed, we are convinced, it has affected several decisions of the Committee and the general outlook on India in England." The "negative and destructive policy" here referred to is, of course, the Congress policy of rejection. Now, we beg to ask Sir Tej and Mr. Jayakar a simple question: if rejection is so dangerous, is this the time to warn the country against it? Ever since the meeting of the Swarajists at Ranchi, the question of rejection is before the country. The Congress has made that the chief plank in its platform. It fought the elections on that issue and won sweeping victories on it. It suffered reverses only in Bengal and the Punjab at the hands of the Nationalists on the question of the communal award, but the Nationalists too, being only a wing of the Congress, are as deeply committed to rejection of the reforms as the main body of Congressmen. All these months Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar had not one word—at least in public—to say against rejection. They did not themselves stand for election, nor did they put up any candidate on an anti-rejection programme. They let by far the biggest party in the country commit itself irrevocably to rejection, and now, when nothing can possibly be done to move the Congress from it, these statesmen are wringing their hands about it. What is the good that they hope to do by it?

They are not content to say, rejection will do harm; they say, it has already done harm. Can they tell us what? and how they know it? These things are only to be inferred; no one can have a positive knowledge about them. It may well be that Lord Salisbury and Lord Rankeillour, for instance, said to their colleagues on the Committee, pointing to the adoption of the rejectionist policy by the Congress, "If large sections of Indians are predetermined not to accept the reforms, why provide for any advance at all?" But might not have these members of the Committee also said, "If even such reasonable persons as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar are not content with any but the most drastic changes in the White Paper proposals, why stand even by these proposals?" Our point is to show that, in placing the blame for retrograde proposals of the Joint Select Committee partially on the Congress, they must not assume, with smug self-satisfaction, that their own proposals did not provide ammunition to the Tories.

They must have. The question is not whether your opponents can exploit your demand for their own purposes, but whether the demand you put forward is right or wrong.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar are really for accepting the Joint Select Committee's recommendations, although they do not wish to put it so frankly. If they were not for unconditional acceptance, they would not have gone out of their way to say: "With all the defects and shortcomings of the proposed constitution—and they are neither few nor negligible—and with all the attendant disappointment, which is perfectly understandable, we

cannot foresee in the near future the possibility of any constitutional scheme being devised in England or in India which may be acceptable to the country as a whole." This is as much as to say: "No amendments in the forward direction will be carried in Parliament now. Nor will the Labour Party, when it will come into power, one does not know how long it will take, give us a larger measure. The constituent assembly will be a failure. Therefore, submit to the inevitable." It may be that the cry of rejection has wrought damage to our cause. Will this cry of abject submission do any good?

## WHAT SHOULD THE CONGRESS DO?

IT has now become clear that the talk of an All-Parties Conference to consider the minimum amendments that would be required by all sections of Indian opinion to make the Government scheme acceptable to India was no more than a trial balloon. Its only object was to see if the Congress cannot be persuaded to give up its rejection policy. The proposal cannot be traced to its origin. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and other Bombay Liberals, from whom had emanated the earlier proposal for a similar Conference, which eventually miscarried, disown this particular proposal, and so do leaders of other parties. There is none who is willing to father it. It is also proved by now that the conversations, reported to be going on in Congress circles in Patna about forming alliances with other parties in the Legislative Assembly, have no existence in fact. Every detail in this story is made up by enterprising members on the staff of the Anglo-Indian Press.

Congressmen need have no objection if those who have a particular relish for it put forth efforts to introduce liberal modifications in the Joint Select Committee's Report in spite of the clear intimation which has been given that no further advance is at all possible. Let Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar make such an attempt if they want—and be sadder and wiser at the end of it all. But the Congress must not be implicated in this futile business, either directly or indirectly. For it is pledged to a full, frank, flat, outright, wholesale, incontinent, contemptuous rejection of the whole Government scheme; it rejects the scheme out of hand principally because it is an imposition by Great Britain upon India. There are some other sections of opinion which are in favour of rejection or near-rejection on the ground of the unsatisfactory character of the scheme. To this the Congress adds another, which is peculiar to it, viz. that the scheme is not framed by India for herself, but by Britain and forced on a subject people.

Other parties may or may not agree to this, but it is idle for them to hope that they will succeed in seducing the Congress from its allegiance to Rejection. The Congress went to the country on that single issue; and the country responded with an enthusiasm which surpassed all expectations. Is it now possible for the

Congress, from the mere political point of view, leaving aside the moral, to go back upon rejection and cooperate with other parties in putting forward constructive suggestions for improvement? I suggest that even those who, like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar, are opposed to rejection, must ask the Congress to fulfil its pledges even if by doing so it would be pursuing a wrong policy rather than betray the country in order that it should do what they consider to be expedient. The Congress can never think of it for a moment; if it forgot its past promises so quickly and so disgracefully, the country would never give it its confidence again.

But why is rejection to be given up? Because, we are told, unless the Congress sought the help of anti-rejectionist members it will not obtain a majority in the Assembly and by pursuing this will-o'-the-wisp of rejection it will only demonstrate its own numerical weakness. As a matter of fact the Congress (including its Nationalist wing) and the Muslim Unity Board, and other Congress-minded members returned by special interests are in a clear majority in the Assembly, if non-official members are reckoned and the official bloc is kept out. It is not therefore necessary for the Congress to make a bargain with communal parties in order that it may be able to carry its rejection motion. But, it is objected, the voting will not be confined to non-officials; the officials too will insist upon exercising their constitutional right to vote on every proposition that comes before it. This is an idle fear. Officials cannot and will not vote on the rejection motion.

Let me give the instance of the resolution debated in the Legislative Council of Burma on the question of the separation of that province from India. How did Government find out public opinion on it? They first ordered a General Election on that issue. Separationists and anti-separationists were given full opportunities of propagating their respective views. The question was then raised in the new Council in the form of a resolution, and on this resolution only the non-officials were allowed to vote. This was the procedure that was laid down by Government on its own initiative, and officials were ordered not to vote because Government realised that

they were entirely out of place where public opinion was to be ascertained. In putting the question to the Council, the President said, on the 16th December, 1932: "At the beginning of this year, the Prime Minister made an announcement to the Burma Round Table Conference in London and indicated that he wanted to ascertain the opinion of Burma on the question of separation or not from India. A General Election has been held and this Council has been especially assembled on this somewhat early date in order that the opinion of non-official representatives of Burma should be ascertained so that Government might know the opinion of Burma as stated by its representatives."

The approved means of ascertaining public opinion on any question is to submit the question to the vote of the legislature elected on that issue and, where the legislature contains officials, to the vote of the non-official part of it. The new Assembly has been returned on the issue of constitutional reforms, and if the non-official members pronounce their verdict in favour of rejection, Government must accept the verdict and abandon their proposals. It can be contended that even nominated non-official members ought to be excluded from the vote, but the contention may not be accepted by Government. On the issue of separation, the nominated non-official members in the Burma Council were allowed to vote, and Government may insist, on the issue of reforms too, that such members in the Assembly shall be left free to vote. But Government themselves, on their own initiative and without any demand from the public, will forbid official members in the Assembly to vote. If this is done it does not require more than 61 members to carry the rejection motion, and the rejectionist parties themselves, without any alliance with other parties, but only with the help of representatives of special interests who hold Congress views, will have that much numerical strength. It is quite unnecessary therefore for the Congress, apart from the immorality involved therein, to violate its election pledges and modify its rejection policy in order to co-operate with anti-rejectionists.

It so happened that, even with all the precautions taken by Government, the vote in the Burma Council on the question of separation was obscure, and Government was compelled to take the decision on its own authority. But the decision being against the inclusion of Burma in the federation, Government felt free to take it. However, it would not have assumed responsibility for forcing Burma into the federation in face of an ambiguity in Burma's own choice, for such a decision would be incapable of being revoked in any imaginable circumstances in future. A federation, once agreed to, stands for all time, secession from it being supposed to be constitutionally impossible. The British Government would never have thought for one moment of keeping Burma in India by force when India was about to adopt a federal constitution, for by so doing they would be putting Burma in a position from which there would be no retracing of steps at any future time. How much more terrific would be the

responsibility of the British Government for imposing, not upon one province of India, but upon all of them a federal constitution, which is an interminable and irreplaceable constitution, in face, not of an ambiguous decision of the Indian people, but of a clear and unmistakable decision on their part against it! The British Government seems capable of no end of folly, but of an atrocity of such magnitude even the British Government may not be capable.

The Congress must not, and will not, modify its main policy in order to obtain the co-operation of other parties. But it can accommodate these parties in smaller ways, whenever it can do so without sacrificing principle. The policy of rejection itself the Congress may express in a form which is felt to be unobjectionable by other parties. If these parties would insist upon a negative expression to connote a positive act, if they would prefer "non-acceptance" to "rejection," I for my part do not see any reason why the Congress should not agree. The Philippines Legislature, when it wanted to reject the Independence Act of the U. S. Congress, used the negative form. It "declines to accept" the Act, it said; so may our own Legislative Assembly. There is really no difference of substance between the two, and if the susceptibilities of some delicate natures stand one expression better than another, the Congress may as well adopt the one which is not obnoxious to them. There is one other matter on which a compromise is possible. The Legislative Assembly, in its rejection or non-acceptance resolution, will probably state the reasons for non-acceptance or rejection. These reasons need not be exhaustive; they may be only such as are agreed to by all. Each party may, in addition to these, have other reasons which in its opinion justify rejection. The compromise here suggested would enable a united front to be shown without any party being required to violate its campaign pledges or surrender any part of its major policy. The Congress too should be eager to bring about such an honourable compromise, but on essentials it cannot obviously give way, and, happily there is no need for it to do so.

A CONGRESSMAN.

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## Our London Letter.

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(BY AIR MAIL.)  
(From Our Correspondent.)

LONDON, 23rd November.

AT LONG LAST!

WE now know both the best and the worst of the Report of the Joint Select Committee. To expect that it will arouse the least enthusiasm in India is, as any one could have foretold who had an inkling of the contents of the Report, to expect the impossible. Its favourable features had long since been discounted, and even these have been whittled down by a mass of safeguards and an insistence upon conservative precautions. The emphasis has been changed from confidence to cautiousness and the note has altered from mutual generosity to mutual suspicion. The internal factions within a

single party, and considerations of a domestic character, largely extraneous to Indian interests and Imperial welfare, have triumphed in such a way that an understanding and appreciation of the intensity and reality of Indian nationalism has been largely forgotten and Indian psychology equally largely ignored.

#### FACTORS OF MISUNDERSTANDING.

Two main factors have gone far to bring about this unfortunate state of affairs. One lies here, the other in India. It takes a long time for the British people to emancipate themselves from ingrained habits of mind and of conduct. So far as the Englishman of to-day is concerned, he has been brought up under the party system. When W. S. Gilbert wrote that every little English boy or girl was born either a little Conservative or a little Liberal, he was stating a profound truth though he used the political nomenclature of his day. Roughly men are divided into Conservatives and Progressives, the one having their eyes upon the past, and the others having them turned towards the future. In translating these temperamental tendencies into modern political language one can understand the principal reason for the gradual elimination of Liberalism as a political party. People naturally turn either to the right or to the left in their political allegiances, and a centre party such as that which Liberalism has sought to become is not well regarded by a people that characteristically dislikes mugwumps and sitters on the fence, as the political jargonists would have it. It is quite true that, in the emergency in which the country found itself in 1931, the stage was unexpectedly set for a national administration: but in the nature of things the problems set for solution were far greater than such an administration could effectively solve, even if we had been a nation of planners (which every one knows we are not, except under compulsion), in any short space of time. Nevertheless the very urgency of some of the problems has involved a certain shifting of values and the adoption of certain social and economic measures that have gravely upset the equilibrium of the more conservative Tories, who had never given their genuine allegiance to the concept of a National Government, who had resented the presence of a Labour Prime Minister at the head of a national administration, and who had felt entitled to take full advantage of a vast Tory majority in Parliament, many of whom, however, owed their seats to non-Tory votes. Add to this political jealousies and ambitions, and one realises the state of internal tension that has increasingly developed in the Tory Party. On the other hand, the measures taken by the National Government have failed to anticipate the national need to the extent that had been hoped, or to satisfy the demands of many middle-minded people without specific party affiliations or loyalties. It was this section that gave the Government their huge majority in 1931, and it is this section, too, that have more or less clearly indicated their own dissatisfaction with Government policy during recent by-elections.

#### SOCIALISM AND ANTI-SOCIALISM.

Accordingly the Tory Party leaders and many others have been viewing with increasing concern the prospects before them as the time approaches for the next appeal to the country. It is not quite true to say, as the *Daily Herald* did a few days ago, that the Joint Select Committee (or, as it now appears, the majority) had subordinated Indian interests to the internal concerns of one party in the State. The Conservatives as a whole, and many others, have definitely reached the view that at the next general election they will be at grips with Socialism and that in the intervening period between now and then

the maximum effort should be made to keep intact the anti-Socialist forces, in view of the threats of Sir Stafford Cripps recently renewed as to the nature of the Socialist programme immediately if, and when, it should be returned to office. It is true that every speech of Sir Stafford loses the Labour Party thousands of votes in the country, but the anti-Socialist element, whilst deriving consolation from that fact realises that many things may happen between now and the general election, both as a result of continental and world conditions and of internal economic crises that may bring the nation, from their point of view, in danger of Socialism and disaster. If, therefore, the Joint Select Committee, composed as in the circumstances of the case it was, has reported with a view to securing the maximum of support from the middle-minded Conservative elements, it had at least as much an eye upon the political and economic future of this country, at a date not more than two years hence at the most, and possibly considerably earlier, as it did upon the conditions of India, real or supposed.

#### THE INDIAN FACTORS.

On the Indian side the situation has been none too encouraging. Political observers here have watched with some anxiety the serious, and apparently incurable, irresponsibility of Congress politicians, the widespread character of its Congress appeal to nationalist sentiment and the latter's general response, the ineffectiveness of Moderate nationalist organisations, the growth in urban areas of Socialism-Communism, the revival of militant orthodoxy among Hindus, and the complete failure of Indians themselves to solve their communal differences. The internal weaknesses of India, combined with the prospects of internal discord, on the one hand, and extreme irresponsible nationalism, on the other, have had an effect upon the British imagination far deeper than it is pleasant to recall, either by Indians themselves or by their British friends and well-wishers. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at if, on the whole, the Joint Select Committee has erred rather on the side of cautiousness than on that of generosity, on kindly wariness rather than on sympathy and courage. I think that there is very little doubt that when the country has recovered from its major interest in next week's Royal marriage, and has begun to digest the Committee's proposals, it will generally approve of them. The British people have a habit of playing for safety. The hymn (Mahatma Gandhi's favourite) "One step enough for me" was written by an Englishman.

#### LABOUR PARTY REACTIONS.

Quite naturally the Labour Party, whose representatives have fought so splendidly, as the Volume of Proceedings clearly shows, to secure some substantial improvement upon the White Paper proposals for the effective satisfaction of national opinion in India, and to obtain larger opportunities and a better status for the Indian masses, have expressed deep dissatisfaction with the Report. Mr. Lansbury, as Leader of the Opposition, has manfully stated that the Party will accept no responsibility for the constitution based upon the Report. He has very properly emphasised the critical defects of the present proposals, and in particular has pointed to the inelasticity of the proposed constitution, the absence of any declared direction towards Dominion Status, and the heavy over-weight of conservative precautions entrenching class interests.

On the other hand, twice in the House of Commons he has equally plainly stated, as did Lord Ponsonby in the Lords, in almost identical language, that, whilst the policy of the Party would be to



oppose the Bill through its various stages, with a view to its amendment "nearer to the heart's desire", the Party must not be taken to intend to play the game of Mr. Churchill and his diehard friends, or to desire to wreck the Bill, which even the Labour Party regards as demonstrably, and substantially, an advance upon the present constitution, whatever may be the view widely held to the contrary in India. Indeed, it is clear, both from Mr. Lansbury's pronouncements and from Major Attlee's writings in to-day's *New Statesman* and the *Daily Herald*, Labour will expect that, having done everything possible to improve the Constitution Bill, the parties in India will make up their minds to work the new constitution and to extract from it the maximum that it is capable of securing for the advancement of India to her natural goal of complete self-government.

#### THE PROSPECTS.

Let us now take some of the realities of the situation. In spite of the academic fireworks in which the irresponsible Mr. Churchill took part on the Prime Minister's motion that the House should agree that private members' time throughout this session should be taken for Government business, in view of the immensity of its programme—Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Baldwin together indicating that the India Bill would contain something in the neighbourhood of four hundred clauses—there was no real disposition to impede the Government by refusing facilities. Moreover, looking towards Mr. Churchill, the Prime Minister emphasised that, whilst the Government desired very full discussion on a highly complex and controversial measure, they were not prepared for licence. At a later stage, Mr. Churchill gave a general assurance that the opponents of the Bill would not use obstructive tactics, suggesting thereby that there was no need to contemplate the use of the guillotine or other machinery for cutting short debate. No-one knows better than Mr. Lansbury, who suggested that there was no reason why discussions should not be continued in an early autumn session, that by reason of circumstances here as well as in India it is imperative to get the Bill passed this session, which will be impossible if it reaches the Lords only at the end of next year. Every effort will therefore be made to get rid of the Bill from the Commons before Parliament rises for the summer vacation.

#### POSSIBILITIES AND AMENDMENT.

What is also certain is that though, as the *Manchester Guardian* suggests to Indian politicians, they should concentrate upon securing such amendments in the Bill as will effectively improve it from the Indian viewpoint and will obtain the maximum support in India, I very much doubt whether, except in minor matters, the Government will be willing to accept any amendment in a forward direction. This is not necessarily because they are unsympathetic or unresponsive. It arises out of the nature of the case itself. What is virtually the Majority Report is a compromise among many different tendencies, and it hangs together. The diehards have so far succeeded that the Government have been compelled, through their representatives on the Committee, to accept such modifications of the White Paper proposals downwards as would make it possible for them to carry with them a majority of their Tory followers in Parliament. It is practically certain that they have succeeded in doing this and that they will have reduced the Tory opposition to the Bill to something in the neighbourhood of forty to fifty. If, however, they were to accept any substantial modifications upwards, the whole position would be ripped open without any hope of agreement, and without any hope of a constitution.

The Liberals will certainly try to reopen the question of indirect versus direct election for the Federal Assembly. They are disgruntled that the views of the Franchise Committee, so ably presided over by Lord Lothian, and adopted in the White Paper, should have been deliberately set aside. They have a traditional belief in the virtue of the wide-spread vote, and they are not anxious to safeguard the already only too well safeguarded position of the conservative elements in Indian life. It may be incidentally mentioned here that the India Office has been at pains to "scotch" rumours arising out of the fact that Lord Lothian, Sir John Simon, and Lord Winterton were not present to vote for the Report. They did not deliberately absent themselves. Lord Lothian was in America, according to a long pre-arranged plan. Sir John Simon, who is speaking on the Report this week-end, was prevented at the last moment from attending the final meeting of the Committee owing to his preoccupation with the dangerous situation arising out of the assassination of King Alexander and of M. Barthou (for whose funeral ceremonies he flew to Paris that very day). Lord Winterton had a public engagement that he could not cancel at the last moment, the time and day of the final meeting having been suddenly altered at short notice. Anyhow the Liberals, like the Labour Party, will do nothing to prevent the passage of the Bill.

#### TORY TACTICS.

Everything, however, will depend upon how the Conservative Central Council, who will have had twelve days in which to study the Bill, will react to Mr. Baldwin's leadership on the 4th December. The diehards have had the wisdom and the shrewdness not to rely solely upon Mr. Churchill's leadership, but have decided to place their faith in the hands of Lord Salisbury, whose staunch and traditional Toryism will stand the diehards in much better stead with the Party than Mr. Churchill's erratic political career. Moreover, brilliant as the latter is, he cuts nothing like so much ice as he did before his signal failure over the affair of the Committee of Privileges. By the way, no serious notice need be taken of the fact that the subject of the privileges of the House is to be referred to a Committee for report. It was adumbrated at the time of Lord Hugh Cecil's speech on the Report of the Committee of Privileges, some months ago. It is interesting to note, too, that the question of breach of privilege is to be raised to-day in Parliament by a Liberal Member in connection with the fact that yesterday morning, by the first post, Members of Parliament received, "with the compliments of Lord Salisbury," a sixpenny pamphlet reproducing the complete text of the very fatuous alternative scheme proposed to the Joint Select Committee by the dissentient Tory minority. The argument is that, if the printing of the document was put in hand before the Report and the Proceedings were placed in the hands of Members at 2-45 p. m. on Tuesday last, a clear breach of the privileges of Parliament has occurred, since no one but the King's Printer is entitled, without authority, to print any part of the Parliamentary proceedings or those of a duly appointed committee of Parliament. It may prove to be a mare's nest, but on the other hand it may be that a technical breach of privilege has occurred, and if so Lord Salisbury's advocacy of the diehard cause will be somewhat damaged in advance.

#### PROPAGANDA AND PROGRAMME.

Nevertheless it may be that even if, as is expected, Mr. Baldwin gets his vote on the 4th December, the Central Council will agree to a further reference to the larger body of representatives of Conservative Associations throughout the country. The diehards will hope that in the more emotional surroundings of

less well-informed Party members, they will obtain better results. Such a meeting could not be arranged for until about the middle of January. In the meanwhile, Government spokesmen and other competent persons will have been flooding the country with propaganda, speeches and writings, with the object of steadying opinion in favour of the Report, and, on the whole, though I do not think that a great hullabaloo can be avoided, and a great deal of unwise talk prevented, I am fairly confident that the Government will be free to pursue their programme. But it is all the more certain in that case that they will be precluded from accepting amendments that may, from the Indian viewpoint, substantially improve the Bill. It is yet uncertain whether the Bill will be introduced this side of Christmas or not. Though it is practically in shape already, there may still be technical difficulties preventing its early publication, and in any case before reaching a decision on the question the Cabinet may prefer to await the result of the Tory Party meeting early in December. As to the House of Lords, it is yet early days to predict what it will do. Lord Derby, especially with the greater part of Lancashire behind him, is a very heavy counterpoise to Lord Salisbury, and the Archbishop of Canterbury (who made a very bold speech last Monday on the occasion of the final Emancipation Centenary Celebrations meeting, at the Mansion House, in which he warned the country of its responsibilities towards the native inhabitants of the South African Protectorates, and to exercise the utmost caution against a too ready acceptance of General Smuts's plausible plea for the transfer of the Protectorates from Downing Street administration to that of the Union Government) wields enormous influence among the Conservative Peers. If, therefore, all goes well for the Government in the Commons, though the Lords will insist upon adequate time to discuss the Bill, they will not make its passage, during the present session, impossible.

#### PRESS COMMENT.

Turning for a moment to the Press, comment has been more or less upon anticipated lines. The Rothermere Press and the *Morning Post* (whose Bombay correspondent confidently predicts the rejection of the scheme by the Princes;) condemned the Report out of hand, for obvious reasons. Probably their articles had been written three months ago. At any rate they might have been. There has been a steady tendency among the hitherto uncommitted Tory Press, with few exceptions, to come down in favour of the Report. This is especially noticeable in the Provinces, though the *Scotsman* is hostile. The Beaverbrook Press will probably see which way the cat jumps, but one has to reckon with Lord Beaverbrook's personal hostility to Mr. Baldwin, of whose attitude towards protection he entirely disapproves. The *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, which have steadily supported the Government throughout, continue to do so. Both the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Times* regard the Report as a great State document, and the *Spectator*, too, supports it. The *News Chronicle* is gently critical of its reactionary features, and of course the *Daily Herald* echoes the official Labour point of view, and points to the inadequacy of the proposals to satisfy Indian opinion. This is emphasised in a cabled special article (featured on the leader page), in the *News-Chronicle* from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the text of which will probably be already known to your readers. It is the only detailed opinion from India yet available, though probably others will be forthcoming. Comment appears to-day, too, upon the note of caution struck by the *Hindustan Times* in the midst of the chorus of condemnation arising from the Indian Nationalist Press generally,

and in particular the Congress and near-Congress elements therein.

## Review.

### BOMBAY CITY'S PROBLEMS.

**BOMBAY LOOKS AHEAD.** Ed. By CLIFORD MANSCHARDT. (Taraporevala.) 1934. 24cm. 107p. Rs. 4.

A PEOPLE in order to be fit for democracy must be an educated people, that is to say, schooled in at least the elements of political science and political knowledge. The schooling must first take the form of the education of the people in the problems of their corporations, municipalities and district boards, for, like charity, democracy must begin at home. It was to educate the citizens of Bombay on the problems of the moment that the Nagpada Neighbourhood House arranged a series of lectures in the cold weather season of 1929-1930 to stimulate thought upon various phases of Bombay's public life and to rouse a civic consciousness. These lectures in the series 'Building a Better City' were published under the title 'Bombay To-Day and To-Morrow.'

The 'Building a Better City' series of lectures which were very popular could not be finished owing to the unfortunate launching of the Civil Disobedience movement which engrossed the attention of Bombay citizens in the national fight. The withdrawal of the C. D. movement enabled the organisers of these popular civic lectures to arrange another series called 'Bombay Looks Ahead' in 1934. Eight lectures were delivered and they have been given permanent shape by this publication under review. The book contains an introduction from Lord Bra-bourne, the Governor of Bombay, who presided at the opening lecture in the series.

In the first lecture, which is the best in the series entitled the 'Social Function of Municipal Government,' Mr. Masani, Municipal Commissioner of Bombay, deals not "with the formal routine activities of municipal government, but with those problems of social welfare which ordinarily fall outside the obligations imposed upon municipal authorities by statute but which have been increasingly engaging the attention of progressive municipalities in modern times." The measures which he mentions are of a preventive character, their aim being to counteract the ills of modern civilisation.

If we may be permitted to parody a well-known adage, we may say that 'Man proposes, but Finance disposes.' It may therefore be pointed out that the ambitious programme laid before the Bombay Corporation by Mr. Masani requires ample funds for its fulfilment. The lecturer's point of view is that where there is a will, there is a way. Mr. Masani says: "The authorities may either render a social service direct, or have it rendered by other organisations, encouraged by concessions, subventions or both."

The other lectures in the book touch on the specific problems of Bombay such as city planning, educational system, adult education, industrial unemployment and industrial future, and the protection of children. The lecturers have brought to bear on all these subjects their vast erudition and great experience and have presented the problems with a conciseness and a felicity of expression all their own.

The pleasure and satisfaction of a reader of this book is somewhat damped by the feeling that its

price is excessive. After all a full text of these lectures would have appeared in newspapers at the time when they were delivered. To fix the price of the book containing the lectures which are spread over 107 pages at Rs. 4 is certainly too much.

M. V. SUBRAHMANYAM.

## Correspondence.

### HISTORY OF PUNJABI LITERATURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SERVANT OF INDIA.

SIR,—I shall feel obliged if you will please publish the following. A number of points in a review of my "History of Punjabi Literature" published in your journal require correction and elucidation.

(1) The reviewer ascribes greater authenticity to the work on Kabir of the late S. Nihal Singh Suri. The work in question is entirely useless as history for the writer has tried to establish that Kabir, along with Ravidas, Namdev, etc. was a follower of Nanak whom he met in his old age and acknowledged as his Guru, making veiled references in his later poetry to this effect. I have discussed the bases of Suri's conclusions in my latest work on Kabir. I have also in that publication denied Kabir's authorship of *Bijak*; Dr. F. E. Keay (Kabir and his Followers) also maintains this thesis. As regards the merit of Kabir's poetry I do maintain that much of it is second-rate and full of insipid repetitions; not only that, it is fully derivative and in my forthcoming volume on *Kabir and His Poetry* I shall be dealing with this judgment at length.

(2) Whether or not all extra-*Granth* compositions bearing the name of Nanak are real or spurious is a question over which the more orthodox accepting the decision of the compiler of the *Adi-Granth*, have a right to differ from the less orthodox Sikhs and the non-Sikhs who have an equal right to maintain their viewpoint, on the strength of internal evidence.

(3) I have not included extracts from Kabir, Namdev, Miran Bai, Chand Bardai, Raidas and Shah Burhan-ud-Din (by the way, Hamir Rasau is not an author; it is the name of a poetical work) because I considered them to have been Panjabi writers of the Pre-Nanak Age, but partly because I wanted the reader to see for himself the great similarity between the metres, vocabulary and ideology of the non-Punjabi saints and the Punjabi saints of the same period and of the period which followed next; partly because they provided good evidence for the correct chronology of Kabir, and, also, partly because they illustrated the influence of one upon the other and showed how in its first stage *Hindavi*, the North Indian vernacular, resembled *Dakkani* greatly.

(4) Kabir did imbibe linguistic, metrical, verbal and ideological influences from the Punjab and Punjabi and I am glad that in maintaining it I err, if at all, in good company. I would refer your reviewer to the preface to his *Kabir Granthavali* by S. S. Das and to the latest work entitled *History of the Development of Hindi Language and Literature* by A. U. S. Upadhyaya, published by the Patna University.

(5) With regard to the language of Bhai Santokh Singh, the exact words I have used in characterization of the passage quoted from him are: How Persian, Lahndi, Braji and Lahori are mingled and brought under the sway of Panjabi phonetics and poetical necessity will be very thoroughly exempli-

fied by the following lines taken at random from his *Nanak Prakash*.

(6) Your reviewer states that where Muslim influence prevailed, the language became what is called Lahndi. He has obviously forgotten his Grierson and has shown his ignorance of the difference between *Hindavi* and Hindi, and Bailey and Bloch, Mohammadans had precious little to do with the formation of *Lahnda* or Lahndi.

(7) If the reviewer is prepared to accept particular portions of Guru Arjan Dev's *Jaisri-di-var* as good examples of Lahori, all his criticism of my failure to discriminate between Punjabi, Hindavi, and Avadhi loses its point.

(8) I am glad the reviewer acknowledges that Punjabi literature in a recognisable form began with the Mohammadan Sufi *faqirs* of the South and West like Farid, and the *Hindu Yogi faqirs of the East like Gorakh and Charpat*. His complaint in the next sentence, that the passages quoted by me from the *Yogis* are very poor specimens of Panjabi, is rather queer; you cannot expect poets writing in the 10th or 11th century to give you the language as it was to become four or five centuries later.

(9) I attach no value to the latest researches of Professor Sahib Singh. I am quite satisfied with the number and identity of the Bhattas as I find them in Bhai Kaban Singh's *Gur Shabad Ratnakar*. Where is there any authentic account of these Bhattas to be found?

(10) So far as I know, there are no *parachis* (*parichayas*) of Mani Singh.

(11) Prose ascribed to Gorakh Nath is available but I do not accept its authenticity.

(12) The Panjabi prose of Professor Puran Singh as exemplified in his *Khulha Lekh* and his translation of Tolstoy's "Resurrection" is certainly, to me, our best modern prose. Your reviewer and I can agree to differ on that point as on that of the merit of Kabir's poetry.

(13) It is not a question of my having "had no time to read the enormous mass of production which has been crowded into a short period of recent development". I had no inclination to do it as most of it is trash. I made my intentions quite clear when I quoted a line by an anonymous author at the beginning of the chapter on the British Period: "There are mountains of printed matter in the world, there are relatively few books." I do assert that all the "books" printed during the modern period I have taken notice of. Your reviewer himself admits that I have "got in most of the prominent authors". I only would change "most of" into "all".

(14) If an Urdu work is translated into good literary Panjabi that is no reason why I should not include it in the Panjabi list. That explains the presence of *Guru Gobind Singh* by Daulat Ram. I included *Chittian de Var* and *Var Nadir Shah* under prose works because I had in view the merit of the prose introductions by the editors prefacing the original verse.

(15) As to my use of excellent English words like picturization, economicality, plentitude, idiomaticness, which your reviewer calls "queer", I may assure him that these queer words have been picked up by me for their exactly covering the ideas which needed expression, from such journals as the *Bookman* and *John O'London's Weekly*, and other latest English critical works. It is there that I learn my English and I must confess I am not prepared to do that from Indians who "profess" English in the Panjab or elsewhere in India.

(16) The questions how and when, did the various North-Indian vernaculars arise, when and how

far did differing provincial phonetic laws begin to operate, what part did *Yogis, Siddhas, Naths* and *Sufis* play in the formation and development of *Hindavi*, what is the extent of indebtedness of one mediaeval *Bhagat* and poet to another, how should mixed vocabulary be christened, are larger questions some of which still call for final answers and are engaging the attention of scholars all over India who are busily engaged in re-evaluating old, orthodox views. Men who know no other than their own provincial vernacular and who are unacquainted with the principles of phonetics had better not rush in where angels fear to tread. For fear of making this letter too lengthy for publication in your weekly I refrain from answering to minor points your reviewer has raised.—Yours, etc.

MOHAN SINGH.

Oriental College, Lahore,  
Nov. 27.

## Miscellaneous.

### NO SURRENDER.

INDIANS should take care that they are not rattled into an ignominious surrender by self-interested parties. If the White Paper scheme is bad, it is bad and must be rejected. Nothing is to be gained by its acceptance.

It is foolish to hope that it can ever be amended into a constitution worthy of India. Those who believe in such a metamorphosis are living in a fool's paradise.

The appeal made by the Die-Hard Lords and Commoners should be an eye-opener to all those who believe that by rejecting the scheme they will merely help to strengthen the hands of India's proclaimed enemies.

Such arguments should not weigh with patriotic Indians, who must act in this matter with the sole motive to do what is in the best interests of their own country. Opportunism is worse than defeatism and abject surrender.

The Congress and other political parties in the Assembly are being urged not to reject the Select Committee's report, in view of the Die-Hard appeal.

It is stated that the Die-Hards in Britain, who are sharpening their swords to fight the scheme, would at once raise the cry that it is no use forcing on India a scheme of "self-government" which is "not acceptable" and which would be ignored or destroyed.

As Indians believe with them that there is no sense in forcing on India a scheme which she does not want, why should this threat of the Die-Hards disturb us at all? It is to be welcomed.

There is everything to be gained by postponing the scheme, or even rejecting it. But there is no advantage in accepting it, for it will permanently enthrone the bureaucracy in a position of impregnable supremacy, from which it will be difficult to dislodge it in the future.

It is far better to remain as we are than accept a constitution which is no advance at all, but something which will bring more reaction in the country and which will strengthen the hands of foreign capitalists and fortify bureaucrats and policemen in perpetual domination over the country.

Indians are asked what they will gain by forcing a postponement of the Bill, and whether they expect the Labour Party to do any better in the future when it comes into power.

India does not expect much from any British Party, whether Labour or any other. Indians are under no delusion that Labour will be more honest in its treatment of Indian claims than other British political parties have been.

But that is no reason for accepting the constitution which is now offered, which makes no genuine effort to widen the bounds of India's political freedom, or which makes of Governors and Governors-General freak dictators with powers vying with those of a Mussolini or Hitler.

India does not want a Federation of British Indians with autocratic Princes whose presence in the Federal Assembly is neither desirable nor just unless Indians in British India are given similar powers of interference with the affairs of Indian States.

It is a one-sided Federation, and the presence of these autocrats in the Federal legislature will be of no advantage to any one but themselves, the bureaucracy and alien rentiers.

That is an intolerable position, not only humiliating to the country and unacceptable to it, but positively harmful and dangerous to its future progress.

By accepting the scheme, Indians and particularly Congressmen will surrender all that they have stood for, fought for, and suffered for the past few years. The acceptance of the scheme will merely give a further lease of life to the present conditions, which ought to be ended now or never.

It is for this that we call upon all patriotic Indians, to whatever party or community they may belong, to unite and avert the danger of the new constitution. Reject it irrespective of consequences. Anything else will mean abject surrender of the country's interests.—The *Bombay Sentinel*, 4th December.

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