

SPEECHES
ON
INDIAN AFFAIRS
BY
JOHN MORLEY

THIRD EDITION,
REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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NOTE.

This is the second and up-to-date edition of Lord Morley's Speeches and Writings on Indian affairs. At the moment when the question of Self-Government for India is being keenly discussed on all sides, Lord Morley's Speeches on Indian Reforms, particularly those made in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords in his capacity as Secretary of State for India and also his famous Despatch on the Indian Councils Bill, 1909, will be read with immense interest. Every effort has been made to include in this edition not only all the speeches of Lord Morley on Indian subjects but also his contributions to the press on the same. To facilitate easy reference an index has been added to this edition.

July 1917.

PREFACE.

Advantage has been taken of the issue of this revised (Third) edition to include Lord Morley's views on the Montagu Reforms as well as King Edward's Gracious Proclamation (Appendix. F.) which is well known as the handiwork of Lord Morley, the then Secretary of State for India.

MADRAS,
June 1920.

The Publishers.

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APPENDIX.

LORD MORLEY'S DESPATCH

ON

THE REFORM PROPOSALS.

The following is the full text of Lord Morley's Despatch:—

I have to acknowledge the important despatch of the 1st October, 1908, in which I had submitted for approval and decision a group of constitutional reforms framed by Your Excellency in Council, in pursuance of a policy initiated more than two years ago. Your proposals in their present shape are the outcome of a tentative project placed, in August last year, in the hands of Local Governments in India with instructions to consult important bodies and individuals representative of various classes of the community before putting their own conclusions before the Government of India. Those instructions, as you are very evidently justified in assuring me, were carried out with great care and thoroughness. After examining, moreover, the enormous mass of material gathered together in a prolonged operation, I gladly recognise the admirable industry, patience, thought and candour with which that material has been sifted by your Government and worked out into practical proposals, liberal in their spirit and comprehensive in their scope. I have taken all the pains demanded by their importance to secure special consideration of them in Council. It is a sincere satisfaction to me to find myself able to accept the substantial part of Your Excellency's scheme, with such modifications as would naturally occur to different minds in handling problems of remarkable difficulty in themselves and reasonably open to a wide variety of solution,

THE IMPERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL.

The original proposal of an Imperial Advisory Council was based on the interesting and attractive idea of associating ruling Chiefs and territorial magnates of British India in guardianship of common and Imperial interests and as a means of promoting more intimate relations among component parts of the Indian Empire. The general opinion of those whose assent and co-operation would be indispensable has proved adverse, and Your Excellency in

Council now considers that the project should for the present not be proceeded with.

You still favour an Imperial Council composed only of ruling Chiefs. Lord Lytton made an experiment in this direction, but it remained without successful result. Lord Curzon afterwards proposed to create a Council composed exclusively of Princes contributing Imperial Service Troops, and deliberating on that subject exclusively. The opinion is pronounced that this also is likely to be unfruitful and ineffectual in practice. Your Excellency's project is narrower than the first of these two and wider than the second. I confess that, while entirely appreciating and sympathising with your object, I judge the practical difficulties in the way of such a Council assembling under satisfactory conditions to be considerable, the expense, precedence, and housing, for instance, even if there were no others, yet if not definitely discontinued with a view to assembly it could possess little or no reality. It would obviously be a mistake to push the project unless it commands the clear assent and approval of those whose presence in the Council would be essential to its success, and the opinions expressed in the replies with which you have furnished me lead me to doubt whether that condition can be secured. But in case Your Excellency still favours this proposal, which is in itself attractive, I do not wish to express dissent at this stage, and if, after consultation with the leading Chiefs, you are able to devise a scheme that is at once acceptable to them and workable in practice, I am not inclined to place any obstacle in the way of a full and fair trial and in any event the doubt I have expressed must not be taken as discouraging consultation with individual Chiefs according to the existing practice, for nobody with any part to play in Indian Government can doubt the manifold advantages of still further developing not only amicable but confidential relations of this kind with the loyal rulers in Indian States, possessed as they are of such peculiar authority and experience.

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCILS.

Next I agree with Your Excellency in the judgment that the question of a Council of notables for British India only should not be entertained. I am inclined, furthermore, for my own part, to doubt whether the creation of Provincial Advisory Councils is likely to prove an experiment of any marked actual value. The origin of the demand for bodies of that character, whatever the strength of such a demand amounts to, is undoubtedly the desire for greater facilities in the discussion of public measures. Your Excellency indicates what strikes me as pointing in a more hopeful direction in the proposition that this claim

for increased facilities of discussion should be met "rather by extending the powers of the existing Legislative Councils than by setting up large rival Councils which must to some extent conflict with them." Large or small, such rivalry would be almost certain to spring up, and from the first the new species of Council would be suspected as designed to be a check upon the old. As in the case of ruling Chiefs or of notables in British India, so here, informal consultation with the leading men of a locality would have most or all of the advantages of an Advisory Council without the many obvious disadvantages of duplicating political machinery.

ENLARGEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS.

From these proposals I pass to what is, and what you declared to be, the pith and substance of the despatch under reply. "The enlargement of the Legislative Councils," you say, "and the extension of their functions to the discussion of administrative questions are the widest, most deep-reaching and most substantial features of the scheme which we now put forward." This perfectly correct description evoked and justified the close scrutiny to which these features have been subjected in my Council, and I am glad to believe that the result reveals few elements of material difference.

Your Government have now felt bound to deal first with the Imperial Legislative Council and from that work downwards to the Councils in the Provinces. I gather, however, from your despatch of the 21st March, 1907, that you would at that time have preferred, as Lord Lansdowne had done in 1892, to build up the higher fabric on the foundation of the Provincial Councils. In your circular letter of the 24th August, 1907, you observed that the most logical and convenient mode of dealing with the question would have been first to discuss and settle the composition, the electorates and the powers of the Provincial Legislative Councils, and then to build up on the basis of these materials a revised constitution for the Imperial Council. In the absence of proposals from the Local Governments and Administrations, you were precluded from adopting this course, and, therefore, you set tentatively before them the line on which first the Legislative Council of the Governor-General and thereafter those of Governors and Lieutenant-Governors might be constituted.

In your present letter you have followed the same order, but with the full materials before me such as are now supplied by local opinions, it appears to be both more convenient and, as you said, more logical to begin with the Provincial Councils and afterwards to consider the constitution of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS.

The first question that arises touches the principle of representation. This is fully discussed in paragraphs 18 to 20, 26 to 31, and 34 of your letter. Citing previous discussions of the subject and referring to the precedent of the measures taken to give effect to the Statute of 1892, you adhere to the opinion that in the circumstances of India representation by classes and interests is the only practicable method of embodying the principle in the constitution of the Legislative Councils (paragraphs A. D.). You justly observe that the principle to be borne in mind is that the election by the wishes of the people is the ultimate object to be secured, whatever may be the actual machinery adopted for giving effect to it. (paragraph 29.) You consider that for certain limited interests Corporations of Presidency towns, Universities, Chambers of Commerce, planting communities and the like limited electorates must exist as at present, and you foresee no serious obstacle in carrying out arrangements for that purpose. Difficulties come into view when you go beyond these limited electorates and have to deal with large and widespread interests or communities, such as the landholding and professional classes, or with important minorities, such as Mahomedans in most provinces in India, and Sikhs in the Punjab. You dwell upon the great variety of conditions in the various provinces of the Indian Empire and the impossibility of applying any uniform system throughout, and your conclusion generally appears to be that class electorates should be framed where this is practicable and likely to lead to good results, and in their failure or defect it will be necessary to have recourse to nomination.

With the general principles advanced by Your Excellency in this chapter of our discussion I am in entire accord. I agree that to some extent class representation must be maintained in the limited electorates to which you refer, and here, as you point out, no serious obstacle is to be anticipated. I agree also that the Legislative Council should reflect the leading elements of the population at large and that no system of representation would be satisfactory if it did not provide for the presence in the Councils of sufficient representatives of communities so important as are the Mahomedans and the landed classes. But, in examining your plans for obtaining their representation, I am struck with the difficulty of securing satisfactory electoral bodies under them and with the extent to which, as you expect, nomination will be demanded to supply the deficiencies of election. The same awkwardness and perplexity appear in obtaining satisfactory representation of the Indian commercial classes where, as is found generally throughout

India with very few exceptions, they have not established Associations or Chambers to represent their interests.

The case of landholders is discussed in paragraphs 27 to 29 of your letter with immediate reference to the Imperial Legislative Council, and the situation is just the same. If separate representation is to be secured for local Councils you will "find it impossible to make any definite proposal which would admit of general application." (Para 27). You see difficulties in devising a constituency that should consist only of landholders deriving a certain income from land (Para 28), and you point out with much force the objections to election by voluntary Associations. In these observations I agree, and especially in your remark that the recognition of Associations as electoral agencies should be regarded as a provisional arrangement to be maintained only until some regular electorate can be formed.

The same difficulties as you observe in paragraph 30 encounter the proposal to have a special electorate for Mahomedans in some Provinces, as in Bombay the Mahomedans are so scattered that common organisation for electoral purposes is thought impracticable. In other Provinces it is proposed to found a scheme partly on a property qualification and partly on a literary attainment; in others again it is suggested that recourse might be had to voluntary associations. One difficulty in regard to Mahomedans is not mentioned in your letter for the provision in Province of a special electorate giving them a definite proportion of the seats on the Councils might involve the refusal to them in that Province of a right to vote in the territorial electorates of which rural and Municipal Boards will afford the basis. If that were not done they would evidently have a double vote, and this would probably be resented by other classes of the population.

ELECTORAL COLLEGES.

Without rejecting the various expedients suggested by Your Excellency for adoption in order to secure the adequate presentation of these important classes on the Councils, I suggest for your consideration that the object in view might be better secured, at any rate in the more advanced Provinces in India, by a modification of the system of a popular electorate founded on the principle of electoral Colleges. The use of this method is not in itself novel. It already exists in the group of District Boards and of Municipalities, which in several Provinces return members to the Provincial Councils. The election is not committed to the Boards or Municipalities directly. These bodies choose electors, who then proceed to elect the representative of the group. I will briefly describe the scheme that at present commends itself to me,

and in order to make the method of working clear I will assume hypothetical figures for a given Province. Let it be supposed that the total population of the Province is 20 millions, of whom 15 millions are Hindus and 5 millions Mahomedans, and the number of members to be elected 12. Then since the Hindus are to Mahomedans as three to one, nine Hindus should be elected to three Mahomedans. In order to obtain these members, divide the Province into three electoral areas, in each of which three Hindus and one Mahomedan are to be returned. Then in each of these areas constitute an electoral College consisting of, let us say, a hundred members. In order to preserve the proportion between the two religions, 75 of these should be Hindus and 25 Mahomedans. This electoral College should be obtained by calling upon the various electorates, which might be (a) substantial landowners paying not less than a fixed amount of land-revenue, (b) the members of rural or subdivisinal Boards, (c) the members of District Boards, and (d) the members of Municipal Corporations, to return to it such candidates as they desired, a definite number being allotted to each electorate. Out of those offering themselves and obtaining votes, the 75 Hindus who obtained the majority of votes should be declared members of the College, and the 25 Musalmans who obtained the majority should similarly be declared elected. If the Musalmans returned did not provide 25 members for the electoral College, the deficiency would be made good by nomination. Having thus obtained an electoral College containing 75 Hindus and 25 Mussulmans, that body would be called upon to elect three representatives for the Hindus and one for the Mahomedans. Each member of the College would have only one vote and could vote for only one candidate. In this way it is evident that it would be in the power of each section of the population to return a member in the proportion corresponding to its own proportion to the total population.

In the same way the desired proportion could be obtained of any representatives of any particular interest, as, for instance, of landowners. All that is necessary would be to constitute the electoral College in such a way that the number of electors representing the land-owning interest should bear to the total number the same proportion as the members of Council representing that interest to be elected bear to the total number to be elected.

In this manner minorities would be protected against exclusion by majorities and all large and important section of the population would have the opportunity of returning members in proportion to their ratio to the total population. Their choice could in that

event be exercised in the best possible way, that, namely, of popular election, instead of requiring Government to supply deficiencies by the dubious method of nomination.

I do not wish definitely to prescribe such a scheme for adoption, whether locally or universally, but I commend it to your consideration. It appears to offer an expedient by which the objections against a system of nomination may be avoided, and it would work through a choice freely exercised by the electorate at large instead of by artificial electorates specially constituted for the purpose. No doubt it removes the primary voter by more than one stage from the ultimate choice and it does not profess to be simple. I can only say that it is quite as simple as any scheme for representation of minorities can ever be, the system of a single vote, which is an essential part of it. It is said to work satisfactorily in places where it is in existence, and it is easy of apprehension by the electors. It would have several great advantages. It would bring the classes specially concerned within the popular electorate, and so meet the criticisms of the Hindus to which you refer in paragraph 30; second, it establishes a principle that would be an answer to further claims for representation by special classes or Associations; third, it would ensure the persons chosen being actually drawn from the locality that the electoral College represents; fourth, it would provide a healthy stimulus to interest in local self-government by linking up local bodies (rural and Municipal Boards) more closely with the Provincial Legislative Councils. To this end it might be provided that the candidate for election to the Provincial Council must himself have taken part in local administration.

The due representation of the Indian mercantile community on which you touch in paragraph 31 of your letter might be included in the scheme if the commercial classes fail to organise themselves as you suggest that they may arrange to do, in Associations similar to the European Chambers of Commerce.

To meet possible objections founded on the difficulty of bringing together electoral Colleges to vote in one place, I may add that this is not contemplated in the scheme. You refer at the close of paragraph 28 to the success of the Calcutta University in organising the election of Fellows by a large number of graduates scattered all over India. The votes of the electors in each College could, I imagine, be collected in the same manner without requiring them to assemble at a common centre.

OFFICIAL MAJORITY TO BE DISPENSED WITH.

From the electoral structure I now turn to the official element in the constitution of Provincial Legislative Councils.

dealt with in paragraphs 43 to 56 of your letter. I first observe that in all of them you provide for a bare official majority, but you contemplate that in ordinary circumstances only the number of official members necessary for the transaction of business shall be able to attend. The first question, therefore, is the necessity of maintaining in these Councils the majority of officials.

We have before us to begin with the leading fact that in the important Province of Bombay there is in the Council, as at present composed, no official majority, and that the Bombay Government, even in the smaller of its alternative schemes, presented to Your Excellency in Council is willing to dispense with such a majority, considering the character of the Legislation ordinarily coming before a Provincial Council. It is not possible with due representation given to the various classes and interests in the community to do without a majority of officials. After a careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that in Provincial councils such a majority may be dispensed with provided that a substantial official majority is permanently maintained in the Imperial Legislative Council.

I do not conceal from myself the risks in such an arrangement. The non-official majority may press legislation of a character disapproved by the Executive Government. This should be met by the exercise of the power to withhold assent possessed by the head of the Government then. Although the local Legislature is vested with power to make laws for the peace and good government of the territories constituting the Province, still the range of subjects is considerably narrowed by the statutory exclusions now in force. Thus, for example, the local Legislature may not without the previous sanction of the Governor-General make or take into consideration any law affecting the public debt of India or the Customs duties or any other tax or duty for the time being in force and imposed by the authority of the Governor-General in Council for the general purposes of the Government of India, or regulating currency or postal or telegraph business, or altering in any way the Indian Penal Code, or affecting religion or religious rites or usages, or affecting the discipline or maintenance of Naval or Military forces, or dealing with patents or copyright, or the relations of the Government with foreign Princes or States. It is difficult to see how any measure of such urgency that delay might work serious mischief can come before a Provincial Council; for mere opposition to a useful and beneficial project would not come within this description. On the other hand, and perhaps more often, there may be opposition on the part of the non-official

Members to legislation that the Government desires. With a Council, however, representing divergent interests and realising together with its increased powers greater responsibility, a combination of all the Non-official Members to resist a measure proposed by the Government would be unlikely, and some non-officials at least would probably cast their votes on the side of the Government. If however, a combination of all the non-official members against the Government were to occur, that might be a very good reason for thinking that the proposed measure was really open to objection, and should not be proceeded with.

Your Excellency will recall since you came into the authority of Governor-General an Act proposed by a Local Government which a representative Legislative Council would almost certainly have rejected. Your Excellency's action in withholding assent from the Act shows that in your judgment it would have been an advantage if the Local Government had been induced by a hostile vote to reconsider their Bill. If, in spite of such hostile vote, the comparatively rare case should arise where immediate legislation were still thought absolutely necessary, then the constitution as it at present stands provides an adequate remedy. The Governor-General in Council to-day possesses a concurrent power to legislate for any Province, and though I strongly favour a policy that would leave to each local Legislature the duty of providing for its own requirements, still I recognise in this power an ample safeguard, should, under exceptional circumstances, a real demand for its exercise arise.

CONSTITUTION OF PROVINCIAL COUNCILS.

This decision will make it necessary to modify to some extent the constitution of the several Provincial Councils proposed by you and will enable you to secure a wider representation. Subject to consideration of these details (which will not involve the postponement of the proposed Parliamentary Legislation for the amendment of the Indian Councils Act, 1892, and for other purposes), I am ready to accept generally the proposals for numbers and the constitution of the Councils set forth in your letter.

THE IMPERIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Your proposals in relation to the Imperial Legislative Council are necessarily entitled to the greatest weight. I am glad to find myself able to accept them practically in their entirety. While I desire to liberalise as far as possible the Provincial Councils, I recognise that it is an essential condition of this policy that the Imperial supremacy shall be in no degree compromised. I must, therefore, regard it as essential that Your Excellency's Council in its

legislative as well as its executive character should continue to be so constituted as to ensure its constant and uninterrupted power to fulfil the constitutional obligations that it owes and must always owe to His Majesty's Government and to the Imperial Parliament. I see formidable drawbacks that have certainly not escaped Your Excellency to the expedient which you propose, and I cannot regard with favour the power of calling into play an official majority while seeming to dispense with it. I am unable to persuade myself that to import a number of gentlemen to vote down something upon which they may or may not have heard the arguments will prove satisfactory. To secure the required relations, I am convinced that a permanent official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council is absolutely necessary, and this must outweigh the grave disadvantages that induce us to dispense with it in the Provincial Legislatures. It need not be in any sense an overwhelming majority, and this Your Excellency does not seek, but it must be substantial as it is certainly desirable that the Governor-General should be removed from the conflict of the division list and that the fate of any measure or Resolution should not rest on his vote alone.

I have already dealt in the earlier paragraphs of this Despatch with the elective principle, and it will be for Your Excellency to consider how far the popular electorate can be utilised for the return to your Legislative Council of landholders and Mahomedans. Some modifications of the scheme suggested for the Provinces will, no doubt, be necessary, and the electoral Colleges would probably have to be on the basis of Province and not of division, and the case of the Central Provinces would probably (in view of the disappearance of Advisory Councils) have to be met by nomination until a local Legislature is provided.

I accept your proposals for securing the representation of commerce both European and Indian.

I also agree to your proposals as to nomination, but it will be a matter for your consideration whether to meet the requirement of a substantial official majority. The number of nominated officials should not be raised.

Your plan for securing occasional representation for the interest of minorities such as the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Indian Christians, the Buddhists and the domiciled community meets with my entire approval, and I am in complete sympathy with your intention sometimes to appoint one or two experts in connection with legislation pending before Council.

INCREASED FACILITIES FOR DEBATE.

I turn to the proposals contained in paragraph 57-59 of your despatch affording further facilities for debate. This

subject, as Your Excellency remarks, was not dealt with in the earlier correspondence out of which your present proposals arise, but I am entirely in accord with Your Excellency's Government in regarding it as of cardinal importance.

The existing law which confines discussion, except on the occasion of the Annual Financial Statement, to the Legislative proposals actually before the Council imposes a restriction that I am convinced is no longer either desirable or necessary. The plan of Your Excellency's Government contemplate a wide relaxation of this restriction, and in sanctioning it generally I am confident that these increased facilities, judiciously used, will be pronounced of the greatest advantage, not only by Councils and those whom they represent but also by Government who will gain additional opportunities both of becoming acquainted with the drift of public opinion and of explaining their own actions.

EFFECT OF THE RESOLUTIONS.

Taking the proposals in detail, I agree that the Resolutions to be moved should take the form of recommendations to Government, having only such force and effect as Government after consideration shall deem due to them. The introduction and discussion of Resolutions should not extend to subjects removed from the cognisance of Legislative Councils by statute, and must obviously be subject to rules and restrictions. These, as Your Excellency observes, may best be laid down in the first place when the rules of business are drawn up and developed thereafter as experience may show to be desirable. Meanwhile, I agree generally with the conditions suggested in paragraph 59 of your despatch. I must, however, remark upon the first of the suggested conditions that isolated incidents of administration or personal questions may be and often are at the same time matters of public and general importance. It would, in my opinion, be sufficient to lay down that Resolutions must relate to matters of public and general importance, inasmuch as the President of the Council will have the power of deciding finally whether any proposed Resolution does, or does not, satisfy this condition.

INTERPELLATION.

In respect of rules on the asking of questions I have come to the conclusion that subject to such restrictions as may be found requisite in practice and to the existing general powers of the President the asking of supplementary questions should be allowed. Without these a system of formal questions met by formal replies must inevitably tend to become unreal and ineffective and in an assembly in which, under proper safeguards, free discussion and debate is permitted and encouraged, there can be no sufficient

reason for prohibiting that method of eliciting information and expressing indirectly the opinions and wishes of the questioners.

DISCUSSION OF THE IMPERIAL BUDGET.

Special importance attaches to rules as to the discussion of the Imperial Budget and I recognise with much satisfaction the liberality of the proposals that you have placed before me. The changes under this head constitute a notable step in the direction of giving to the representatives of Indian opinion a part in the most important administrative operation of the political year, I approve the dates suggested for the promulgation of the Financial Statement and for the beginning and ending of its discussion in Committee, and I anticipate valuable results from the knowledge which your Government will acquire in these debates of the views of those whom the proposed measures will chiefly and directly affect, and which it will be able to utilise in shaping its final financial proposals for the year. Generally, also, I approve the rules sketched in paragraph 64 for the regulation of discussions in Committee and of the moving of Resolutions and I concur in your opinion that the form of procedure should be such as to show clearly that the power of executive action resides exclusively in Government, who, while inviting the free expression of opinion in the form of Resolutions, do not thereby forego any part of the power and responsibility which has been and must continue to be in their hands.

PROVINCIAL BUDGETS.

Your proposals for the discussion of the Provincial Budgets seem entirely sound. As in the case of the Imperial Budget, so with respect to the Provincial finances, I observe with satisfaction that provision is made for full and free discussion and for the consideration by Government of the results of such discussion before the final proposals for the year are framed, and I believe that under the system suggested by you the Local Governments will retain that ultimate control over the financial policy of their Provinces, without which not only the authority of the Government of India but also that of the Secretary of State in Council and of Parliament would inevitably disappear.

FURTHER REFORMS.

Your Excellency claims for your scheme as a whole "that it will really and effectively" associate the people of India in the work not "only of occasional legislation but of actual every-day administration." The claim is abundantly justified, yet the scheme is not and hardly pretends to be a complete representation of the entire body of changes and improvements in the existing system that are evidently present to the minds of some of those whom your

Government has consulted and that to the best of my judgment are now demanded by the situation described in the opening words of the despatch. It is evidently desirable, Your Excellency will agree, to present our reformed constitutional system as a whole. From this point of view it seems necessary to attempt without delay in effectual advance in the direction of local self-government.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The principles that should inspire and regulate measures with this aim can hardly be laid down in sounder or clearer terms than in the Resolution published by the Government of India on the 18th May, 1882. I do not know where to look for a better expression of the views that should govern our policy under this important head, and I will venture to quote some passages in this memorable deliverance. Explaining the proposal for local self-government of that date the Government of India place themselves on ground which may well be our ground also. "It is not primarily," they say, "with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported, it is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education;" and again "there appears to be great force in the argument that so long as the chief Executive officers are as a matter of course Chairmen of the Municipal and District Committees there is little chance of these Committees affording any effective training to their members in the management of local affairs or of the non-official members taking any real interest in local business. The non-official members must be led to feel that real power is placed in their hands and that they have real responsibilities to discharge." This anticipation has been, to some extent, warranted by experience. Funds have not existed for an efficient Executive staff. The official element within the local bodies has been in many places predominant. Non-official members have not been induced to such an extent as was hoped to take a real interest in local business because their powers and their responsibilities were not real. If Local Self-Government has so far been no marked success as a training ground, it is mainly for the reason that the constitution of the local bodies departed from what was affirmed in the Resolution to be "the true principle" that "the control should be exercised from without rather than from within; the Government should revise and check the acts of local bodies but not dictate them." I have no doubt that the Government of India to-day will affirm and actively shape their policy upon the principle authoritatively set forth by their predecessors in 1882:—"It would be hopeless to expect any real development of self-government if the local bodies were subject to check and interference in matters of details, and

the respective powers of Government and of the various local bodies should be clearly and distinctly defined by statute, so that there may be as little risk of friction and misunderstanding as possible within the limits to be laid down in each case, however, the Governor-General in Council is anxious that the fullest possible liberty of action should be given to local bodies."

THE STARTING POINT IN PUBLIC LIFE.

Your Excellency will recall that the Resolution from which I have quoted treats the sub-division, taluka or the tahsil as the smallest administrative unit. It is a question whether it would not be a wise-policy to go further. The village in India (generally) has been the fundamental and indestructible unit of the social system, surviving the downfall of dynasty after dynasty. I desire Your Excellency in Council to consider the best way of carrying out a policy that would make the village a starting point of public life.

A SPECIAL DEPARTMENT.

The encouragement of local self-government being an object of this high importance in the better organisation of our Indian system, it remains to be considered how far in each Province it would be desirable to create a department for dealing exclusively with these local bodies, guiding and instructing them and correcting abuses in a form analogous to the operations of the Local Government Board in this country. That, however, is a detail, though a weighty one in a question on which as a whole I confidently expect that Your Excellency will find much light in the forthcoming report of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation.

EXECUTIVE COUNCILS: ADMISSION OF INDIANS.

In the closing page of your letter Your Excellency raises a question of a high order of importance. You recognise as you inform me that the effect of our proposals will be to throw a greater burden on the heads of Local Governments, not only by reason of the actual increase of work caused by the long sittings of the Legislative Councils, but also because there will be considerable responsibility in dealing with the recommendations of those Councils. You then suggest the possibility that experience may show it to be desirable to strengthen the hands of the Lieutenant-Governors in the large Provinces by the creation of Executive Councils and of assisting the Governors of Madras and Bombay by enlarging the Executive Councils that now exist in these Presidencies.

I have to observe with respect to Bombay and Madras that the original scheme under the Act of 1833 provided for the appointment of three Members in these Presidencies. It seems conforma-

ble to the policy of this Despatch to take the power to raise to four the numbers of each of these Executive Councils of whom one, at least, should be an Indian. I would not, however, propose to make this a provision of a statute but would leave it to practice and usage growing into confirmed rule.

MORE EXECUTIVE COUNCILS IN THE LARGER PROVINCES.

As to the creation of Executive Councils in the larger Provinces, I am much impressed by both of the considerations that weigh with Your Excellency in throwing out the suggestion and more especially by the second of them. All will depend for the wise and efficient despatch of public business upon right relations between the supreme head of the Executive power in the Province and the Legislative Council. The question is whether these relations will be the more likely to adjust themselves effectively if the judgment of the Lieutenant-Governor is fortified and enlarged by two or more competent advisers with an official and responsible share in his deliberations.

Your Excellency anticipates longer sittings of the Legislative Council with increased activity of discussion, and the effectual representation of Provincial opinion and feeling as a guide to executive authority is the central object of the policy of Your Excellency's despatch. The aim of that policy is two-fold, at once to enable Government the better to realise the wants, interests and sentiment of the governed, and on the other hand to give the governed a better chance of understanding, as occasion arises, the case for the Government against the misrepresentations of ignorance and malice. That double object, as Your Excellency fully appreciates, is the foundation of the whole system in India and all over the world of administration and legislation either through or subject to the criticism of deliberative bodies, whether great or small.

The suggestion for the establishment of Executive Councils for Lieutenant-Governors, as Your Excellency is aware, is not new. A really new problem or new solution is in truth surprisingly uncommon in the history of British rule in India and of the political or administrative controversies connected with it. Indeed, without for an instant undervaluing the supreme necessity for caution and circumspection at every step and motion in Indian Government, it may be open to some question whether in some of these controversies before now even an erroneous conclusion would not have been better than no conclusion at all. The issue we are now considering was much discussed in obedience to the orders of the Secretary of State in 1868 by men of the highest authority on Indian questions and I do not conceive that after all

the consideration given to the subject then and since, further consultations could be expected to bring any new arguments of weight and substance into view.

It has sometimes been argued that the creation of Executive Councils in the major Provinces would necessarily carry with it as in Bombay and Madras the appointment in each case of a Governor from Home. This would indeed be a "large departure from the present system of administration," almost amounting to the confusion and overthrow of that system reposing as it does upon the presence at the head of the highest administrative posts of officers trained and experienced in the complex requirements and diversified duties of the Indian Government. I take for granted, therefore, that the head of the Province will be, as now, a member of the Indian Civil Service appointed in such mode as the law prescribes.

THE POWER OF VETO.

I propose, therefore, to ask for power to create Executive Councils from time to time as may be found expedient. In this connection, we cannot ignore the necessity of securing that a constitutional change designed both to strengthen the authority and to lighten the labours of the head of the Province shall not impair the prompt exercise of Executive power. It will, therefore, be necessary to consider most carefully what degree of authority over the members of his Council in case of dissent should be vested in the head of a Province in which an Executive Council may be called into being. It was recognised by Parliament more than a century ago that the Governors of Madras and Bombay should be vested with a discretionary power of overruling these Councils in cases of high importance and essentially affecting the public interest and welfare. A power no less than this will obviously be required in the Provinces in which a Council may come to be associated with the head of the Executive, and I shall be glad if you will favour me with your views upon its definition. Your Excellency will readily understand that the use of such a power, while not to be evaded in the special cases for which it is designed, is not intended for a part of the ordinary mechanism of Government. Rather, in the language of the historical despatch of 1834, it is my belief that "in a punctual, constant and ever fastidious adherence to your ordinary rules of practice you will find the best security not only for the efficiency and also for the despatch of your Legislative proceedings."



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