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Topics of the Week.

Making Federation Still-Born.

THE most ardent advocate of office acceptance in the Provinces, Mr. Satyamurti is at the same time the most uncompromising enemy of federation. It will be remembered that some time ago he suggested that almost the first thing the provincial legislatures should do was to pass a resolution praying that the federal part of the constitution should not be brought into being. At the time he put forward this suggestion Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had not expressed the opinion that, bad as the whole constitution was, the federal part was very much worse than the provincial part; nor had the Congress, following this cue, not committed itself by passing a resolution to that effect to preventing federation. Mr. Satyamurti at that time had only expressed his individual opinion. Now, however, the Congress has made it its special business to sabotage federation, Mr. Satyamurti makes some practical suggestions as to how this sabotage can be brought about.

IN the *Hindustan Times's* All-India Convention number he says :

That it (federation) ought to be prevented from coming into existence and should be made still-born, must be evident to every political thinker in India to-day. This federation is unheard of in history, unsound in political theory. Indeed, it is no federation at all. It is an attempt to create in the centre a legislature and an executive, which, according to the bureaucrats, will form a bulwark against popular will, either in what is called British India or in the Indian States. The federal legislature will be much worse than even the present legislature. (Then follows a discussion of its composition.) The federal executive will be much worse than even the present Government

of India. (Then follows a discussion of reservations and safeguards.) Again, the people of Indian States have nothing to gain by federation. They will continue to be slaves of slaves, i. e., the Princes of India, who are and will be slaves of the Political Department. The legislative Assembly by an overwhelming majority has passed a resolution rejecting this federation. I venture to suggest that in all the eleven provinces resolutions will be immediately passed by the legislatures rejecting the federation and asking that it should not be brought into existence.

Anti-Federation League.

IN discussing feasible methods of preventing federation, he says :

If the Congress decides to accept office (as it has since done), six provincial Governments will do everything in their power to prevent the federation coming into existence, with the full backing of the legislatures. Knowing Muslim opinion as I do, I venture to state that Bengal, the Punjab, Sind and the North-West Frontier Province will reject the federation. Assam also may follow suit. If all provincial Governments are against the federation, I wonder how the British Government can go on forcing the pace.

The first method suggested, then, is that the provincial Governments should protest. Ten provincial Governments are certain to join the protest and the remaining eleven will very likely do so. Then Mr. Satyamurti proceeds :

Another way in which we can prevent the federation is to give a fair and timely warning to all the princes, that they are walking into a trap, if they march into the federation. Their only prop will be the Viceroy and the Political Department. Their own people, i. e., the people of the Indian States and the people of British India, are clearly against the federation.

Finally, I think we must from now organize huge public agitation against the federation. The Congress, the Muslim League and all the public bodies, who hate this federation, will be well advised, in my judgment, to form an Anti-Federation League, and carry on a raging and tearing campaign throughout the country, to prevent this federation from coming into existence. Anyhow, I am confidently hoping that this federation will be either still-born, or, if it is born, will soon die, and when it dies, it will die, unhonoured, upwept and unsung.

Concerted Strike by all Provinces.

MOST of the Congress leaders who are for acceptance of office are for an unconditional acceptance of it, and Mr. K. M. Munshi is one of them. He would not have Congressmen assume responsibilities of government with the sword of gubernatorial special powers hanging constantly upon them. If they are to do so, the British Government must be prepared "to let Congressmen do as they like in the limited, provincial

sphere." But, left to himself, he would not go to the Governor for an assurance that his special powers would be put in abeyance. For he thinks that it would be advantageous for Congressmen where they are in a majority to take office in any case, being prepared, however, to give it up as soon as the Governor makes use of any of his special powers. Nor should this be, in his opinion, isolated action on the part of any single province; it should be concerted action on the part of all the six provinces in which the Congress commands a majority. "If at any stage," he says, "the Governor of any of these provinces exercises his special powers, all the six provinces should create a crisis by going out of office *en bloc*. In this way, without relying upon the assurance from a party whose assurances in the past have been far from assuring, we can by our own strength and discipline achieve our object. . . . The moment these powers are used the Councils will be dissolved and the time for direct action will have arrived." This course will have, in Mr. Munshi's opinion, one advantage. "It will give Congressmen some respite after the strenuous times which they passed through during the elections, and during that respite Congress would have an opportunity to consolidate its position for the coming struggle," whereas if Congress asked for an assurance which was not forthcoming it would have to enter upon the struggle immediately.

Finance Bill.

UPON two features connected with the Indian budget public criticism was specially concentrated. These related to the proposed addition to the excise duty on sugar and the failure of the Government to reintroduce the half anna post card. It was feared that the former would impose an unfair burden on newer and smaller sugar factories. But what really decided the public against the additional excise duty was the likelihood, nay the certainty, of its increasing the economic difficulties of people of limited means. These are already unconscionably heavy and any addition to them was simply unthinkable. An immediate return to the half-anna post card was also desired with a view to lighten the economic burden on the poorer sections of the population.

NOR would the effectuation of these two reforms have hopelessly dislocated Indian finances. The abandonment of the increase in the sugar excise would have meant a loss to Indian revenues of about Rs. 115 lakhs and the reversion to the half anna post card only about Rs. 50 lakhs. It is difficult to believe that with suitable adjustments these demands which, it may be noted, had the backing of all sections of opinion, from the most conservative to the most advanced, could not have been met. A small reduction in the salaries of the higher staff which would not have been felt by them was an alternative suggestion thrown out by the Opposition by way of filling the gap of Rs. 165 lakhs which might have been caused if it had been decided to relieve the poor tax-payer in the directions indicated. But for reasons with which the Indian public is but too painfully familiar, the suggestion failed to commend itself to the powers that be. All which shows the very scant respect which Government have for public opinion.

THE subsequent setting in motion of the certification procedure gives evidence of studied unresponsiveness on the part of the Government. The Finance Bill with the Viceroy's recommendation for its passage with the two rejected items restored has been thrown out by the Assembly. Which body with any sense of self-respect could have behaved otherwise? It would have simply stultified itself by going back on

its earlier decision and falling in with the Viceroy's wishes. Its conduct in thus championing the cause of the overburdened taxpayer is deserving of all praise. It is, of course, beyond its power to make Government obey the dictates of public opinion. A faithful expression of it is all that it can aim at in the present circumstances. The Finance Bill cannot be prevented from becoming law so long as the Council of State is there dutifully to register the decrees of the Government. But its support to the Government can by no stretch of imagination be looked upon as in any way representative of public opinion. The certified Finance Bill will thus be nothing more than an executive-made law which has no sanction of public opinion.

Political Prisoners and Detenus.

THE problem of political prisoners and detenus was pressed on public attention last week from two platforms. In the Council of State a resolution demanding the release of detenus and political prisoners on the eve of the introduction of the reforms was brought forward. The Council's record has belied the hope that any progressive move or proposal would ordinarily commend itself to it. On this occasion also it fully lived up to its reputation as a reactionary body by rejecting the motion.

THE Political Prisoners' Relief Conference held at Delhi last week under the presidency of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose also made the same demand. But it did not stop there. Knowing full well that the demand, though reasonable, would not be heeded by the present bureaucratic Government, it also concerned itself with measures designed to make the lot of political prisoners and detenus bearable. Their grievances are many and numerous. But most of them will be found on closer analysis to have their basis really in mental and intellectual starvation.

THE political prisoners and detenus are segregated and the supply of books and newspapers is withheld from them. This results in mental disequilibrium in many cases, not to mention the physical impairment to which it gives rise with untoward consequences like suicides. If the Government were endowed with a sympathetic understanding of the hardships from which these young men suffer, most of these grievances would have been solved long ago. No considerations of finance are involved in their being allowed to associate with one another and there appears to be no reason why segregation should be insisted upon. The provision of libraries in jails and detention camps and the supply of newspapers cannot, of course, be arranged without expenditure of money. But it has been estimated that the expense will not be very heavy. And it would be still further reduced if, as repeatedly suggested, all political prisoners are concentrated in one or two jails. But in no case can the proposal be ruled out on grounds of finance. We hope Congressmen, on assumption of office in the different provinces, will make it almost their first task to look into this problem.

The Great Democrat.

United India and Indian States is very ardently devoted to democracy—in British India. In so far as the States are concerned, however, it honestly believes—and not merely because the interests of its patrons require such a confession of faith—that democracy in these areas is a superfluous and even a deleterious luxury. It shows much concern at the provision in the new constitution which allows second chambers in six provinces to be filled partly by no-

mination. The largest number of such nominated members will be in the Madras Legislative Council: 10 out of 56—a percentage of 18. The Legislative Assemblies in all the provinces will be wholly elected; the Councils where they are to be constituted will be only revising bodies; the percentage of nominated members in these will vary between 13 and 18. Still our contemporary is unable to tolerate this detraction from the perfect democracy it wishes to see established in British India. The nominated element in the upper chambers of six out of eleven provinces is an "archaic" feature which must be lopped off instantly if the editor of *United India* is ever to sleep in peace.

HE has, however, entirely different standards to apply when judging of the constitution in regard to the States. The States will provide a nominated element in both the chambers of the federal legislature—33½ per cent. in the lower and 40 per cent. in the upper; the upper chamber will be a permanent body not subject to dissolution: it will have in every respect co-equal powers with the lower chamber. But *United India* sees nothing archaic or undemocratic in any of these provisions because they are the result of the Indian Princes' insistent demand that it shall be so. Our contemporary finds nothing in any of these features of the constitution which militates against democracy; on the other hand, they are very necessary if India is ever to evolve a truly democratic form of government. See how unrestrained democracy has only led to fascism or communism in the West. Western countries have not yet realised that democracy if it is really to subserve the interests of the masses must be tempered with a very large admixture of autocracy. The autocracy to be mingled with democracy must of course be of the right sort. It will never do for these autocrats who are to be imported into a democratic constitution to have a sneaking sympathy with popular government. They must be people who will boldly assume the role of trustees for their subjects and, instead of merely carrying out the people's wishes, must set about doing what they think will be best for the people.

WHY has Western democracy proved such a colossal failure? In the first place, statesmen there are too doctrinaire, wedded to the outworn dogmas of self-government and popular liberties; and in the second place, even if they wanted to try a new experiment, they haven't the sort of benevolent autocrats with whom India is so richly dowered. In both these respects we are far more fortunately situated. We have no tradition of democracy amongst us, from which we find it difficult to extricate ourselves, and we are blessed with a number—some 600—of good strong autocrats who will have the courage of mercilessly putting down all stirrings of a democratic instinct in their people. Mr. Lees-Smith thought that it was a great blemish of the Indian federation that in its principles of Western Democracy were joined to "Oriental Absolutism." He does not realise that that is its chief virtue. A new type of democracy is being given to the world—a democracy that is at once safe and beneficent. This is apparently *United India's* political philosophy. It is all right for India, but what is to happen to other countries? Where are they to get that element of autocracy from, which is so essential if the operations of democracy are to be successful? Are we to have all the good things to ourselves? Cannot *United India* persuade some of these 600 benevolent rulers or at least their younger brothers to migrate to other countries, where democracy of the wrong type is making havoc, in order that they may be democratised in a proper way?

Reduction of British Troops.

Mr. KUNZRU moved a resolution in the Council of State of which the object was to impress on the Government the need for a reduction of British troops. The demand is based on economic no less than on sentimental considerations, for a British soldier is at least thrice as costly as his Indian counterpart. As admitted by the Commander-in-Chief himself, the elimination of British troops would result in a saving of Rs. 8 crores. The amount is urgently needed for nation-building services which are at present starved and there can be no doubt that even merely on the ground of cost the proposal deserves to be carried into effect. But there was a further argument on which Mr. Kunzru based his case. After the establishment of autonomous governments in the provinces, it is possible, he said, to conceive of a contingency when the policy of the ministers might differ from that of the British Government. Would not the British Government then refuse to allow to the ministers the use of British troops? he asked. And would it not be better from that point of view to set in motion the process of replacement of British by Indian troops?

THE force of the argument about increased cost involved in the employment of British soldiers was candidly acknowledged by Sir Robert Cassels. But the admission hardly meant anything in practice in view of his hostile attitude towards the demand itself. One can understand his inability to go the whole way with Indian opinion on this question at one bound or all at once. But could he not have promised some help? Beyond pointing to the reduction of 20,000 in the number of British troops, that had taken place since the War and to a possible decrease in the near future due to recruiting difficulties in England, he clearly expressed his inability to move in the direction desired by Mr. Kunzru. Need he be told that the question is not of what decrease would take place on account of uncontrollable factors but of what action would be taken by the Army authorities themselves to bring about a reduction of British troops? Mr. Kunzru obviously wanted to be assured on that point. But despite his sweet words, Sir Robert Cassels was extremely unhelpful.

THERE was the same anxiety not to disturb the status quo in regard to the ratio between British and Indian troops in his remarks. This ratio is 1 to between 2 and 3. The proportion is objected to as being based on a policy of distrust of Indians and attempts to have it changed have come to naught. Sir Robert Cassels denied any conscious attempt on the part of Government to maintain that particular mathematical proportion which, he said, was only the result of circumstances. If the ratio had nothing to do with the Government's policy, one fails to see any sense in resisting, as the Commander-in-Chief did, all proposals for its change unless they meant an additional burden on the tax-payer. The demand for a reduction of the white garrison no way suffers from that disadvantage and should have found favour with the Government if the consideration of Indian interests alone had influenced their policy. Whatever Sir Robert Cassels may say, Indian opinion will find it difficult to take his words at their face-value.

Mr. Vaidya's Scheme of Hyderabad Legislature.

THE public expectation about the grant of a liberal measure of political reforms in connection with the Nizam's Jubilee having been disappointed, Mr. K. S. Vaidya, a member of the Hyderabad Legislative Council, has framed a bill to democratise its constitution. Its present constitution was made nearly thirty-seven years ago. It will not be strictly

correct to say that the period has witnessed no changes in it. It has indeed undergone some changes, but these have been mostly of a minor or unimportant nature. The British Indian constitution was revised thrice during these years, but that of Hyderabad State has remained almost unaltered. The need for its revision is thus obvious and we are glad that Mr. Vaidya has turned his attention to it.

THE present Council has a membership of 20, only four of whom are elected—two by Jahagirdars and two by the legal profession. Experience has shown that the election of the Jahagirdars' representatives is little better than a farce. They generally put forward only two candidates and have succeeded in avoiding a contested election. And it is only in regard to the representation of lawyers that election has played some part. Mr. Vaidya's scheme proposes a membership of 44 elected members for the Council. One wonders whether it provides for the election of the President by the Council. The total absence of communal representation is a noteworthy feature of the scheme. But with a view to the correction of inequalities in the representation of different communities Mr. Vaidya seeks to empower the Nizam's Government to nominate ten persons, five of whom should be non-officials, provision being made for the nomination of experts on special occasions.

BUT a mere enlargement of the Council unaccompanied by a corresponding extension of its powers would not meet the needs of the situation. Owing to its very restricted powers—it does not enjoy the right of interpellation—the Council's legislative output and its record of work have been very meagre and disappointing. Under Mr. Vaidya's proposal its members will be given the right of asking questions, moving resolutions, and voting on the budget subject, of course, to the Nizam's final orders. The Nizam's Privy purse of Rs. 50 lakhs and the salaries of officials appointed by him would be excluded from the Council's jurisdiction. The present Council sits at very long intervals and sits for a very short time. This is the result of its constitution which leaves no scope for non-official initiative. If Mr. Vaidya's scheme is accepted, it will meet more frequently and in fact will have to be assembled at least once every quarter, its tenure of office being three years instead of the present two. There can be no doubt that action on the lines proposed by Mr. Vaidya has been long overdue. And we wish all possible success to his public-spirited effort.

Mr. Subhas Bose's Release.

MR. SUBHAS BOSE was released last week. The event is naturally the subject of much rejoicing. But we are not sure that the Government is entitled to any thanks for it. By setting him at liberty they have only rectified an injustice. And for refraining from doing a wrong or unjust thing nobody expects or receives thanks. The Government appear to us to be in that position. Mr. Bose was detained by them for years only on suspicion and though his creature comforts were, we daresay, properly attended to, the loneliness and isolation of confinement seem to have gravely damaged his health. And we should not wonder if it was really the fear of a possible breakdown in his health and not any magnanimity on the part of the Government that secured for him his release. It is not in us to be unduly severe on the Government, but it is their own record in Mr. Bose's case that is widely believed to support the view of his release having been forced on them as a matter of necessity. In other words, he was set at liberty because his health was precarious and Government

was anxious to save themselves the immediate responsibility for any untoward consequences that were possibly apprehended. Anyway the public has reason to feel gratified at his restoration to liberty.

Indians in Zanzibar.

THE position of Indians in Zanzibar was the subject of a debate raised by Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru in the Council of State last week. He wanted another investigation into the position of Indians there as affected by the clove legislation of 1934. For this purpose he favoured the deputation of a representative of the Government of India to that British protectorate. A careful study of the situation on the spot such as Mr. Kunzru had in mind would have doubtless brought to light facts and information which otherwise remain obscure. But the Government consider the inquiry needless at the present stage. Whenever they would find that an investigation on the spot could be usefully undertaken they promised to arrange for it. On such a sympathetic assurance Mr. Kunzru withdrew his resolution.

THE debate was useful also from another point of view. Indian opinion has all along pressed for the appointment of an Agent of the Government of India for East Africa. It is not as if the Government are not friendly to the idea. But somehow the question is hanging fire. The Government spokesman availed himself of the opportunity furnished by this debate to announce that the question would be discussed with the authorities in England by their representative when he attends the Imperial Conference. Since the question is said to need personal discussion, is it to be supposed that there are serious difficulties in the way? If so, Indian opinion would like to be enlightened about them in time.

Mr. Tuljapurkar's Petition.

A PETITION is submitted to the Nizam by Mr. V. R. Tuljapurkar, in which pointed attention is drawn to the grievances of H. E. H.'s Hindu subjects in the matter of their religious observances and the use of their mother tongue in schools. But before any reference is made to the subject of the petition we must tell our readers something about the petitioner himself. He is a subject of Hyderabad State and an earnest public worker. The part he played in the fight for the assertion of the local Hindus' right to take their religious processions to the accompaniment of music by a customary route earned for him the displeasure of the State authorities which manifested itself in an internment order being served upon him. This restricted his movements to the town of Tuljapur and was to be in force for an unspecified period. To deprive a respectable citizen of his civic rights in this arbitrary manner is bad enough. But to omit to arrange for the payment to the internee of even a subsistence allowance, as happened in Mr. Tuljapurkar's case, is cruel. The Bengal Government follows a coercive policy in regard to suspected terrorists and violent revolutionaries but does not neglect to provide for an allowance, which will enable the detenu at least to keep body and soul together. The Nizam's Government apparently regards Mr. Tuljapurkar as a more dangerous person than the Bengal Government regards terrorists!

SO far as one can see, Mr. Tuljapurkar's complaint is not so much against the Nizam personally as against his officials. In fact, he says in so many words, that the Nizam is himself following a policy of religious equality towards his subjects, whatever their religion. But it is his communally-minded

Muslim officials that see to it that in actual practice the Nizam's policy is thrown to the winds. In this connection he instances their attitude towards the question of the famous Ganapati procession at Paithan. In order that no trouble over music before a mosque should ever arise in regard to the time-honoured Eknath Dindi procession, the Nizam's Government constructed, at considerable expense, a special road for it. On it no mosques were situated at the time and, according to the agreement executed by local Muslims, none were to be constructed thereafter. Yet the organisers of the Ganapati procession were ordered not to play music on this mosque-free road on the ground of the existence on it of two of them! This happened seven years ago and though the local Hindus under Mr. Tuljapurkar's lead have managed to keep the authorities constantly in mind of the glaring injustice done to them it still remains unremedied. And, what is most deplorable, attempts are officially being made to create a split in the Hindu community on this point so as to obviate the need for the cancellation of this obnoxious order on the pretext of want of unanimity amongst Hindus themselves.

THE other grievance of the Hindus to which reference is made in this petition relates to the official discouragement of the use of their mother tongue as the medium of instruction in schools. They

can obviously not have much to say against encouragement to Urdu in a State ruled by a Muslim King. But what they strongly object to is its being foisted, by all sorts of subtle devices and subterfuges, upon Hindus who form an overwhelming majority of His Exalted Highness's subjects. Here, again, Mr. Tuljapurkar does not blame the Nizam so much as his subordinates. May it be hoped that the matters referred to in the petition will have his personal attention?

Indian Christians and Communal Electorates.

IN the course of its reflections on the results of the recent general elections to the provincial legislatures, the *Indian Christian Messenger*, the organ of the Indian Christian Association of U. P., says:

We must state in unequivocal terms that we have emerged more convinced than ever that communal electorates are blatantly pernicious. These have harmed personal relations and have done incalculable injury to us as a community. We look upon these as entirely oppressive and tyrannical. For illustration we may mention that any candidate, howsoever capable, under the Congress ticket, stands debarred from getting elected because of the outlook for our community in these provinces. He with such persuasion finds doors slammed in his face as far as the general constituency is concerned, for he has been relegated to a communal group.

THE CONGRESS MINISTRIES.

THE Working Committee's resolution on office acceptance has been adopted by the All-India Congress Committee, with a slight verbal change which makes no difference whatever to the substance of the resolution. Acceptance of office by Congress members will be permitted only if the Leader of the Congress Party in the Assembly can announce publicly that he has received an assurance that the Governor will in effect impose a self-denying ordinance on himself with regard to the exercise of the special powers vested in him by the constitution and give free play to the Congress Cabinet to do just what it likes. To judge from the comments in Congress organs it would appear that Congressmen are sanguine that they would receive the required assurance and would thus be enabled to assume the reins of office. Liberal politicians have often been twitted in the past with relying too much on the promises of the British Government's agents and being unduly hopeful about their beneficent intentions. We believe Congressmen can justly be accused now of deluding themselves with hopes which are certain to be dashed. It appears to us to be very unlikely, unless the Leader of the Congress Party in his parleys with the Governor gives an undertaking which he ought never to give, that the Governor can or will give him an assurance in advance that he will in all circumstances allow his special powers to fall into desuetude. If everything is done in a straightforward manner the Governor must declare himself unable to make a promise which he will find it impossible to fulfil without contravening the letter and the spirit of the constitution.

The Constitution Act places upon the Governor certain special responsibilities, and the extraordinary powers with which he is endowed are meant to enable

him to discharge these responsibilities. If the Governor now promises not to exercise these extraordinary powers, such a promise can only imply that he has made up his mind, and is prepared to have his resolve made publicly known, not to carry out the responsibilities which the Act imposes upon him. No Governor could do so even if he would. It is not a question here of the Governor using his special powers with self-restraint and in moderation. If that were in issue, a solution would be readily available. Even then no assurance would be necessary, for the majority behind the Congress Ministers would be a constant reminder to the Governor, without the Congress Party uttering a word about it, that he must not be too free with the exercise of powers which he can invoke only in certain stated emergencies. The question here is that the Governor must decide beforehand—and must allow the decision to be published on the strength of the talk that he will have with the Congress Party's Leader—that he will in every conceivable situation renounce the powers which the constitution has conferred upon him and made it incumbent upon him to bring into use whenever necessary. The Constitution Act in terms "requires" him to use these powers. If, in spite of this, an assurance like the one stipulated by the Congress resolution is to be given one of two things must happen. Either the Governor must prejudge the questions that will come up for his decision later, so far as to be able to say in regard to every one of them: "This is not a question on which I need take, and indeed can take, action independently of the Cabinet." We do not see how the Governor can do so, though on particular questions he may decide not to interfere with the Cabinet's policy. Or, and this is the only other alternative, the Leader of the Congress Party

must give a solemn pledge that the Ministry will never give occasion to the Governor to bring his special powers into exercise. He must say: "I know very well that the Act does not concede full self-government in the provinces. I am aware of the severe limitations placed upon the powers of the Cabinet. You have special responsibilities in regard to certain matters and have been given adequate powers to implement these responsibilities. I am fully mindful of this. But I will tell you upon my honour that I shall never allow circumstances to arise in which you can ever think of bringing your special powers into force." Thereupon probably the Governor will reply: "I am glad to hear this. Surely if such circumstances do not arise I shall never use my powers. You have no idea how hateful it would be for me to use them." The Leader of the Congress Party would then proceed: "This is good so far as it goes. But a conditional promise like that on your part will not meet the situation. You know the Congress has passed a certain resolution which requires, at least in form, an unconditional promise from you. I can well see your difficulty. I will put it this way. I give you a promise that never by any chance will a situation be created in which, either on your own initiative or on demand from any other party or interest you will feel the least inclined to bring your special powers into play. We shall remain well within the limits of the constitution and never seek to impinge on your powers. Can you not on the strength of this promise, which you will see is unconditional and is intended to cover all imaginable cases, tell me that I may go forward with my plans of forming a government?" The Governor will then say: "Go ahead, but take care how you behave as Ministers." If in such circumstances a promise is made, it is indeed a promise which the Governor does not make to the Leader of the Congress Party but which the Leader of the Congress Party makes to the Governor; it is a promise which involves not the Governor's abdication but the Congress Party's surrender.

Can the Leader of the Congress Party honestly make such a promise? A conditional permission to accept office comes only at the tail-end of a very lengthy resolution, which demands in the earlier part that "the new constitution be withdrawn" and warns all Congress members of the legislature that, "in the event of the constitution not being withdrawn, their work inside and outside the legislatures must be based on the fundamental Congress policy of combating the new constitution and seeking to end it." The resolution declares further that "that policy must inevitably lead to deadlocks with the British Government and must bring out still further the in-

herent antagonism between British imperialism and Indian nationalism and expose the autocratic and anti-democratic nature of the new constitution." Will the Leader of the Congress Party conveniently forget in his interview with the Governor that the policy which the Congress enjoins upon him is one of deadlocks; that it is not the Congress business to make matters smooth for the Governor, but rather to create deadlocks whenever they could be created? We think no man of self-respect, however accommodating he may be by nature, will ever consent to give to the Governor the kind of promise which alone can possibly evoke from the latter a response that will be considered satisfactory enough to permit of the formation of a ministry by the Congress. But, self-respect apart, can the Leader of the Congress Party consistently with the earlier part of the resolution give such a pledge? And if he were to give it, would the Governor accept it? Is it not possible that the Governor too has seen the resolution as a whole and Pandit Jawaharlal's commentary on it, in which the need for destroying the Act is underlined? Will he not say: "The Congress policy is just the opposite of what you declare. You say you will avoid deadlocks. I would very much like you to follow that policy, but I am afraid you can follow it only as a renegade to the Congress. For the Congress is not for steadfastly avoiding deadlocks but for deliberately precipitating them. Even if I were to promise that I would waive my special powers in order to enable you to try your hand at government, I feel certain that you would not long remain in the Ministry. The punishment that falls upon all renegades will fall upon you too—and soon enough. In these circumstances it would be best for you to give up hopes of assuming office. I am so sorry, but the Congress High Command leaves you no other alternative"?

It is very difficult to see how, without either the Governor or the Leader of the Congress Party being false to the responsibilities of his position, office acceptance by the Congress on the terms laid down by the All-India Congress Committee is possible. But even if the Congress Party managed somehow to find its way to positions of power in the Government we are clear that before very long it would have to come out of these positions. The leftists in the Congress are at present in a minority, but they are rapidly growing in strength, and as the Congress Cabinet will, with a view not to provoke the use of the Governor's special powers, follow a temporising policy it will rapidly become unpopular in the Congress ranks, and the leftists will become numerous. By the logic of facts, the Congress, having gone so far in a certain direction, will be propelled along it with a still greater velocity. There is no escape from this situation, and if it is to arise very soon in any event, would it not be better to face it now than to do so after a good deal of unnecessary recrimination with the Governor and bad blood on both sides?

THE PRINCES MIGHT TAKE HEED.

THE Congress decision on the office question really means that, like the Moslem community in general, Congressmen are willing to treat the provincial and federal parts of the constitution separately and that while they will offer uncompromising opposition to the functioning of the latter they

will have no objection to working the former, provided a reasonable guarantee is forthcoming that they would not be unduly hampered in this task. Mr. Jinnah and other Moslem leaders are known to be thoroughly hostile to federation, but they were being reproached so far for their thinly disguised desire to

save the provincial part of the constitution from a general attack upon the whole constitution. The Congress too has now placed itself on all fours with the Muslim community in this respect. For see what the All-India Congress Committee's resolution on this subject leads to. Congressmen in six provinces ask for an assurance that they will be left free by the Governor in carrying on the provincial administration in the way they think best. If such an assurance is forthcoming they will assume office and will retain it so long as the assurance given is carried out, both in the letter and in the spirit. While they do so they will discharge the duties of their office in the normal way, without pursuing wrecking tactics. Deadlocks will be produced only if either the necessary assurance is not given or, being given, is not scrupulously honoured. But while the Congress Ministers are ruling in the provinces federation may come into being at the centre, and although the Congress will in the meantime endeavour, as it is pledged to do, to prevent the inauguration of federation it will not make the fact of federation having come into existence a cause for a change of tactics in the provinces. In the A.I.C.C. discussion an anti-office member reminded the Committee of the thoroughly reactionary character of the central government under the new constitution. "You are willing," he said, "to form a government and work the provincial part of the constitution honestly because this part, though unsatisfactory in form, will be rendered satisfactory in fact by the Governor imposing a self-denying ordinance upon himself. But how can we forget the federal part, which is the core of the whole thing?" He meant to say that if a wrecking policy must be adopted to avert the calamity of being subjected to a hated constitution, it was as much the duty of the Congress to adopt this policy in the provinces when the federal part of the constitution alone was left in an unsatisfactory condition as when both the provincial and the federal parts were equally unsatisfactory. The constitution must be looked upon as a whole, and even to secure the withdrawal of the central part of the constitution it was incumbent upon the Congress members in the legislatures to follow wrecking tactics in the provinces. By adopting the resolution that it did in the A.I.C.C. the Congress rejected this view and by implication determined to tackle the provincial and federal parts of the constitution in isolation and each on its own merits. This is exactly what the Muslim leaders desire, and the Congress by its decision on the office question has, perhaps unconsciously, brought itself into line with the prevailing Muslim opinion.

One result of this new and unintended orientation will be, if the Governors cease to be meddling some long enough, to concentrate attack upon federation from all fronts. The Congress, being engaged in constructive work in the provincial sphere, will have had left to it only the central sphere for its militant activities, and just because these activities have no scope in other fields, they will show themselves in a redoubled form at the centre. Moreover, barring a few leaders at the top, most Congressmen believe, with

Pandit Jawaharlal, that of the two parts of the constitution the federal part is much the worse, and that by no kind of Gentleman's Agreement reached between the Governor-General and the people's representatives would the essential defects in it be cured. The Congress would thus make fierce onslaughts upon federation, and in these it would receive the whole-hearted support of the Muslim community. It is thus not at all improbable that, as Mr. Satyamurti suggests, in ten out of eleven provinces and possibly in all the eleven, legislatures would pass by an overwhelming majority resolutions condemning federation and putting forward a demand for its wholesale withdrawal. This demand will perhaps be spurned by the British Government, but one may confidently predict that an intensive agitation will be kept up afterwards, and the most important thing to remember here is that in this agitation the Congress and the Muslims will be comrades-in-arms. Our political struggle has suffered grievously in the past because the Muslim community stood apart from the other political groups. Here at last is an issue of supreme importance in which all the political elements in the country will work together. The People's Front that will thus result will be no artificial structure either; it will be formed by all progressive politicians coming spontaneously together to resist reactionary forces. One must be abnormally faint of heart who will doubt that in such a straight fight the progressives will not come out, victorious. The Congress position always remains in doubt so long as Mahatma Gandhi's opinion is not known, and although the attitude that he took up towards federation at the Round Table Conference was open to serious objection it should also be noted that at one stage in its proceedings he was content to have provincial autonomy, leaving the centre over for treatment in future. The A.I.C.C. resolution virtually seeks to give effect to this compromise that he was then prepared to accept. Provided that the Congress can carry on its activities in the provinces without any impediment from the Governor it will be ready to ignore the centre. But the centre must not at least be made worse than it is at present. Because federation makes it worse, the Congress will be compelled to use all its resources, short of pursuing wrecking tactics in the provinces, as a retaliatory measure, first in preventing and then in destroying the federal structure, and the Muslims will be at one with the Congress in this.

This is a development to which the Princes might well pay heed. The Princes' quarrel at present is with the Paramount Power, and with the Paramount Power only. British Indians have not only no quarrel with them, but ordinarily they support the Princes in the demands which the latter make on the Paramount Power. But the position will be completely changed hereafter. The Princes will force themselves upon British India in the federation, and British India cannot possibly ignore them. Their autocracy was winked at so long as British India did not suffer from it, but it will obtrude itself now in the central legislature, and British India must from the nature of the case labour ceaselessly to eliminate it not only from the federal legislature but from the States themselves.

For British Indians realise that if the Princes' autocracy is not to be the most serious obstacle to British India's progress, it must be abolished altogether. For the Princes cannot be autocrats in their States and democrats in British India. British Indians will thus from self-interest be forced to join hands with the Indian States' people in a vigorous movement for the democratisation of the Indian States from which till now they kept studiously aloof. Do the Princes want to lock themselves in battle with the British Indian people? The latter have not yet won a victory in their struggle with the British Government, but the

British Government is already showing signs of exhaustion. The States will not be able long to hold out against British Indian agitation. But we cannot understand why the Princes should quite unnecessarily place themselves athwart British India and bring down upon their devoted heads the accumulated wrath of the entire Indian people. Mr. Satyamurti has suggested that a solemn warning should be given to the Princes, asking them to keep their autocracy to their own States lest it be completely broken. The Princes will be wise in their generation if they will hearken to this advice given in a friendly spirit.

THE CONGRESS CONVENTION.

THE Convention of all the Congress members elected to the legislatures and the members of the Congress executive that was held in Delhi after the meetings of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. was an impressive gathering. The speech which the Congress President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, delivered on the occasion of opening the Convention was admirably adapted to the fulfilment of the Convention's object of unifying and giving one-pointedness to the activities of Congressmen within the legislatures and co-ordinating them with the activities of Congressmen without. The speech, however, seems to have produced a diametrically opposite result. That is no fault of Pandit Jawaharlal. Congress policy as he interprets it is consistent and one-pointed, and he used inspiring words in exhorting all Congressmen to be faithful to it. But a large section of the Congress interprets this policy in a different if not a contrary sense. They speak the same language but extract from it a meaning so entirely different as to convert a policy of non-co-operation into one of co-operation. The Convention was held at a very unfortunate time for these neo-co-operators, for Pandit Jawaharlal's fiery speech emphasising the need for maintaining and intensifying a non-co-operation spirit came just when the other section was most anxious to appear in a superlatively conciliatory mood to the Governors of provinces, from whom they wanted to obtain a sort of assurance so as to enable them to take offices of Ministers in the provincial Governments. The speech was most disconcerting to them. They were foaming at the mouth when the Pandit spoke, but it was more their misfortune than the Pandit's fault that hostility to the constitution was being stressed by him just when they were engaged in working for a face-saving device for assuming a friendly attitude to the constitution.

Mr. Nehru reminded his auditors of the Congress goal of independence. One would think that because the Independence Day is being celebrated every year no Congressman was in danger of forgetting such a vital part of the Congress programme. But a great number of Congressmen, it is well known, accept this goal with a mental reserve. A recent example of this was afforded by Mr. C. R. Reddy, who openly avowed the other day that he had entered the Congress on the distinct understanding that to him Independence would bear a different meaning from that which ordinarily

attaches to it. He was so oppressed by the feeling that he was, so to say, sailing under false colours that he thought it his duty to resign his membership of the Congress. But he need not have done so as no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi still interprets Independence as nothing better than Dominion Status. Indeed there is none more disloyal to the Congress creed than he, but he has attained a status in the Congress which cannot be shaken by anything that he does, in however flagrant a contradiction it may be to what is required of one pledged to Congress principles. Pandit Jawaharlal therefore took occasion of the Convention to administer indirect reproof to Mahatma Gandhi by telling leading Congressmen that Independence does not and cannot mean Dominion Status. Dominion Status, when achieved, may give India the right of secession; but the Congress stand for Independence in deliberate substitution for Dominion Status means that India has made up her mind to effect the severance at the earliest possible opportunity. Mahatma Gandhi makes it appear as if, when the right is obtained, India may not exercise it. Pandit Jawaharlal totally denied it. If it were otherwise, there was no need for the Congress to give up the goal of Dominion Status and adopt that of Independence instead. "Independence means," he declared, "national freedom in the fullest sense of the word; it means, as our pledge has stated, a severance of the British connexion." What the Congress stands for is not the right to separate from the British Empire in the abstract, leaving it still undecided whether when the right is obtained it should be exercised or not, but for the actual exercise of that right on which the Congress has finally resolved. The position that Mahatma Gandhi has taken up on this matter shows him in an extremely bad light on the moral plane. If disciplinary action is required against any one it is required against him.

Pandit Jawaharlal then exhorted Congress members to keep true to the attitude which the Congress has assumed towards the new constitution, whether they accept offices or not. The Congress has declared, he said, that the Indian people "will not have this constitution. They have given notice to quit to British imperialism. This constitution must therefore go lock, stock and barrel, and leave the field clear for our Constituent Assembly. . . . The outstanding fact of the elections is that the people of

this country have given their verdict clearly, unequivocally and emphatically against this slave constitution. If the British Government has any respect for democracy and still sees virtue in democratic procedure, as it so loudly proclaims, then it has no alternative but to withdraw this constitution and Act. . . . Congress members of the legislatures have their work cut out for them by Congress resolutions. That work is primarily to fight the Act and press and work for a Constituent Assembly. . . . So we are told by the Congress to go to the Legislatures not to co-operate (for this so-called co-operation would only be another name for submission to dictation) but to fight the Act. . . . We have to remember that the whole logic of Congress resolutions and declarations and policy leads us to maintain a spirit of non-co-operation towards this constitution and Act." One may or may not approve of this policy, but who can doubt that this is the only interpretation which can honestly be placed upon the Congress resolutions, and it is natural that those who are veering round from non-co-operation to co-operation should find this utterance, thoroughly logical as it is, very distasteful.

Even if the Ministerships are offered to and accepted by Congressmen, we cannot believe that Pandit Jawaharlal, who naturally goes by the words of the Congress resolutions, will let Congress members of the legislatures swerve very far from the path of non-co-operation, and the assurances of co-operation that will be given by them in order to obtain answering assurances from the Governor will remain unhonoured, the Congress Party being forced to revert to non-co-operation by the very momentum of the policy that was being advocated so long and is even now being advocated at least in outward form. There is no doubt that Mr. Rajagopalachari, Babu Rajendra Prasad and others, though still speaking of ending the constitution by working it, are really making a move to the right, but we believe Pandit Jawaharlal will yet keep the Congress to the left.

Miscellaneous.

CONGRESS AND OFFICE ACCEPTANCE.

A. I. C. C. RESOLUTION.

The All-India Congress Committee which met at Delhi on March 17 and 18 passed a resolution on the subject of acceptance of office by Congressmen. It ran as follows :

THE All-India Congress Committee records its high appreciation of the magnificent response of the country to the call of the Congress during the recent elections and the approval by the electorate of the Congress policy and programme.

The Congress entered these elections with the objective of independence involving the total rejection of the new constitution and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly to frame India's constitution. The declared policy of the Congress was to combat the new Act and end it. The electorate has, in an overwhelming majority, set its seal of approval to this policy and programme, and the new Act, therefore, stands condem-

ned and utterly rejected by the people through the self-same democratic process which had been invoked by the British Government, and the people have further declared that they desire to frame their own constitution based on national independence, through the medium of a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise. This Committee, therefore, demands on behalf of the people of India that the new Constitution be withdrawn.

In the event of the British Government still persisting with the new constitution in defiance of the declared will of the people, the All-India Congress Committee desires to impress upon all Congress members of the legislatures that their work inside and outside the legislatures must be based on the fundamental Congress policy of combating the new constitution and seeking to end it, a policy on the basis of which they sought the suffrage of the electorate and won their overwhelming victory in the elections. That policy must inevitably lead to deadlocks with the British Government and bring out still further the inherent antagonism between British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism, and expose the autocratic and undemocratic nature of the new constitution.

The All-India Congress Committee endorses and confirms the resolutions of the Working Committee passed at Wardha on 27th and 28th February, 1937, on extra-parliamentary activities of the Congress members of the legislatures, mass contacts and the Congress policy in the legislatures and calls upon all Congressmen in the legislatures and outside to work in accordance with the directions contained in them.

And on the pending question of office acceptance and in pursuance of the policy summed up in the foregoing paragraphs, the All-India Congress Committee authorises and permits the acceptance of ministerial offices in the provinces where the Congress commands a majority in the legislatures, provided ministerships shall not be accepted unless the leader of the Congress Party in the legislature is satisfied and is able to state publicly that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of the Ministers in regard to their constitutional activities.

CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS.

The following are among the resolutions passed by the National Convention held at Delhi on March 19 and 20.

NEW CONSTITUTION.

THIS Convention reiterates the opinion of the people of India that the Government of India Act of 1935 has been designed to perpetuate the subjection and exploitation of the Indian people and strengthen the hold of British Imperialism on India.

This Convention declares that the Indian people do not recognise the right of any external authority to dictate the political and economic structure of India. The Indian people can only accept a constitutional structure framed by them and based on the independence of India as a nation and which allows them full scope for development according to their needs and desires.

This Convention stands for a genuine democratic State in India where political power has been transferred to the people as a whole. Such a State can only be created by the Indian people themselves through the medium of a Constituent Assembly elect-

ed on the basis of adult suffrage and having power to determine finally the constitution of the country.

The electorate has, in an overwhelming measure, set its seal on the Congress objective of independence and the rejection of the new constitution. The constitution therefore stands condemned and utterly rejected by the people through the self-same democratic process which had been invoked by the British Government and the people have further declared that they desire to frame their own constitution based on National Independence through the medium of a Constituent Assembly.

This Convention therefore calls on all Congress Parliamentary parties to take the earliest opportunity to put forward, in the name of the nation, a demand in their respective legislatures that the Government of India Act of 1935 be withdrawn so that the people of India may frame their own constitution.

This Convention draws the attention of the various Congress Parliamentary parties to the resolution relating to the Congress policy in the legislatures passed by the Working Committee at Wardha and adopted by the All-India Congress Committee at Delhi on the 18th March and calls upon them to be guided by that resolution in their work within the legislatures.

MASS CONTACTS.

This Convention desires to remind all Congress members of the provincial Assemblies that their sphere of activity is not confined to legislatures but includes their constituencies. All effective work in

the legislatures must have the sanction of the people behind it and therefore all work in legislatures must be co-ordinated with Congress activities outside. Every Congress member must, therefore, keep in constant touch with the people of his constituency and should consult them and report to them from time to time and give such help to them as he can in their day-to-day struggles. He should further keep in touch with primary and other local committees in his constituency and share the responsibility of keeping the Congress organisation in that area in efficient working condition and in touch with the masses it seeks to represent.

CONGRESS OATH.

The following oath was administered by the President of the Congress to members of provincial legislatures attending the National Convention which met at Delhi on March 19 and 20. The oath ran :

I, a member of this All-India Convention, pledge myself to the service of India and to work in the legislatures and outside for the independence of India and the ending of the exploitation and poverty of her people. I pledge myself to work under the discipline of the Congress for the furtherance of Congress ideals and objectives, to the end that India may be free and independent and her millions freed from the heavy burdens they suffer from.

PALESTINE ROYAL COMMISSION.

ARAB HIGHER COMMITTEE'S MEMORANDUM.

Following is the Memorandum of Evidence submitted by the Arab Higher Committee to Lord Peel's Royal Commission on Palestine.

THE Arab Higher Committee, acting on behalf of the Arabs of Palestine, hereby begs to submit to the Royal Commission an analysis of the Arab Case in Palestine, embracing the fundamental causes of last summer's disturbances and those that have recurred in Palestine since the year 1919.

The fundamental causes of the disturbances may be summarised in the following two points :

A—The Deprivation of the Palestine Arabs of their natural and political rights.

B—The fixed intention of the British Government of maintaining a policy in Palestine which, in so far as it operates in favour of establishing a Jewish National Home, cannot but lead to the destruction of the Arabs as a national and cultural entity in the country . . . as shall be explained hereafter.

1. We beg to stress the fact that the Arab movement in Palestine is one which from the first has aspired to national independence, a movement which does not in its essence differ from parallel movements amongst the Arabs of other Arab territories, nor can this be dismissed as a new movement (consequent upon the mandatory policy), for it dates back to pre-War days.

The Arabs formed an important part of the Ottoman Empire, and it is quite erroneous to suggest that they were exposed to particular sufferings under the oppressive Turkish regime, and that their uprising, with the co-operation proceeding from the Allies, was merely intended to free them from the Turkish yoke

merely for its own sake. The truth is that under the Ottoman Constitution they were enjoying all the rights and privileges, political and otherwise, which were accorded their Turkish brethren, without the least discrimination being exercised between the different racial elements within the body of the Ottoman Empire.

In actual fact the Arabs shared fully with their Turkish brethren in the administration of the Government in all its varying aspects, occupying both civil and military positions in major and minor affairs alike. They filled with distinction the positions of Prime Minister, Ministers of the Chamber, military commanders, and provincial and district governors. They were also represented in the Ottoman Parliament, in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, in proportion to their numbers as specified (in principle) in the Ottoman Constitution and in the Ottoman electoral laws. Furthermore, the administration of the Arab territories was entrusted to certain executive bodies elected in the provinces, districts, and sub-districts, as well as to representative bodies elected for the provinces and independent districts such as Jerusalem; which said bodies were free to exercise the widest discretion in the administration, the Treasury and matters of education and development. In spite of all this, however, the Arabs were continuously aspiring for complete national independence in their own country, motivated by the desire to reach the distinguished position which they had held in the past centuries, when they rendered to the civilised world the greatest contribution, affecting every phase of human activity. For many generations in the past the Arab leaders and the Arab youth (including many natives of Palestine) have clung to the principle of independence and succeeded in spreading this

conviction among all the ranks of Arab society. This movement was given a new impetus in the year 1908, with the result that after the Paris Conference of 1917 which was one of the most fervent and complete expressions of this aspiration, the Arabs embarked on an era full of persecutions and valuable sacrifices. It was as a consummation of this movement that the Shereef of Mecca (King Hussein) declared in the name of all the Arabs the widespread rebellion which followed the treaty of alliance made with Great Britain in 1915, a rebellion which was entered upon for the declared purpose of realizing the aim of freedom and independence for the Arab territories.

2. The British Government entered into a covenant with King Hussein as representative of the Arabs, which promised Great Britain's recognition of the establishment of an Independent Arab State. The promises therein made covered all the Arab territories then falling within the Turkish Empire.

Mr. Winston Churchill, as Secretary of State in 1922, attempted unsuccessfully to establish that Palestine was not intended to fall within the frontiers referred to in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence. The territories to be specifically excluded from the Independent Arab State as set out in that correspondence, and which remained unapproved of by Shereef Hussein (King Hussein), were intended to cover only the area that is now known as the Lebanon. This is provable by the following facts :

(1) These exclusions were only made to avoid a collision with the French interests in the western parts of Syria. France had no interests at that time save in the Lebanon (as this territory is called today).

(2) The excluded area comprised only those parts falling west of the Districts of Damascus, Hamah, Homs and Aleppo. Palestine, it is clear, does not fall to the west of any of the above Districts.

(3) The allegation of Mr. Winston Churchill that "Damascus" meant the Vilayat of Damascus is fundamentally erroneous, for there was no Vilayat known as the "Vilayat of Damascus" for Damascus itself was the capital of the Vilayat of Syria. It is one of many Districts (kada) included within the Vilayat of Syria.

Had the "Vilayat of Syria" (including as it then did the different Districts of Transjordan, west of which Palestine falls), been intended for complete exclusion from the Arab independent State, there would have been no necessity to mention the Districts of Homs and Hamah, which all fall within the Vilayat of Syria, as also does the District (Kada) of Damascus. And had Palestine been intended for exclusion from the Independent Arab State, the Districts of Salt and Karak would not have been disregarded in a document which set out to lay down frontiers with diplomatic precision.

(4) Basing himself on the above mentioned pledges, King Hussein played his important role in declaring war against the Turks. He called all the Arab territories to participate, and the Palestine volunteers were amongst the first to join the "Arab Revolutionary Armies". Aeroplanes continually rained upon Palestine various proclamations calling upon the Arab officers and men in the Turkish ranks to join the Arab Revolution. This the Arabs of Palestine accordingly did on a large scale, officers and privates alike, with the sole aspiration of attaining a single end, viz. the independence of the Arab lands including Palestine.

3. After the War came to an end, schemes of territorial reconstitution were put forward on the basis of President Wilson's principles of the right of

self-determination, the fulfilment of which has since become a sacred trust of civilization.

When victory was finally achieved by the Allies, Lord Allenby, the Commander of the Allied forces in the East, issued in the year 1918, and in the name of the two Governments of Great Britain and France, a written Declaration that was distributed in all the cities and villages of what is now Palestine, in Syria and in the Lebanon, affirming that it was the solemn purpose of the Allies to further the cause of Arab self-determination and to establish Arab National Governments. It furthermore declared that neither France nor Great Britain had any imperialistic ambitions whatsoever on this country. This to the Arabs of Palestine meant a renewed assertion of the promises made to King Hussein, to which reference has been made above.

4. The most important outcome of the Peace Conference of Versailles was the creation of the League of Nations which was established on the above-mentioned principle of national self-determination. This involved the recognition in principle of the independence of the Arab states that were separated from the Turkish Empire, and that were declaredly considered to have attained such a degree of political consciousness as entitled them to national independence, subject only to the temporary advice and supervision of a Mandatory Government, in the choice of which the public opinion of the State concerned was to be the most important consideration.

In pursuance of that principle an international commission known as the King-Crane Commission was sent to the Arab-populated lands to investigate and scrutinize the wishes of the inhabitants thereof on the subject of mandates; and the result of its investigation was a definite and conclusive proof that the Arabs rejected not only the mandatory principle in its entirety but the Balfour Declaration specifically reasserting at the same time their original demands of Arab unity and independence.

5. In spite of all this, however, and in utter disregard of the right of the Palestine Arabs to take their place in the promised Independent Arab State, their land was severed from Syria and forcibly placed under a British Mandate, in which the Balfour Declaration was iniquitously enshrined. Furthermore, even though the Mandate purports to base itself on Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which sets forth the doctrine of national self-determination, it is clear that in its formation Jewish interests were given precedence, and to the Mandatory Government was delegated absolute power over both the Legislative as well as the Administrative side of the country's government, at the same time as it undertook to place the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as would secure the establishment of a Jewish National Home. The British Government has for the last nineteen years followed a policy clearly aimed at the building of a Jewish National Home, entirely disregarding in the meantime such guarantees as were asserted in the terms of the Mandate as being intended to safeguard the rights and national position of the Arabs. That these have been prejudiced is clearly exhibited in the fact that their racial proportion in the population of Palestine has been decreased from being 93 p.c. at the time of the occupation to 70 p.c. today. Their aspiration to self-rule has been disappointed; they have been deprived of the administration of their own country; and their national entity is now threatened with annihilation through the influx of an alien race. Meanwhile the Jews have been allowed to occupy the best and most productive land, from which the Arab farmers and the Arab villagers were ruthlessly swept off. All this

took place when other Arab territories that were separated from the Ottoman Empire along with Palestine, viz. Syria, the Lebanon and Iraq, have since the establishment of the Mandatory regime enjoyed a form of national rule which has finally developed into complete independence and the termination of the Mandates, on the basis of treaties of friendship between the original Mandatory powers and the mandated territories.

It is only natural therefore that the Palestine Arabs who during all the past years have trustfully awaited justice at the hands of the British Government should now be firm in their conviction that any power militating against their sacred right to independence and national existence is rank despotism, and that it is their sacred duty to uphold the struggle by all means at their command until that despotism is removed, and their rights regained.

6. Mr. Winston Churchill declared in 1921 that the obstacle in the way of establishing a National Government in Palestine, similar to those in the other Arab territories, was not that the inhabitants of Palestine were less of culture and civilization than those of other countries, but it was the commitments of the Balfour Declaration. The injustice and the prejudice revealed in this declaration does not require either comment or explanation. It suffices however to say that no honest person could justify the deprivation of the Palestine Arabs of their natural and sacred rights to freedom and independence, denied them for no act of negligence on their part, but purely because His Britannic Majesty's Government promised to establish a Jewish National Home in Palestine.

Whatever may be said of the Balfour Declaration, one thing remains in it prominent and clear: that it is void *ab initio*, illogical, and unfounded in any principle of justice. The Jews left Palestine and have ceased to have connections therewith for the last two thousand years. They lost their national existence with that communal severance, none the less complete for the later presence of a few thousand Jews who lived here intact and secure (both their souls and their property) by virtue and justice of Arab tradition. The Arabs on the other hand have occupied Palestine for more than 1300 years, during which period their civilization and culture have unfailingly stamped their country with the Arabic character. The Arabs are still the legitimate owners of the country and form the greater part of its population. The total number of Jews entering and living in the country during and before the Turkish rule, up to the time of the British Occupation, did not exceed 50,000—which represented some 7 p. c. of the total population as it then was, and even this number contained a great many foreign Jews.

7. The Balfour Declaration leads to an unknown end, and contains two propositions which have been proved by actual experience and application to be in utter contradiction to each other.

That the end of the Balfour Declaration is ambiguous has been clearly exhibited in the fact that the several official attempts at its interpretation have only served to increase its ambiguity. The two contradictions are these: (a) establishing a Jewish National Home in Palestine and (b) safeguarding the rights and status of the Arabs. The former is inevitably detrimental to the rights of the Arabs in this country, and herein lies the practical and complete contradiction which the Arabs have never ceased to assert.

The British Government, through its commitments involved in the Balfour Declaration, has openly deviated from the path of sacred justice and shed the laudable quality of honouring its solemn undertakings and pledged word; and having neglected its sworn promises to the Arabs, it has obdurately persisted in its pursuance of this unjust policy. By attempting to build a Jewish National Home in this Arab country, which is but a fragment of the extensive Arab territories which surround it on all sides, the British Government has endeavoured to make the impossible appear as a reality. Over and above this, this country is particularly dear and sacred to both the Arab and the wider Moslem world, and the British Government, by its failure to appreciate the sanctity of this small territory, has committed a breach of faith and respect; and by so doing has converted this sacred land into a place of bloody turmoil such as can never be assuaged while the avoidance of justice and natural right is the basis of its administration. History has never recorded an attempt of this character, and the pursuance of such a policy can never be of benefit to any of the parties concerned.

8. The Arab Higher Committee does not see much value in entering into details or relying on mere statistical figures to prove the injustice done to the Arabs by the British Administration; or to prove the partiality and bias shown by Government towards the Jews in Palestine, as evinced in the backing consistently afforded them by Government, and the grant of the natural resources of the country for their exclusive development; or to prove further what is involved in the imperialist and Zionist policy operative in Palestine viz. the firm hold maintained by these considerations over the administrative and legislative departments of the Government alike; or what acts of partiality are being perpetrated which can find no justification in the principles of right and justice. The Arabs, further, see no benefit nor hope of reform to be gained from minor changes within the existing structure, because the evil has its roots deep within the system itself. Therefore unless the grievances fundamental to this system are themselves remedied, wholly and courageously, the evil cannot but continue, and the grievances intensify.

And this fundamental and frank treatment, we would suggest, is as follows:

(1) The immediate abandonment of the abortive attempt to establish still further the Jewish National Home which originated in the Balfour Declaration, and the reconsideration of all the consequences thereon resultant, which, fraught with harm to the Arabs, have gone far to undermine their rights and even their existence.

(2) The immediate and complete stoppage of Jewish immigration.

(3) The immediate and complete prohibition of the sale of Arab land to the Jews.

(4) The solution of the Palestine problem on a basis parallel to that on which were solved the problems of Iraq, Syria and the Lebanon, viz. by means of the termination of the period of mandatory rule, and by the formation of a treaty between Great Britain and Palestine that shall be the basis for the establishment of an independent national government, constitutionally elected, in which shall be represented all sections of the population, and which shall guarantee justice, progress and well-being for all.