

WHAT THE
SIMON REPORT
MEANS

by

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THE Statutory Commission on the Constitution of India was appointed on November 26th, 1927, Mr. Stanley Baldwin being Prime Minister, and the Earl of Birkenhead, Secretary of State for India. The members were:

The Right Hon. Sir John Simon, M.P., Chairman; Viscount Burnham; Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal; The Hon. E. C. G. Cadogan, M.P.; The Right Hon. Vernon Hartshorn, M.P.; The Right Hon. G. R. Lane Fox, M.P.; Major C. R. Attlee, M.P.

The Report of the Commission is published in two sections. In Vol. I. (Cmd. 3568, price 3s.) the Commissioners survey the problem. In Vol. II. (Cmd. 3569, price 3s.) they give their considered conclusions and proposals. The Report is unanimous in all the important matters.

If any one thing is certain in the relations between Britain and India, it is that the year 1930 will be known as the year of the Simon Report. This historic document, as all the world now knows, is the work of a special Commission consisting of two peers and five

members of the House of Commons. In form it is a government blue-book of the familiar kind, though a good deal longer (two volumes, making 750 pages) than blue-books usually are. And it is written in a style of severe detachment, without a trace of over-emphasis or rhetoric. That fact is particularly worth noting, because the Report itself is a portent of destiny. Whether it is or is not to be made the basis of a new constructive policy, its publication must do one momentous thing. It will mark for India the end of an age. It draws a line between the British India we have known and the India of an incalculable future.

During the past ten years, ever since a certain series of events—part hopeful, and part deeply disturbing—which occurred immediately after the War, the affairs of India have been seen to possess a constantly growing importance. In the Press of the world they have been given an amount of attention never before known, and, since 1927 especially, the public mind of Britain has been increasingly occupied with them. Why? The reasons are mainly three:

(1) The whole enormous problem of the relations between East and West, and particularly the problem of European power in the East, is now recognised as a matter of urgent world concern;

(2) India is the theatre of a movement of insurgent nationalism which, after passing through many phases, has come under the direction of a unique leader—M. K. Gandhi—admired on this side and attacked on that, as the most extraordinary man in Asia;

(3) Britain has solemnly committed herself to a policy of advance towards responsible self-government in India, a policy for which no parallel can be found in any other imperial system known to history.

The Simon Report is the direct outcome of this deliberate British Policy, for the definite beginnings of which we must go back just twenty years.

THE OLD BRITISH SYSTEM.

The earlier, and very celebrated, British system in India was correctly described as a great centralised bureaucracy presided over by the Viceroy, who occupied the most splendid office in the gift of the British Crown and wielded the power of a despotic ruler. In that older India—a paradise of the British army officer and the covenanted Civilian—government was a straightforward business of administration. There were no politics as we understand them. The word of the Sahib was omnipotent. Throughout a gorgeous half-century, following the great Mutiny of 1857-8, the country was ruled under a complete departmental system. Between the days of Dalhousie and Canning and the days of Curzon, this was sternly built up and incessantly hammered into shape—the temple of that Indian Civil Service which had become renowned as the most carefully chosen, the most thoroughly trained, and, as was always affirmed, the most efficient public service in the world.

The first important breach in that wonderful old system, under which the British official was supreme and unchallenged (save when he was so unlucky as to earn the censure of his superiors), was made in 1909 by Lord Morley as Secretary of State for India in the last Liberal Government. The Morley Reforms were exceedingly cautious. They enlarged and improved the Legislative Councils; they admitted for the first time in India the method of direct election, on a very limited basis; and they opened the inner Executive Councils to a few

Indian public men. They left the structure of British supremacy intact.

Within four years of the inauguration of the Morley Reforms the Great War broke out, and India was called upon to play a most distinctive part in it. The Princes and the leaders of all sections proffered their aid to Britain; the Indian Expeditionary Force was sent to France, and as the War went on Indian troops were serving with the Allied armies in three continents, while India was being developed as a vast reservoir and factory of war supplies. Inevitably, therefore, the Indian problem as a whole had to be considered afresh. British statesmen of all parties looked ahead to significant changes, and predicted their advent in unmistakable terms.

THE MONTAGU DECLARATION.

In 1917 came the decision and the proclamation by which, for the British people and Parliament, the problem of India was defined and transformed. Mr. Edwin Montagu was Secretary of State in the Coalition Government, and on August 20th he delivered in the House of Commons "the most momentous announcement ever made in India's chequered history." Every circumstance, says the Simon Commission, was present which could add weight and authority to the declaration. It was accepted by Parliament without reserve of any kind, and no challenge was issued by any party in the State. The statement was in the following terms:

The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the pro-

gressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.

A first substantial move towards the responsible self-government here foreshadowed was made in the Montagu Constitution, which was embodied in the Government of India Act passed through Parliament in 1919, with the co-operation of all parties. The preamble of this famous statute reaffirmed the pledge of 1917, repeated that the policy could be effected only by successive stages, and added that "the time and manner of each advance could be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples."

It was laid down in the Act that the Constitution then created was to be brought under review at the end of ten years. Whether that arrangement was wise or not has been a matter of dispute. It was said that a term which would be treated as a trial was unsettling. It was said that a decade was too short. The Indian political leaders, however, took the view that the inquiry into the Constitution might well be hastened, and in 1927, the ninth year of the Reforms, the Baldwin Government nominated the Statutory Commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon. It was appointed, under royal warrant, "for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India," and it was required to "report as to whether, and to what extent, it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing."

LORD IRWIN'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

The Simon Commission had been at work for nearly two years and was engaged in England upon the preparation of its Report, when, in the autumn of 1929, the Viceroy took leave in England for the purpose of conferring with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State (Mr. Wedgwood Benn) upon matters of moment connected with his office. Lord Irwin returned to India in October, and on November 1st, 1929, he made an announcement reaffirming the pledge of responsible self-government. His Excellency then, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, stated that "in their judgment it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of Indian constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status."

So much for the preliminaries of the Simon Commission and its task. The labour of the Commission has occupied nearly three years. It involved two long visits to India, the taking of a huge mass of evidence, and the covering of many thousands of miles. The demand from India had been for a mixed commission of British and Indians. The decision of the late Government to make it a parliamentary body aroused bitter hostility among the Indian parties and leaders, and the Commission in consequence had to conduct its inquiries in the teeth of a widespread political boycott. This antagonism, however, made no difference to the plan, which was steadily carried through, in India and in England.

By the time the Commission had got fully to work on its second visit, at the end of 1928, all the provincial assemblies, with the exception of Burma, had appointed committees to co-operate. An Indian Central Com-

mittee had been formed, under the chairmanship of the eminent Madras jurist, Sir C. Sankaran Nair. To this Committee the Council of State nominated three of its members. The Viceroy appointed a fourth, and, as the Central Legislative Assembly had declined to cooperate, Lord Irwin designated five of its members to work with them. Sir Sankaran Nair's Committee completed its work in London in October, 1929. Its report, a valuable document supplementary to the Report of the Statutory Commission, is the blue-book numbered Cmd. 3451 of 1929

A GREAT SURVEY.

The Report of the Simon Commission appeared in two portions and was accorded in the Press an amount of publicity hardly approached by any blue-book on record. It is a very remarkable example of a species of official literature in which our nation excels: two volumes of masterly statement and analysis, covering a field of vast extent and variety. Sir John Simon and his colleagues had several alternatives before them. They might have been brief and restricted. They might have chosen to confine themselves to matters of the Constitution and the departments. They have preferred to be wide-ranging and educative. They have produced a survey of India, as well as of its Government, that becomes at once a work of reference, an indispensable handbook of India.

The Commissioners say, at the outset:

First of all, we have endeavoured to bring before those whose duty it is to provide for India's constitutional future a realization of the facts of the situation, those stubborn facts which no amount of rhetoric or appeal to abstract principles can alter. The immense

area and population of India, the diversities of race, creed, and caste, the existence of the Indian States, the predominance in numbers of the rural population, the high percentage of illiteracy, and the standing menace of the North-West Frontier, are all facts which no person, British or Indian, who has to deal with the constitutional problem of India can possibly ignore.

These facts must be faced. Their existence cannot in any way be allowed to invalidate the solemn pledge of the British people with regard to the progressive realization of responsible government in British India.

The Report is a reminder, and the most weighty reminder our generation has had, of the greatness and complexity of the problem now confronting the British democracy. The Commissioners devote their first volume in great part to the social facts of India, with the evident purpose of correcting the notion, if any British reader is so ignorant as to have held it, that the problem of Indian government, or self-government, is a reasonably simple political matter. Let us take, somewhat at random, a few of the more salient facts set forth in the earlier chapters.

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE.

The total extent of India is 1,800,000 square miles; that is, nearly half the size of Europe, two-thirds the size of the United States, 20 times the size of Great Britain. Of this area 1,100,000 square miles are British India; 600,000 square miles, one-third of the whole, belong to the Indian States, under their own rulers, princes or maharajas. The Indian States are nearly 600 in number. They vary amazingly in extent: from Kashmir and Hyderabad, each of which is as large as Great Britain, or Mysore, the size of Ireland, to small domains resembling a ducal estate

in England. All alike are outside the governing system of British India.

At the last census (1921) the population of India was roughly 319 millions, of whom 247 millions were in British India and nearly 92 millions in the Indian States. This great multitude speaks a bewildering variety of languages; the census names 222 in all. No single native language has so wide a range as English, and yet in 1921 only $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions in all India were literate in our tongue. That means 16 in every 1,000 males, and two in every 1,000 females. Taking India as a whole, 17 out of every 100 men and two out of every 100 women twenty years of age and upwards were entered as literate, in any language.

The social economy of India is overwhelmingly rural. Nine-tenths of the 320 millions live in little villages, of which there are more than 500,000 in India. In England, roughly speaking, eight persons in every 100 belong to agriculture; in India the figure is over 70. There are only 33 cities containing more than 100,000 people. The total urban population in 1921 was $32\frac{1}{2}$ millions, or a trifle over 10 per cent. of the whole. The greater number of the 500,000 villages are far from main roads and much farther from the railway. Post offices are many miles apart. Under the prevailing system of tillage, the small holdings do not provide work for more than half the cultivator's time. The main characteristics of rural life are still those of the ages before British rule. The Report says:

Each village tends to be self-contained; in each will usually be found some persons with permanent title in the land, either as owners or tenants with hereditary occupancy rights; of these, some cultivate all they hold, others with larger areas at their disposal rent out

to tenants, on a yearly agreement, a part or the whole of their lands; below these in the scale are agricultural labourers, frequently of different castes from the actual cultivators; some of these have acquired small plots in proprietary right or permanent tenure; some have a field or two on rent; many are members of the depressed classes; some work in the fields only at times of pressure, and are mainly engaged in crafts such as leather work, or in tasks regarded as menial. The vast majority of the peasants live in debt to the moneylender, who is often established in their midst.

THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA.

Religion in India is of predominant importance. Through the mighty mass of the Indian population, besides minor differences, there runs the deep and unalterable division between two faiths and civilisations—the Hindu, comprising some 216 millions, belonging to an ancient, impressive, and infinitely elaborated system; the Muhammadan, counting 70 millions, heirs of the great conquest before the British, adherents of an opposing faith which is as simple as any known to man.

In British India the Hindus number 163 millions and the Moslems 59½ millions. In Bengal and the Punjab the Moslems are the majority; in the N.W. Frontier Province they make up almost the entire population. Everywhere else the Moslems are decisively outnumbered; but nowhere, except on the N.W. Frontier, can they be dealt with upon the basis of a separate community such as the Protestants of Switzerland or of Ulster. In the Indian States the Hindus are 53½ millions, the Moslems 9¼ millions. The Sikhs of the Punjabs are under four millions; the Indian Christians are now nearing six millions; the Buddhists, 11½ millions, are nearly all in Burma.

It is commonly said that Hinduism is a social system rather than a faith. It accounts for one-eighth of the population of the globe, and one-half of the total inhabitants of the British Empire. The Report says:—

The sophisticated and Westernised Hindu graduate may seem a being of an entirely different order both from the contemplative devotee living in abstraction from material things, and from the mob of excited worshippers thronging the temples of Shiva or Kali. But all alike are caught up in this marvellous system, so ancient and so persistent, which is the bedrock of indigenous India. It is a religion which touches ordinary acts of daily life at nearly every point, and a philosophy of existence which provides an outlook fundamentally different from that of the creeds of the West.

CASTE AND OUTCASTE.

The social aspects of Hinduism are of necessity summed up in the system of Caste, which is India's peculiar institution. Its elaboration in the modern world of Hinduism is indescribable. The census gives a list of 2,300 castes and sub-castes, which through the ages have grown out of the original four broad divisions of Hindu society. Every Hindu belongs to the caste of his parents and in that caste he remains. The Report expresses the view that the caste system is giving way, though slowly, to modern influences. Trains and trams cannot make provision for caste distinctions. Labour, trade, travel and politics combine to hasten the change, and the influence of the educated classes tells inevitably in the same direction.

And then, at the lower end of this infinitely complicated scale, outside and below all the castes, are the depressed classes, the Untouchables. These comprise about 60 millions in all India, some 20 per cent. of the

total population, or 30 per cent. of the Hindus; in British India, 44 millions. They include the aboriginal people and the workers employed in unclean labour. They are the disinherited of the Hindu system; untouchable because to all caste Hindus they bring pollution. In many parts of India they are denied access to wells and tanks, and their children are either excluded from the schools or made to sit apart. The Commissioners remind us that the cause of the Untouchables has been for Mr. Gandhi a main concern since the beginning of his Swaraj crusade.

HINDU AND MOSLEM.

It has always been maintained by Indians that their country has given the world an example of wide tolerance in religious belief and practice, but the antagonism of Hindu and Moslem is seemingly perpetual. The Commissioners observe:

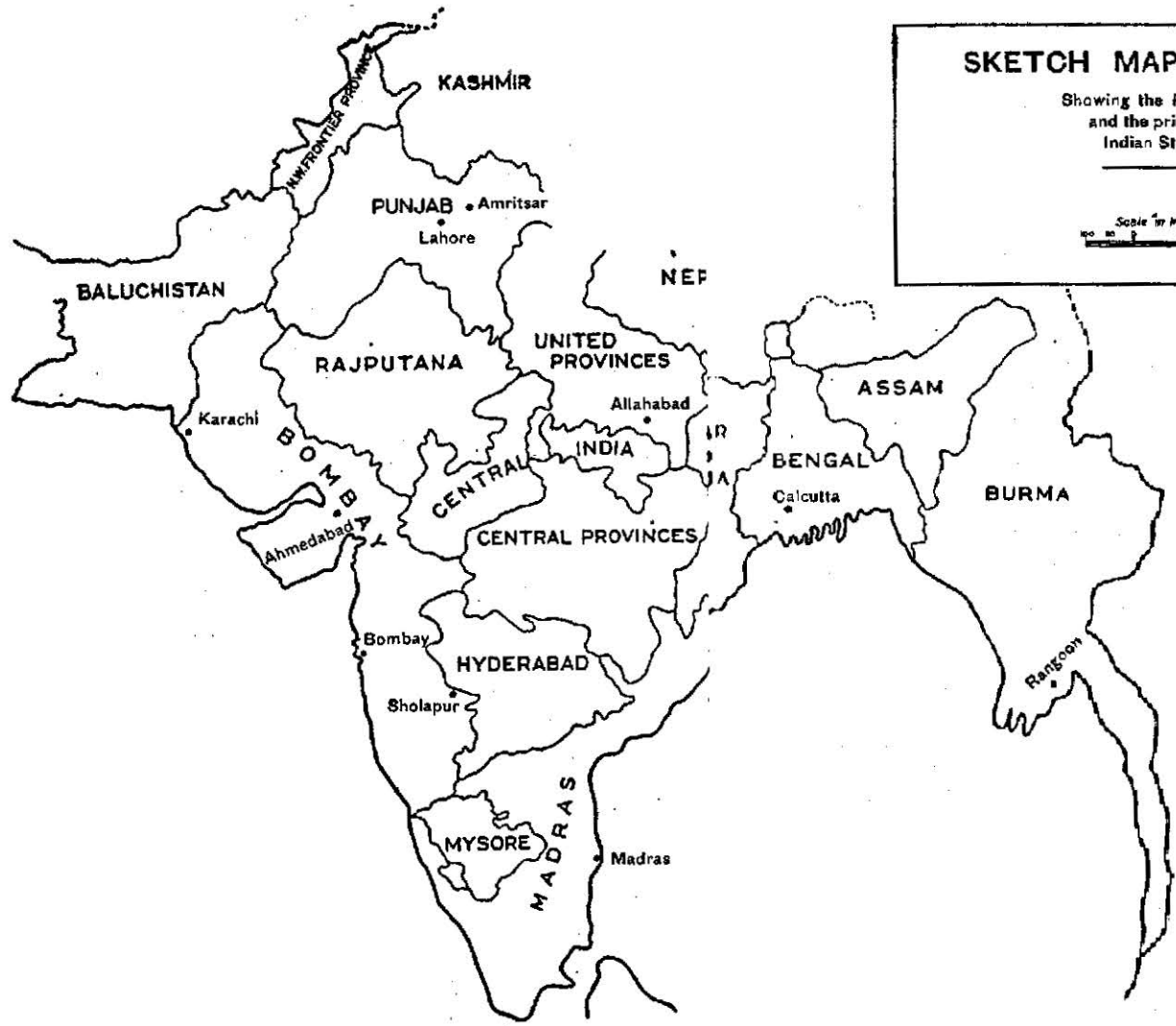
It is evident that the distribution of the population as between Hindus and Muhammadans provides one of the most serious complications for Indian statesmanship, and that this question recurs in different forms and degrees in almost every part of India. . . . It unfortunately happens that on Indian soil the opposition of these two faiths is sharply intensified by religious practices which are only too likely to provoke mutual ill-feeling. The devout Hindu regards the cow as an object of great veneration, while the ceremonial sacrifice of cows or other animals is a feature of the annual Muhammadan festival known as the Baqr'Id. Hindu music played through the streets on the occasion of the procession of an idol, or in connection with a marriage celebration, may take place at a time when the Muhammadans of the town are at worship in an adjoining mosque, and hence arises an outbreak of resentment which is apt to degenerate into a serious quarrel. . . . In spite of the constant watchfulness

of the police authorities, and of the earnest efforts of leaders in both communities to reach a *modus vivendi*, the immediate occasion of communal disorder is nearly always the religious issue. On the other hand, when communal feeling is roused on some matter of secular interest, religious zeal is always present to stimulate conflict, and partisans are not slow to exploit the opportunity.

The Commissioners add: "It is a lamentable fact that the occasions when Hindu-Muhammadan tension is carried to the point of violent outbreak have not diminished since the Reforms. In the five years 1923 to 1927 approximately 450 lives have been lost and 5,000 persons have been injured in communal riots; these figures include some disturbances in which Sikhs were involved."

THE WOMEN OF INDIA.

"The women's movement in India holds the key of progress," say the Commissioners, "and the results it may achieve are incalculably great." This sentence from the Report will startle many readers, who may not find it easy to think of a women's movement over against the facts of early marriage and the purdah. Something like half the girls are married before fifteen. The last census showed that more than two million Indian girls are married before the age of ten, and 100,000 widowed by then. In 1921 less than one woman in 50 in British India could read and write in any language. In no province does one girl out of five attend school; in some provinces not one out of 20 or 25. "The numbers of trained Indian women in the professions of teaching and nursing are pathetically few, and the obstacles to increasing their numbers are very great." And yet the Commissioners find it advisable to make special reference to the vitality of the



SKETCH MAP OF INDIA
Showing the Provinces
and the principal
Indian States

Scale in Miles
0 50 100 150

women's movement, while the political equality of women is not left in doubt.

THE DISTRICT OFFICER.

There is no space here even to indicate the richness of the material compressed into Vol. I. It includes a broad and effective survey of the whole scheme of administration: the central and provincial governments, the Army, Finance, Education, the system of voting, the Frontier, the still remote world of the Indian States. In all this, it may be, the English reader will probably find no more fascinating chapters than those dealing with the position and work of the Public Services, especially the picture of the District Officer, that special product of the I.C.S., in whom many before the Simon Commission have seen a fine theme for description. "The great mass of the people," say the Commissioners, "desire personal rule," and the only personal ruler for the vast majority is the District Officer. If his district is typical, it may be as large as Belgium and contain a million people. He wields large powers and can bestow all kinds of benefits. His duties are numberless. He is magistrate and head of the revenue department, and is in touch with every inch of his territory through an organisation that includes almost all functions. It collects the revenue and keeps the peace; deals with the registration and modification of holdings, the management of estates, loans to agriculturists, famine relief. The District Officer dispenses patronage, makes appointments, and is the fount of minor honours. Whenever there is a dispute he is called in; he threatens, he warns, he commands. Whether Briton or Indian, the District Officer is, and must long remain, the pivot of the Administration.

THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION.

The constitutional structure of India as now existing was shaped by the Government of India Act, 1919. It is described by the Commissioners in a series of detailed chapters, which form the first complete account available for the English reader. British India contains nine major provinces:

Assam	Bombay	Madras
Bengal	Burma	Punjab
Bihar and Orissa	Central Provinces	United Provinces

These are known as the Governors' Provinces, all having a Governor, a small executive council, and a legislative council. The legislative councils are elective as regards 70 per cent. of their membership (in Burma, 60 per cent.). The franchise amounts to about one-tenth of the adult male population. In 1908 Lord Morley conceded, under pressure from the Moslems, the principle of communal electorates—that is, the right of minorities to be represented through constituencies consisting entirely of their own people. The Moslems enjoy this privilege in all the provinces, and in the Punjab it is accorded to the Sikhs. In nationalist India no political question is more fiercely contested. The Commissioners reluctantly uphold the privilege.

In the provincial governments the existing system has one peculiar feature in what was, ten years ago, a novel division of the executive authority, known as Dyarchy—as the modern Indian and the official Briton appear to agree, an appropriate name for a repellent institution. It is very fully described and analysed in the Report. Under the system of dyarchy (dual or split government) the public departments are divided

into Reserved and Transferred. The reserved departments (*e.g.*, Finance, Police) remain wholly in the control of the Governor and his small executive council (mixed English and Indian), while the transferred subjects (such as Education, Local Government, Public Health) are in charge of Indian Ministers appointed by the Governor. The Ministers are usually either two or three in number; they must be elected members of the legislative council. Dyarchy was distrusted from the outset. It was said to give the form of responsibility to Ministers without the actuality; and, since Ministers were not responsible to the legislative council in which they sat, and in several provinces the device produced either intolerable friction or a deadlock, dyarchy has had very few friends. We shall see, when coming to the Commission's proposals, that their judgment is given against it without reserves.

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

The supreme authority of India is the Viceroy-in-Council: the head of the Government, together with the seven members of his Executive Council or Cabinet. The departments are: Home; Finance; Law; Commerce; Education, Health, and Lands; Industries and Labour. The Commander-in-Chief is the Army Member (an ironic upshot of the epic combat between, Curzon and Kitchener). The Viceroy is his own Foreign Minister. Three members of the Executive Council at present are Indians.

The Central Legislature has two chambers—the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. The former is an Upper House (not actually very important) of 60 members. The Assembly consists of 145 members, 105 being elected. The Moslems have 30 seats by

virtue of the principle of separate communal electorates, as in the provinces. The European members number 25. The Central Legislature has power to make laws for the whole of British India, with certain restrictions; and its decisions are subject to the final authority of the Viceroy. By the exercise of his overriding power he can resist any enactment, and can secure the passage of any Bill deemed by him to be necessary for the peace and good government of the country. This power of certification, as it is called, has been exercised only four times since the reformed Assembly came into being. The understanding is that it is an emergency power to be used very sparingly. It happened, however, that one of the occasions was the insistence upon an increase in the salt duty, after it had been taken out of the Budget by the Assembly, seven years ago. A resort to the device of certification in those circumstances meant inevitably a widespread and violent attack upon the Viceroy, Lord Reading.

The Central Legislative Assembly and the provincial councils are parliamentary in form. But the conditions are extraordinarily different. In the All-India Assembly, for example, the 105 elected members are returned by $1\frac{1}{8}$ million voters, scattered among a population of 140 millions. The constituencies are almost unimaginable. Not a few of them are in area equal to England or Scotland. It is fairly usual for a constituency to be as large as Wales. And when to this is added the remoteness of the villages and the fact of widespread illiteracy among the voters, necessitating pictorial signs on the ballot papers and a finger-print instead of signature, the English reader may be able to form a vague conception of the relation, if any, between the Indian representative and the invisible constituents on

whose behalf he occupies a seat in New Delhi. And yet, with all its impossibilities, the Legislative Assembly does its work, has created in nine years a valuable tradition, and is unquestionably laying the foundations of a Central Legislature, which, according to the Simon Commission, must in course of time develop into the organ of a federated India.

INDIAN NATIONALISM.

One feature of the Report, which has been noticed in England and will be far more commented upon in India, is the smallness of space devoted in the two volumes to that aspect of the existing situation upon which, for some years past, the attention of the world has been fixed, almost to the exclusion of everything else—the movement of Indian Nationalism, or Swaraj. Relatively brief, however, as the treatment of this subject is, the Commissioners show a right appreciation of its importance. In Part II. they say:

It has only been the existence of British rule in India that has rendered such a development possible. The movement has been growing steadily for the last 50 years and with a greatly accelerated pace in the last decade. . . . Whatever may be its shortcomings and however distasteful some of its manifestations, it appears to be the one force in Indian society to-day that may perhaps contain within itself the power to overcome the deep and dangerous cleavages that threaten its peace. Nationalism is a force with immense power for good or evil, and the task in the future is to utilize that force for constructive ends.

THE REAL INDIAN DEMAND.

In the concluding paragraph of Part I. the following most significant sentences appear:

We should say without hesitation that, in all its variations of expression and intensity, the political

sentiment which is most widespread among all educated Indians is the expression of a demand for equality with Europeans and a resentment against any suspicion of differential treatment. The attitude an Indian takes up on any given matter is largely governed by consideration of his self-respect. It is a great deal more than a personal feeling; it is the claim of the East for due recognition of status. . . . While the member of a minority community, putting the safety of his community first, will stipulate for safeguards; and while the moderate may look askance at extremist methods which he will not openly denounce, *all alike are in sympathy with the demand for equal status with the European and proclaim their belief in self-determination for India.*

“In our view,” the Commissioners continue, “the most formidable of the evils from which India is suffering have their roots in social and economic customs of long standing, which can only be remedied by the action of the Indian people themselves. They are much less likely to be remedied if the blame for their continuance can be put, however unreasonably, on others.”

Let us see how, in Part II., the Commission responds to the challenge of its own statement.

PART II.—THE PROPOSALS.

For every reader who is interested either in a great and strange people or in a system of government which has no parallel, the reading of Part I. of the Report cannot fail to be a task of absorbing interest. Part II. is, of course, the main and governing portion, but we could not expect it to have the fascination of the first volume. It is an exceedingly close statement and argument, most able and interesting of all, perhaps, in its survey of the prospects of a federated India. No adequate summary of even its most important points would be possible in a small pamphlet. What follows must be taken as the barest outline of the Commission's proposals.

The first principle which the Commissioners lay down is that a new Constitution should contain within itself provision for its own amendment and growth. They are against the method of periodic outside inquiries. They indicate that the lack of self-reforming machinery is a serious defect of the Montagu Constitution. They see no reason why the method of self-correction and self-development should not be practicable.

A FEDERAL INDIA.

The problem of India, they submit, is a problem of All India. They believe that no constitution can be satisfactory if it fails to provide for an organic relation between British India and the Indian States. "The Indian rulers are proud of their historic position and their rights; at the same time we believe that they recognise more and more the need for adjusting their future relationship to the rest of India." The greater unity will come about when it is felt that it is to the mutual advantage of both sides to pursue it. Therefore, they believe, it must follow that the ultimate constitution of India will need to be federal, "for it is only in a federal Constitution that units differing so widely in constitution as the provinces and the States can be brought together while retaining internal autonomy." The Commissioners, moreover, think that "the easier and more speedy approach to the desired end can be obtained by reorganising the constitution of India on a federal basis in such a way that individual States, or groups of States, may have the opportunity of entering as soon as they wish to do so." It appears to them that the alternative method would reduce progress to the pace of the slowest.

If self-government is to be a reality it must be applied to political units of a suitable size; and the Commis-

sioners express themselves plainly in favour of large changes in the boundaries of the Indian provinces. They are aware of the highly controversial nature of this proposal, and they recognise the necessity of proceeding with their recommendations upon the basis of the existing provinces, with one or two exceptions. Thus, they declare unequivocally for the separation of Burma, and they urge the case for the partition of Sind from the Bombay Presidency, and Orissa from the artificial province of which it forms the southern section. The argument in all these cases may be taken as altogether conclusive.

The Commissioners develop an elaborate argument for an All-India Federation, with the central Government becoming "an association of units formed mainly for the purpose of performing certain functions on behalf of all." They urge in this connection the need of making full provision for "the maintenance and efficiency of the fundamentals of government." These include the safe holding of the gateway of the North-West; and the maintenance of the Army in full strength and full security, not only for external defence, but for the purpose of upholding internal order. "Nowhere in the world is there such frequent need for courageous and prompt action as in India, and nowhere is the penalty for hesitation and weakness greater."

HOME RULE IN THE PROVINCES.

At the time of the making of the Montagu Constitution the Indian demand, roughly speaking, was for full provincial autonomy. What the provinces got was dyarchy, the form of dual government which to-day has almost no serious defenders. The Commissioners say that, in regard to the provincial system, they were

struck with the fact that practically everyone they consulted declared for a change; and the capital change upon which they insist is the abolition of dyarchy. They have little to say for dyarchy as the training-ground for responsible government that it was supposed to be, though they say that at least "it has brought home to some who had no previous experience of the task of government the difficulties of administration and the meaning of responsibility." But while dyarchy continues, the growth of real responsibility is hindered; Ministers in charge of the transferred departments are in a permanent difficulty, and elected members of the legislature are driven to display hostility to the reserved half of the Government, which they can criticize but not control. The Commissioners propose accordingly that the barrier now set up between the two halves of a provincial government—the departments of which Indian Ministers may take charge, and the departments from which they are excluded—should go; that dyarchy should end. The provincial Cabinet should be unitary, and every member of it should be required to take responsibility for the whole policy of the Government.

LAW AND ORDER.

In discussing the problem of the provincial government the Commissioners come at once upon the primary difficulty of Law and Order. Under the dyarchical system, of course, the Police is a reserved department. In a partial and tentative form of autonomy the question does not arise. No one would propose the concession of police authority to an Indian Minister under his existing handicap. The Commissioners hold the view that the unitary responsible Government of a province should have full responsibility for the Police. There is

no responsible government without that; they see no tolerable alternative. But they find themselves opposed by a strong body of opinion, chiefly official, sternly opposed to the transfer of police authority. The Commissioners argue the matter in full, and hold firmly to their opinion. Clearly they must do so; for, as they point out, if Police is to be a reserved department dyarchy would have to be maintained. And they are resolved that dyarchy must go.

The Commissioners are, as we should expect, in favour of a broader franchise. They remind us that in the Nehru Constitution, drafted by an Indian committee in 1928, the proposed basis was adult suffrage. That would add, in British India, 100 millions to the register, and they think it necessary only to mention the point in dismissing it. Certainly no Swaraj Government would dream of adopting universal suffrage. The Commissioners propose measures which would roughly treble the existing franchise, giving women a fair field and no favour.

The unitary Government is to be responsible to the Legislature, in a degree not imaginable under dyarchy. The Commissioners suggest the appointment of a First Minister, with whom the Governor would consult in forming his Cabinet; and they state an interesting series of alternatives, which could be possible only if Ministers were fully responsible to the Chamber.

As for the Governor: the Commissioners admit that they are not proposing to lessen his authority. On the contrary, they desire to extend it. They give him large overriding powers; and they suggest that, for a long time to come, his difficulties and responsibilities would be such that the Governor of an Indian province, under the new scheme, would need to be, not an

average administrator, but a statesman of supreme ability and wisdom.

THE SUPREME AUTHORITY.

No section of the Report is of greater moment than that devoted to the supreme authority, hitherto known as the Governor-General in Council. The Commissioners, after formulating their proposals for the new provincial legislatures and for the Federal Assembly, approach the crucial problem of the Central Government. They pronounce, without qualification, for the maintenance of the full powers of the Viceroy, and to those powers they would add the right to choose his own Cabinet, the Executive Council. Any division of authority, any weakening of British supremacy at the centre, they hold to be inadmissible. They say : " We lay down without hesitation the proposition that dyarchy at the Centre, or any system of divided responsibility resembling dyarchy, is quite impossible. Unity in the central executive must be preserved at all costs."

Dyarchy being abandoned in the provinces, they add, it would, indeed, be an astonishing result if a similar principle were to be adopted at the centre. That statement is unqualified and final.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

Their principal recommendations are:

The new Constitution should " contain within itself provision for its own development."

It is a " paramount necessity " that, while India is on the road to complete self-government, there should be full provision for " the maintenance and efficiency of the fundamentals of government."

The ultimate Constitution of India must be Federal. A Council for Greater India should be created, with,

say, one-third of the members representative of Indian States included.

Home rule in the provinces; each province "mistress in her own house." A unitary Cabinet responsible to the Legislature. Abolition of dyarchy. The provincial government to have full control of administration, including Law and Order. The provincial councils increased in size to 200 or 250; members to have a term of five years. The communal electorates, for the protection of minorities, to be retained. The franchise broadened to include about 10 per cent. of the inhabitants, or 20 per cent. of the adult population.

The Governor to have large over-riding powers: in particular, for preserving the safety and tranquillity of the province and to prevent serious prejudice to any section of the community.

The N.W. Frontier: representative institutions for the Frontier Province, with unified control of the tribal area of the border.

The immediate separation of Burma.

A Federal Assembly in place of the existing Legislative Assembly; a membership of 250 to 280, with a fixed life of five years. Abolition of direct election. Members to be elected by the provincial councils, by a system of proportional representation.

No division of authority in the Central Government. The Viceroy to nominate his Executive Council (the Cabinet), instead of, as now, the appointments being nominally made by the Crown.

The defence of India is not a matter of purely Indian concern. It will be impossible, "at least for a very long time to come," for the Army to "dispense with a very considerable British element." The control of the Army to be transferred from the Government of India to imperial authority.

INDIA WITHOUT GANDHI.

The Commissioners in their general conclusion say:

In writing this Report we have made no allusion to the events of the last few months in India. In fact, the whole of our principal recommendations were arrived at and unanimously agreed upon before these events occurred. We have not altered a line of our Report on that account, for it is necessary to look beyond particular incidents and to take a longer view.

Nothing in either volume, we may be sure, will be read in India with so much surprise as this. It so happens that the time during which the Simon Commission was engaged in its task coincided with the outbreak of an intensive form of that movement of Indian Nationalism to which the Commissioners make several, markedly understanding, references. This is the development that has aroused the eager curiosity of the world at large, that has created for the Government of India a practical problem of unparalleled difficulty, and—within the past twelve months, devoted by the Commission to the writing of its Report—has transformed the entire outlook in India. The course of these events may here be stated in the barest outline.

In 1928 the Indian nationalist parties, led by the most prominent Swarajists, set out towards a formulation of the demand for full self-government (*Puran Swaraj*) on the basis of Dominion Status within the Empire. An "all-parties" conference produced the draft known as the Nehru Constitution (referred to in passing by the Simon Commission), a highly abstract scheme. In December, 1928, the Indian National Congress (long the most important nationalist organisation) carried a resolution to the effect that, if dominion status were not conceded by the last day of 1929, the Congress would recommend the resumption of "mass civil disobedience"—that is, the weapon of boycott and

defiance of law adopted by Mr. Gandhi in the Non-Co-operation crusade of 1920-22. This resolution was supported by Mr. Gandhi, and, notwithstanding several noteworthy events of 1929, including the Viceroy's declaration of November 1st, the Mahatma resolved to carry out the threat. In December he himself moved, in the National Congress at Lahore, the fateful resolution which abandoned the way of conciliation, and declared for the "independence" of India and for mass civil disobedience, without violence. On March 12th he began the march, from Ahmedabad to the Arabian Sea, which opened the campaign of organised disobedience, beginning with the raids on the salt depots. On May 5th Mr. Gandhi was apprehended and interned, after many of his followers had been arrested, tried, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The events of these six months, which have been accompanied by menacing upheavals in many cities and immense public excitement in several provinces, have an important bearing upon the question of India's attitude towards the Commissioners' proposals. The Report is, in essentials, a review of India without Gandhi.

WHAT WILL INDIA DO ?

India is in a state of very grave disturbance; the political parties and their leaders are in a deeply resentful mood. No more unpromising condition for the reception of a great new constitutional project could be imagined. Can we hope, at this early date, to make a fairly accurate forecast of Indian views on the Report?

Mr. Gandhi, the Nehrus, the Swarajists generally are irreconcilable. It must be recognised that there is nothing in the recommendations to modify their absolute hostility.

The Moslems and the smaller communities will welcome the strong safeguards for minorities, while it is to be assumed that the Indian commercial and propertied classes will accept the Commission's provincial scheme as embodying a long step towards responsible government.

The question of most immediate concern is the attitude of the Liberals, the moderate Nationalists, the large body of politically conscious Indians who, as the Commissioners put it in a passage quoted above, proclaim their belief in self-determination. The minds of all these have been caught by the magic of the term Dominion Status, which has never been defined by any Indian statesman or group. They will note, with special emphasis, that the dominion solution is not discussed in the Report. Sir John Simon and his colleagues did not associate themselves with Lord Irwin's November declaration; and they do not refer to it.

Short of the dominion solution, however, there is the question, which for years past has been treated as of the first importance in India, of responsible government, or some measure of it, at the centre. The Commissioners are against that. They declare, with impressive emphasis, for the upholding of the Viceroy's supreme position, the maintenance of British authority, unimpaired, at Delhi and Simla.

The hopes of all who believe in the paramount necessity of peace and reconstruction in India, of a settlement by consent preliminary to a new charter of responsible government, are now fixed, and must continue to be fixed, upon the plan of an open Round Table Conference in the autumn of 1930. Therefore, the dominant question of the moment is: How and in what degree will the Simon Report contribute to the holding of that Conference?