

REPORT
OF THE
National Liberal Federation of India

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TWELFTH ANNUAL SESSION

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HELD AT THE GOKHALE HALL, MADRAS,
On the 29th, 30th and 31st December 1929

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PRESIDENT:

THE HON'BLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA.

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PRINTED BY
G. A. NATESAN & CO., GEORGE TOWN,
MADRAS.

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THE
National Liberal Federation of India

TWELFTH ANNUAL SESSION

Held at the Gokhale Hall, Madras

on the 29th, 30th, 31st Dec. 1929.

REPORT OF THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE

At the Allahabad Session of the Liberal Federation in December 1928, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer and the Hon. Mr. G. A. Natesan invited the next (the twelfth) Session to Madras. Accordingly, for weeks before Christmas 1929, the Liberals of Madras were busy making arrangements for a successful Session of the Liberal Federation. It was felt that in view of the exceptional circumstances of the time, a right lead and a definite lead should be given to the country in the direction of obtaining a Dominion constitution for India. And Liberals all over the country were anxious to join hands and press their views on the attention of the Government and also rally the country with them in their attempt to lead the people along the path of constitutional reform.

As early as August 1929, a Reception Committee was formed of leading Liberals of the Madras Presidency, and at a meeting held at the Servants of India Society on Sunday the 24th November, under the presidentship of Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer, definite steps were taken to give effect to their resolve to hold the Twelfth Session of the Federation at Madras in Christmas week.

It was therein unanimously resolved to request the Rt. Hon. Sastri to be the Chairman of the Reception Committee, but as he could not accept the honour owing to indifferent health, the Committee elected Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer in his place.

The following were appointed General Secretaries :

The Hon. Mr. G. A. Natesan,
Mr. M. Kolandavelu Mudaliar (also to act as Treasurer),
Mr. E. Vinayaka Rao (Advocate).

A small volunteer corps consisting of the Senior Students of Colleges and other young men was formed with Prof. C. S. Srinivasachari, M.A., of the Pachaiyappa's College as Captain, and Messrs. Raja Rajar and M. K. Rangachari, as Vice-Captains.

Two Sub-Committees were also appointed, one for general purposes, and the other to look after the accommodation of delegates during the Session.

The deliberations of the Session were marked by considerable enthusiasm. Delegates had come from far and near, and among those who responded to the invitation of the Reception Committee were many who had made their mark in public life, in administrative experience and constructive statesmanship. Thus the Session that met at Madras was distinguished by the weight of its pronouncements and decisions.

THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION OF INDIA
XII ANNUAL SESSION
Madras, 29th Dec. 1929.

WELCOME ADDRESS
BY SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR.

THE following is the full text of the welcome address delivered by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Chairman of the Reception Committee:—

Fellow-Delegates and Friends,

“It is my pleasant privilege as well as my duty to offer a cordial welcome to the President and Delegates of the twelfth session of the National Liberal Federation. The Right Honourable Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was first elected Chairman of the Reception Committee, and his presence and guidance on this momentous occasion would have been of incalculable benefit to our party and the country, and would also have served to educate public opinion in England. But, though he has been prevented by reasons of health from undertaking the duties of Chairman, our party will always have the benefit of his wise and stimulating advice; and it is our hope and belief that he will play a great and decisive part in the deliberations of the Conference contemplated in His Excellency the Viceroy's announcement. Turning now to the President-Designate, it would be superfluous to recount the services of one whose strenuous labours in many fields, financial, commercial, civic and political, have earned for him a high reputation throughout India. The choice, as our President, of a prominent leader in the sphere of business is particularly appropriate in as much as India, with the rest of the world, is now encountering new economic stresses and strains some of which are local in origin and incidence and some of which, like the Labour problems, are affected by world forces and all of which have to be carefully examined and attended to. Furthermore, as a great thinker has said, democracy is desired not merely as something precious in itself because it is the embodiment of liberty, but is also and largely valued for what it may be used to win for the masses. In the many discussions that are taking place with regard to the future of our country and its constitution, it is sometimes forgotten that politics is a means to an end, the end being the levelling up of standards and the attainment of all-round efficiency and happiness. Because and only because it is felt that self-government and political enfranchisement are indispensable pre-requisites to an adequate re-ordering of the social and economic life, is there so much concentration of effort on politics. Did not Viscount Bryce declare that no Government demands as much from the citizen as democracy but none gives so much back? Our Federation may account itself specially fortunate at this juncture to have secured the services of a President who,

by his intimate acquaintance with economic and fiscal as well as political problems, will furnish us with right perspectives. It is an additional advantage that, belonging as he does to a community renowned for practical and organized experience, he will also bring to bear upon such matters and problems as the communal a certain amount of detachment as well as an active desire to reconcile rather than dwell on differences.

At the present moment, we are on the eve of important happenings, and brief as these remarks must inevitably be, it is impossible not to advert to the significance of His Excellency the Viceroy's pronouncement and the recent Parliamentary debates on India. Following on the announcement, came the Delhi Conference. The Delhi Conference has demonstrated that no Indian leader is averse to an honourable settlement and that men of all parties realise the sincerity of the intentions of those responsible for a fine gesture. The Conference, as is well-known, generally welcomed the announcement, but in addition formulated certain proposals or suggestions. There has been a divergence of views in the country as to these suggestions; but I may hazard the opinion that our party, while feeling strongly that a policy of general conciliation is a necessary concomitant of successful political negotiation, that the penalising of opinion as distinguished from overt criminal acts and conspiracies should be eschewed and that it is an essential factor for the success of the Conference that it should be convened expeditiously, is not disposed to make these suggestions conditions precedent to the summoning of the Conference. Both in this matter and as to so-called guarantees regarding the basis of negotiation, it must be borne in mind that it is open to United India to put forward an agreed claim and that our hands are not tied in any manner. If this is fully realised, much of the present controversy will appear to be unreal. One cannot, therefore but regard the break-down of the Conference between the Viceroy and Gandhiji and others as one more instance of wasted opportunities. In any case, it is now perfectly clear that Parliament, especially after the debate of the 18th December, is committed to a policy of active conciliation. In addition, Parliament, by unanimously adopting Mr. Fenner Brockway's motion, has set its feet on a path that definitely leads away from preliminary objections, periodical examinations and dissolving views of hypothetical and much qualified assertions. It seems to be impossible now to predicate when the Conference will be held. It would be very useful to hold it after the country has considered the present situation and given a 'mandate' to new legislative bodies. That the situation would be tremendously complicated by delay beyond 1930 is equally clear; and there can be no two opinions as to the necessity of Lord Irwin being at the head of Indian affairs not only during the period of the Conference but when the resolutions of that Conference are sought to be implemented; and I feel no hesitation in saying that the Liberal Party will demand that in the interests of India and of England alike, the preliminary work at least of constitution-making should be finished during the normal or extended term of Lord Irwin's Viceroyalty. My own reading of the present situation is that, thanks to a variety of circumstances, the ball is at our feet and that, if only the various Indian parties and organisations could combine together and speak with a united voice on the major issues, England will, and cannot but, accede to our demands. Our unfriends are counting upon the possibilities of disunion

and of irreconcilable differences amongst the groups that will be brought together in London, and our object must be to falsify such anticipations. Our motto must be the proud saying of the Kauravas: "We are a hundred *plus* five in the family house, but one to the outside world." Thus, alone shall our representatives speak with that authority and unity which Mr. Wedgwood Benn has very properly hoped for. The Liberal Party has neither the widespread organisation nor the large membership that distinguishes some of our sister organisations, but I claim that many who are not formally enrolled as our members are in complete sympathy with our aspirations and our methods. Naturally, moreover, no one desires to do or say anything calculated to weaken the influence of great organisations like the Indian National Congress to which practically all the members of our Party have belonged and which has been led by a succession of sincere patriots and unselfish workers for the public weal. The reason why, feeling as we do, we are yet meeting in Madras, although in much smaller numbers than the gathering at Lahore, is that it is essential that the problems that are confronting us should be solved, by first allowing each definite group or body of thinkers to elucidate their position according to their own temperament and view-point and then trying to effect a wise synthesis of these labours so as to conduce to the best advantage of India as a whole. We hold that not in the submerging, but in the fullest evolution of different personalities, individual and political, lies the future of our national well-being. So long, therefore, as our party stands inflexibly for the attainment of the fullest measure of autonomy for India in every sphere within the ambit of the British Commonwealth and so long as the objects to be attained are pursued by methods of persuasion, of constitutional opposition and constitutional co-operation, we need have no fear either for the future of the country or of our party. The energies of every party and every patriot must, therefore, be applied and the largest amount of patience and mutual comprehension generated and utilised between now and the date of the Conference in London to bring men and groups together and to evolve the greatest common measure of unity not only as to basic principles but in the larger details, so that we may present to the British people and Government not only a united front, but the outlines of a generally agreed scheme which can be accepted and brought into operation like the schemes evolved in the Dominions. But after saying this, it must also be added that in order to achieve this result a great deal of laborious preliminary work involving mutual consultation and the reconciliation of apparently divergent interests in a spirit of mutual generosity and give-and-take would be necessary. The revival of a procedure and programme similar to that adopted at the All-Parties Convention is a prime requisite. The history of other constitutions has shown that they cannot be created

In brilliant fits or by a happy quirk
But by dim, vulgar, vast, unobvious work.

The Liberal Party whose members are meeting here in conference, let it be remembered and emphasised, is not a party either of inaction or acquiescence. It is, and has been, a party of progressivists who yield to no group of men in this country in their passionate desire to see that India fulfils her destiny in the amplest measure in every sphere, political, economic and social, and is given the opportunity to express her personality in all

departments of life and thought and make her specific contribution to the civilisation of the world. Our party is an All-India organisation which has striven to maintain and has adopted standards and policies, neither sectarian nor provincial in character. There are those who, apparently sympathising with our aims, would yet deprecate a too slavish imitation of Western institutions. They would say to us that in our modernisation, we shall lose our individuality and break the thread of our historic unity. Such men would do well to ponder over a passage contained in a recent book on "THE AWAKENING OF JAPAN" by a Japanese artist and thinker, Okakura-Kakuzo :

" It is true that the imperative needs of our sudden transformation from the old to the new life have swept away many land-marks of old Japan ; yet, in spite of changes we have still been able to remain true to our former ideals. Though our sandals were changed, our journey continues ; though our houses be burnt, our cities remain."

How Japan, renouncing the old policy of seclusion, has yet demonstrated that the Japanese are not a mere nation of imitators, how Japan has absorbed but not copied, these facts are amongst the political commonplaces of to-day ; and it is the hope of most thinking Indians that, given a fair field and no favour, India will not fail where Japan has succeeded. The endeavour to enable India fully to express herself, and the hope of thereby solving the communal problem and the problem of the depressed classes in the most comprehensive manner possible are really responsible for the introduction of the adult suffrage scheme in the Nehru Report. This provision was inserted in the Report not without a lively realisation of the immensity and the difficulty of the problem, but because no other means could be devised for tackling the problem of minorities and speedily achieving the rehabilitation of the depressed classes. Almost equal in difficulty to the problem of minorities is what may be called the problem of the majorities. For, in some quarters it seems to be taken for granted that everything should be done which would make it impossible for the majority to have its way. I do not wish to embitter controversy but no democracy is possible unless accompanied by the belief that it is and must be majority rule. No doubt safeguards and expedients for protecting minorities in certain specific matters of vital importance for the existence of the minorities may be necessary ; and recent discussions have focussed attention on the claims of groups like the orthodox section of the Hindus and Muhammadans to something like self-determination. All this is, however, very different from making the majority powerless. The statement made by the great Lincoln on a historic occasion holds good for all time with regard to the relations of "majority" and "minority" communities within a State :

" Physically speaking we cannot separate, we cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impossible wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other : but the different parts of our country cannot do this. A majority held in restraint by constitutional check and limitation and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions is the only true sovereign of a people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy and despotism".

This declaration furnishes the reason and the justification for so ordering our political life as to afford means for the majorities and

the minorities to come together in joint political endeavour while at the same time taking steps to prevent futile rebellion on the one side or tyranny on the other.

The English party from which we have derived our name has stood for the vindication of the principle that political and other institutions must be progressively remoulded, that improvements in society are, as Morley emphasised, best secured by steadily striving after the bestowal of equality of opportunities and that the best guarantee for progress is the participation in their own Government of the people most likely to suffer from injustice. Indeed, the main conditions of success in democratic Government are that the legislatures shall be elected under a franchise and an electoral system which make it representative of all opinions and interests in the country and that although the legislature should control the executive, it should not destroy its initiative or impair its authority. These principles are ours to-day although the English Liberal Party is apt to ignore them on such occasions as the recent Indian Debate. What, however, our party has always recognised and reiterated is that in the existing conditions of the world India's destiny and India's ideals can and ought to be achieved in the fullest measure as an honourable member of the partnership known as the British Commonwealth of Nations. The party has arrived at this conclusion not on sentimental but on practical grounds. There is now being effected a tremendous shrinkage of the world on account of rapid intercommunications not only physical but intellectual and cultural, and isolation is becoming the exception and co-ordination the rule. It is the thesis of Count Coudenhove Kalergi's remarkable book "PAN EUROPA" that if the Science of Politics fails to adapt itself to the Science of Communications, the resultant tension will be catastrophic. Instances of conjoint action through federations, such as the League of Nations, the International Labour Organisation and other syntheses of human effort are daily multiplying; and just as the family idea was absorbed in the tribal and the tribal in the national, so is it becoming daily obvious that the international idea will absorb and transcend the national. It is in view to such considerations and with a full recognition of the rapid and significant changes that each succeeding Imperial Conference has been effecting in the structure of the British Commonwealth, in the position of the individual members not only in Imperial affairs but in the foreign, and in the growth of the practice of mutual consultation and in the acceptance of agreed policies as the substitute for dictation or dominion, that the Liberal Party remains firmly convinced of the advantages of what is compendiously called "Dominion Status." Dominion Status in action may have been partially in operation from 1919 as Mr. Benn has observed but so long as it is in *posse*, the efficacy of the status in practice is a doubtful or varying quantity dependent on the degree of goodwill present in Whitehall and Delhi. An Indian delegation to the League may have a free hand, but at the same time may not. Sastri may be an accredited ambassador of India to-day and may be exposed to bad treatment by a Minister of the Crown to-morrow. Hence arises the necessity for logical developments and clear-cut definitions. Conventions can be built up only when all concerned are willing and anxious to build them up. True it is, as high-placed critics have assured us, the expression Dominion Status has no uniform meaning.

and each Dominion is evolving differently from its sister Dominion. What, however, our party stands for is the vindication of India's right to grow into the larger life of the future in her own way, and according to her own traditions and genius, and to have the opportunity to arrange her own political furniture in her own house of which she feels that she is mistress, combining whole-heartedly with the sister Dominions for common and beneficent purpose in spirit of mutual equality and not of discrimination or of patronage, and in allegiance and loyalty to a flexible but fully accepted central constitution of which the symbol and spear-point is the constitutional sovereign. Our party, in the interests of India and of England and of the Commonwealth, asks for the conferment of Dominion Status confident in the belief that only thus will India find herself, and England and India realise their highest destiny. Let it be remembered in this connection that even the Nehru Report does not *ipso facto* bring about Dominion Status. Restrictions, safeguards and transitional arrangements may be necessary but we ask that we may devise them ourselves in free conference and that they may not be imposed from above. When, presumably, well-meaning persons tell us that Parliamentary Government will not suit the Indian climate or the Indian race, our answer is simple but definite, namely, that for years a particular form of Government has been held up as capable of bringing the greatest possible happiness within the reach of the largest number of people, that possibly India may find it necessary to modify the particular forms that have been developed in other countries, but that the Indians would prefer to make their experiment in their own way, encouraged, if possible, by kindly suggestions but unhampered by *doctrinaire* or purely destructive criticisms. Such criticisms ignore the admitted fact that the nucleus of democracy is to be found in the village administration which is indigenous to India but similar remarks were heard from Burke in relation to France and from many European politicians and literateurs in regard to America and with reference to Germany, modern Turkey, modern Italy, and Spain. They are forgotten as soon as they become out of date, but are perhaps useful as stimuli and as warnings against possible mistakes. It is well for nations as well as for individuals to undergo a course of tonics and they are often bitter to the taste. It is amusing to watch the efforts of those who, in the same breath, criticise administrations like those of China or Spain or Fascist Italy as falling short of Parliamentary ideals, and yet feel shocked when what is demanded in India is responsible and representative government. The diversity of our civilisation and the variegated nature of the provinces and the peoples inhabiting them have been instanced as well-nigh insuperable difficulties in the way of constitution-making by many retired pro-consuls including the latest recruit amongst them, Sir Leslie Wilson, who has conjured up the further obstacle alleged to be presented by the spectacle of a Hindu Minister calling out the army to proceed against Muhammadans in the case of communal disturbances. Other countries have had similar difficulties and have solved them by adopting forms of government like the Canadian which, as pointed out by Viscount Bryce, has been prescribed

“ not merely by the diversities to be found in vast territories stretching westward from Nova Scotia to the Pacific but also by the dual character of the population, one-third of which speaks French and

follows the Roman Law whereas in the other provinces the Common Law of England prevails”.

It is noteworthy that, in the language of a keen observer, this constitution was adopted with a full realisation of possible communal difficulties. It has been said that if any source of danger to peace and good Government was discerned, it lay in the existence of two races which were mutually jealous and showed no tendency to blend. As has often been noticed, the success and strength of the Canadian system has been, to a large extent, achieved by vesting very wide powers in the central legislative authority by making the judicial authority inhere solely in the Dominion Government except in respect of minor local jurisdictions, and by deeming all powers and functions not expressly assigned to the provinces to belong to the Dominion. The appropriateness of these ideals to our country which also needs a strong central government composed as it is of widely different units and therefore likely to exhibit centrifugal tendencies is obvious. The existence of the backward classes as necessitating continued tutelage is one of the sermons preached by Sir Leslie Wilson ; but how easily do men like him forget that in the Presidency which he himself administered, most notable work has been set on foot for the uplift of the depressed classes by agencies like the Servants of India Society and the Social Reform Association pioneered not by strangers but by Indians themselves ! While no one can deny the meed of praise due to the missionaries for their great work among the depressed classes, it is often ignored that the disadvantages of these classes are largely the result of economic conditions and that the acquisition of a competence and status almost automatically removes their disabilities. Speaking of the “ lower classes ” in England including labourers, one of the Iron-sides remarked that they had no interest in the country except the interests of breathing ; and was it not the great Burke who asserted that any attempt to break the chain of social subordination in any part is absurd ? Fortunately, the solution of this problem and the perspectives to be maintained in approaching it have been indicated in wise and eloquent words by Lord Irwin who, in one of his Madras speeches has pleaded for unity among the different groups composing the depressed classes, and who has urged on them that the acquisition of the habits of thrift and the improvement of the standards of life will be their best uplifters ; and while no one with a heart to feel can resist the appeal and the warning to the so-called higher classes given by the Viceroy, one cannot but whole-heartedly subscribe to his statement that

“ when in so many other ways I see signs of stimulating national consciousness in India, I cannot but believe that hand in hand with this will come a quickening of sympathy with the depressed classes and a desire to see them given their proper place in the social and political life of their Motherland.”

This is the statesman’s point of view and not that of Lord Meston or Sir Leslie Wilson.

These then are our feelings and ideals and our party, true to these sentiments, has been willing, from time to time, cordially to help in such measures and to render assistance to the British Government on such occasions as would lead to the end in view. When the members of the party felt that there was a *bona fide* and deliberate effort to aid India on her way to

self-government; they had no hesitation in consenting to work a scheme of reforms like the one of 1919, albeit, in their opinion, inadequate. Thus was it that prominent leaders of the party accepted office and ran various departments of Government under the system of dyarchy. Having ranged themselves on the side of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford and being convinced, as they then were, that England meant well and intended that system to be only a transitional affair, nay, a corridor or passage, they could do no less. The party later, however, discovered the truth of the adage *autre temps autre mœurs* (other times, other ways), and after Mr. Montagu there was a change in the outlook and atmosphere and this was speedily manifested in the events of the years that followed. The fate of the Muddiman Committee's Report and the general change in the spirit of the administration in the country shook the faith of the party.

Then came the appointment of the Simon Commission. It is unnecessary to analyse the reasons which led the Liberal Party—a party which had, in spite of unpopularity, worked the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms—to keep aloof from the Simon Commission's labours. Suffice it to say, that if the spirit of honourable and equal comradeship and the desire to evoke real co-operation and keep great ideals steadily in view that are now manifested by the authors of the scheme of a Round Table Conference had actuated all the authorities at the time of the appointment of the Commission, the history of political India during the past few months would have been very different. India's instinctive psychology has rarely been at fault and Indians have never failed to recognise true gentlemen when they encounter them like Lord Ripon, Mr. Montagu, Lord Irwin, Mr. MacDonald, and Mr. Wedgwood Benn, even when they do not see eye to eye with them as in the case of Mr. Stanley Baldwin and Sir Samuel Hoare. Of especial value are the present Viceroy's efforts for, in his task of removing misconceptions like those generated by the statement of Sir Malcolm Hailey and of formulating a policy of reconciliation and conjoint work, he vividly realises in his own words that the influence on the world of a perfect understanding between Great Britain and India might surely be so great that "no scales can give us the measure either of the prize of success or of the price of failure in our attempts to reach it." It is further a matter for satisfaction that the present Secretary of State has been able not only to quote but to adopt in practice Sir Stanley Reed's observation that the passion for equality in the eyes of the world is a dominating force in India, and that he has been able also to repel expressly and implicitly the suggestion of Lord Birkenhead that an unyielding attitude is the passport to success in the discharge of what he has called the fiduciary obligations to India.

Not only the utterances of men like Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Birkenhead during the recent Indian Debates in Parliament, but many other statements and acts of responsible men in Great Britain have brought home to us that there is a growing hostility to Indian aspirations not wholly confined to representatives of vested interests. The triumphant glee with which specially lurid passages in Miss Mayo's book were quoted and emphasised among persons who, till the appearance of the book, had taken no particular interest in India and who have neither the desire nor the patience to be convinced of its one-sided character, is only one example of what I have stated. It is, however, a matter for genuine satisfaction that the-

Secretary of State has openly stated with reference to the *Daily Mail* campaign that these stunts count for nothing. It is said and reiterated times without number that of all the obstacles that lie in the way of India's political progress, none is more formidable than internal dissension. Do our critics not realise that there is a fundamental unity underlying all this diversity, that the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin problem in the South is essentially transitory in character and is part of the movement always attendant on social re-adjustments, that the Hindu-Muhammadan problem is largely a resultant of the grant of political power to popular representatives and that the problem of minorities including such questions as those raised by Raja Narendranath in the Punjab and by various organisations in Bengal, United Provinces, and Bombay and by the orthodox party in relation to social legislation is one which is, by no means, confined to India and one which has not stood in the way of a rise of democracy elsewhere than in India? It may be noticed that these differences have not often been discouraged but sometimes welcomed by some of the very men who now lay much stress on them. It has been pointed out by many responsible publicists that the questions of cow-killing and of music before mosques which are the two main causes of Hindu-Muhammadan friction, apart from competition for offices and seats in the legislature, can be resolved by measures of conciliation which have actually succeeded in practice in some parts of India and by means of rules like those as to construction of new buildings which have been successfully utilised in some Indian States. The conclusion to be drawn here again is that where there is a will as well as the need and responsibility for action, there will always be found the way. Part of this trouble is undoubtedly due to the fact that it pays some men to keep up a state of unstable equilibrium. The sense of responsibility has generally brought discipline in its train.

Europeans in India who, of late, have taken a most commendable part in the politics of this country and the support of whose Association was a useful factor at the time of the Parliamentary Debates have also pointedly raised the question of the protection of their interests, financial and political. It is needless to assert that the Liberal Party while firmly convinced that India's commercial and economic policy must be dictated with sole advertence to India's interests, is equally convinced that fair and just treatment of all legitimate vested interests is of the essence of democratic government and that they will not be parties to any system of mere spoliation or expropriation. If measures are contemplated for the protection of nascent industries or for the stimulation of Indian trade, as matters of national concern, no such measures will be based on injustice or racial discrimination as such. Indeed, how can political India which feels so poignantly in respect of and protests so vehemently against discriminatory legislation and invidious administrative measures in South Africa, East Africa and elsewhere, be a party to discrimination for its own sake? The danger, however, must not be lost sight of amongst those who speak against discrimination that bitterness provokes bitterness and justice breeds justice.

Mr. Woolacott in his "INDIA ON TRIAL" deprecates the policy of attempting to placate the implacable and after enunciating this profound maxim, he has adduced against the grant of self-government the three argu-

ments most dear to a certain type of doubters and critics, namely, India's incapacity to defend herself, the illiteracy of large masses of Indians and the existence and attitude of the Indian Princes. These theories represent only the opinions of interested parties. One wonders what these men would say were the positions reversed. Mr. Aldous Huxley who, though a traveller in a hurry, was a man of lively sympathies and a trained imagination, rightly envisages the position thus. "Moreover," he says,

"even if as an Indian I share the Englishman's belief, even if it could somehow be proved that Swaraj would bring as its immediate consequences communal discord, religious and political wars, the oppression of the lower by the higher caste, inefficiency and corruption, in a word, general anarchy, even if these could be proved, I think I should still go on fighting for obtaining Swaraj. There are certain things about which it is not possible, it is not right, to take merely the utilitarian view."

But putting aside this psychological verity and its implications, what is the present posture of affairs as to these matters? Firstly, as to defence. India is perfectly ready to subscribe to the proposition that claiming responsible government, she should be in a position to defend herself against foreign aggression and to maintain internal peace, although India is also entitled to say that it is rather inconsistent on the part of those who welcome the Paris Pact and the signing by Great Britain of the Optional Clause and the disarmament proposals and who are quite ready to applaud Denmark for disbanding all her forces, to insist that India should not be allowed to govern herself because she cannot utilise modern armaments and modern methods of destruction. It is equally noteworthy that the policy implicit in this criticism was not uniformly recognised in the case of the self-governing dominions when they started on their self-governing career. Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar who has made this subject his own, has pointed out that in 1858 the total cost of the defence of the Colonies was four million pounds of which only 380 thousand pounds was contributed by all the colonies. On the other hand, India has, throughout the period of the British rule, raised her own army and found the money for that army. It is not too much to say that the policy followed by England in regard to the military organisation of India has not tended to make India self-relying. Indeed, it was openly stated by the Eden Commission in 1879 that the purpose of the army in India was firstly to repel foreign aggression, secondly, to prevent armed rebellion in India, and thirdly, to watch over the Indian States. The civil population was disarmed, recruitment was limited and caste as distinguished from general fellowship encouraged. Indian troops were armed with obsolete or obsolescent weapons and it is not an Indian politician that affirmed that the only inference from the army policy of Great Britain was that England was afraid to trust Indians. The Report of the Esher Committee of 1919 and the discussion in the Assembly following thereupon are matters of recent history. The real conclusion derivable from the admirable report of the Sken Committee cannot be other than that the difficulty of army re-organisation in India to-day is due, in the main, to the past policy of Government. I do not deny that there has come into being a new outlook in regard to the question of Indian defence as was demonstrated in the recommendation of the Auxillary and Territorial Forces Committee. But

it is quite a legitimate observation of Sir Sivaswami Aiyar's that the question of Indian defence has never been approached from the point of view of Indian nationalism after the promise of responsible government as the goal of India. What is therefore needed is such a modification in the administrative and political arrangements of the country as may lead to an early shouldering of the responsibility by India in respect of her own defence. In this connection, it must not be forgotten that the black-coated clerical population of London was assumed, until the Great War, to be unfit for a martial career; but 'made good' in a remarkable manner under the impact of circumstances and after a very limited experience. The British Empire was established in India with the military co-operation of many communities now classed as non-martial and many new lessons were learnt by the world during the Great War as to the futility of these classifications and arbitrary values. The argument based on the number of decades that would normally be taken by the Indian recruit to evolve into an officer, is not, therefore, to be taken at its full face value. It is to the lasting credit of Lord Sinha that he appreciated the full significance and value of training defence, and one main reason why a full measure of self-government is now asked for by us is to enable the country to deal with this problem. It is honestly felt by most Indians that the problem will never be adequately solved unless the responsibility of defence is laid upon our shoulders with such temporary and transitional arrangements and safeguards as may be *bona fide* requisite in the interests of the country and the Empire alike.

In regard to the question of education, I was subjected, very recently, to a spirited attack in one of the English papers by my old friend, Sir Mark Hunter, because I was responsible for the statement that even in England the idea of the education of the masses as one of the fundamental duties of the State was evolved not long before 1870, and that in England as in other countries, education succeeded and did not precede the movement for political enfranchisement and electoral reform. I do not propose to refer to the Government of India's opposition to Mr. Gokhale's Bill in 1910, nor is it my purpose to remark by way of rejoinder that Government's own delay and neglect cannot be urged as an answer to the demand for reform. What I do say in answer to Sir Mark Hunter and men of his way of thinking is that the backward condition of most people has, in education as in other matters, been generally remedied by the extension of self-government. Practically from the time of Walpole, England had responsible Government though at first with a very small electorate. After the Reform Act of 1832, the House of Lords objected to and threw out a Bill designed to inaugurate a national system of education. As late as 1845, 16 per cent. of the school-going children could alone read the Bible. Lord Durham's Report which was followed by the grant of full responsible government to Canada says: "It is impossible to exaggerate the want of education amongst the inhabitants. No means of instruction has ever been provided for them and they are destitute of the qualification even of reading and writing". Here again, the assertion that India makes is that no progress is possible unless the duty as well as the right of educating its masses devolves on a government alive to its obligations in the matter of "educating its masters," undividedly responsible to the electorate and without

financial fetters imposed from above or outside as to the allocation of funds to the various items in the national budget.

Closely allied to this backwardness of the electorate are the topics of caste or communal feeling and the nepotism which is supposed to be specially characteristic of India and which unfits India for Parliamentary Government; and recent correspondence and articles in English Magazines have, in the discussions on the Indian Debate, strongly emphasised the incompetence and corruption of municipal bodies and the favouritism alleged to be inseparable from Indian administration. Lord Meston has, in fact, deplored in his very recent speech to the Kensington League of Nations Union that the introduction of the trappings of democracy in India has resulted in giving opportunities to low people. Our contention is that, in a period of transition and turmoil, there will always occur some cases of unworthy men put in the seats of the mighty; and what has to be kept in view is not the isolated case of a nepotic Lord Chancellor or a "slim" Prime Minister in England or a man of blood and iron without scruples in Germany or a stray Boss-ridden President of the United States or a corrupt District Board President or Minister in India, but the general progress of the people at large towards higher standards of conduct. Not in a spirit of *Tu Quoque* do I make two citations from Bryce to show that these phenomena, assuming they exist, are not indigenous to the Indian soil and have not been incompatible with the rise of true democracy. Speaking of present day French Ministers, Viscount Bryce says: "The Minister brings with him or is soon surrounded by a swarm of personal attendants, private secretaries and various hangers-on. These constitute what may be called his private political and patronage staff who help in his parliamentary work, keep an eye on places to be disposed of and are, what physicians call, a nidus for intrigue as well as annoyance to the permanent officials of the department." This is, by no means, the worst of the charges levelled against democracies. I quote Bryce again: "Corruption and malversation were common in the Greek republics. They were common in Rome amongst ambitious politicians who were wont to bribe the voters or the jurors before whom they were prosecuted with monies extorted from the provincial subjects of the republic. Among the statesmen of Italy, and indeed of Europe generally, in the 15th and 16th centuries, there was little honour. In England bribery was rife in Parliament under Walpole and Parliamentary constituencies till the middle of the last century. It was for the briber, a matter of jest, not of social stigma, the habit being an old one. So in tropical America, there are some republics in which the ruling faction has for many a year 'made the elections,' and many in which a President is expected to enrich himself and leaves a good name if he has shot comparatively few of his opponents." (Vide, Bryce's *Modern Democracies*, Vol. I, pp. 157-8). It is not too often in history that a tradition of unselfish patriotism as well as of firmness and of faith in the power of freedom is set by men like George Washington and renewed by men like Abraham Lincoln. But why should we travel to America? Mr. Ramsay Muir has averred that in the middle of the 19th century, 16,000 public offices were used in England for political purposes and filled by men selected not because they could do the work required, but because they were

the relatives of electors. A perusal of the closing chapters of Sir George Arthur's KING GEORGE V: A SKETCH OF A GREAT RULER, will disclose how much embarrassment and public scandal can be caused by what has been termed a sale of honours, such as was attempted not many years ago, with something like a fixed scale of tariff for each title or peerage. The book was published some months ago, and the author has not yet been sued. I do not refer to all these things in the spirit of Miss Mayo but as warnings to ill-instructed critics and by way of an injunction to them to remember the Biblical maxim of the mote and the beam. Is it not moreover the experience of most of us in public life and those who have been Members of Government that standards have been progressively rising throughout the country and that those who have deviated from them have been subject to unequivocal condemnation from a growingly critical public? After all, public morality is a mathematical function of public opinion.

Coming now to the Indian Princes, it must be a source of great embarrassment and much searching of the heart to many of the leader writers in English newspapers to peruse His Highness the Maharaja of Bikanir's statement on the Viceroy's offer and the speeches delivered by representative Rulers like H. H. The Nawab of Bhopal, H. H. The Maharaja of Kolhapur and H. H. The Maharani Regent of Travancore. Let me repeat a striking passage from the utterance of H. H. The Maharaja of Bikanir: "The Princes, realising full well that they are bound to their brethren in British India by ties of blood, race and religion, have no desire to hamper the attainment of Dominion Status by British India or to be a drag on its constitutional advancement. Nothing is further from their desire than to break up the country into two discordant halves warring against each other in fratricidal feuds and they as earnestly look forward to the unity of India as their friends, the political leaders of British India". This pronouncement is especially important when considered in relation to the statement contained in the Butler Committee's Report that the Princes were labouring under a grave apprehension that they would be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with the new Government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature. The Maharaja has unequivocally declared that the Federation which is inevitable if Dominion Status is to be achieved has no terrors for the Princes and the Governments of the States. They only desire, and legitimately desire, that their future relation with British India should be settled with their free consent on terms just as honourable to the States as to British India. It must be remembered that such Federation will necessarily involve certain definite results. The States must inevitably adopt modern methods of government and to bring about the economic and political equipment of the people of the States to fulfil their part, they should be given the power to think and act in their own interests, the Rulers taking up the role of constitutional sovereigns. The Memorandum submitted by the representatives of seventy States to the Butler Committee, by Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao and his colleagues urges upon Indian Princes the establishments of representative institutions for local self-government, legislation and control of taxation and general administration, the submission of the budgets of the States to the votes of popular assemblies, the separation of the privy purse of the Ruler and the formation of an independent judiciary free of intervention from outside. It will be borne in mind that these demands

do not, in essence, differ from the essentials of good government in an Indian State formulated in a well-known speech of His Excellency Lord Irwin and expressed in another form in his very recent utterance in Hyderabad. They surely furnish a basis for discussion and settlement. There are numerous Indian States, many of which, I am proud to say, belong to South India, for whom the task of levelling up standards in this manner would be an easy one in view to the progress already attained in those States; but there is no gainsaying that considerable headway has to be made in some other States. The general improvement of administrative ideals is essential to any Federation such as is envisaged by the Maharajah of Bikanir. It is, therefore, particularly fortunate that, on the 19th April 1928, the Conference of 35 Princes and 100 representatives of different States put on record a resolution reaffirming the abiding determination of the Rulers of Indian States to ensure the rule of law in their States and to promote the welfare and good government of their subjects in these States, while it also emphasised the dependence of the progress and prosperity of British India and the States alike upon the creation of constitutional means for the adjournment of relations between them.

As I recently had occasion to observe, Indian Princes may always be sure of the active friendliness and support of British Indian publicists. Is it not a fact that a very real attachment to the Indian Princes is felt by every Indian, if only because they represent surviving fragments of the old Indian Sovereignty? There is no doubt that, as soon as the standards of administration in the Indian States are assimilated to those in the neighbouring British tracts, the Princes will take their place amongst the natural leaders of India and will be enabled to be factors of incalculable good not only to their own States, but to the whole of India. The present state of things in which the Governments of Great Britain and India have to assert that paramountcy is paramount, and to exercise in a necessarily haphazard fashion the so-called residual jurisdiction of correcting mis-government where it exists, without adequate machinery or desire to supervise the daily administration of erring Rulers, is an impossible one. Alike from the point of view of the Paramount Power and of the Rulers and their subjects, a full discussion and a consequent readjustment of powers and obligations is indispensable in their own interests as well as in those of the future Dominion of India. These questions being disposed of and the energies of the thinking classes being released from the combative activities connected with political agitation, there would then arise a host of problems still to be solved before Government by the People for the People becomes a reality. That work has been thus epitomised in one of the speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale:— "The elevation of the Depressed Classes who have to be brought up to the same level with the rest of the people, universal education, co-operation, the improvement of the economic condition of the peasantry, higher education of women and their equalisation with men, the spread of industrial and technical education, the building up of the industrial strength of the country and the promotion of closer relations between different communities." These, as he said, are some of the tasks that lie in front of us and each undoubtedly needs an army of missionaries. But it is felt that the atmosphere and environment of freedom are necessary for the work to be done under the most favourable conditions. How are these to be

created? Not otherwise surely, than by taking the fullest possible advantage of the offer now made to us that the intellectual and moral resources of India and of England should be pooled together for the purpose of evolving a harmonious scheme for the future Government of India. Wisely did the Sikh Khalsa say in its resolution welcoming the announcement that "it is sure to have the desired effect of allaying the feeling of suspicion and distrust which had been lurking in the minds of the people of India on account of the narrow interpretations put on the Declaration of 1917 and that the Sikhs are glad to learn that the goal of British policy in India has now been clearly defined as the attainment of full Dominion Status and fervently hope that practical steps would be immediately taken to-day about this desirable and cherished state of affairs, when India will rise to her status of full manhood and her minister will have an equal footing with the ministers of the Dominions." The value of the offer lies in making it possible for the instructed opinion of Indian India and British India alike to impinge upon the sources of political power in England before England makes up her mind in regard to the future constitution. Material, there is in plenty for the formulation of a scheme. I append in a foot-note a list of the documents that have or may have a bearing on the subject of the Indian Constitution apart from treatises like those of Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar and Sir M. Visveswarayya.

As members of the Liberal Party, it is a matter for legitimate rejoicing that in regard to some of the constructive schemes, men belonging to our Party have done fine work and it is needless to remind this Federation of the splendid formative and unifying labours of Dr. Besant and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, both in relation to the Nehru Report and the Delhi Conference.

The Liberal Party and the country look forward to a pronouncement from the President not only on these topics of the day which are essentially political, but also on some others which raise political issues incidentally, such as the utility and possibility of establishing a Central Reserve Bank, the Coastal Reservation Controversy and another matter which is exercising men's minds, at the present moment, namely, the Labour situation. The Labour Commission presided over by a man of remarkable insight and sympathy and including such men as the Right Honourable Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and Mr. Joshi, may well be expected to suggest means for restoring that harmony between capital and labour which is indispensable to India's industrial advancement and economic welfare. At this juncture in our country's economic history, we cannot afford to reproduce in our midst the industrial disequilibria which has crippled many other countries, and which has been affecting some of our important business to their great prejudice. It is a matter for special congratulation that an influential section of the labour organisations in India has dissociated itself openly from subversive and destructive methods. As to subjects like Coastal Reservation and the vindication of India's right to create her own Mercantile Marine, the President is in a specially advantageous position to guide us aright and to appraise the legitimate claims of vested interests and reconcile them with national ends.

Our party is not among the pessimists and the prospects at the present moment are promising. In Lord Irwin the cause of Indian freedom has a high-souled and strenuous friend—one who has not hesitated, in the further-

ance of his ideals, to take one of the greatest of political risks, the risk of antagonising political comrades. Among the members of the British Cabinet and in the Labour Party we have some true friends of India, and in the Secretary of State, our interests have a fine and alert champion who has charged himself with the task of giving effect to an active and responsive policy. The achievements of the present British Government in the spheres of foreign affairs and of disarmament have been directed by a policy of all-round friendliness and peace-making; and the acceptance in the Commons of Mr. Morley's resolution deprecating the exploitation of the backward populations of the world is a proof of their earnestness in dealing with Imperial problems. What is needed now is the realisation on all hands that time is of the essence in such great political transactions. The world-spirit is with us in our endeavours, and one cannot but feel confident that in spite of uninstructed criticism and unwise opposition, our cause is bound to triumph. Has it not been wisely observed that great political, economic and social forces flow with a tidal sweep over communities that are only half-conscious of that which is befalling them and that wise statesmen are those who foresee what time is thus bringing and endeavour to shape institutions and to mould men's thought and purpose in accordance with the change that is silently surrounding them?

It is impossible to conclude this Address without a reference to the dastardly attempt to wreck Lord Irwin's train. Not only will the whole of India recoil from the deed with shame and horror, but it is part of the duty of Indian and Englishman alike to get rid, by the exercise of wise and brave statesmanship, of the root causes of such happenings which are wholly uncharacteristic of Indian thought and civilisation.

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1. Montagu-Chelmsford Report.
 2. Southborough Report.
 3. Muddiman Report on Functions and Franchise.
 4. Frontier Committee's Report.
 5. The various Reports on Army and the Defence of India.
 6. Butler Committee's Report.
 7. Viceroy's Announcement of 31st October, 1929.
 8. MacDonald-Simon Letters.
 9. Simon Commission's Report.
 10. Central Committee's Report.
 11. Provincial Committee's Report.
 12. Government Despatches on Reports.
 13. The Assembly Resolutions.
 14. The Nehru Proposals.
 15. Dr. Besant's Commonwealth Bill.
 16. Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar's Bill.
 17. The Lucknow Pact.
 18. The Madras Congress Resolution on Communal Settlement.
 19. The Hindu-Mahasabha's Jubbulpur Resolution.
 20. The All-Muslim Conference (Delhi) Demands of April, 1929.
 21. The Sikh Conference Resolution.
 22. The Depressed Classes Representation.
 23. The States Peoples' Conference Demands.
 24. The States Subjects' Representation.
 25. The Peasants' Charter or Declaration of Rights.
 26. Chamber of Princes Resolution of 1929.
 27. Chamber of Princes Special Organisation's Representation and Papers.
 28. H. H. Bikanir Maharaja's Banquet Speeches of 1928-29.
 29. H. H. Bikanir Maharaja's Statement on Viceroy's offer.
 30. H. H. Bhopal Nawab's Speech.
 31. H. H. Kolhapur Maharaja's Speech.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

After the Chairman of the Reception Committee had delivered his welcome address, the election of the President was proceeded with.

SIR P. S. SIVASWAMI AIYAR

Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar proposed that the Hon'ble Sir Phiroze Sethna be elected President of the twelfth session of the National Liberal Federation. In doing so, he said :—

Mr. Chairman and Fellow-Delegates,

It gives me great pleasure to propose that the Hon'ble Sir Phiroze Sethna be elected the President of this Conference. He is one of the most prominent citizens of Bombay and a veteran politician and public worker. His connection with the public life of Bombay began with his entry into the Corporation about a quarter of a century ago. He soon won the confidence and esteem of his fellow-corporators and rose to one of the highest gifts in the Corporation—the Chairmanship of the Standing Committee and Presidentship of the Corporation. There is hardly a department of civic or public activity in Bombay with which he has not been connected. His position in the financial, commercial and industrial life of Bombay is exceptionally high. I do not know of any department of public business with which Sir Phiroze Sethna is not connected; whether it is steel or cotton or shipping or anything else that we can think of, you will find that he is intimately connected with the management of great concerns. Not merely are his activities confined to financial or business organisations but they extend over the whole sphere of philanthropic effort in Bombay. Whenever they want any zealous worker, they have to resort to Sir Phiroze Sethna, who has been connected with innumerable organisations calculated to promote social, financial or economic advancement or the beautification or improvement or anything else which is conducive to the welfare of Bombay. But even these various activities do not exhaust his field of labour. He has been a legislator for many years past. He became a member of the Legislative Council of Bombay in 1915, and I have known him since 1921 as one of the most prominent members of the Council of State. He commands the respect and attention of the Council of State whenever he rises to speak. He has taken a keen interest in the business of the Council of State and has done his very best to give that Council a title to public esteem and regard. He was a member of the Indian Sandhurst Committee and a member of the Delegation appointed to proceed to South Africa and negotiate with the South African Union Government about Indian settlers in the Union of South Africa. His varied and long public life, his services to the country in many capacities and his high character all entitle him to the esteem and regard of the public. I do not think we could have got a better person to preside over our deliberations on this occasion. I have, therefore, great pleasure in proposing the name of the Hon'ble Sir Phiroze Sethna for your acceptance.

(Applause)

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, seconding the proposition, said :

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Not many words are needed from me to commend the proposal which has been put before you by my friend Sir Sivaswami Iyer. Every one of us knows the worth of Sir Phiroze Sethna. There is, however, one aspect of the choice you have made this year to which I would particularly invite your attention. Sir Phiroze is a hard-headed, experienced businessman, and it seems to me that it is really in the fitness of things that on a supreme occasion of this character, the direction and guidance that we have got to receive should proceed from a businessman who understands the pros and cons of business propositions which will be placed before you. If we are not a showy body making the wildest of proposals for our countrymen, I am not at all sorry that our President is also not a showy man. What we want really is the substance and not the shadow of anything, and when we bear that in mind, we have reason to congratulate ourselves that we have got one of the most substantial, widely-read, experienced politicians to preside over our conference this year. I shall not, gentlemen, say anything at the present moment with reference to the occasion that has arisen in the country.

Perhaps I should reserve my remarks on that matter until a later stage of the proceedings of this conference. But this much I will venture to say now: you are being watched all over the country and across the country. It is for you to give a message of hope and unity in the midst of the confusion that has been created during the last few days. You may be weak in numbers, but I have not the least doubt that you will be called upon to play a great part on this momentous occasion. (Applause).

If you can send a message out from this platform to the various communities and interests, of unity, union and solidarity on this occasion, you will have deserved to live, and you will have rendered great service to the country, and I have no doubt that that message will proceed clearly, forcibly and eloquently from our Federation, whose President you are now going to instal in the Chair. (Applause).

DR. ANNIE BESANT

Dr. Annie Besant, in supporting the proposition, said :

Friends, I am here to support the proposition that has been laid before you, because I believe that in the election of the proposed President you will be doing a real service to the poor of India whose condition in the country is at present the greatest menace to the peace of India, because the condition of our poor is not only a scandal in the face of the civilisation of the world, but also because the remedies that must be brought to bear upon that terrible disease of poverty are remedies not only political, although I hold politics to be one of the greatest duties of every educated man and woman in India to-day, but also because there is much that can be done even before we gain our liberty, from the guidance of those who understand the economic cause of our poverty as well as the political causes. If I concern myself mostly with the political causes, Mr. President, it is because I understand those the best. I have never pretended to be a financier. My knowledge with regard to

finance is rather that which has grown out of a careful study of the conditions of the people of India, and because I hold that the greatest danger in India to-day—it is a statement I made many years ago, *i.e.*, in 1915, and it is truer to-day than it was then—is the insurrection of hunger, than which no greater argument is possible, in which every passion ruining society breaks out. My reason for that is that I believe that the hunger problem of India, a fact which has been put forward by Professor Ganguli after a most careful study of the amount of nourishment necessary for the health of a human being and the average amount available to the masses of the poor in India, is, as he told us, that more than 60 per cent. of the Indian masses have less than three-fourths of the nourishment necessary to health. You can play with everything except hunger. You may shut your eyes to many of the terrible defects which exist in India; but you cannot stop your ears to the cry of the starving people. With them there is no argument possible, save the satisfaction of their hunger. Great revolutions of the world have grown up in that way. It is the most dangerous soil from which revolutions can spring, for a revolution heals nothing. It does not bring remedies to evils which cause it. It is the frantic outburst of mothers, who see their children suffering from hunger, of fathers who are maddened when they go home after a day's labour and see their little ones thin, emaciated, diseased, as they too often are because they have not got food enough for healthy life and growth. I have said that that is a danger which faces us. We cannot be playing with that which has to be faced. I have never forgotten a wise warning given by one of our men—Lokamanya Tilak—who said to me one day when we were discussing the question of poverty some years ago: "You might have people starving on the roadside and even if you put some grain before them they would not have touched it, but now they would loot that grain." So they are too hungry to be patient any longer. That is the nature of the conditions now in India. You may go through the villages and see the thinness of the children.

I wonder how long patience can endure these conditions. We have still time if we could remedy the wrong. We have still power if we will see that we govern ourselves and not allow the foreigner to rule us. To me that is the only remedy—Dominion Status, if they will give it to us in time. But I believe they will. We have a very favourable conjunction of circumstances both in India and England as far as our rulers are concerned. Wedgwood Benn is a man full of passionate sympathy with India, and sympathy is one of the most valuable qualities in a ruler of people. In Ramsay Macdonald we have one who, while he is naturally wrapped up very much in the question of unemployment in England and while we have in him a man whose natural genius leads him in the direction of general and foreign politics more perhaps than in the methods of ruling a distant Dominion, still we have in him a man who knows and feels for the condition of India, and he has made India, let us not forget, an issue in the coming general election in England. As far as I know, that is done for the first time. India has always been a side question. Go to the House of Commons on the day of the Indian debate, you will see a remarkable array of empty benches and a few people waiting in the lobbies until the Indian debate is over. We have to make England understand that if she cannot govern India decently, if India is illiterate under her rule, where she was

once literate, if her children are starving where once they were well fed, if the degradation of India dates from the coming of the foreign rule and the quarrels of Hindus and Mussalmans, if their stimulants and power for quarrels are neither in their religion nor in their race, and if they are promoting strife rather than endeavouring to end it, England may leave India to govern herself. If Mussalmans and Hindus have lived in this country for hundreds of years, why have they come to cut each other's throats now, as we are told in England, while both can still live side by side for all time to come? They have not exterminated each other for hundreds of years. Why should they quarrel now? Because there is a third party who is not the same in religion nor race nor political past, so that each tries to get something from the third party if it cannot get it from its opponent. When one gets a little and goes to the foreign government, it says: "Mussalmans would give me this if they were our rulers, what would you give?" If it is Mussalmans, they say to the foreign government: "Hindus will give us this, what would you give?" Quarrels between religions are simply made an advantage in political life and power. Leave them alone to govern their common country, and the quarrels between them will disappear. As long as there is a third party, from whom something can be got, so long politicians will fight to get that something. Let us at least demand Dominion Status, for what does that mean? It means Independence within the Indian territory. Foreign affairs, we should have to fight for with the other component parts of this Commonwealth of Nations, but in India we shall be self-governing, and that surely is the first thing for which we want to strive. In England there is no foreigner to say to you that he would deprive you of your power or threaten to set one community against another. I would ask you all to fix your political thinking on this one issue all over India. Do not complicate it with what you call a cry for Independence. A nation does not ask for Independence from a foreigner. It takes it if it is strong enough to take it, and if it is not strong enough to do so, then, to talk of Independence at all,—it is a hypocrisy to proclaim it and not to make it real among the people. By this I do not mean that I am in favour of separation between England and India. I am not. I want complete Self-Government for India and within India, so that Great Britain shall have no power there. The definition of Dominion Status is 'autonomous unit equal with each other,' and my reason for preferring that to separation is that I believe that England and India together can do more to the world than either of them can do separately, if you add together their contributions. Such an alliance will prevent a colour war which is one of the dangers of the world's civilisation to-day. For very long Europe has tried to bring Asia under European domination, but now China is a mighty military nation. China has had civil war until she has become a military nation, but it is better than slavery. We find ourselves to-day in a position where we can say to England: "We will have Dominion Status. We do not want to take it by violence but in goodwill and friendliness." I know we shall win it, only if we will be true to each other and get rid of the divisions that weaken us year after year. O, Brethren! what difference is there between a Hindu and a Mussalman when the whole nation cries out to England to set her free? Surely, the difference of religion, religion-

that ought to unite! That difference should be forgotten before the cry of the nation, crying out for liberty that she may live her own life and give her own message to the world, for India has a message that no other country and living civilisation going back into the very dawn of history and civilisation could give. India was never poor, never miserable, never uncivilised until the day when her village system was destroyed and poverty spread into the whole of the nation. In building our constitution let us not build a fifth-rate copy of a constitution of the West. India has her own past to build her future upon; and if you want to know what India can do, see what India has done in the past. Where is the civilisation that can rival the civilisation of India, save China? There is none in the world that has such a literature as has been produced in India by Indian brains, God-inspired, by the one life that lives in all. You need not apologise for your past. Europe had thirty years of war, with you. When your kings and armies wanted to fight, they went to battle, leaving peasants alone. An Indian peasant does not care what Government is ruling over him so long as he is prosperous and wealthy. I would say to you: Struggle for Dominion Status. You may say: "Why not Independence?" I say that Dominion Status is greater than Independence. Remember that that is what Mr. C. R. Das said. He was an Indian, passionately patriotic and great. I often take as a motto his words that the place of India in a federation of free nations is greater than isolation. Nations must be inter-dependent, and not independent one of the other. They must link themselves one with the other instead of fight one with the other. Exchange your cultures, exchange your arts, exchange your literature, and those serve India best to-day who help India to produce arts, literature and political science also, and as we spread the knowledge of India, so we shall create the India of the future. (loud applause).

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, further supporting the proposition, said: Ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in supporting this proposition. I have had the privilege of knowing Sir Phiroze Sethna and his public work for many years, and I can confidently say that in asking him to occupy the the Chair you are making a very good choice indeed.

Sir M. V. Joshi, speaking next, said: On behalf of the Central Provinces and Berar I support the nomination very cheerfully.

Mr. J. N. Basu: I have great pleasure in supporting the proposition.

The proposition that the Hon'ble Sir Phiroze Sethna be requested to preside over the deliberations of the session was then put to the House and carried with acclamation. He was then garlanded and installed in the Presidential Chair.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BY THE HON'BLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA, K.T., O.B.E.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer and Fellow-Liberals,

I am deeply sensible of the high honour which the National Liberal Federation has done me in electing me to preside over the deliberations of its session this year, and I offer you my cordial thanks. Distinguished men in the first flight of Indian political life, have filled this chair in past years, and it would be tantamount to presumption on my part to lay any claim either to their superior intellectual merits or to great services rendered by them to the Motherland. The Liberal party in India to-day may not be strong in numbers, but it represents the constructive statesmanship, the mature political wisdom, the administrative capacity and experience of this land, and therefore the responsibility of leading the thought and guiding the judgment of an assemblage of men belonging to such an elect school of thought, is so serious that one might well feel absolutely unequal to it. I am however quite confident that every member of this Federation will be so good as to extend to me his or her fullest co-operation, that each one of us will bring to the common stock the best that is within him or her, and that with our united endeavours, and with our considered and deliberate expressions of opinion and decisions, we shall be able to give the right lead both to our own countrymen as well as to the British people, and thus contribute to the satisfactory solution of those difficult and important questions by which both we and the British people are faced at the present moment.

H. M. THE KING-EMPEROR

When we met last year at Allahabad under the presidency of my esteemed friend Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, His Majesty the King-Emperor was still suffering from a serious illness which had filled the whole British Empire with the gravest anxiety. We sincerely rejoice that, by the grace of God, His Majesty is now restored to perfect health and is able to resume His normal duties. We pray that His reign may be memorable for the liberation and strengthening of those forces of peace which will make war almost impossible, for the promotion of the high ends of internationalism, for the cementing of the bonds of union among all the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and for the raising of India to a position of perfect equality with great Britain and the Dominions. His Majesty's influence upon the progress of this country, exercised and rightly exercised, though it is within strictly constitutional limits, has always been wholesome. The noble message which he sent to the people of India in 1921 and which was delivered on his behalf by His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught at the time of the inauguration of the Indian Legislature is still ringing in our ears. His Majesty said:

"For years, it may be for generations, patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamed of Swaraj for their Motherland. To-day you have beginnings of Swaraj within my Empire, and widest scope and ample opportunity for progress to the liberty which my other Dominions enjoy."

In the light of recent events, it is impossible not to be struck by the sentiment to which His Majesty gave expression nearly nine years ago, that our progress is to be to the liberty which the Dominions enjoy. We feel very hopeful that in future, as in the past, His Majesty's influence will be exercised so as to help in attaining the liberty which the Dominions enjoy.

URGE TO SWARAJ

Ladies and Gentlemen, of those great questions which are naturally and rightly entitled to the first place in our thoughts at the present moment, the greatest, the most important and the most urgent question that faces us to-day—the question that transcends every other interest, in importance, and in its bearing on the future of the relations between India and Great Britain is, what is to be the future constitution of India? It is a problem which calls for a satisfactory solution. Unless such a solution is reached, there can be no peace and no ordered progress in this country, and the relation between it and Great Britain must remain in the present unhappy and unsatisfactory condition. India's desire for a good, suitable, acceptable constitution which will make her a separate, self-governing national entity and give her the fullest scope for the attainment and enjoyment of Dominion freedom and status entirely in harmony with this universal human urge, and those who do not, or cannot realise this 'universalism' of India's political movement, are ill-qualified either to understand its significance, or make any worthy contribution to the solution of her constitutional problem.

SIMON COMMISSION BOYCOTT

Let me briefly review the course through which we have recently passed, and mark with such exactitude as may be possible the stage at which we have arrived in our great constitutional struggle, so that we may be better able to envisage the immediate conditions of the problem, and to lay down our future policy and programme. It was in November 1927 that Lord Birkenhead, the then Secretary of State for India, with that non-chalance for the consequences of his actions so characteristic of him, announced the intention of His Majesty's Government to appoint a Statutory Commission under the Government of India Act and its exclusively Parliamentary and British constitution. This entire scheme of the Commission was so unfair to India and so utterly opposed to the spirit of the policy as embodied in the Declaration of 1917 and subsequently in the Statute of 1919, and so well calculated to alienate Indian public opinion and sentiment, that political India felt no hesitation in rejecting it, and resolved to have nothing to do with it at any stage and in any form. This resolution was carried out with unshaken and unflinching determination, with the result that the Commission lost the benefit of the interchange of views and consultation with those who were pre-eminently qualified to assist Government in the solution of the constitutional problem. The Liberal party in particular, and I may be allowed to say so with pardonable pride, counts among its numbers men who have held offices under the Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution either as members of Executive Councils or as Ministers, and who as such have had close personal knowledge of the inner working of the Constitution, its defects and its limitations, and whose views on the constitutional question would have been found to be specially valuable. But the short-sighted and unstatesmanlike policy which the late Conservative Government decided to adopt in the matter of the constitutional inquiry and which, to our great

regret and surprise, received the support of not only the Liberal party but of the Labour party which had always avowed its faith in the principles of political equality and national self-determination, made it impossible for them, consistently with their sense of national self-respect and national duty to co-operate with Government in framing a new constitution for India.

VINDICATION

The policy of non-co-operation with the Simon Commission which was really forced upon the Liberal party, as upon other political parties, by a grave blunder which Government and Parliament committed, and which could have been easily avoided with a modicum of insight and imagination, was at first misrepresented and ridiculed as a manifestation of mental aberration on the part of Indian political leaders. I have no desire to rake up the past. I would rather let bygones be bygones, now that light has apparently dawned upon those who at one time thought that our opposition to the Simon Commission was irrational and suicidal. But it is impossible for us not to feel some sense of natural satisfaction that the policy which political India deliberately adopted and loyally and consistently followed, with regard to the scheme of constitutional inquiry framed by Government and Parliament, has been fully justified and that its significance and its inwardness have now been realised by all those who have the wisdom to see that no great and vital problem like that of the constitution for India and the relation between her and Great Britain can easily be solved except on the basis of mutual goodwill and genuine heart-to-heart co-operation. It is a matter of satisfaction to us of the Liberal party that in deliberately asking the country to reject the scheme of the Commission and to abstain from co-operating with it at any stage and in any form, we adopted a course of action the wisdom of which has been fully vindicated by the development of events. I cannot refrain from quoting the words of a well-known Englishman who has spent the best years of his life as a journalist in this country as Editor of the TIMES OF INDIA, an Anglo-Indian paper which has not always been in agreement with the views of Indian leaders. And yet, Sir Stanley Reed in a letter he addressed to the LONDON TIMES less than two months back on the subject of the Viceroy's announcement, wrote as follows :—

“The relegation of Indian publicists to the status of witnesses before the body which frames the new Constitution for their country was a blunder of the first magnitude. It drove into an opposition which has never wavered, the great body of Indian politicians, especially those Liberals who rallied to the Government during the Non-Co-operation movement, and without whose good-will no constitution in India can function.

Against this incubus, the Simon Commission has struggled in vain. The wisdom and patience of Sir John Simon and his colleagues, the public spirit of those Indians who agreed to serve on the Central Committee of the Legislatures, have failed to weaken the opposition. A stage was reached then, to use the words of one who speaks with authority of the work of the Commission, when “anything we propose will be greeted with a howl of execration.”

INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

Ladies and gentlemen, the appointment of the Simon Commission led to two results of which account must be taken in a full and just estimate of the political situation. In the first place, it gave an impetus to the Independence idea and led the Indian National Congress to declare at its Madras

session in 1927 that national independence is the political goal of India. Before the appointment of the Commission, the movement for national independence counted little in the political life of India, but since then it has become a factor of such importance that it can no longer be ignored. At its Calcutta Session last year, the Congress, under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru, somewhat modified the resolution regarding national independence, and declared that it would adopt in its entirety the Constitution for Dominion Status as framed by the Nehru Committee, provided that it was accepted by the British Parliament on or before 31st December, 1929. It however warned Government that in the event of its non-acceptance by that date or its rejection, earlier, it would organise non-violent Non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse taxation or in such other manner as might be decided upon. We Liberals do not approve of either of these resolutions. We stand for Dominion Status, we hold that, if Dominion Status is granted without undue delay, there will be no political or ethical justification for India to seek to sever the British connection. Nor can we support a general policy of non-payment of taxes as in our judgment such a policy, like the policy of a general strike, cannot but plunge the country into all the evils and horrors of an open conflict with Government, who in sheer self-defence and in the discharge of its elementary duties of maintaining peace and order, of carrying on the King's Government, will not hesitate to take, and will be quite justified in taking, every necessary measure for pulling down such a general movement of civil disobedience. For these reasons, we must express our entire disapproval of these resolutions. But as constructive statesmen whose duty it is to face the Indian problem as a whole in all its aspects and in a proper perspective and who consider that a policy of prevention is better than a policy of cure, it will not be proper for us, nor for the Government, to ignore or belittle the significance of the movement of thought in this particular political organisation in India.

LORD BIRKENHEAD'S CHALLENGE

Another effect of the appointment of the Simon Commission, though indirect, has been of a more satisfactory nature. Lord Birkenhead had more than once given India a challenge to frame a constitution just as she liked according to her ideas and wishes. On 7th July, 1925, he said in the House of Lords :—

“It has been the habit of the spokesman of Swarajist thought to declare in anticipation that no constitution framed in the West can either be suitable for or acceptable to the peoples of India. It has always seemed to me that a very simple answer may be made to such a contention. We do not claim in Great Britain that we alone in the world are able to frame constitutions though we are not altogether discontented with the humble constructive efforts which we have made in this field of human ingenuity. But if our critics in India are of opinion that their greater knowledge of Indian conditions qualified them to succeed, where they tell that we have failed, let them produce a constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement among the great peoples of India. Such a contribution to our problems would nowhere be resented. It would, on the contrary, be most carefully examined by the Government of India, by myself, and, I am sure, by the Commission, whenever that body may be assembled.”

In the same way, in November, 1927, when he moved the constitution of the Commission in the House of Lords, he said :—

"It is sometimes said by our critics in India that it is for a Round Table Conference or a Congress in India to decide upon the form of constitution suitable for themselves, and then for the British Parliament formally to pass it. This suggestion has not been lightly made. It has been seriously made by men who are entitled that their observations shall be seriously accepted. I can only make this comment. I have twice in the three years during which I have been Secretary of State invited our critics in India to put forward their own suggestions for a constitution, to indicate to us the form which, in their judgment, any reform of the constitution should take. That offer is still open."

INDIA'S ANSWER

This challenge was accepted. And as you know, political India has framed a constitution and published it for the knowledge and consideration of the democracy of Great Britain and other democracies of the civilised world. It has received the heartiest support of all important political parties, except the party of independence and a considerable section of the Moslem League. It would be too much to say that it carries behind it universal agreement among all the important communities and parties of India; yet if a plebiscite were taken, I believe, it would receive the approval of a fair majority of the Indian electorate. And it cannot be too strongly stressed that its basic principle, *viz.*, that what India wants is a constitution, embodying full Responsible Government, both provincial and national, and conferring upon her full Dominion Status, is one as regards which there is not only a fair measure of general agreement, but almost complete unanimity, among all the great peoples and political parties of India. The supreme merit of the Nehru Constitution is that it has rallied almost the whole of political India round the banner of Dominion Status which it wants to be unfurled without delay. It is true that a considerable and weighty section of Moslem opinion does not accept its proposals for communal representation. On the other hand, it must, however, be borne in mind that as regards the grant of Dominion Status, Moslem opinion is in complete accord with those other sections of Indian opinion to which the Nehru Constitution is wholly or almost wholly acceptable.

BEFORE LABOUR PARTY'S ADVENT TO POWER

Such was, in brief outline, the political situation as it existed on the eve of the British Parliamentary elections in May last. Lord Birkenhead's Indian policy had been a grievous failure. It had produced the same effects which Lord Curzon's policy had done twenty-four years ago. The scheme of a constitutional inquiry which Lord Birkenhead forced upon India, already smarting under disappointments and humiliations to which she had been subjected for some years past, raised a storm of righteous indignation and opposition throughout the length and breadth of the country. Not only did it impress and pain India as an affront to her national self-respect, to the noble and magnanimous spirit of comradeship with which she had ungrudgingly and unstintedly sacrificed men and money in the cause of the British Empire during the Great War, but it also lent colour to the suspicion that Great Britain, under the influence of the reactionary forces that had in the meanwhile been struggling to reassert themselves, intended to go back upon her pledged word to thwart and delay the fulfilment of India's destiny as a fully self-governing nation enjoying the same rights and status as the Dominions, and to strengthen the bonds of Imperial domination which

had perforce been weakened by the exigencies of the War and its aftermath. As a consequence, the relations between India and Great Britain had been strained almost to breaking point. The idea of national independence, which had been vaguely floating in the minds of a few people, suddenly attained fixity and strength, was accepted by the Indian National Congress, and had become an operative though as yet by no means effective force in the political life of India. And there was the danger, which it would be folly to consider illusive or unreal, of the movement of civil disobedience being started on an extensive scale in case the demands of the Congress as embodied in the Nehru Constitution were flouted by Government. On the side of practical constructive statesmanship, the consensus of national opinion and feeling had been organised and marshalled in favour of Dominion Status, as against national independence, provided the grant of Dominion Status was not unduly delayed, and a notable constitution which had behind it large, weighty and powerful sections of opinion, had been produced and proclaimed to the civilized world. The communal controversies or differences had not yet been settled, but the fundamental provisions of the Nehru Constitution, bearing on the transfer of political power from the British to the Indian electorate, had won almost universal acceptance.

AFTER

The general election in Great Britain much to the unexpected discomfiture of the Conservative Party, resulted in the Labour Party securing the largest number of seats in the House of Commons. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the leader of the party being called upon to form His Majesty's Government, offered the office of Secretary of State for India to Mr. Wedgwood Benn. He could not have made a better selection, for in the few months that he has been there, we have learnt to recognise him as a man of high character, deep regard for principles, and a genuine desire to face the Indian problem in a spirit of courageous statesmanship and to solve it in accordance with the professed principles of his party, so as to remove for ever a standing cause of friction, misunderstanding and ill-feeling between India and Great Britain. The Labour Party's accession to power did not, indeed, arouse any high hopes or expectations among the Indian people, though the leaders in the front rank of politics rightly did not wish to condemn it without trial.

TRIBUTE TO THE VICEROY

Soon after the formation of the new Government, His Excellency Lord Irwin went to England on short leave and on a mission of peace as it were to represent as he said the aspirations of the Indian people to the British Government and to impress upon them the necessity of reaching a solution of the Indian problem such as would succeed in drawing Great Britain and India closer together. On his return, His Excellency, on 31st October last, with the consent of His Majesty's Government, made an announcement which will rank as of very great importance in the history of the Indo-British connection. Warm appreciation is due to him personally and to His Majesty's present Ministers for this remarkable, and let us hope fruitful, gesture of conciliation. What part His Excellency played during his ambassadorial mission will perhaps remain a closed book to students of

history. Sufficient, however, has been said to enable us to regard Lord Irwin as one who belongs to the order of those illustrious statesmen who are rightly acclaimed as true Empire-builders. Imagine therefore the pain and horror with which the country at large received the news on Monday last of his train being bombed by some miscreants. We have nothing but utter execration and condemnation of such insane acts of violence and terrorism. If the authors of such deeds believe that the goal of independence can be attained by such methods which are as much morally and religiously reprehensible as they are insane, they are labouring under the greatest delusion and the sooner they emancipate their immature or ill-trained or ill-guided minds from this delusion, the better will it be for themselves and for India. We thank Providence for His Excellency's miraculous escape and we hope that the British policy in India will not be deflected in the least by such acts of violence.

ANNOUNCEMENT ANALYSED

The announcement clearly and emphatically declares that Dominion Status is the political goal of India. "I am authorised," says His Excellency, "on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgment, it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as therein contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status." This is, indeed, satisfactory. All that is necessary now is to make what is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 perfectly explicit by a Statutory enactment.

The Viceregal statement announces the intention of His Majesty's Government to hold a conference on the question of constitutional settlement. "When the Commission and the Indian Central Committee" says His Excellency, "have submitted their reports, and these have been published, and when His Majesty's Government have been able in consultation with the Government of India, to consider these matters in the light of all the material then available, they will propose to invite representatives of different parties and interests in British India, and also representatives of the Indian States, to meet them separately or together as circumstances may demand, for the purpose of conference and discussion in regard both to the British Indian, and the All-India problems. It will be their earnest hope that, by this means, it may subsequently prove possible on these grave issues to submit proposals to Parliament which may command a wide measure of general assent." As the correspondence between the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Statutory Commission which was published in England on the same day as the Viceregal statement shows, this proposal for a Conference emanated in the first instance from Sir John Simon, and as the Prime Minister says in his reply, he has been able to secure for it the approval of the leaders of both the Conservative and the Liberal parties. Thus, it is clear that the proposal for a Round Table Conference to discuss the question of the constitutional settlement of India and the question of the relations between British India and the Indian States has received the support of the Simon Commission and the three political parties in Great Britain. But though the idea of the Conference has met with the approval of all the parties, it does not follow that the proposals that will be formally submitted to Parliament by Government, as a result of the Conference will

be accepted by all the parties. His Excellency has made it clear in the statement that with regard to these proposals "every British party is bound to preserve to itself complete freedom of action."

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

It would be desirable to consider and examine the Viceregal pronouncement in the light of the debates thereon in Parliament. It is a matter of profound regret that the Conservative and the Liberal parties, instead of cordially approving of the issue of the statement, should have made an unnecessary fuss over it. The objection taken to it on the ground that it would undermine the authority and prestige of the Statutory Commission and should not have been made until after the publication of its report, is now only of academic interest and therefore does not call for any answer. With regard to the reference in the statement to Dominion Status, though it would appear that both the parties would have preferred if it had not been made, yet neither Lord Reading in the House of Lords, nor Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons at all challenged the view that the attainment of Dominion Status by India was implicit in the Declaration of 1917. On the contrary, Lord Reading made it plain that neither he nor his party objected to Dominion Status being regarded as the ideal to be eventually reached in relation to the Government of India. So far as Mr. Baldwin was concerned, he personally had no objection to a statement concerning Dominion Status being issued. And, indeed, reading between the lines, his speech looks like a vindication of his own personal view and of the view taken by Lord Irwin and His Majesty's Government. "No one," he said, "dreamt of a self-governing India without a self-governing status. No Indian dreamt of an India with an inferior status, nor did we wish that India should be content with an inferior status because that would mean that we had failed in our work in India." Mr. Lloyd George was, no doubt, characteristically vehement in his denunciation, he criticised the Viceroy's pronouncement as very unwise, and declared that it would lead to a complete catastrophe in India. Such unavoidable and ill-considered language was only natural from one who was responsible for what is known as his "Steel Frame" speech. But he too, did not say that he was opposed to the goal of Dominion Status or that it did not logically follow from the terms of the Montagu Declaration of 1917.

CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION

Such being the case, Mr. Wedgwood Benn was perfectly right in saying, in his reply, that so far as the text of the statement was concerned, there was no challenge either by Mr. Lloyd George or the Leader of the Opposition, and that the challenge really was only as regards the moment chosen for making it, and the interpretation put upon it by Indian political leaders. But then it might be argued that all the grace of the statement has been taken away by Government making it plain that the conditions and reservations contained in the Declaration of 1917 and the preamble to the Government of India Act of 1919 remained in full force and effect, and were applicable to Dominion Status. I however venture to think that this view may not be taken for they have at the same time made it clear that it is open to Parliament to do away with those conditions and reservations. The position taken up by Government is constitutionally correct. So long as the

Government of India Act remained unamended, the conditions and reservations were of course effective, speaking from the constitutional and legal point of view. But, if as a result of the conference, Government came to the conclusion that they should no longer be retained, and made proposals to Parliament to that effect, surely it could not be prevented from removing them if it liked. These reservations and conditions are not immutable like the Laws of the Medes and the Persians, and they can be modified, altered and altogether abolished by the sovereign body that had laid them down. Be it noted that neither Lord Passfield in the House of Lords, nor Mr. Wedgwood Benn nor the Prime Minister declared that they were binding for all time and that the Government would not propose their modification or even their total cancellation, if they considered such a course expedient after a thorough review and reconsideration of the situation. It was clearly impossible for Government at the present moment to give an assurance that those conditions and restrictions did not exist, but that cannot or does not mean that Parliament would not do away with them, if it thought that it was desirable or expedient to do so. On the whole, therefore, I do not think that the value or the importance of the Viceroy's statement is in any way affected or lessened by what has been said by Government in the course of the debate, as regards the continuance of those conditions and restrictions so long as the Government of India Act remained as it is.

OUR DUTY

What then should be our response to this new gesture on the part of Government? I feel not the slightest hesitation in saying that India will commit a very grave blunder if she rejects the offer. I think the Secretary of State is fully justified in saying that "using the word policy in a wide sense, there has been a change. The first change is a change of spirit, but the second is far more important. It is a change in policy which in reality is the central object of interested Indian opinion, and that is the Conference." I think the key-note of the new spirit and the new policy is to be found in the noble sentiment expressed by the Secretary of State, instinct with true moral and political purpose, *viz.*, that obstacles to self-government should be regarded, not as an excuse for abandoning a predetermined course, but as merely exciting a desire to overcome them, and that they could be overcome in a spirit of sincerity and good will. Given sincerity, goodwill and a genuine desire to appreciate and adjust different points of view, it is not at all difficult to arrive in the Conference at a solution of the constitutional problem such as may carry behind it the general agreement of political India. We should therefore accept the offer of the Conference in the same spirit in which it has been made.

CRUCIAL ISSUE

There is, however, one point on which I think we may be fully justified in making our position absolutely clear. Replying to a question in the House of Commons, Mr. Wedgwood Benn said that it was premature to decide just now the question of the terms of reference to the Conference. As the object of the Conference is to enable Government to lay before Parliament proposals which may command a wide measure of general assent, it may be presumed that the terms of reference to the Commission will be quite satisfactory, that they will be widest and most liberal possible, otherwise

it is obvious that there is no hope of such a wide measure of general assent being reached. For instance, we can never agree to the terms of reference if they assume or are based on the existing conditions and restrictions, as laid down in the Declaration of 1917 or in the preamble to the Government of India Act of 1919. If the terms of reference lay down that the question of responsible government or Dominion Status must be discussed only on the basis of the principle of gradual progress or progress by stages or instalments, or on the continuance or maintenance of Dyarchy in the Provincial or the Central Governments, in other words, if the question of the immediate establishment of full Responsible Government, provincial or national, or of the immediate attainment of Dominion Status, is excluded from the purview of the Conference, it is obvious that the Conference can serve no good purpose, and cannot bring about such a satisfactory settlement of the constitutional problem as we all desire, and as is the avowed object of the Conference then in that case, we shall have to reject the offer of Government and refuse to have anything to do with the Conference. Government have not bound themselves to accept the proposals that may be made by the British Indian side of the Conference and we do not insist that such acceptance should be made a condition prerequisite to our forming the Conference, though it is obvious that if Government without good reason reject any proposals made by the British Indian side of the Conference unanimously or by a majority, the object of the Conference is bound to be defeated. But though Government may preserve to themselves complete freedom of action as regards the proposals that might be pressed either with unanimity or with a fair measure of support behind them by the British Indian wing of the Conference, Government will not at all be able to carry out the object of holding the Conference itself, if the terms of reference to it are based on the existing conditions or restrictions or otherwise narrowed or restricted. This is a point so clear in itself but, at the same time, of such vital importance that it is necessary to avoid any future misunderstanding by defining our position with regard to it as definitely as possible. We cannot agree to take part in the Conference if its terms of reference will exclude the question of the immediate establishment of full responsible government or the immediate attainment of Dominion Status. We of course disagree with Mr. Gandhi and Pundit Motilal Nehru, who at the interview with Lord Irwin on Monday last wanted an assurance to be given that the purpose of the Conference was to draft a scheme of Dominion Status which His Majesty's Government would undertake to support. The leaders' Conference therefore failed owing to a difference of opinion on the fundamentals.

CAUTION

Provided the terms of reference to the Conference are satisfactory, we should not insist on any condition being fulfilled as a prerequisite to our cooperation with Government in this matter of the Conference. We should scrupulously avoid complicating the situation or adding to the difficulties of the Labour Government by seeking to impose any such condition. It will be a great folly on our part to commit once more the mistake made in 1921 when Lord Reading seriously thought of holding a Conference. As Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has told us with his inside knowledge, if that mistake

had not been committed, the political situation to-day would have been quite different from what it is. A repetition of such a mistake would show that we utterly lack constructive statesmanship, or sound diplomacy and allow ourselves to sacrifice vital interests in the pursuit of objects which are really of a subsidiary character. The transcendent issue is the satisfactory settlement of the constitutional problem, and its chances must not in the least be imperilled by mistaken or impractical idealism or sentimentalism, or by giving undue prominence to matters or questions that might well abide the conclusion of the Conference.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CONFERENCE

The next question is, what should be the constitution of the Conference? In the Viceroy's statement, it is stated that the British Indian section thereof will consist of representatives of different parties and interests. That the different parties and interests must be adequately represented goes without saying, though in the selection of representatives, care must be taken to find out that they represent real parties and interests with regard to communal organisations or parties. Extreme representatives of such organisations or parties, who, owing to their excessive or unbalanced spirit of communalism, are constitutionally incapable of reconciling the provisional needs or ends of communalism with the permanent aims or interests of nationalism or the state, have really no place in the national or the political life of India, and their claims to be invited to the Conference must be courageously set aside as not worth consideration. Only those representatives of such organisations or parties should be invited, who, while rightly anxious to press legitimate communal claims, which can clearly be defended on the broad principle that minorities are entitled to adequate protection, and are at the same time no less anxious to blend them harmoniously with the superior purposes, ends or interests of the nation or the state, should have a place on the Conference. The Conference is not for the purpose of advancing or pressing mere communal or sectarian claims and interests, but for the purpose of building up a political fabric in which national interests would be supreme or paramount, which would not contravene the basic principles of nationalism or of a genuine system of democratic responsible government and in which, at the same time communal needs, interests or claims will receive their legitimate due. Such being the case, it is absolutely necessary for the success of the Conference that it should consist of representatives of the right stamp and spirit.

A SUGGESTION

Speaking about the constitution of the Conference, I wish to put in a plea for the inclusion among its membership besides representatives of parties and interests, one or two constitutional experts, men who are reputed to be students of constitutions and constitutional questions both theoretically and practically. Constitutional questions are not a matter of mere party politics, for a satisfactory solution of some of them, deep and close knowledge of different constitutions and of their practical working and of the theoretical principles on which certain constitutional arrangements are or ought to be based, is essential. For instance, the constitution of a second chamber, the relations between it and the popular House, its powers and functions, the question of combining ministerial responsibility with stability and efficiency, the

question of the distribution of subjects and legislative powers between the Central Government and the Provincial Governments, the financial relations between them, all these questions really require expert knowledge for their proper solution and such solution is absolutely essential to a sound system of responsible government and its efficient working. The working of democratic governments in the West has disclosed certain defects and there are political thinkers investigating the question as to how to remedy them. The Indian constitution must be so devised as to avoid all such defects. Hence, the deliberations of the Conference would gain in value if they are informed, assisted and illumined by expert knowledge and advice. There are Indians available who may not find a place at the Conference table as representatives of parties or interests, but whose presence thereat as constitutional experts and students will be of immense advantage in reaching sound conclusions on the various questions with which the Conference will have to deal, and the Secretary of State may well consider the inclusion of such experts in the Conference.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Government's proposal to convene a Round Table Conference is a very important development in the political situation of this country, and it casts upon us an immense responsibility which I have every hope we shall discharge with success. I feel not the slightest doubt that if we rise to the occasion, keenly realise our duty, and ever placing before us the highest interests of our great Motherland, press our views and demands before the British Government in the true spirit of unity and with the sole desire of reaching the best and fairest solution of our constitutional problem, we shall have made such a tremendous advance in the successful issue of the great struggle for Swaraj which we have been carrying on for the last fifty years and more. The first condition of our success is to set our own house in order. If we are not united on the main issues touching the constitutional problem, speak with many discordant voices, the impression we shall produce will be so unfavourable that in that case the British must perforce be the final arbiters of our destiny and they will be fully justified in deciding it in the manner which they deem best. On the other hand, if we settle our differences, and reach an agreement on all those questions which have divided us at present, it will be impossible for the British Government to flout the national will of India and we shall have practically settled our constitution according to our own views and wishes. Let us suppose that we settle our internal differences and produce a constitution to which we all agree, which commands the general support of all communities, parties and interests, which is acceptable to the minorities as giving adequate protection to their legitimate interests and claims, which wins the approval of the Moham-medans, the Sikhs, the Anglo-Indians, the Christians, the Non-Brahmans, the depressed classes and so on, do you think that, in the event of this great and happy consummation being realised, the British Government and Parliament will be so foolish as to oppose or defy the deliberate will of India and to impose upon us a constitution which we cannot accept?

THE REALITIES

I think, the British people are realising with greater and greater vividness that the days of Imperialism, of domination and of autocracy are gone for ever. The perpetuation of the British domination is now impossible. It is impossible because it is opposed to the true interests of the British people themselves. It is impossible because awakened India is bound to revolt against it and to continue the revolt till the domination is ended. It is impossible because the world forces which are irresistibly leading humanity on to a higher and higher destiny are arrayed against it. It is impossible because rational and enlightened world opinion sees and feels that therein lies the destruction of all hopes and efforts for a higher, nobler, worthier, happier and purer human life, that therein lie imbedded the poisonous germs of the crash of culture and civilisation. There can be no doubt therefore that the national will of India is bound to prevail with the British Government and people, that they are not likely to commit such an act of insanity and national suicide as to flout or defy it.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Already the section clamouring for independence is none too small. We cannot afford to treat their pretensions lightly and there is before us the instance of America. As Lecky says, "The histories of the colonies during the twenty or thirty years preceding the Declaration of Independence is full of internecine or intercolonial disputes and neither the public opinion nor the then existing conditions of the country admitted of independence as any rational eventuality". Lecky quotes one of the American patriots writing in 1765, a decade before the actual date of the Declaration of Independence: "God forbid these colonies should ever prove undutiful to the mother country. Whenever such a day shall come, it will be the beginning of a terrible scene. Were these Colonies left alone to themselves to-morrow, America would be a mere shambles of blood and confusion before little petty states could be settled." Another quotation coming from an acute observer about the same time is: "such is the difference of character, of manners, of religion, of interest of the different colonies, that were they left to themselves, there would soon be a civil war from one end of the continent to the other." Is not something similar being said in regard to India to-day by our die-hard friends? Let me quote only one of them and he a reactionary and an unsympathetic former Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, who, at an after-dinner speech only a month ago, said, "There was no immediate prospect of Dominion Status for India. If what is loosely called Dominion Status was given to India to-morrow, India would dissolve into anarchy." This brought upon his head a well-deserved rebuke from Dr. Drummond Shiels, that Lord Birkenhead is the last man to be regarded as an authority on India. We recognise it as a distinct loss to this country that Dr. Shiels is no longer Under-Secretary of State for India, and that his activities are transferred to another sphere of usefulness. But let us go further and analyse the American opinion on the very eve of the struggle. Many of the leading agents in the Revolution expressed up to the last moment a strong desire to remain united to England. John Adam himself describes how difficult it was for him to overcome this desire and yet everything was changed and Independence was declared. The Government of the Southern and Middle States had to be moulded anew into a purely

popular form, destroying the vested interests, which so long unduly preponderated before anything could be done, and all this was effected in the incredibly short space of a year or so. Here is an instance of what was unthought of and seemingly impossible proving practicable and in this light we have to gauge the cry for independence in this country.

OPPOSITION IN ENGLAND

Indeed, nothing should be done which can nourish this extreme school of thought. The DAILY MAIL has opened out its columns to reactionary propaganda. It is doing the greatest disservice to England as well as the Empire. Even though familiarity with the Sydenhamites has bred a contempt in us, still every such article in regard to Indian aspirations goes to snap the thread that weaves the web of unity between England and India. The rank and file in England is terribly ignorant of conditions in India. Were they not so, they would support our case. By trading upon their ignorance and leading them wrong, the DAILY MAIL is only paving the disruption of the Empire. The opposition in England is mostly inspired by retired British officials from India, the majority of whom misuse their professional knowledge of this country to thwart the fulfilment of our aspirations. The main burden of the propaganda is that India is unfit for Dominion Status and various arguments are used to prove the case. But show me a country where it was not so, where risks were not taken and political progress every time waited on complete fitness. Even in England the latest constitutional step, the enfranchisement of women, was an experiment. In politics, it is not prudent to follow hard and fast logic as far as it will go. There must be accommodation to circumstances and there must be give and take. It is that cardinal doctrine of political expediency which Burke enunciated, which England for once refused to follow and with what result we all know. Let us hope that the lesson is not lost on her. "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together." This great saying may seem trite with time usage, but it is still a living truth as it was when Burke first uttered it. Statesmanlike acts are not worse for being generous. Rather it is the contrary and England has had practical instances during the past hundred years of its history.

CANADA

Let us go back a century and turn our eyes to the Canadian Colonies. There was growing friction between the Executive and the Legislative Assemblies. As Ramsay Muir says, "Being denied responsibility, they were acting irresponsibly." In French-Canada the friction had taken a racial turn and nationalist feelings ran high. The French, like the minorities in our midst, feared they would be swamped; there was distrust between the two; and social relationship was practically absent. In 1837 there were risings and the British Government sent out Lord Durham with large powers to deal with the situation. In the temporary remedies he provided, perhaps he over-stepped the mark and had to resign, but the permanent remedy he suggested in his great report on Canada has made him live for ever. Believing in freedom as the key of political harmony, he traced the root cause of all trouble to that system which failed to bring home to all citizens their responsibility for common welfare. In the words of the historian, he aimed

that French and English must learn that Fate had made them partners and cease to fight against one another. For that purpose he recommended that that Upper and Lower Canada, in other words Britishers and Frenchmen in that continent should be united. He advocated various other means of unity as well, but "the main burden of his message was that responsibility must be thrust upon the peoples, by giving supreme power to their representatives and ensuring that the executive government should be responsible to the legislature. It is only by making each community directly responsible for its own welfare that social and political health could be attained." The Government in England hesitated at first but at last steps were taken and with what result. Let me give the words of the historian himself. "The new colonial policy had achieved a genuine triumph in Canada within twenty years, It had established the fullest measure of self-government ever enjoyed by any colony in history. It had restored harmony and made co-operation possible between the two partner-races, recently in open conflict. It had opened an era of prosperity after an era of depression. These were great achievements." But greater still which the historian omits to mention, is that the Empire secured the fidelity of a worthy partner which grew to be a bulwark of the British Commonwealth. Here was a country divided in itself and distracted. Tame reasoning would not have allowed a dose of freedom. But what logical speculation and abstract theory did not comprehend, generous statesmanship did and with what rich reward, we all know.

SOUTH AFRICA

But there is one more instance and once again I shall give the story in the words of the historian himself lest I may bring in any personal bias. "For seventy years, South Africa had been the scene of frequent conflicts and most bitter friction. Seemingly, the close of the South African war brought an end to all this. But really the task of reconstruction was to begin then. Lord Milner with a brilliant band of helpers grappled the slow and weary task. But nothing substantial came of it, until the Liberal Government under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, with splendid faith in the virtues of self-government, decided to take the bold step of establishing a fully responsible system in the Transvaal at once in December 1906. The courage and magnanimity of this step taken only four years after the war, surpassed even the gift of self-government to Canada after the rebellion of 1837. But it brought its own reward, immediate and great. Though the first elections in 1907 gave a majority to the Dutch there was no attempt to revive the exclusive racial policy of Kruger. On the contrary, the first result of the change was the rise of a spontaneous demand among both the British and the Dutch for the unification of all South Africa, an end towards which Grey and Frere, Carnarvon and Gladstone, had striven in vain.....For the first time for seventy years the two white peoples of South Africa were found co-operating in harmony for the common advantage." The scheme which they drafted went beyond federation; it established a single unitary state. Thus, the most divided region of the British Commonwealth, left free to choose, adopted a more completely unified form of Government than either Canada or Australia and modelled its institutions as closely as might be upon those of the mother country. The task of forming the first Ministry

was entrusted to the Transvaal Dutchman, Louis Botha, who had been the Commander-in-Chief of the Boer armies, and four years later the ordeal of the Great War was to prove that in this case, as in so many others, freedom was the strongest foundation of comradeship. It seemed that the medicine of liberty had cured one of the greatest diseases by which the modern Commonwealth had been hampered.

IRELAND

If in 1770 no English officials could believe that the American Colonies could ever govern themselves, a century and a half later in 1921 they thought likewise in regard to Ireland. Were there not very many in England who till quite lately doubted if ever the Labour Party would possess the men and the ability to govern their country and have not all these prognostications been belied. They will be equally belied in regard to India.

THE IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM

We are all agreed as regards our political goal and it is to us a matter of the sincerest satisfaction that the British Government have made it absolutely clear that that goal is no other than and nothing short of Dominion Status. Dominion Status will give us every scope for rising to the fullest height of our national stature. As regards this goal, there is perfect agreement not only among all Indians except those who want independence, but also between them and the British. Nobody now has a good word for Dyarchy, that wonderful hybrid constitutional system evolved out of its inner consciousness by the Round Table group of political thinkers and students, which at one time seemed to exercise so much influence upon British Imperial thought. Dyarchy, let us hope, is doomed. The present constitutional position of the Central Government is so anomalous as to be intolerable. There are only two alternatives possible with regard to the Central Government. The first is to revert to the old patent and undiluted system of autocracy under which Government had a clear official majority in the Legislature which enabled them to carry any measure they wanted and under which there was not the slightest pretence made to rule by the consent of the people. Such a reversion to the old system is utterly unthinkable. The only alternative that remains then is to establish full responsible government in the Central Government also. Besides I cannot too strongly stress the fact that, without full responsibility in the Central Government, responsibility in the Provincial Governments, partial or full, cannot be real and genuine. Full responsibility in the Provinces combined with no responsibility or only partial responsibility with reference to National Government, will virtually mean the continuance of the existing state of things and be open to the same grave objections as the present anomalous and inefficient dyarchical system. Indian political opinion is practically unanimous or at all events is predominantly in favour of the introduction of full responsibility in the Central Government.

COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION

Let us examine what are our differences? They relate, as you know, for the most part, to the question of communal representation. Even with regard to this question, let us, in the first place, note and

emphasise the points of the agreement rather than the points of difference. Though in the opinion of a considerable section of our people, communal representation is a necessary evil in the present conditions of India, we are all agreed that it is an evil, that in the long run must disappear and further that the sooner the conditions become favourable to its disappearance, the better. The evils of communalism and communal representation are recognised on all hands, even the strongest and the most extreme communalists do not maintain that communal representation is good in itself and that therefore it should remain a permanent feature of our polity. They admit, no less than others, that a system of democratic self-government of which communal representation is a permanent feature cannot be a sound system of democratic self-government, that it must be a parody of such a system, that it is not a system that will make for the fusion of the different communities and elements in the body politic, and the evolution of a true national and democratic mind. What nation it is, what kind of democracy it is, which is divided in different water-tight compartments, living each its own life, each pursuing its own communal ends and having in common little more than what cannot be helped, owing to the fact of living on one and the same soil, and having its economic interests more or less interlinked with those of other communities? Such a nation cannot be a true nation. Such a democracy will be a curious type contravening all principles of real democracy. India, if she wants, may have such a system, but it will not be a system which will make her a true, united, powerful and united nation, give her a genuine form of democratic self-government, conduce to her efficiency or promote her progress and welfare. Such being the case, we all realise with greater or less force and vividness, the inherent and patent evils of communal representation and we all want that it should not mark our political life and system a day longer than may be absolutely necessary.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

The Muslim All-Parties Conference held under the presidency of H. H. the Aga Khan at Delhi last year, made the astonishing claim that the Moslems had a right to communal representation by means of special electorates. I deny the validity of this claim. You cannot have a right to a system of representation which is inherently evil, and even if the existence of such a right is admitted, its continuance must be determined essentially and mainly, by the broader and more vital considerations of national unity, true national growth and permanent national welfare and progress and not by the bias, inclinations or the wishes of the community concerned. It is however a matter of satisfaction that even the Moslem All-Parties Conference recognises the evils of communal representation and is prepared to do away with it when the conditions of India no longer render its continuance necessary. This then is the first point of agreement, *viz.*, that we must so work and modify and improve our national conditions in such a way, that we may be able to abolish communal representation eventually and that this ideal may be realised as soon as possible. The second point of agreement is that though the goal of the abolition of communal representation must be reached at the earliest possible moment, taking things and conditions as they are, a transitory system is necessary which while

leading automatically if possible to the ultimate abolition of communal representation, will take due account of the existing circumstances and conditions. The immediate introduction of a common electoral roll even without reservation of seats for minority communities is not a change which is advocated even by those who are, in principle, strongly opposed to communal representation. We all realise that the complete abolition of communal representation, though an ideal to be realised as soon as possible, is not immediately practicable. This is the second point of agreement.

VALUE OF UNITY

Bearing these two points of agreement in mind, the solution proposed by the Nehru Committee is perhaps the best that can be devised under the present circumstances. Considering the proposals of the Committee on this question, it is impossible to deny that, on their merits, they offer a solution of a very difficult and delicate question, which ought to be acceptable to all those who are not wedded to the permanent retention of communal electorates. It is a matter of sincere regret that these proposals have not received the approval of all sections of Moslem opinion, and it does not seem likely that such approval can be won as a result of further consultation and conference. Shall we then allow ourselves to be irrevocably divided on this question? Or will it not be better and wiser on our part to once more do our best to settle our differences and to reach an agreement which, though not ideally the best or even the best under the circumstances, will have the merit of carrying behind it the largest measure of support of Moslem opinion. An irrevocable split on this question would be most unfortunate. It would show that though we might indulge in tall talk about the principle of national self-determination we are woefully incapable of putting it into practice.

FAIR REQUEST

I therefore most strongly urge that another serious effort should be made to reach an agreed solution of the question of communal representation with the Moslem community. Any solution of this question which fails to carry behind it the support of at least a considerable majority of the Moslem community, however good it may be in itself, has little chance of being acceptable to the British Parliament which will certainly be justified, if it desired, in vetoing such proposals. Similar efforts should also be made to reach agreements with the depressed classes and other important minority communities. If we are able, as I fervently hope we may be, to settle our internal differences as regards this question of communal representation, the constitution which we shall then be in a position to recommend at the Round Table Conference will have such strength behind it that the British Government and Parliament will find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reject it. And if they do, the responsibility for such disregard of the Indian national desire will fall on them, and such disregard will be a sufficient justification for any strong action we may subsequently decide to take. Personally I feel confident that an agreed solution of the constitutional problem, reached by us among ourselves, will strengthen the hands of the Labour Government which will, I think in that case, be able to persuade Parliament that any delay in meeting the united wishes of all India and in granting her Dominion Status will be unjust and fraught with grave danger.

INDIAN STATES

It is a matter of the utmost satisfaction that the Indian Princes and Chiefs have all heartily welcomed the proposal for the Conference and are quite willing to extend their co-operation for the sake of making it a thorough success. The question of the relations between British India and the Indian States, when she develops into a Self-Governing Dominion in the fullest enjoyment of responsible government and Dominion Status, is a highly important one which must be satisfactorily solved, if the organic territorial unity and nationality of India are to be living realities, and the development of the two constituent parts of India is to take place on peaceful, harmonious and well-considered lines. The importance of the question is however more than equalled by its difficulty, complexity and delicacy and its solution is not likely to be rendered easier by loose, or extreme thinking, by unjust and ill-considered attacks on the Indian Princes and Chiefs, or by an unwise desire on our part to interfere with the internal affairs of the States. It is no use denying the fact that the internal questions affecting the people of the States must be settled by the Princes and their subjects themselves. All that we can do is to exercise moral influence. The subjects in Indian States must be the architects of their own fortunes. I for one feel that the momentum of British Indian and world events is so great that the modernisation of Indian States is bound to take place sooner or later, that medieval notions cannot long survive the stress of the liberal methods and ideas that are now making a universal advance, and whose ultimate triumph throughout the world is only a matter of time. At least one Indian ruler, the Chief of Phaltnan in the Presidency of Bombay, has had the distinction of declaring that the establishment of responsible government is the ultimate goal of his State. He has promulgated an Act, called Government of Phaltnan State Act 1929, which marks the first step on the path of this goal. At the inauguration ceremony of the Phaltnan State Legislative Council constituted under the Act, which was held on 7th September 1929, His Excellency the Governor of Bombay sent the following message :—

“ By its creation (that is the creation of the Council) you, the Ruler of the State of Phaltnan, have shown your desire that the constitutional development of your State should keep pace with the advance of ideas and with the political progress of India as a whole, and your wish to associate your subjects with the conduct of the affairs of the State.”

It is to be sincerely hoped that other Princes and Rulers will also declare that it is their intention to establish, in the fullness of time, responsible government in their States and to associate their subjects in an increasing measure with the conduct of the affairs of their territories. It is not necessary that responsible government in all the States should take one and the same form, it may well take different forms adapted to local conditions, but the basic principle should be recognised, and progress, though slow, should be steady and sure. Speaking for myself, I feel no doubt whatever that this happy consummation will be fully realised and that British India and Indian India will form a strong and progressive Federation carrying out a common national destiny, in a spirit of perfect union and co-operation, with the people in both these constituent parts of India enjoying the benefits of responsible government in one form or another. India, fully developed on

these lines, will be an unique and powerful political entity in the world, whose voice cannot fail to carry immense weight in International Councils.

H. H. THE MAHARAJA OF BIKANIR AS SPOKESMAN

The proposed Round Table Conference, however, cannot discuss these internal questions, as they lie outside its scope. They must be settled by the Rulers themselves in consultation with the representatives of their subjects. In a speech which His Highness the Maharaja of Bikanir made on the occasion of inaugurating the Administrative Conference on 3rd October 1923, he said :—

“ The Princes have, on more occasions than one, in the past and particularly during the last twelve years or so, given actual proofs, not merely in words but also by deeds, of their good will towards British India and of their welcoming its attainment of Dominion Status. The friendly co-operation of the States rests however on two clear and essential conditions :—

(a) that equitable and satisfactory arrangements are arrived at between the parties concerned for the position of the States in the future constitution of India on terms fair and honourable alike to the States and British India ; and

(b) that India remains an integral part of the British Commonwealth of Nations under the *ægis* of our beloved King-Emperor.”

His Highness expressed the same view at the interview he granted on 2nd November 1929 to the Associated Press of India in regard to the Viceregal Declaration. His Highness's views may be regarded as thoroughly representative of those held, if not unanimously, at least by a majority of the Princes and Rulers of India, and, as such, are entitled to the greatest weight and consideration. I do not think that any objection can reasonably be taken to the conditions which His Highness naturally and rightly regards as essential. Nor do I think that it is impossible to arrive at an agreed solution of the great problem of the position of the Indian States in the future constitution of India.

COMMON INTERESTS

We entertain respect for the Indian Princes to whom we are attached by ancient traditions, associations and history, and we are as jealous as they themselves are, of their legitimate rights and privileges, of their status and dignity, and responsible leaders in British India have every desire to respect the sanctity of ancient treaty rights and obligations. All that we urge and, from the point of view of British India, have a right to insist on, is that the Indian States should not seek to separate themselves from British India, that they should not consider themselves as an independent and separate entity having nothing to do with British India, that the Princes should never forget that they are as much of the soil as the people in British India, that they are as patriotic and as proud of the land of their birth as the latter, that both British India and Indian India have to evolve a common destiny, and that if any sacrifice must be made for the fullest realisation of that destiny, it should be willingly and cheerfully made by both sides. On the one hand, British India must pay proper consideration to the position of the States, the rights and privileges of the Princes ; on the other hand, if the attainment by British India of Dominion Status

involves some sacrifice on the part of the States and their rulers, it should be willingly and cheerfully made by them. Nobody expects them to make such tremendous sacrifices as were made by the Princes and *Daimyos* of Japan at the time of her Restoration, but if the evolution of India into a Federal Dominion entails some sacrifice, I sincerely hope that they will not hesitate to make it, at least to the extent that may be absolutely necessary. I cannot help thinking that if only the Princes would be pleased to take leaders in British India into their confidence, and exchange views with them in perfect freedom and candour, it will not be impossible to make equitable and satisfactory arrangements, to use the words of H. H. the Maharaja of Bikanir, for the position of the States such as would be fair and honourable both to the States and to British India.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT AND DEFENCE

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the objections taken to the establishment of full responsible government in India is that she is not yet ready to undertake the responsibility of her own defence, and that she will not be able to maintain internal peace and security without British troops. The argument is that responsible government connotes the assumption of the duty of maintaining internal peace and security by the sons of the soil and of defending national frontiers against foreign aggression. It is contended that India will not be able to maintain internal peace and security, and defend herself against foreign aggression without British troops, as she has no national army fully trained, equipped and manned by Indian officers, and that so long as British troops cannot be withdrawn from India, the establishment of full Swaraj or responsible government is outside the domain of practical politics. Now, in the first place, it must be borne in mind that the demand for full responsible government and Dominion Status stands on an entirely different footing from that for national independence. It is obvious that the latter is incompatible with the maintenance or selection of foreign troops, and that a people that want national independence must depend upon themselves for its national defence. But the question assumes a somewhat different aspect in the case of a demand only for full responsible government and Dominion Status. The proposition that if India wishes to have full responsible government and be raised to the Status of a Dominion, she must assume the responsibility for her national defence, may be admitted as perfectly sound.

WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH TROOPS

But does it follow from this that British troops must be withdrawn from India the moment full responsible government is established, and that therefore, if they cannot be so withdrawn, full responsible government must not be established? It may be conceded at once that they should be withdrawn at the earliest possible moment and that every measure should be adopted in order that it might be possible to withdraw them at the earliest possible moment. Was not something similar done in South Africa? A Dominion is a part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. If India is a member of the Commonwealth, her defence is not only an Indian question, it is a question that concerns the whole Commonwealth. If her integrity is threatened by a foreign enemy, it means that the integrity of the whole Commonwealth is threatened, and she has a right to assistance in her defence from every component part of the Commonwealth. When the

Great War broke out in 1914, would it have been right for Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India to stand out? Such an attitude on their part would have been utterly unreasonable. Membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations would have no meaning and no moral significance, if all its members did not regard it as their sacred duty to render as much assistance as they can to a fellow-member whose integrity was threatened by an enemy. It follows from this that though the main responsibility for national defence rests upon a member itself, all other members must come to its assistance, when there is a peril of foreign aggression to that member. If the defence of a member, that is, indirectly of the whole Commonwealth, makes it necessary, desirable or expedient that British troops should be maintained within the territorial limits of that member, what reasonable objection can be raised to such a course being adopted? They may be kept there as an Imperial measure to prevent or put down any foreign attack on India, in other words, to better ensure the integrity of the British Empire. Bolshevik Russia is known to harbour evil designs against the British Commonwealth. In order to defeat such designs, what objection can reasonably be urged against maintaining British troops in India but would it be right on that ground to deny responsible government to India? Again, if the Imperial and military policy hitherto pursued by Great Britain has made it impossible for India to attain the requisite national defensive strength, it is adding insult to injury to withhold responsible government on the ground of that deficiency, instead of showing every willingness to make up the deficiency, in the interim, until the requisite strength is acquired as quickly as possible by every possible means.

INTERNAL PEACE

A responsible government must certainly be able to preserve peace and order without relying upon troops that are not indigenous. We claim that we shall certainly be able to maintain internal peace and order without invoking the assistance of British troops. Preservation of internal peace and order does not mean that there will be no disturbances at all; if that were its meaning, even the British Government cannot claim that it is able to maintain peace and order. Disturbances may take place in future as in the past, but we do claim and claim most emphatically that we shall be fully able to discharge our responsibility of maintaining peace and order with our own police and military forces. In this connection it is pertinent to remember that even in the British Colonies, though the principle was laid down that they must assume responsibility for defence and internal peace and security, yet British troops were not immediately withdrawn, nay, they were even employed in maintaining internal peace and order. When the cry is raised that India cannot be granted full responsible government, because she does not possess a national army fully trained and equipped and therefore cannot discharge the responsibility of national self-defence, we cannot but condemn that cry as utterly unfair, absolutely unjustified by the facts of colonial history, and as really inspired by the selfish desire for prolonging Indian political subordination as much as possible. It seems clear that the true principle is not first adequacy and efficiency of national defence and then responsible government but first responsible government and then adequacy and efficiency of national defence.

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Next in importance to the supreme question of the attainment of Dominion Status is that of the status of our countrymen in other parts of the Empire. Happily in South Africa, the wonderful work of the Right Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri has helped to set our minds at ease. Thanks to his matchless labours, there has been a decided change for the better in the angle of vision, not only of the white population in South Africa, but of our countrymen too. Among the latter the old spirit of bitter and sulking despondency has given place to a feeling of hope for the future. Their self-respect and with it their self-confidence and self-help have revived. The most striking example of this renaissance is the Sastri College built entirely by contributions from Indians in Natal, which was recently opened by His Excellency the Governor-General of South Africa, a compliment which India appreciates greatly. There has been striking progress in the education of Indian children. The Prime Minister of South Africa, Gen. Hertzog, presented a Union Flag to the Indian Boy Scouts in Johannesburg despite the fact that the local Scout Council refused to recognise Indian Scouts on grounds of colour. Mr. W. H. Sampson, the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, publicly defended the action of the Typographical Union in admitting for the first time Indian printers into that trade union. These are some of the indications of the change of feeling that has come over the Europeans in South Africa. All this is matter for thanksgiving. But the sky is not all clear. The question of Indian trade licenses in the Transvaal is causing our nationals acute anxiety. There has been an unhappy revival of anti-Indian agitation in that Province. The fall in the stream of assisted emigration is being exploited to our disadvantage. All this causes us grave anxiety, but we are confident that the generous statesmanship of Gen. Hertzog and of Dr. D. F. Malan ably assisted by our Agent, Sir Kurma Reddi, who, we hope, will soon recover and be able to return to his post, will rise equal to the occasion, stem the tide of anti-Indian agitation and find solutions honourable to all concerned. Difficulties may from time to time arise. These are inevitable even between most friendly countries and governments. What is wanted is a spirit of mutual confidence and good fellowship, so that such difficulties may be amicably settled.

KENYA

In East Africa the situation is far from reassuring. The spirit of arrogance and unreason seems to animate the outlook of the European settlers. The just and moderate claims of our fellow-countrymen are viewed with contumely and hostility. Our demand for equal citizenship is met by the Europeans with a demand that they shall be politically dominant in East Africa. Our contention that political advance in these territories shall wait upon the development of the native community to take their just share in ordering their own affairs is met by the rejoinder that they (the European settlers) can be fully trusted to exercise greater political power to the advantage of the native. Indians in East Africa have repeatedly declared that they do not seek political domination either in Kenya or in any of the other territories in Eastern Africa. At the same time, consistently with their self-respect, they cannot accept a position of political inferiority.

Nor does their past experience encourage them to view with satisfaction the prospect of any arrangement which will transfer greater power of Government to representatives of the European settlers. In the interests of the native, in the interests of the Indian who in the past has admittedly done a great deal for the development of Eastern Africa, and in the interests of Imperial solidarity, the duty of His Majesty's Government is clearly to repudiate the European claim to domination and concede to the Indian claim for equality. More it will be unreasonable of us to ask. Less it will be unmanly of us to accept.

CEYLON

Another threatening cloud seems to hang over the point of the horizon pointing towards Ceylon. There, His Majesty's Government contemplate the introduction of a fresh measure of political reform. On the merits of this measure it is not for us to speak. It is the prerogative of the inhabitants of Ceylon to decide the form of the constitution under which they will live. Our duty is clearly limited to the protection of our own men. From the despatches that passed between His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, it appears that the intention is to base one of the qualifications of legislative franchise on domicile, which has not been defined but which will, so far as can be seen, require a declaration by the Indian labourer of his intention to reside permanently in the island, and renunciation by him of such special privileges as have been secured to him by the intercession of an outside Government, *viz.*, the Government of India. I am not a lawyer, but the idea of requiring members of one Commonwealth owing allegiance to the same Sovereign to acquire a domicile in one of His Majesty's possessions as a condition precedent to admission to political franchise, strikes me as novel. Whether this be so or not, the effect of the other conditions which I have described will undoubtedly be to prevent the great bulk of Indian labourers working on estates in Ceylon from qualifying for the vote. These men, even when they have been in residence for more than five years in Ceylon, do not ordinarily intend to settle down there. No more can they afford to renounce such privileges as the payment to them of a standard wage which have been secured to them by the advocacy of the people and the Government of this country. We have long been friends with Ceylon. Men of our race and our civilisation have had their share in building up the cultural and economic prosperity of the island. We wish the permanent inhabitants of Ceylon to remember this and to be just to our people. The franchise qualifications which are proposed for our people and which, as I have endeavoured to explain, will in practice have the effect of withholding the vote from a large proportion of them, we cannot accept.

NO PROPER MACHINERY

It is the bounden duty of Government to look after the interest of our nationals in other parts of the Empire. Have we readily available full information about their present political and economic status in all those lands where they have settled? Have we any efficient machinery for keeping ourselves informed of the political and economic changes that are afoot in the rapidly developing colonial Empire of Great Britain; an agency which constantly studies developments in these regions, determines what changes are likely to affect the interests of our compatriots, and acts with the

fullness of knowledge and promptitude of decision which in international affairs hold the key to success? It is obvious that the setting up of the machinery which would help us both in looking after the Indian communities already settled abroad or in exploring the possibilities of fresh migration, must be done by the Government of the country. Government alone has resources, the facilities and the power to study, to investigate and, when necessary, to act diplomatically. True, its policy must conform to public opinion. But public opinion cannot be clearly and correctly formed unless the necessary data are placed before it and those data must be collected by Government agency. At Delhi and Simla, the care of Indians Overseas is entrusted to the Department of Education, Health and Lands. As a member of the Standing Emigration Committee ever since its establishment, it has been my privilege to work in close co-operation with that Department. It does its best and under its present respected and distinguished head, the Hon. Sir Muhammad Habibullah, its policy has been in close unison with the popular view of the Indian case abroad. But it is no reflection on the Department to say that it is not adequately equipped for its task. I am not aware of any Government which entrusts the care of over a million of its nationals and the whole field of migrational policy to a department overburdened with other activities such as Sir Muhammad Habibullah's department is. The Hon'ble Mr. G. A. Natesan drew attention to the subject in the Council of State. As a result, the Government of India have added to the Department of Education, Health and Lands a Joint Secretary. It appears to me to be humanly speaking impossible for any one individual even though he be such a capable Joint Secretary as the present incumbent, Mr. G. S. Bajpai is, to keep himself acquainted with developments that are proceeding apace in territories extending literally from China to Peru, to make available for public information, reports on questions of interest to India and Indians abroad, and to help to discharge effectively the duty of vigilant and effective support of the Indian cause in countries where contentious issues may be in ferment. It is not for us to suggest to Government how they should put their own house in order, but it is our duty to draw their attention to the obvious fact that it needs putting in order.

REMEDY

The moral which I have attempted to draw is supported by recent events in East Africa. Deputations from East Africa to this country and from this country to East Africa have been at work. The non-official Indian demands have been clearly formulated, and the grievances fully explained. These demands fall to the ultimate arbitrament of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain, who have behind them the life-long knowledge and experience of a supremely competent staff at the Colonial Office. I mean no disparagement to our own men when I ask what wealth of experience and knowledge the Government of India have to oppose to that of the Colonial Office. On a short view, my suggestion for reinforcing the official machinery responsible for the care of the interests of Indians overseas may appear extravagant. The public in India have abundant cause to complain of the extravagance of Government and to be chary of suggesting additions to its strength, but in a field of policy so vital to our national self-respect and our interest, it is the long view that, I submit, ought to appeal to us and on the long view, my suggestions appear to be fully justified.

RATIO QUESTION

No review of the existing conditions in the country will be considered complete unless I refer to some of the outstanding commercial and financial grievances, the redress of which is as vital to securing self-government as the removal of any political grievances. You may consider that whenever a Bombay man begins to speak of financial sins of omission and commission on the part of Government, he cannot, like poor Mr. Dick, forget King Charles's head, *viz*: the ratio question. I do not think it is a Bombay question alone; it is an All-India question, but Bombay may be taken, if you like, as a typical instance of the devastation wrought by the ill-fated ratio of 1s. 6d. placed on the statute-book through the obstinacy of Sir Basil Blackett backed up by the narrow and parochial outlook of some of members of the Assembly. The warnings given by Indian authorities were disregarded, as they usually are, and yet with every day which passes, these warnings are receiving greater and greater justification. The cotton industry of Bombay, which is the life-blood of that Presidency, has been paralysed, and the agriculturists for whom Governments, whether Central or Provincial, have been never wanting in shallow and superficial sympathy, are not able to get the cost of their production from the raw materials like cotton exported outside. Bengal Cotton is selling at something like Rs. 200 per Khandy, and this rate, in the opinion of those people who ought to know, does not give the agriculturist any return whatsoever for his labour and for his investment. Deflation is carried on to the extent of crores of Rupees and yet exchange does not come up to the ratio placed on the statute book. Heaven alone knows, how far this process of impoverishing the country is to be carried on before Government come to realise that the time has come for their admitting their mistake and rectifying it.

TRADE COMMISSIONERS

With regard to this financial policy as well the general indifference of Government to the development of industries, I can only say that there is no national economic policy being formulated by them or followed by them. It is all a policy of drift and makeshift. No Government can hope, in these days of strenuous competition and technical advance, to succeed with such a policy of drift and makeshift. Questions which can be solved at once take years and years for their solution. Take, for instance, the case of Trade Commissioners. It is now more than two decades, since the Indian Merchants' Chamber of Bombay took up this question and since then it has been agitated on platforms of the Industrial Conference, Commercial Congress, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, etc. And yet it is only now that Government think of doing something in that direction, but with their usual caution, may I say super-human caution, they propose to appoint two Trade Commissioners per year completing what to Government appears now a full quota, *viz*: six in the course of three years. Surely, caution also may sometime be carried to an extreme. We have seen free and self-governing countries appointing Consuls and Trade Commissioners not by two's and three's but by dozens, and yet our Government apparently thinks that the Heavens may fall if more than two Trade Commissioners are appointed every year, and if more

than six Trade Commissioners are appointed altogether, nor have they given the assurance that they will all be Indians. I make bold to say from personal knowledge that if they are preferably Indians, they will receive greater support in the countries they are sent to.

INDIAN FIRMS IN ENGLAND

I am one of those who believe that commerce and politics cannot be separated. The hardships and difficulties under which our countrymen in South Africa and East Africa have to carry on their trade are sufficiently well-known to you. I will admit that, with regard to this question, the Government of India have been doing their best under the guidance of the Hon'ble Sir Mahomed Habibullah, in whom we have always found a powerful champion of our cause. No one, however, would expect that these conditions prevailing in East and South Africa would find an echo even in the heart of the Metropolis of the Empire. And yet the insidious influence of colour bar or whatever you may choose to call it, is so great that even there, a taboo is placed against the admission of Indians in any commercial associations. The doors of the Baltic Exchange, of the Commercial Sale Rooms, of the Jute Association and of other similar bodies, are, as a rule, closed to them. Our friend, Sir Atul Chatterjee, the High Commissioner for India, is trying his best to get these restrictions removed, but the existence of such restrictions betokening the spirit of the colour bar and racial prejudice in the heart of the chief city of the Empire which has people of innumerable creeds and castes as its citizens, does not speak much for the Imperial pride or Empire citizenship. It is therefore with much satisfaction we observe that within this month for the first time, two Indian firms have been admitted to the Baltic Exchange. There is no reason why the number should be limited to two, and let us hope there will be no restriction hereafter to the inclusion of more Indian firms either in the Baltic Exchange or to our admission in the other bodies I have referred to.

COASTAL RESERVATION BILL

The Coastal Reservation Bill has not been proceeded with because of the timely suggestion of the Viceroy to discuss the subject matter of it at a Conference which is to meet under his Presidentship at Delhi within less than a week from now. Let us hope the deliberations will result in recommendations which will ensure the building up and the strengthening of the mercantile marine of this country. Whilst the Coastal Reservation Bill is not at all a legislative measure involving expropriation as is alleged in certain quarters, we have every intention of asserting our national rights for the economic salvation of India particularly by helping in every possible way industries from which we have been kept out for many a long day.

PRESS PROPAGANDA

In this connection, it would not be out of place to mention the services rendered both here and in England by the press organisation known as the *Free Press of India*. There are other agencies which now and again report the activities of individuals or organisations which try to do harm to the Indian cause, but the *Free Press* London Correspondent misses no opportunity of acquainting the Indian public with whatever sinister attempts are made in the London press. The warnings the *Free Press* correspondent wires out, and which of course find no place in the Anglo-Indian papers, enable us to refute what charges are made against India and the Indians.

Never was there the necessity greater of a proper press propaganda to acquaint the British public, and for the matter of that to acquaint the civilised world, with the correct situation in India. In the absence of any such propaganda, local correspondents of English newspapers delight in magnifying petty troubles in a village or small town into huge riots, time and again advance century-old reasons and arguments which are entirely out of place to-day as to why self-government should be denied to India and endeavour to harm our cause in every conceivable way.

CONCLUSION

I must apologise for the length of my remarks and thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me. It is expected of the President to refer to the burning questions of the day. There are many I have had to leave out. Those that I have taken up, I am sure you will agree with me, require to be dealt with at some length. The numerical strength of the Liberal party may not at present be very large, but we are the leaven of the whole national life of India and our influence upon her development has always been wholesome and abiding. We stand for all-round progress, we have faith in modern civilisation, modern spirit and modern culture. We believe in construction, in unity, in synthesis, in harmony. We stand for Dominion Status with the firm conviction that England cannot withhold it from India even if she wished, and that England will not wish it even if she can. We insist on national self-improvement and maintain that all the social evils from which this country is suffering must be completely removed. Our faith in social reform is as intense as our faith in India's political destiny; we want that all the communities in India, great and small, will be inspired by enlightened liberalism, and rise absolutely above communal, parochial, sectional and narrow spirit. We aim at building up a strong, united progressive India with a unity that nothing shall break, with a deep and abiding sense of nationality and solidarity which will synthesise all differences, and in the fulness of time, evolve a nation whose material and moral strength and whose achievements will further the highest ends of internationalism. We believe in self-government, but we also believe in good and efficient government. We believe in democracy but we want that it should be an enlightened democracy keenly alive no less to its duties than to its rights. Such is the high mission we have to perform, such is the great responsibility that rests on our shoulders. Let us be true to God, to our Motherland, to ourselves, and it shall follow as night the day, that we Liberals shall play a part, by no means small or unworthy, in the re-making of this country.

MESSAGES

The President then called upon the Hon. Mr. G. A. Natesan, one of the Secretaries, to read the messages received from Liberals from different parts of the country. Mr. Natesan read messages from the following:—

Rajah Sir Vasudeva Raja of Kollengode.

Mr. B. S. Kamat, Poona.

Babu Surendranath Varma, Allahabad.

Rai Bahadur Mundle, (C. P.)

Rao Bahadur Mahajani, Akola.

Rai Bahadur Jagmandir Das Jain, Najibabad.

Mr. Prakashnarain Sapru, Allahabad.

Rao Bahadur A. C. Mukerji, Allahabad.

Mr. B. S. Ratha, Berhampore.

Mr. N. Ranganathan, Madanapalle.

Mrs. Sitabai Landge, Yeotmal.

Mr. S. M. Bose, Calcutta.

The open session was then adjourned till noon of the following day. The delegates were entertained to lunch by Dr. Annie Besant, and after lunch, there was a meeting of the Subjects Committee.

SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

The Federation reassembled at 12 noon on 30th December 1929, the Hon'ble Sir Phiroze Sethna presiding.

The President : I find on the programme that the first two resolutions are to be moved from the Chair. They require no comment from me, and I will put them one after the other. The first resolution reads as follows :—

This Federation strongly condemns the dastardly attempt to wreck His Excellency the Viceroy's train, and conveys to Their Excellencies, the Viceroy and Lady Irwin, its congratulations on the providential escape of themselves and their party. The Federation places on record its abhorrence and detestation of the crime which is wholly repugnant to the spirit of Indian life and culture.

The Federation authorises the President to convey this resolution to His Excellency the Viceroy by telegram.

The resolution was declared unanimously.

The President : The second resolution is also to be moved from the Chair, and it reads as follows :—

This Federation places on record its sense of the great loss sustained by the country in the passing away of Mr. Narayan Vishnu Gokhale, Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis and Mr. Justice Gokarnath Misra who were distinguished members of the Liberal Party.

The resolution was carried, the whole audience standing.

VENUE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE

MR. JATINDRANATH BASU

I have great pleasure to invite this Federation to meet in Calcutta next year. In the meantime, momentous events will have happened, and it is necessary that you should all muster in great numbers to assist at the deliberations of the Conference. We may not extend to you the same lavish hospitality as you have met here, but we will try to do our best, and I hope that you will come there in as large numbers as possible.

The President : You would like me on behalf of the Federation to thank Mr. Basu for his kind invitation of this Federation to Calcutta, and I am equally confident that you will be there in very large numbers and receive the same attention from them as we have received here.

The invitation was accordingly accepted.

DOMINION STATUS AND THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.

Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru moved the following resolution :

The National Liberal Federation of India cordially welcomes the Announcement made on October 31, 1929, by His Excellency the Viceroy as it authoritatively confirms the view that Dominion Status for India was what was intended by the Declaration of 1917, as it definitely recognises that British India and the Indian States should together form a greater united India and as it concedes India's claim to a right to confer on a footing of equality with the British Cabinet on the form of the future constitution of India.

The Federation further resolves that the Liberal Party do participate in the deliberations of the Conference contemplated in the Announcement. This Federation strongly urges that the Round

Table Conference should be held as early as possible in 1930, and that the progressive elements in the country should have preponderant representation.

He said: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I have no doubt that every one of you recognises in the fullest measure the supreme character of the occasion [on which we have assembled to-day. I do not remember a single instance during the last many years in the history of our politics when we were called upon to take more far-reaching and more abiding decisions than we are at the [present moment. I do certainly think that [even in 1918 and 1919, when we were called upon to give our verdict on the proposals associated with the names of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford, we were not called upon to face issues of a more vital character than we are to-day. Gentlemen, I do not wish to recapitulate the history of the last ten years. It is all well known to you. But one thing I will venture to say, and that is that during the last four or five years, opinion has been crystallising that the present system of Government in the Provinces as well as the Centre was no longer suited to the needs of the country. Indeed, if there is one thing more than another which characterises the history of our politics during the last five years, it is the growing and undoubted unanimity about Dominion Status being the allotted destiny of India. So far as Dominion Status was concerned, I do not think I am wrong in saying that until at least three days ago, or rather until yesterday, that was the common creed of all the important political parties in this country. Dominion Status was the one rallying cry in the country which could bring together on a common platform all political schools of thought in this country, Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees, and, I may add, even Europeans. Well, unfortunately, we had to pass through some years of the Government of England during which our destinies were in the hands of Lord Birkenhead, and we know what has been the consequence. When Lord Birkenhead, either voluntarily or in accordance with a wrong and thoughtless advice given to him, recommended the appointment of a Commission from which all Indians were excluded, you found again all Parties uniting on a common platform in saying to the Commission and the Government that we would have nothing to do with that Commission because we Indians were excluded from it and because we were not given that opportunity which we claimed to be ours in determining the future of our constitution. So far back as 1924, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution to which various political Parties then composing the Legislative Assembly were parties. I am referring to the resolution which is popularly known as the National Demand, a resolution which, after formulating our demands, expressly ask the Government to call a Round Table Conference. I was not at that time a member of the Legislative Assembly. My respected friend, Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar, who will follow me, was at that time a member of the Assembly, and if my recollection is not wrong, he supported that resolution. The idea of a Round Table Conference, started in the Legislative Assembly in 1924, took just two or three years to bear fruit and certainly during the last two or three years, nearly every political Party in this country—I venture to say so without fear of contradiction—has been strongly committed to the idea of a Round Table Conference. Gentlemen,

I am not disclosing any secret when I do say, and say so affirmatively, that in the early part of this year, H. E. the Viceroy was told by some of us that we would welcome the calling of a Round Table Conference. I, therefore, look upon it as a triumph for public opinion that the present-day Government of England and Lord Irwin should have agreed together in giving effect to a proposal which we have been advocating since 1924, and which we have been emphasising during all the twelve months which are about to expire. Well, luckily for us, and luckily for the Empire, I say the old Government went out, and the Government of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald came in, and they appointed Mr. Wedgwood Benn to be the Secretary of State for India. Luckily also for us, Lord Irwin recognised, and recognised whole-heartedly, that the true solution of the difficulties with which we and the Government are confronted lay in calling together a conference of the representatives of the various political Parties and the various interests in this country to sit round a table and confer on terms of perfect equality, not with anybody or everybody representing British politics, but with the representatives of His Majesty's Government. I should have thought that the fact that the representatives of India with the representatives of the various schools of political thought in this country were going to meet an authoritative body like the British Government soon was itself a great landmark in our politics. Let not the significance of that be overlooked. I do not know, speaking frankly, whether we should have responded with equal voice or cordially to an invitation to meet what used to be called at one time and what is even now called the Joint Parliamentary Committee of which Sir John Simon and his Commission would be an integral part. Therefore, this idea of a Round Table Conference was, in my opinion, a decided advance upon the earlier ideas that held the field until it was adumbrated by H. E. the Viceroy. Again, you will be pleased to observe that in the announcement which was made by H. E. the Viceroy, it was most definitely, clearly and unequivocally stated that Dominion Status was exactly what was contemplated by the Announcement of August 1917, so that all the cobwebs that gathered round that announcement in the year 1924 had been swept off altogether. Undoubtedly, let us not forget that. The old preamble of the Government of India Act which provides for progressive realisation of responsible Government still stands. It is bound to stand until it is repealed by Parliament. Therefore, let us not forget, having regard to the constitutional position, and having regard to the fact that it is Parliament and Parliament alone which can repeal the preamble of the Government of India Act, there is nothing more which Mr. Ramsay Macdonald or Mr. Wedgwood Benn or Lord Irwin could do at this particular moment. No doubt, so long as the Government of India Act stands, that preamble stands. And so long as that preamble stands, the Government are bound to act within its scope. But I do not interpret the declaration made by His Excellency as announcing the intention of His Majesty's Government that whatever may happen, the conditions laid down in that preamble should always continue. That, to my humble judgment, is not the correct way of looking at it. I submit to every one of you that it is open to every one of us to go to the Round Table Conference and say that what we want is not Responsible Government by successive stages, but that what we want really is a Dominion constitution to be established now,

subject to such safe-guards and reservations as may be considered necessary from a practical point of view, and then again, if there is to be any provision for safe-guards and reservations, I take it that there will have to be an agreement about them between us and His Majesty's Government. That is the position. It has been said, and I am afraid that is what has caused so much trouble at the present moment, that Lord Irwin and Mr. Wedgwood Benn have made no definite promise that Dominion Government shall be established as a result of that Conference. Gentlemen, my answer to that complaint is that even if Lord Irwin or Mr. Wedgwood Benn or Mr. Ramsay Macdonald were to make a promise of that character, I would not, on constitutional grounds, be satisfied with such a promise, because all of them and none of them can override the supremacy of Parliament. Therefore, let us not reject this offer which has been extended to us in recognition of our own claim, and, if I may say so, in accordance with our wishes, because Lord Irwin and Mr. Wedgwood Benn have not given us a duly attempted and registered bond necessarily implying that they shall do nothing else except establish Dominion Status in India on such and such a day. That is absurd. Therefore, the question to which we have to apply our minds is that if our representatives go there and discuss these high and important questions on terms of equality with the British representatives in England and if we can secure the maximum amount of agreement, are there not reasonable chances of our agreed conclusions being accepted by Parliament? Speaking for myself, I say, and I say very strongly, that it seems to me unthinkable that if there is agreement among ourselves, our agreed resolutions would be summarily rejected by any Government and particularly by the Labour Government. I, therefore, ask you to accept the proposals adumbrated by H. E. the Viceroy. You owe it to yourselves and you owe it to your country that you should make the best effort that you can on this occasion to go there and to convince them that you are ready for Dominion Status and that you have an unanswerable case. Do not confess your weakness on this occasion, and if you are weak, it is up to you that you should endow yourselves with strength, and that strength can only arise from unity or union among yourselves. I do regret that counsels leading to division and differences between one section of the community, and another section of the community, between capital and labour, between British India and Indian States, should have been solemnly and seriously put forward before the country at a time when wisdom and forethought require that every effort should be made to sink our differences and when we should be drawn to each other rather than be driven away from each other. Gentlemen, what do you want Dominion Status for? After all, Dominion Status is only a means to some end. It is not an end by itself. Frankly, if you want Dominion Status to turn Zamindars out of their property, bag and baggage, to finish with capitalists, only because you are drawn by allurements, I do not want the country to be drowned in turmoil and confusion. When we want Dominion Status, we mean nothing more by it than Dominion Status. I have come across men who say that Dominion Status is the same thing as Independence, and that Dominion Status is the first stage to Independence. Dominion Status means Dominion Status, and so far as our internal affairs are concerned, we shall be masters in our house. Dominion Status also imposes

on us certain obligations. It implies that we shall continue to be members of the British Commonwealth with all the obligations lying on that integral Commonwealth. If that is not the sense in which we understand Dominion Status, we are not playing the game. I feel we are in dead earnest about Dominion Status. We do not want Dominion Status to be worked up to in instalments. So far as the Liberal Party is concerned, its position is made abundantly plain. We want a constitution which shall give us Dominion Status automatically without any more investigation or examination by Parliamentary Committees or Commissions. We recognise that there may be some difficulties, and if we do recognise that there seem to be some difficulties, let us not be put down as traitors. I have found a very distinguished leader say that there are difficulties in our way. I have heard another say that there are no difficulties. We, as practical men, recognise that there may be difficulties in our way, and if those difficulties are pointed out or felt by us, it is safe to provide safe-guards and reservations against those difficulties. We have got to deal, on an occasion like this, with our own men and with men in England. So far as our countrymen are concerned, what I will say respectfully but earnestly is that the time has really come when we should sink our differences and refrain from holding out threats or ultimatums either within ourselves or to the Government. Let us, as practical men, apply ourselves unitedly to a solution of these problems, and if then we fail, even then I will say we will not be justified in retiring in disgust. I do say that if we do unite on this occasion, I cannot imagine that we should fail at all. That is our message to our countrymen, so far as the Liberal Party is concerned. If I may make a confession of creed, whatever our critics may find in the Liberal Party on which to blame us, there is one thing to which the Liberal Party is not prepared to plead guilty, and that is the charge of communalism. We, Liberals, have not identified ourselves with any communal movement in the country. We are anxious that justice, ample justice, should be done to every community, Hindu or Muhammadan or Sikh. Let every interest be protected and we are particularly anxious—I do not say this merely for the purpose of argument to-day—but our conduct is a witness to it—we are particularly anxious that the interests of minorities should be amply, justly and generously protected. These are the ideals by which we have guided ourselves, and we are ready on this occasion to place our services unreservedly at the disposal of the country. It is true our motives will be misrepresented, and we will, in certain quarters, be derided with cheap sneers, which it is very easy for them to command, and I have no doubt we shall come in for a lot of blame. But that has been our lot and our history. It is only on critical occasions like this that we can face practical issues in a practical manner. So far as the principle of Dominion Status is concerned, so far as its realisation in the nearest possible future is concerned, there is not a Liberal in this Assembly or outside, who is not prepared to put up the best fight that he is capable of either here or in England. (Applause). If that is our message to our country, there is one other message, and that is meant for British die-hards of the Birkenhead type, men who wanted to treat us like children and who told us that it was a good thing for us to cherish the ideal of Dominion Status as a distant, far-off adorable dream but that it would be absurd for us

to expect or hope to achieve Dominion Status now or for the matter of that within the next few generations. My answer to them is that if the situation in Lahore and elsewhere in India is what it is to-day, then it is as much due to the folly and stubbornness of Lord Birkenhead as to the folly and stubbornness of some of our men. It is only when men talk to us like that and not in terms of practical propositions capable of early realisation but in terms of a century, our patience is lost and we refuse to believe in the sincerity of Lord Birkenhead and others who talk in a wild manner in Parliament. I say that if you are in earnest, do not weaken the hands of your friends. Take wisdom and take care betimes lest you go on losing more and more friends in this country. There are many of us who sincerely think and hold that our best aspirations can be fulfilled if we can, in the shortest possible time, realise the ideal of Dominion Status which we have been cherishing and that the time has come when the British Cabinet cannot play with our sentiment and they have to face the practical issues in a practical manner. Therefore, if we have to deal with our men, we have also to deal with die-hards in England and with a Press which has been hostile for the last two or three years. I do sincerely hope and trust that if there is need for us to read the signs of the times properly, there is an equal need for our British friends to read the signs of the times with equal clearness and thought. It is in this spirit that I ask you to accept the first part of the resolution. In the second part of the resolution, we say that the Round Table Conference should be held as early as possible in 1930, and that the progressive elements in the country should have preponderant representation. I have heard it said in certain quarters—I do not know with what truth—but I have heard it said repeatedly that His Majesty's Government would not be ready for a Round Table Conference until the Simon Commission's Report is out. It has been said that the Simon Commission's Report could not be out until April or possibly May, and that it would be impossible for the Government of India, the local Governments and the Government in England to be ready to go to a Round Table Conference in 1930 or, at any rate, that they will not be ready to go to a Round Table Conference until late in 1930. I should be sorry if such a disaster were to arise. Those of us who have given thought to this matter and those of us who remember the new conditions in this country feel that it is the imperative duty of Government here and the Government in England to call a Round Table Conference at the earliest possible opportunity so that people's minds may settle down on these great problems, and we may then put forward our united effort to achieve the object which we have in view. I hope and trust that it may be found possible for Lord Irwin in India and Mr. Wedgwood Benn in England to summon the Round Table Conference at as early a date in 1930 as is consistent with all the requirements of the situation. I should be glad if it could be called earlier, but to put it off to 1931 or till the end 1930 is consistent neither with wisdom nor expediency. I pass on to the last part of the resolution which says that the progressive elements in the country should have preponderant representation in the Round Table Conference. I should have been glad if our friends of the Congress had decided to go to the Round Table Conference. We should have been very willing indeed to co-operate with them in the common achievement of the common idea before us. We would have shouldered with

them the task of achieving the common aim, which is the attainment of Dominion Status. We should have found them a source of strength, and if I can say so, they could have depended on our support. But they have taken their own line. They are responsible for their own actions. But nevertheless, it is incumbent upon us, and our responsibility on this occasion is, therefore, all the greater to see that the other progressive elements in the country are preponderantly represented. We do not want to go to a Round Table where we may be overwhelmed by reactionary or Tory influences. That is what we mean by the last portion of the resolution.

I have already taken too much of your time. There never was a greater occasion than what has arisen now, and in giving adherence to this resolution, you will understand that you stand irrevocably committed to the idea of Dominion Government and that you should go there, if invited, and work to the best of your capacity to achieve Dominion Status, not by stages, but by a constitution which will place you on the same footing as the other Dominions, subject to such safe-guards and reservations as the interests of minorities and other interests make it necessary for us to provide. (Applause).

SIR CHIMANLAL SETALVAD

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, in seconding the resolution, said: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in seconding this resolution, which has been moved by my friend Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. You will all remember that when in the year 1927, the Simon Commission was appointed, the country, with one voice, protested against that procedure and declared that it would have nothing to do with it. You will also remember that it was the Liberal Party which first gave the lead in that matter and that all other Parties coalesced in our protest. You will also remember the reasons why we objected to the Simon Commission being appointed in the manner in which it was appointed,—first because it excluded from it all Indians altogether and thereby denied the right of the Indians to have an equal voice in the framing of their constitution. It also implied that the fitness of India for further political advance, for the Dominion Status that we now want, was to be tested and judged by that Commission. Under those circumstances it was, that we all resolved on having nothing to do with that Commission, and we stood together. As pointed out by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the country had always asked for a Round Table Conference, where the representatives of India and the representatives of Britain may negotiate on equal terms as to the future constitution of India. Luckily for us, the Conservative Government went out of power and was succeeded by the Labour Government. But still more fortunate for us, ladies and gentlemen, we have at this time in India a Viceroy of the wide sympathies and broad statesmanship that Lord Irwin has shown on this occasion. I am afraid that many of us, at any rate, many other people in the country, have not sufficiently recognised and are not sufficiently alive to what Lord Irwin has done for this country, because you may be sure of this, that the Labour Government, however well-disposed to befriend us, however ready to do all it can for us, would not have been able to achieve what they have succeeded in achieving if the Viceroy had not agreed with them in the course to be taken. (Hear, hear). Because the Labour Government, as you know, though in power, are still a minority Government, and unless

the Viceroy of India whole-heartedly agreed with them in the policy they wanted to pursue, they would not have been able to put through things in Parliament. Therefore it is that we cannot be too thankful to Lord Irwin for the broad statesmanship and great vision he has shown on this occasion.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us realise what has been promised to us by this offer of the British Government. It means this, and it means nothing less, that the representatives of India will meet on equal terms the representatives of Great Britain and hammer out by negotiations the future constitution of India. We have secured equality of voice at the Conference, and thereby have secured all that we were fighting for when we objected to the Simon Commission being appointed in the manner it was appointed; and if we go to that Conference united, if we go to that Conference with a scheme agreed upon by all classes and creeds, by all interests and parties in this country including the Indian States, then you may be sure that at that Conference we shall achieve all that we want, *viz.*, the grant of Dominion Status, accompanied it may be by such reservations and safe-guards as may be necessary for the transitional period.

It is very unfortunate, ladies and gentlemen, that when we have arrived at a stage when we achieved what we were demanding all this time, *viz.*, a Round Table Conference, a free Round Table Conference, where people go with no commitments at all, where the British Government comes also with no commitments and no Bill drafted or proposals formulated, completely free to sit and negotiate as to the best methods to be adopted for the future constitution of India. I repeat it is unfortunate, when we achieved it, that the important political organisation in the country, *viz.*, the Congress, should have cut itself adrift in the manner it has done and refused to accept the invitation for the Round Table Conference. Dr. Sapru has said, we are not responsible for their conduct. They are responsible for their action. But I am afraid they do not realise, and Mr. Gandhi, who has led them into this, does not realise the full implications and the necessary results of the policy they are going to pursue. They have declared Independence as their objective and have scrapped the Nehru Report for Dominion Status, and they have refused the invitation to the Round Table Conference. But they have not stopped there. They have decided to lead the country into civil disobedience, into non-payment of taxes and all that such measures involve. Now, just imagine for a moment what will all that lead to. If you ask people to follow direct action, to refuse to pay taxes, to civilly disobey, as Mr. Gandhi says, what are you bound to have? You are bound to have bloodshed, turmoil and all sorts of trouble in the country. It passes my imagination, however personally I like Mr. Gandhi, who has in the past, as he acknowledges himself, committed Himalayan mistakes, he is again going to repeat a still greater Himalayan mistake by trying to lead the country into this path. And it must be remembered, ladies and gentlemen, that if you inculcate in the minds of the people, in the minds of the masses, in the minds of the younger generation, the idea of Independence, the idea of direct action, the idea of disobeying laws, what will happen to your own Swaraj when you get it, whenever you get it, as we hope as soon as possible? Then, further, I am afraid Mr. Gandhi and his associates do not remember what incalculable harm they will be doing to India, financially and economically. If you have an unsettled India, if you have no security of life

and property which must follow if disorders break out—if you have that, you will not only make foreign capital shy to come to India but also drive out Indian capital. Already Indian capital is going out of the country because people feel themselves insecure and prefer to send their money out to foreign countries because they think their investments will be safer elsewhere. All these are evils that will follow and are bound to follow in the wake of the position that the Congress has taken up now. However, ladies and gentlemen, I have said that the responsibility is theirs, we cannot help it. But the responsibility on us is greater, to do all that we can to combat the evil that is sure to come by the way in which the Congress is leading the country. It behoves, therefore, the Liberal Party that they should combine as quickly as they can with the other stable elements in the country to counteract the evil effects of what is being done, to grasp the hand of fellowship offered to us by this offer of Round Table Conference and to go there with a united demand and argue our claims and convince the people at the Conference that our claim is irresistible and that in justice and fairness we ought to have Dominion Status in the manner we are asking for.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the other parts of the resolution, Dr. Sapru has dealt, viz., that the Conference should be held as early as possible, and in this connection I entirely endorse what he has said, that for what is happening in India, for the growth of extremism in the country, for even the Congress mentality at this moment, the responsibility lies heavily on the Government themselves. Now, tested in that way, if this offer of Round Table Conference had been made in 1928 instead of the wretched creation of the Simon Commission and the manner in which it was created, I am sure the present Congress mentality would never have arisen. Therefore, our task is a difficult one, I put it. On the one hand, you have to combat the die-hards like the Congress in our midst, and on the other, you have to combat die-hards like Lord Birkenhead and his associates who think with him. Therefore, the Liberal Party, which has always stood steadfastly by its principles, should exert itself to the utmost it can to take the initiative and do all it can to combine with other parties and bring about a happy, a peaceful and a proper solution of the future constitution of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in seconding this resolution.

DEWAN BAHADUR T. RANGACHARIAR

Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, in supporting the resolution, said: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure, notwithstanding the seriousness of the proposition that I am recommending for your acceptance, in coming forward to support this proposition, which has been moved so ably by my friend Sir Tej Bahadur and seconded by my friend Sir Chimanlal Setalvad. There are three aspects of this resolution which I wish to bring to your prominent notice in the remarks which I am about to make. I first wish to draw your attention to the distinctive feature of how we describe ourselves in this resolution compared with the other resolutions on the agenda. We call ourselves in this resolution as the National Liberal Federation, whereas in the other resolutions you will notice we call ourselves merely as "This Federation". I am going to draw your attention to the significance of the word 'National' in this resolution. The second aspect of the

resolution which I wish to draw your attention to is that of the three grounds mentioned for considering the announcement of H.E. Lord Irwin, the third ground is, in my opinion, the most important. I dare say, ladies and gentlemen, you are familiar with the expression 'National Demand'. Which is the National Demand which has been advertised and spoken about and complained about all these years? That National Demand was promulgated in the Legislative Assembly in 1925, on the 8th of September, at its Simla session. It was preceded by two resolutions or debates on the question of the constitution for India. In the first Assembly, between 1921 and 1924, when the Congress people kept out of the Legislative Councils and the Assembly, those of us who took the opprobrium, as it then was, of working the constitution, unsatisfactory as we all claimed it to be, tried our best to convince the bureaucrats of the futility of the constitution which they have provided in what is known as the 1919 Act. Notwithstanding the gross defects in that Act, we went in to work it, in order to show that Indians are prepared to take up responsibility, however unwillingly, however unsatisfactorily that may be thrust upon them. That was the object with which we went into the Assembly, and immediately after the first session, in September 1921 a resolution was passed in the Assembly with an overwhelming majority, without a dissentient voice,—a resolution which, I remember, was actually drafted by the then Home Member. You, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, were then in the Assembly representing the Government. Sir William Vincent actually drafted the resolution of September 1921 pointing out that the progress made in the Councils and in the Assembly satisfied them that further progress was needed and that the constitution needed revision. Lord Peel, who was then the Secretary of State, took over a year to consider that resolution, which was backed up by the Government of India. Lord Peel sent a despatch about August 1922 saying that the time had not arrived, that the Reforms had then been working for only a short time and that no satisfactory reasons had been shown for revising the constitution. The Assembly again in September 1922 discussed that despatch of Lord Peel and pointed out how unsatisfactory that despatch was. Even then it was an unopposed resolution which was passed in the Assembly, the Government Members remaining neutral. They did not oppose the resolution which exposed Lord Peel's despatch. We went back to the Assembly, in 1924. In 1924 the national elements were more strongly represented than they were in the first Assembly. The Swarajists, as they then were described, people who wished to co-operate with the Councils, they also came there in larger numbers. In the very first session in 1924, I had the honour of tabling a resolution for asking Government to revise the constitution and secured success in the ballot. This was my resolution:

"This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he be pleased to take at an early date the necessary steps, including, if necessary, the appointment of a Royal Commission, for revising the Government of India Act, so as to secure for India full-Self-Governing Dominion Status within the British Empire and Provincial Autonomy in the Provinces."

We had three days' discussion outside the Assembly—the Nationalists and the Swarajists. We met together and agreed upon an amendment.

to this resolution of mine, to be moved by Pundit Motilal Nehru, who led the Swarajists then. His amendment was this :

That the following be substituted for the original resolution :—

“ This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council to take steps to have the Government of India Act revised with a view to establish Full Responsible Government in India, and for this said purpose, to summon at an early date a representative Round Table Conference to recommend, with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, the scheme of a constitution for India” * * *

and certain other things. Now, the idea of a Round Table Conference emanated, so far as the Assembly was concerned, from Pundit Motilal Nehru. But it emanated a few months before that at the Imperial Conference held in London, at which H. H. the Maharaja of Alwar, who, having regard to the considerable number of times this question of the constitution was being discussed to the exclusion of other more constructive proposals, pointed out at the Imperial Conference that if only Britain would take courage in its hands and call together the representatives of India to a Round Table and discuss the problem, then India would be happy, India would have gained what she wanted and Britain could be proud of that achievement. The idea of a ‘ Table Conference,’ which afterwards developed into a Round Table Conference emanated from the Maharaja of Alwar, and that is what induced Pundit Motilal Nehru to introduce the words “ a representative Round Table Conference,” because it was objected, and rightly objected, that in regard to a constitution for India it should not be given by others but should be made by the Indians themselves. That was a legitimate claim and that is why we agreed to this amendment. This amended resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority of 76 representatives of the people.

This was, as I stated, in February 1924. We waited and waited. Then came the Assembly session of September 1925, when, not having heard any reply either from the Government of India or from the Secretary of State about the resolution, another resolution was tabled, which has subsequently come to be known as the National Demand. This National Demand was moved by Pundit Motilal Nehru himself on 8th September 1925. It is a very long resolution. It consists in the first part, of a declaration, as it were, of the fundamental rights which India should have. The second part of it, which bears upon the present proposition, ran in these terms :

“ That this Assembly further recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council that the necessary steps be taken to constitute, in consultation with the Legislative Assembly, a Convention, a Round Table Conference or other suitable agency, adequately representative of Indian, European and Anglo-Indian interests, to frame, with due regard to the interests of minorities, a detailed scheme based upon the above principles, after making such enquiries as may be necessary in that behalf.”

The two fundamental principles which were previously stated were Provincial Autonomy in all the Provinces, the present system of Dyarchy being scrapped, and the Indian Legislature to have full responsibility for the Government of the country, excluding certain items about which we were all agreed that there should be transitory provision for safe-guards—the

interests of the minorities, the question of military service, all expenditure classed as political and foreign, payment of debts and other things. Having made that National Demand, the Assembly waited for a reply from the Government of India and the Secretary of State. And you, Sir, (referring to the President) raised the point again in the Council of State by a resolution which you tabled, on which the Swarajist member, Seth Govindoss, moved an amendment on the lines of the Assembly resolution. It was in February 1926. Then the Government of India definitely stated that they were bound by the preamble of the Government of India Act and that they were not going to move in the matter. Your resolution and the amendment of Seth Govindoss were defeated in the Council of State. This is what exasperated all of us. The Swarajists walked out of the Assembly, as you know, in March 1926, on account of this sorry response, or rather no response, by the Government of India notwithstanding the support that this National Demand received at the hands of friends like Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, who characterised the action of the Government of India as stubborn and foolish. All sorts of names he gave to the Government of India and the Secretary of State. So, even if such men could get disgusted at the action of the Government, the Government should have taken the opportunity to make a larger response. But they did not do it. I am afraid the same spirit continues. I was not a Liberal till the other day. I am a new recruit to the Liberal ranks. This is the first time I appear on the Liberal platform. When this Liberal organisation was contemplated in Madras, I wrote a strong letter condemning its formation, in the year 1917, to my friend the late Sir K. Srinivasa Iyengar, who asked me to join it. I do not believe in various organisations for achieving national ends. My sympathies were with the Congress. Although I was not of the Congress, I continued to take deep, sympathetic interest in its work till December 1927 when the Independence resolution was brought up. Till then we had all a common ideal, we had a common goal. We were only divided as to the methods to be adopted for achieving that end. But then, when that Independence resolution was moved, and though it was lost by a strong majority, still I knew the seed was there which was likely to develop, and it was no longer right to continue to sympathise with an organisation like that, which was going to spread disorder and all sorts of calamities over the land. So, Sir, I made up my mind that the time had come for me to join the next best organisation, the Liberal Party, because they also believed in the same ideals, they also believed in the same goal, they also believed in full Dominion Status, although they, like sane politicians, recognised the practical difficulties of the situation. They were not wedded to hasty action. I was disappointed in my expectations of the move which the Government were likely to make in these matters. I had some faith in the British Government and in their good-will in the years 1921 and 1922. They were then marching fast along with us. They accepted resolutions in the Assembly with a readiness which surprised me. They were very anxious to co-operate with us. They showed a readiness to respond to requests on matters which did not concern them vitally. Resolutions were accepted, committees were appointed to investigate this problem and that problem, and I had the honour of being chosen on several committees. But when I found

that my recommendations either on mercantile marine or on the North-West Frontier administration or such other vital matters were not accepted and their saying "However good Mr. Rangachari may be, his recommendations cannot be accepted"—that was the view which prevailed with them—I found to my disappointment that it was no longer right to say you can expect anything out of the British Government composed at it was, or is even now. So, they have to learn better sense. They have to learn that they should not drive away friends from their ranks. They have been doing that successfully hitherto.

But still we believe in the British Empire. We believe it is to our advantage to be connected with the British Empire. It will be a great and serious danger if we are severed from the British Empire by ourselves or by others. It is not an Empire to be neglected. It has a world-wide importance. Other Empires have to respect and dread the British Empire. It should be our proud boast to belong to that Empire, not with one dominant partner and we being subordinate partners. But we want to be 'equal partners' in that Empire. Those words still ring in my ears, Mr. Montagu's words of 1917 asking us to be equal partners in the British Empire. In fact, on the day of Announcement, we had a public meeting in Anderson Hall, where we were called upon to appeal to people to come forward with men, money and munitions in order to help this mighty Empire against the common enemy, the Germans. I said, if there was no reason till then to come forward with men, money and munitions, that day marked a departure, we were given this status of a new partnership in the Empire and I, therefore, appealed to the audience in those terms and said that as equal partners we should also contribute to the struggle which the mighty Empire was having with the common enemy. That is what induced us to send our men, that is what induced us to give our money, that is what induced us to sympathise with Britain in her struggle with Germany. Now those things are altogether forgotten, I am afraid. They are things of the past. It is then that they came forward with this declaration of 1917.

Now, as I stated, the point in the resolution which I was about to call your attention to was this; this is a concession to the National Demand, and when that concession comes, it is but right that we should take advantage of it. Is it right that men who are pledged, in fact who are the authors of the idea of the Round Table Conference, should depart from it, should flee from it at the time when it is within their reach? Does it not look as if they were looking out for excuses not to take it? When we have been seriously putting forth this demand for Round Table Conference in preference to a Royal Commission, why now go back upon it? It is not right. However, it is not for us to criticise our friends. They have taken that course, and we are now boldly adopting this resolution in order to still take part in that Conference. I say 'boldly,' because when the National Congress stands out from it, what chance is there of our being able to deliver the goods. That is why I want to emphasise the first part of this resolution. Are you going to justify that expression 'National Liberal Federation' or not? Are you wedded to this Dominion Status being our goal and our aim? No doubt, if belonging to the Empire is going to be ruinous to you, this Dominion Status will enable you to get out of it. But that will be your own concern, having regard to your own

interests. But our next constitution should be based on Dominion Status. That is what we are aiming at, not independence. Therefore, from to-day we part company from our Congress friends. Let us deliberately resolve to do so. We have hitherto been coquetting with them. It was no doubt quite correct to do so, so long as their aim and our aim was the same. But now their aim is quite different from what we have in view. Therefore we must deliberately make up our minds to part company with them. You must justify this resolution by action in future. Our Liberal politicians, with due respect, are elderly statesmen—like the Council of State, stuck to their arm-chairs. Although they belong to the people, they are not of the people. They are all Knights, Dewan Bahadurs and Rao Bahadurs. But they must descend to the common level. The time has come when they should mix with the people identify themselves with people and be of the people. Till we do that, we cannot justify our claim for calling ourselves the National Liberal Federation. Till we do that, till we adopt the methods of the Congress, go to the people, take up [their grievances and try to build up this country, till we are more active, till more organisations spring up, till my friend Mr. Vinayaka Rao sounds more working committees, I do not think we have the right to call the Party 'National'. Merely passing resolutions from Gokhale Hall is not going to give Dominion Status or make this a National Federation. That is why I ask you pointedly to take more active part in bringing out the ideas of this Conference. Satisfy the people of this land, of the follies of the Congress, of the criminal follies of the Congress. They are leading the land into disorder, crime and chaos. Avoid that. And if we elders do not do that, who is going to do it? Therefore, I ask you ladies and gentlemen, to take more active part. Don't say: "The Congress is working, the Congress is doing this or doing that." We have surrendered our Mahajana Sabha and all our institutions into the hands of the Congress, because they were taking them. Now it is for us to capture all organisations in the country and propagate our views.

With these remarks—I have already taken the time allotted to me, and though I have got to say more, I won't—I will merely content myself by saying that I support this resolution most whole-heartedly.

SIR MOROPANT JOSHI.

Sir Moropant Joshi, in supporting the resolution, said: Mr. President and brother-delegates, you will see that the resolution mentions the various reasons why we welcome the announcement of 31st October that will justify us before the Indian public and before foreign countries, if need be. It is not that by passing this resolution you show any want of appreciation of a higher or a seemingly higher ideal of independence. It is not that. I do not think there is any one in India who does not want to be independent. But there are ways, practical ways and ideals, to which we should necessarily fix our attention. Independence may be a more fascinating goal. It may capture public imagination much more than Dominion Status, I admit. But we as practical men must know that even if we are able to achieve Dominion Status it is quite enough and perfectly legitimate for us to have joined in an institution where we are likely to achieve Dominion Status, and that is the Round Table Conference. That is our justification. It is because we take a practical view of matters that we go in for this Round Table Conference.

not with the idea that Independence is a thing which we despise. Independence may be a goal or a fascination, but we are here to consider practical proposals. Gentlemen, you will see that the Labour Government has done as much as it could to do away with the legacy with which they were embarrassed by the previous Government. They cannot give us a Commission, they cannot give us a voice along with that Commission. But they have done the next best thing. They have given us a voice at the Round Table Conference, and I think we shall be failing in our duty tremendously, if we do not seize this opportunity, if for no other reason, but to be able to have an opportunity to show to the Indian public and to public opinion in other countries that the best case that we can put forward for India is Dominion Status at present. You will remember, gentlemen, the effect on public opinion here and in other countries if we seize this mighty chance to state our case as clearly as possible, so that other countries might join our efforts and sympathise more with our aspirations than ever before. We have this excellent opportunity and, therefore, it is that we have been given a lead by the President to embrace this opportunity and utilise it for what it is worth. I am not sanguine myself about complete unanimity amongst the several parties who will be in favour of Dominion Status. Whatever that be, whether we secure unanimity or not, if we go there and urge that we of one political Party in India want Dominion Status and state our case in an emphatic manner, even that will be a great advantage. That is why I strongly commend this resolution for your acceptance.

The second part of the resolution is about calling the Round Table Conference as early as possible in 1930. It is likely that with the Congress-propaganda that is likely to inundate the country and the people or the probable want of a likely propaganda of the same nature in favour of Dominion Status as against Independence, it will be better for the British Government to announce that they will have the Round Table Conference at which matters would be discussed, so as to give hopes to the majority of the people of India that things are being considered favourably and that their aspirations would be met sooner than later. If that hope is engendered, the forces of disorder that will be let loose on the whole country and which it is our duty to guard against will be minimised to a great extent, and that is why we say that a counter-propaganda will be necessary to stem the forces of disorder which will be against the interests of the country.

For these reasons, I commend the acceptance of the resolution to you.

MR. JATINDRANATH BASU

Mr. Jatindranath Basu, in further supporting the resolution, said: Mr. President and brother-delegates. As Sir Moropant Joshi has indicated, there is one feature which characterises us as a political party and which distinguishes us from other parties. It is this, viz., that we base our political conduct on the facts that face us and on the circumstances that surround us. Sir Moropant Joshi has also referred to the talk about independence to which we have been listening for some time past. If by 'Independence' is meant a desire to have control over our own affairs and the power to regulate our destinies in the present and for the future, there is no one present here who is less desirous than the most advanced Congressmen of achieving

Independence, . . . But there is one matter in which we differ from that Party, having regard to the definition that they have recently given to the word 'Independence'. By 'Independence', they mean a breaking away from the British connection. They look to the essence of it which is self-rule. But then, the break with England is not as material a circumstance in understanding what the word 'Independence' means as the other party desires, that we should accept that meaning. Gentlemen, we all see that at the present day, however free a people may be, there are pacts and agreements which bind one independent people to another. The British Commonwealth of Nations itself is a commonwealth of independent nationalities. Every day you hear of pacts and agreements. There was the Washington Agreement, at which India was represented by our friend the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastry. There is the Kellogg Pact, and there is the Naval Conference soon to be held in London. India cannot, even as a free and independent country, remain isolated. It will have to establish agreements, pacts and relationships with other nations, and the British Empire is an Empire which affords an opportunity where independent peoples can meet together for their mutual benefit. There is one great service that the inclusion of India in the British Empire can render. We see in the East the rise of independent nationalities like China, Japan, Turkey, Persia and others. We see to a certain extent a conflict of ideals, and though we have not recently heard of it, at any rate, ten or fifteen years ago, there was an apprehension in the West that there was likely to be a conflict in the not very distant future between Europe and America on the one hand and between Asia and Africa on the other. Gentlemen, the world is advancing, though the adjustments of human differences by fights have not yet completely disappeared, but we are gradually approximating to the ideal when human differences would be adjusted by mutual negotiations. This resolution refers to the Round Table Conference. The Round Table Conference gives us, a great and ancient people, the opportunity of negotiating with another great people in adjusting our mutual differences. Why should we not take advantage of this opportunity? The Congress has suggested the alternative of a fight. That fight is not a resort to arms. We can all understand that kind of fight; but this is a fight which consists of going out of schools, colleges and law courts. Mahatma Gandhi has himself admitted that it is not practicable at present to adopt the programme of mass civil disobedience. The result of that programme may or may not be good, but looking at their methods straight in the face, what do we find? We come out of schools and colleges. Where do we go next? Where do those methods lead us? A great many people will tell us, it will lead us nowhere. Do we benefit ourselves by having resort to those methods? Then, if the alternative to the methods that we desire to adopt is the methods either of war or of having recourse to certain forces which do not lead us anywhere, then I think we may commend the course that we suggest as the best course to be adopted under the circumstances. The course, as I have told you, is one of negotiation, and we place all our views openly and straight in the face, and we do not keep back anything but try to adjust the differences that exist between us in a manner in which one strong man deals with another strong man. With these words, I support the resolution.

BABU BAGAVATISWARAN SINGH

Babu Bagavatiswaran Singh, further supporting the resolution, said : With reference to the resolution moved by Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, I have not many words to add to his, but I feel heartily inclined to associate myself with the last observation of Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar that we should not be satisfied with the passing of the resolution, here alone, and that we should not think that by passing this resolution we shall get Dominion Status. Mr. Rangachariar is perfectly right in his observations. I do not profess to be a politician nor a public man either. I am a layman and a Zamindar. Mr. Rangachariar's advice is more sound, and I fully associate myself with him. And in order to carry out our propaganda, the first thing needful is money, without which we cannot do anything. We have got, fortunately amongst us, men like Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, but we require sufficient funds to go on with our agitation. To carry out our programme, we should have a proper Secretariat Office located in a central place in India. We have to fight against our bureaucrats and we have also to fight against our own men like Mahatma Gandhi himself. I do not want to say anything in the way of criticising Mahatmaji. I have great respect for him. He is the man who was responsible for not accepting the Round Table Conference when it was offered to him by Lord Reading. Whether Mahatmaji's advice to the country is proper or not may be left to the politicians. To me it appears that he was wrong at that time and that he is more wrong at this time. For my humble part, and as my humble quota, it may not be impertinent if I say that I am prepared to pay my quota of Rs. 100 towards this propaganda work, and with these words, I heartily support the resolution.

MR. K. R. VENKATARAMA IYER

Mr. K. R. Venkatarama Iyer said : Mr. President, brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen, when I came here this afternoon, I did not expect to be called upon to speak, but my friend Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar has deemed it necessary to call upon me to address my brother delegates, and I do so with pleasure, because I think that the present is so critical a situation that even a small man like myself had better come out openly and associate himself with the predominant idea which is alone likely to save us all. When the leaders of the various political Parties including the Congress Party issued the Delhi manifesto the other day, welcoming the announcement of H. E. the Viceroy, I thought that that was a very good register of the high-water level of Indian statesmanship. On the other hand, when after having raised very high hopes in the minds of all Indians, we found the other day that the Conference between H. E. the Viceroy and the five chosen representatives of India who undoubtedly, if they had played their part as was expected they would, would have been able to deliver the goods on behalf of India, when it was found that that conference was a failure, it occurred to me that there was a fall from that register of the high-water level of Indian statesmanship. Undoubtedly, Independence as the political goal of India is not a thing which any of us in our timidity need be afraid of or shun. I venture to believe that if immediate Dominion Status should be available, it would be distinctly a great advantage to embrace the opportunity of securing that. For in these days it has become increasingly

clear that amongst the equal partners of the great British Commonwealth of Nations, Independence is no less and no more than a synonym for equal partnership. It would be impossible for Great Britain to keep any of the Self-Governing Dominions to any extent in a position of subordination. Already there are signs that the Self-Governing Dominions are claiming to be practically and substantially independent, and if we can immediately be making the next constitution and find ourselves able to achieve Dominion Status, I should think it will be a state of independence. That kind of independence I value more than what is assumed to be a greater independence, namely, independence outside the British Commonwealth. I think if the Viceregal Pronouncement of 31st October opened the door and extended invitations to all political parties to sit on terms of equality with the British Government to hammer out a great constitution for India, it would practically mean immediate Dominion Status, and I thought that that was a big opportunity, as big as the loftiest of Indian politicians and patriots might be content to accept. That being so, I was naturally rejoicing a great deal when the Delhi manifesto of all Party leaders was issued. But what happened between the issue of that manifesto and the 23rd instant may not be really said to be a justification for the way in which Mahatmaji has recoiled. I do not think that anything has happened in the interval which is an adequate justification for this backing out. It looks as if Mahatmaji and Pundit Motilal Nehru have been overpowered by those without whose support they could not make bold to face the Congress, and whom they have expected and intended to keep on their side, but whom they found it impossible to keep on their side on their own terms. That is a mere speculation on my part, but in the absence of any understandable reasons clearly present to our minds, one has to fall back on surmises and that is my surmise. The Congress which began to dally with this idea of Independence at the Nagpur Congress in 1920, has now reverted to it. Then I came out of the Congress. On the present occasion, it has adopted this creed of Independence under circumstances which I should venture to characterise as affording far less justification for its adoption than then. That means that just now you have an excellent chance of taking the Viceroy and the British Government at their word and demonstrating to the civilised world the justice of our cause and if they were in the wrong we could say that after having given us hopes and after having lured us with assurances and taken us into the Round Table Conference, they really broke all those assurances and shattered our hopes. Then we should certainly be in a position to come out of that Round Table Conference and proclaim to the world that notwithstanding our well-founded apprehensions as to the sincerity of the British declarations, we on this critical occasion having regard to the official status and responsibility of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State thought that we would not be putting a wrong interpretation on their assurances, and that after having entered the conference and after having with a united voice placed the demand of India before that conference, we found that it was all a sham and that we were there to state our case and that that case was turned down, that we are justified now in not placing any faith in promise of Dominion Status and our salvation lies only in Independence, which we shall seek in the way that shall be left to us to determine. That

would have been a way of adjusting our relationship with Britishers and making a response to the British invitation which could have entirely put us in the right and given us a chance to put the Britisher in the wrong. I think from this point of view Mahatma Gandhi and Pundit Motilal Nehru in coming away from the conference on the 23rd instant without developing further points of agreement with the Viceroy have not done the right thing. Naturally, I am taken back to the memory of C.R. Das, who, if he had been alive to-day, would have been the foremost to embrace this opportunity that was rendered available by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State and would not have committed this capital blunder. I think, therefore, that the Congress having taken a line of action which is opposed to the interests of the country and the Congress having adopted this attitude of Independence, those of the National Liberal Federation should practically play the role of Congressmen by inviting all political Parties who would be prepared to take advantage of this opportunity to associate with us, so that the doors of the Round Table Conference will be open not only to all people thinking similarly with us but to all those Congressmen, who, owing to the recent change in the Congress creed, must come out of the Congress and fall into line with the National Liberal Federation. Thus we are laying the door open to all Congressmen who do not agree with the recent change in the Congress creed. I do think, therefore, that we will be doing the right thing in consolidating ourselves in conjunction with all other political Parties prepared to embrace this opportunity and make a united demand before the Round Table Conference. Only I would say what perhaps it is unnecessary particularly to stress, viz., that I do believe that everyone here is as patriotic and advanced as any Congressman. Only let it not appear that because the Congress has adopted the resolution of Independence, we want to lower our demand below what all the political leaders have practically already agreed to as the minimum demand that we shall place on the occasion of framing the next constitution for India. The Nehru Report embodies that great demand. Modifications may be necessary in the sense that so far as the representation of minorities is concerned, re-adjustments may have to be agreed to secure unanimity to that demand before it is formally placed before the Round Table Conference, but subject to such internal re-adjustments among minority groups and majority groups in India, I do not think that our demand shall be a jot smaller than the demand that is already made in the Nehru Report. Subject to that reservation, I should think we should all be prepared to accept the invitation to the Round Table Conference and place before that Conference that united demand which I have already mentioned.

The resolution was put and declared carried unanimously.

At this stage the Federation adjourned for lunch as the guests of Kumararaja Muthiah Chettiar of Chettinad.

APPEAL TO ALL PARTIES

THE PRESIDENT

The Federation re-assembling after lunch, the President said: Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad you are assisting me to start at the scheduled hours. We now start with resolution No. 4. It was decided yesterday that the mover, if he liked, could speak for half an hour, the seconder for fifteen.

minutes, and the supporters for ten minutes each as the limit. We have six names in the printed agenda, and there are two others besides. It seems, therefore, desirable that the speakers should be good enough to observe the time limit. I call upon the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri to move the resolution.

THE RT. HON. SASTRI

The Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, rising amidst vociferous cheering, spoke as follows :

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, by your good leave I will first read the resolution which I have got to move and then confine myself to one particular aspect of it, not being equal to exhaust the thirty minutes which the President rather generously has allowed me.

“ This Federation urges upon all Parties in India which accept the recent Announcement of H. E. the Viceroy wholeheartedly and are prepared to secure its complete and immediate realisation to combine together for the purpose of securing a Constitution based on Dominion Status subject to such safeguards and reservations as may be necessary for the period of transition.”

The speakers to the last resolution have referred, most of them, to recent events at Lahore of which we have all read with much grief. I have no doubt that that grief would be shared by millions of our countrymen as they become acquainted in greater detail with what our compatriots of the Congress have been doing. There can be no doubt that we are confronted in the political history of India with a crisis, almost unparalleled. Strong measures are necessary. We have to put forth all our effort, to exercise the utmost wisdom and circumspection, and then take the utmost possible care that no element or factor which can at all be called into alliance with us should be either neglected or forgotten.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, of all those whom the proceedings at Lahore have saddened, my mind dwells with somewhat pathetic interest upon two figures—Mr. Wedgwood Benn and Lord Irwin. The Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy of India, are not, in their official capacity, calculated to draw our commiseration; but in their individual capacity, as politicians committed to a certain course of action, as statesmen who aspired at a critical hour to take hold of the affairs of a country and put them on the right track, they are people of whom we must think awhile if we would gauge the situation in all its aspects. Lord Irwin particularly, as you know, risked a great deal when he got the members of the British Cabinet and principal members of the political parties to agree to the statement that he made on 31st October last. He broke away nearly from life-long associations. He took a step very much out of keeping, as you can recognise, with the traditions of the Tory Party. And Mr. Wedgwood Benn, who comes to the office almost fresh from private Parliamentary life has shown a vigour and a clearness of grasp and a determination to press the issues dear to him upon his colleagues the like of which we have not known since the days of the late Mr. Montagu.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, what is the reward which we are going to give them? I speak with no disrespect of the Party whose confederation meets here to-day, I speak with no disrespect of any other political party in the land, but there can be no doubt in the mind of anyone of you that, in

making the pronouncement, the British authorities were thinking more of the Indian National Congress than of anybody else. It has been the anxiety, not merely of the Liberal Party, but of other parties as well, how most effectually to counter the catastrophe which would befall the land if on the 31st of this month the Indian National Congress finds itself with no satisfactory statement from England. It was that statement which they wished to give to India. Now, as soon as that announcement was made, within a week thereof, the principal figures in the Congress, the one who was to be the President, the one who practically is the dictator and the one who was the President the other day, all of them and some of us here, little fellows on this platform, also joined in preparing a manifesto expressing their dissatisfaction with the statement. No matter how you interpret the statement, to the man in the street it would appear as though the whole country was going, in one common spirit, to put aside anxiety for the future of India, sink differences and arrive at common formulæ which would supply the lines of our constitution. That hope has been completely shattered. The very men who signed that manifesto have gone back upon it, for reasons into which it is not necessary for me to go at any length. Suffice it to say that that causes a situation to arise, in which our friends in England may well ask themselves: "Are we justified any longer in going forward with this policy? Which party in India are we going to satisfy? If the Congress Party will have nothing to do with Dominion Status and will not come along to prepare a Dominion constitution, whom shall we expect to perform that task? Are there in India," they may well ask themselves, "any people who can compare at all with the Indian National Congress in numbers, in authority, in power to control the masses of India? Are there people whom hitherto we have recognised as representing the authentic voice of India?" But if our champions in England feel a doubt and a hesitancy, as they well may, there are others who would urge them to drop this forward policy, to have nothing more to do with India and India's politicians, and to let things be where they are, causing, as we know, profound dissatisfaction and confusion and threatening to throw the country into a stage which may be scarcely distinguishable from turmoil of a very bad complexion indeed. Now, ladies and gentlemen, just think, is it not necessary for somebody, for some organisation, in India to stand forward in this crisis and to say to these British friends of ours: "For Heaven's sake, go ahead with your policy; if the Congress has failed you, there are others in this country, equally patriotic; trust them, and you will not be deceived?" Now, somebody, it seems to me, has got to take up that firm, that determined, and that promising position. Why should not the Liberal Party take up that position? (Hear, hear). It is that question which this resolution puts to each one of you. But then—here again I speak with no disrespect of the great names that figure on our rolls, here again I wish to cast no displeasure on any individual or organisation—but for the last few years the Liberal Party in this country has allowed itself to be somewhat overshadowed and to be depressed in its own mind by a sense of its comparative impotency. That will no longer do. If we are unequal, there are others, combined with whom we can make head against this crisis; and it is that combination which the resolution has in view. We also have had the

courage to put into your hands a certain statement,* setting forth these views. In that statement we make an appeal to other parties and organisations wedded to the ideal of Dominion Status, to come and take their places alongside of us. Respectfully we ask them too co-operate with us in this common task, and we hope indeed that the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League, the Justice Party of this Province, and indeed every party in the country which is not the Indian National Congress or under its influence will join us in taking the country out of the mire into which it has been plunged. It seems to me that it is necessary, as I said before, to hearten up our friends in England, and to form an organisation which, being comparable to the Indian National Congress, will be able to combat its sinister influence over the masses of this country, and, in alliance with the British Cabinet, give peace to our harrowed land and prosperity to our long-suffering fellow-countrymen.

Now I have told you what appears to me as the main object of this resolution. The other aspects of it will be spoken to by those that follow me. But there is just one word which I will take leave to say. We are, it seems to me, on the eve of a very grave crisis. It will not do for you merely to support this resolution, to pass it even with acclamation, and then to suppose that it will fulfil itself. We have to devise means, whereby action will be set on foot which will bring about the desired result; and that will be found embodied in the last sentence of the statement, of which each one of you has a copy before you. We shall certainly ask you when it appears to the President that the proper opportunity has come, to appoint a committee of influential men belonging to this Federation for the purpose of consulting with similar representatives from other bodies and then starting the long course of action that will be required to fulfil our great purpose.

Ladies and gentlemen, I move the resolution which I read at the beginning: (Loud Cheers).

DR. ANNIE BESANT.

Dr. Annie Besant, in seconding the resolution, said: Mr. President and friends, I am glad to be allowed to speak to you on the question of Dominion Status, because it is one on which there is considerable lack of knowledge in the country, and because the words themselves cover very different constitutions. If, for instance, you take the constitution of Canada which was made, you must remember, before this name 'Dominion' was commonly used, you will find in that, Canada is very, very nearly a sovereign State. She is going to that by the quiet ignoring of any laws which she does not approve of and the taking of any rights which she considers she ought to have. If then, you are going, in framing a Dominion Status Bill, to choose among the Self-Governing Dominions, I should like to suggest that you should study very carefully the constitution of Canada. She has gone, however, further than the constitution itself suggests. She has her own ambassador, for instance, in Washington. She is going to have, or she may by this time already have, her ambassador in Paris. That is to say, she is gradually taking over certain rights which

* Appendix B.

were supposed to belong only to a Sovereign State, by assuming that they belong to her. By practising them she is very quickly approaching that position of complete freedom, which would really mean that the Self-Governing Dominion was what its name implies—Government by its people. Now, we shall be in a position different from most of the Dominions when we frame our constitution—different in race, in habits, in customs, in history—and it is particularly vital for India that she should frame her constitution without being influenced by Great Britain and that she should insist on her constitution being made the statute of the realm by Parliament exactly as she sends it up. Otherwise we may find that framing a constitution for Self-Government, we have left out certain vital matters, leaving those in the hands of Britain and not claiming them for ourselves. I read the other day a definition by a constitutional lawyer, of a Self-Governing Dominion. He defined it as an autonomous unit, equal to all other similar units in the Federation of Nations with Britain, Britain being on an equality with the Self-Governing Dominions, having no right of interference with them, so that practically each of those Self-Governing Dominions becomes, you may say, a sovereign State, except that they do not by any recognised right, deal with their own foreign affairs. Those are left for the British nation to settle practically to the Empire. Now, it is important to us, who are not of the same stock as the British, that we should claim the full autonomy that the Self-Governing Colonies that became Dominions have embodied in their constitutions. In the case of Australia, for instance, while the constitution went to many different authorities in Australia, and it was a long time before they came to an unanimity, when they sent it up to Parliament to be made into a statute there was only one word, I have read, which was altered by Parliament. Dealing with the constitution, then, for India, the first thing that I venture to submit to you is that you should compare them, one with another, that you should select from different ones and then combine in your own those rights that you consider necessary for your own natural growth according to your own religions. That is a task that ought to be already begun among us. We ought to be working now, choosing some of our best lawyers to whom we can submit our labours. We ought to study the constitutions of the various Self-governing nations and decide by careful and prolonged discussion.

I shall say a few points that I would put to you as specially important which we ought to discuss before the question of Dominion Status is really ready for definite consultation for submission to Britain, and then we should take the advice of a thoroughly sound Parliamentary draftsman so as to avoid the errors that otherwise may be made. Let me mention that we made in the Commonwealth of India Bill such an error. We used the word 'cabinet'. That was a fault, I think, which it was very natural that we should make. But when we submitted the Bill to Sir Henry Slessor, he was good enough to say that it was exceedingly well done but that there was one word that he had to cut out, substituting another, that there was no such thing in Parliament as a cabinet. It was an 'Executive Council.' I said: "well, it is used in the papers." "Yes," he said, "but you must not put that into a Bill that you are going to submit to Parliament, because they will think that you do not know the work into which you put your hand." You should always remember that Parliament has made many conventions.

We should ask friendly constitutional lawyers to take our work and draft it properly as a Parliamentary statute.

But before we do that, there are certain points which have to be definitely resolved upon, presumably by discussion among many political associations, so that we may agree among ourselves before we send up any draft to be considered by Parliament. Now, one of those that want very careful discussion is whether you are going to give residuary powers to your Provinces or to your Central Government. Many important points turn on your decision in that matter, and I would suggest that all of us should make up our minds by a careful study of the different constitutions, before we meet together in consultation to co-operate together in formulating the lines of the constitution. Then you should remember to defend your draft, when it is made. No one Dominion has any right to interfere with another Dominion, nor has Britain any right of interference, because in the Federation of free nations Britain is an equal and not a superior. One member who, I think, has rather a knack of inventing useful terms spoke lately in Parliament of the Dominions as partner members in the Empire. That struck me as an exceedingly good term. I would ask all of you to think whether that is not a useful term to introduce when we draw up our Self-Governing Dominion constitution.

Then again you have to decide between the two great types, federal and unitary. The point has to be discussed very carefully whether the residuary powers should be placed in the Centre or in the Provinces. To do that well, it is almost necessary that you should see Dominion constitutions and see where in drafting a constitution certain unconscious mistakes, unconscious of course, were made which have proved that when that constitution was drawn up, they gave too much power to the States and too little to the Central Government. To take only one illustration of the inconvenience of that—they had the States before they had the Dominion—one inconvenience of that in Australia is that every State made its own railway lines of its own favourite gauge, so that when a line was made right across Australia, passengers by the line had to change five times before they could get to a town like Melbourne. That means their luggage ought to be removed five times, and as the wage of a porter in Australia in the railways is £1 each time, you will realise that for going from one part of the country to another, passengers had to pay at least £5 to the porters for carrying their luggage in the changes they made. I only mention that as a case where, if the States are too independent, instead of consulting together, they may make mistakes in practical matters which may be very difficult to remedy afterwards without a very great expenditure of Provincial or National funds. Between the two great types I have mentioned, in one of which the residuary rights are left to the Centre, and in the other they are left to the States, you have one point of enormous importance which you may see if you have read the history of the United States of America. Quite naturally, as those States by the War of Independence became independent, the rights of the State outweighed the rights of the Central and Federal Government. It was that which gave rise to the civil war between the northern and the southern States. One group of those States was denied the right to leave the Union, and that was decided by civil war. Certain southern States fought desperately for their own sovereignty, and the whole question of

slavery in the United States turned on the result of the war between the slave-holding States and the States where the slaves became free. Having seen many cases, I will mention only that now, because the issue was so important in the States, causing civil war. You have in the case of Switzerland about the best example of a union of about 22 sovereign States, each being a Canton, and the whole of those simply made into a friendly alliance between themselves. With a careful study of these different constitutions you will see the advantages and disadvantages on each side. Before any of you go into controversy or are called perhaps to a conference, you ought to familiarise yourselves with the different constitutions of the sovereign States of the world and decide among yourselves what you are going to claim for the Provinces and what you will leave to the Federal Government—I call it Central Government to avoid discussion. That is the thing that you must decide among yourselves before you have to meet the officials of the two Governments. You must remember, the officials know all these things inside and outside. Laymen, unless they take every trouble in training themselves, will not be able to gain their way when they are faced by men who know every trick as it were of constitution making, who want to retain powers in their own hands and, in giving some powers to the people, make them as limited and put as many protections as they can possibly compass. Hence I would submit to you that, in choosing your representatives to go into conference, you should take care that they are thoroughly well versed in the constitutions of the world and properly equipped to deal with the officials both of the Indian Government and of the British Government and may not be helpless as it were in their hands and find that the result of their helplessness has been the betrayal of their nation. In the United States, what was exactly the result of the civil war? I knew very well that civil war would come about as a conflict between the Centre and the States, the States claiming the right to withdraw and Lincoln and his Government refusing to recognise that right. But we ought to know that about all the countries that have struggled for freedom. All the countries of Europe that have made themselves constitutions since the Great War are very different from what they were before that war.

At this stage, Mr. Gadgil, addressing Dr. Besant, said : We want a message to the country to combine for Dominion Status against Independence, to all parties, organisations, castes and creeds. We want a message from your lips.

Dr. Annie Besant : I am perfectly willing to combine for achieving Dominion Status. I am not for combining for Independence. I will tell you why I am not in favour of it. It is because I agree with C. R. Das that to be a member of a free Federation of nations is better than isolation. I think he was a very clever man in his choice of words. He did not say 'greater than independence,' because he knew that people would not agree. So, he chose another word which is really its exact equivalent. Frankly, I am not in favour of isolation. I will tell you why. I think the evolutionary line of advance is in the combination of small areas into larger ones and the union of those, having constituted their Governments, into larger and larger communities, united by certain ties of descent, of habits, of customs, of history, as the case may be. It is a very complicated question, and in

India, with its civilisation stretching back practically into the night of history, we need a very special and careful study, in order to build up a constitution which will be stable, because built on India's past, and yet be open to modification to be provided for India's future. Unless we build upon the past I do not believe that our constitution will live. We must remember that the present is the product of the past, nationally as well as individually, and in order to build a really Indian constitution, you must know what India has done in the past. Remember those wise words of a great Englishman ; he spoke, of England that before you know what England can do you must know what England has done in the past. Put 'India' in that place, and I think you will be on safe ground. Do not copy the modern constitutions that are already falling to pieces in the West, the so-called democratic constitutions. If you will permit me to give a word of counsel let me say this that the only authority for a group of men to govern other men lies in their wisdom and their character. Greater wisdom, nobler character those, it seems to me as I read the history of the past, are the criteria by which you must choose the men whom you place in power.

There is one other question I wish to touch. After you have considered the various Colonial Governments and the various Governments set out in books on constitutions, then, it seems to me you have to remember, in dealing with British history, unless you are English or feel so strongly with the English, you will not realise that England is governed very much more by conventions than by the ordinary law. You have first the common law, which is made up of past decisions of courts of law. Then you have the law which lays down certain things which must be obeyed. And then, you have the tendency of the English people—it sounds very rude, but it is very true—to muddle along. There is a saying that people won't build a bridge unless they come to the river which they want to bridge. That is a very common sense way and it seems to do very well for the English. There is in England enormous respect for the law. I do not know any country where you have laws so much respected as you have it in England. And the official of the law is respected unless he goes outside his own duties. Take the policemen there. They wave their hand one way, everything stops ; the other way, and everything goes on. They don't want people to wait. The police at the points can manage the whole thing. You want proper obedience to laws (cheers).

DEWAN BAHADUR GOVINDARAGHAVA AIYAR

Dewan Bahadur L. A. Govindaraghava Aiyar in supporting the resolution said :—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I beg to support the resolution that has been proposed by the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and seconded by Dr. Besant. If you will read the resolution, you will note that there are three central ideas in it, and it is upon them that emphasis has to be laid. The first idea is that we require Dominion Status. The second idea is that we recognise that the introduction of Dominion Status is not fully possible, and that there ought to be a period of transition during which safe-guards shall have to be provided for the working of this system of Dominion Status. The third idea is that we should call to our aid, for the purpose of stating what exactly we want and for the

purpose of arming ourselves with a good case to go up before the Round Table Conference in England, a meeting of persons who are agreed as to the fundamental principles that must actuate our action and that that meeting must consist of progressive elements in the country. These are the central ideas which this resolution seeks to give expression to. My Rt. Hon'ble friend has told us what exactly the need is for asking at this stage for a meeting of persons who are to be picked from progressive elements in the country. He has pointed out to us how it is that we have now lost the benefit of the services of the Congress Party and how the necessity is all the greater for us to put our shoulders to the wheel and to see what it is that we can do for the purpose of evolving an acceptable system. In the first place, it is not that the Liberal Party is wanting either in the necessary constructive statesmanship or the experience required for doing this work. Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar has, after all, thought it desirable to come over to our ranks, and I am sure that the march of time will convince him that ours is not the next best to the Congress but it is the best (cheers). I might just put forward one idea which must be useful in this connection. While we call this session of the Federation the twelfth session, the Congress is anxious to call their session as 46th or 47th. Their justification for being a separate body has arisen, if at all, only very recently. What the Congress was before the new party in the Congress found favour with the people was exactly the Liberal Party as it now stands. We are content to let facts speak for themselves. I am sure that we shall have justified ourselves in the eyes of the country and of the world. We stand true to the principles that we have all along espoused and have more of the dynamic activity to which Mr. Rangachariar has rightly called our attention. Of the three ideas which are contained in this resolution, two have been spoken upon with considerable ability—perhaps it is impertinent of me to say it—by the two speakers who preceded me. There is only one which relates to the period of transition, on which I shall say a few words. We are not behind others in our desire to see Dominion Status established in this country. We want elements of permanence and the need for no change to be associated with the establishment of such a system. We have therefore to recognise the difficulties that we have to deal with, the disabilities that we are labouring under and provision for possible contingencies, and that is why we say in the resolution that safe-guards have to be provided by us. The difficulty of providing such safe-guards is very great, and having once agreed as to what the difficulties are, the remedies for meeting these difficulties will give rise even to greater controversy. Seeing that our enemies are bound to make the best of what can be criticised amongst us, we should minimise our differences and show the greatest measure of agreement as to what it is that we are agreed upon. For that purpose, you should call, in the first place, a meeting of those who are agreed in a general sort of way as to the ideal we have, and having got at them, we should have a free and full discussion as to what it is that we should get. As my Right Hon'ble friend has pointed out, a statement is also sought to be issued which will put forward with greater particularity what the work of this Committee will have to be. We have not merely our own differences to compose, but we have also to see how we can bring ourselves into line with Indian States so that

any system we shall evolve will be a system under which both British India and Indian States will have a simultaneous development of political progress. This resolution asks that we should do what lies in our power for the purpose of providing for the day when the Round Table Conference is called, and there is no doubt that a Round Table Conference is bound to be called after the Viceregal announcement. It might be that there are difficulties that are now put forward in the way of the object of that announcement being achieved because the Congress, which is now in session, will not co-operate with us or with the Government at the Round Table Conference. India must be very poor in constructive statesmanship if she cannot solve this problem of achieving Dominion Status simply because of this contingency, avoidable as it seems to many of us. I have great pleasure in supporting this resolution and in asking you to accept it unanimously.

PROF. B. B. ROY

Professor B.B. Roy, in further supporting the resolution, said :—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, as a Delegate from Bengal, I consider it a very great privilege to support this important resolution. I do so on three distinct grounds. Firstly, I believe in the great necessity of there being a preliminary conference in India before our leaders go to meet the Round Table Conference in England. I know a word whispered that there are even amongst us leaders who are rather sceptical of the success of a preliminary conference. On the other hand, I have heard a view being expressed by the Muhammadan leader Moulana Mahammad Ali that without a preliminary conference, the London Conference is bound to become a pandemonium. Without taking either of these extremes, I declare myself a great believer in the efficacy of spade work, which a preliminary conference would certainly do in India. It would help our great leaders to make up their minds on the details of a new constitution, which it will be our duty to place before His Majesty's Government in England. While I believe in a conference of this nature, I would not have supported it if I had not found its constitution clearly stated in this resolution. If it had been a conference of all possible parties, I would not have supported it. Since I see it clearly stated here that this Conference will be only of those parties which accept the viceregal announcement without mental reservations, which would work for immediate and complete realisation of Dominion Status, I certainly believe that such a conference of men already united in their minds would do great good. Lastly, I believe in more and more work being done by the leaders of all parties gathering together. I know that at this moment, on account of events that have happened in Lahore, a wave of scepticism is passing, about the utility of conferences and discussions. But I have the good fortune of being a believer in conferences and discussions. I look back to the history of this country during the last few years. I know the circumstances in which Dr. Besant's constitution was drafted. I know also the circumstances in which the Nehru Report was produced. The more we meet together for peaceful discussion and conference, the more and more points of contact will be established, our differences will be narrowed down and we will come on a common platform with greater agreement between all parties. With these words, I support the resolution.

MR. DALVI

Mr. Dalvi, in further supporting the resolution, said :—

Mr. President, and Fellow-delegates, past experience has shown that it is only when different parties in the land are able to join their forces, the elements of re-action in England are cowed down. Such an occasion arose before the advent of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms when all parties met together on a common platform at the Lucknow Congress and within a few months of that Congress came the Montagu reforms. Fortunately for us, the unity of parties continued, with the result that we had the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Unfortunately, thereafter it became necessary for the Liberal Party to secede for a while from the Congress, but before the joint Parliamentary Committee, all parties in this country including the Congress Party were represented. Unfortunately thereafter Mahatma Gandhi threw the bomb of non-co-operation in the political field and when the fire and smoke subsided, we found the wreckage of parties all over the land. The time has now arrived when we should have a synthesis and take one supreme step in the same direction. During the aftermath of the non-co-operation movement, India showed sectionalism and there were centripetal forces taking the upper hand. I may remind the House that there was a Round Table Conference in 1922 under the presidentship of Sir Sankaran Nair, organised by Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya. There was an All-Parties Conference in Bombay. There an attempt was made by Mr. C. Y. Chintamani for a National All-Parties Conference. In the 1928 Congress, under the guidance of Pundit Motilal Nehru, there was a conference for the adoption of the Nehru Report. Three of these conferences were held in Bombay. Two of them were organised by the Congress itself. Unfortunately for the country, the stress of circumstance was not so great as to unite all parties at that period. One feels inclined to doubt how far the attempt of 1925 was *bona fide*. We conferred a whole day and condemned the Bengal Ordinance. But the attempt proved futile. The attempt made in 1928 was a more serious one, and those present at this Federation will tell you that the attempt to make the All-Parties Convention a permanent organisation was attacked by the Congress. I say all this to remind you of the mistakes and difficulties of the past, so that you may shape your future course with the experience of the past to guide us in the future. We are now at a supreme crisis in the history of our nation. The occasion is supreme, the necessity for unity in the country is both urgent and imperative, and it is correct to say that this is the first time that the Liberal Party, as a party, is going to make an attempt of this nature, and I am confident that it will succeed. The parties in the country besides the Congress are unfortunately mostly communal parties. The only non-communal party in the country which will succeed better than any other party is the Liberal Party. It is, therefore, the duty of the Liberal Party to make this attempt. It has been said that the boycott of the Simon Commission was given the lead to by the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party must take all measures for the purpose of making the Round Table Conference successful. At present, we are faced by a supreme crisis here but a hopeful situation in England. With two such situations, in the nature of things, discordant forces unite under a common

danger from a common enemy. Such an occasion has not arisen within the last ten years. I hope that discordant elements will be kept back on this occasion. I find that there is in a certain section of the Congress an abundance of the All-Party mentality. I find that Mr. Kelkar has given notice of amendments in the Lahore Congress, and those amendments are of an All-Party complexion. That, I say, is a very hopeful sign of the times. I presume to state that the first attempt that the Liberal Party is making in this resolution will meet with a much better fate than attempts of other parties on previous occasions. I content myself with saying that if we generate the forces of unity in the land, we shall succeed in achieving a combination of parties with a view to arrive at the largest measure of agreement on Dominion Status to be urged before the Round Table Conference. I have great pleasure in supporting the resolution.

MR. DALIP MAN SINGH

Mr. Dalip Man Singh said : Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the resolution which I have been called upon to support has been very ably moved by the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri and seconded and supported by so many learned speakers. So there is not much left for me to say. But, as it is our general practice that every resolution should be supported by representatives of different Provinces, I also wish to say a few words to you. Gentlemen, now we have passed the stage of infancy, and mere proclamations and announcements, however noble and lofty they may be, cannot satisfy us. We want something more tangible, and that has now appeared before us in the shape of Dominion Status. So, it is very necessary that all parties should combine together to attain it. The chief argument which is urged against India in relation to Dominion Status is that we are not united. But if we take the case of Canada, there were the same quarrels between the French and the English which we have here in our country at the present time. Similarly in the case of South Africa, the Dutch and the English were at daggers drawn, but as soon as they were granted Responsible Self-Government, all those differences vanished. For that reason, it is very necessary that we should unite and forget all our domestic quarrels. As a number of other gentlemen are to support this resolution, with these few words I beg to support it.

MR. M. RAMIER

Mr. Manjeri Ramier, in further supporting the resolution, said : Fellow-delegates and friends, so much wisdom has preceded me, so what can I say, except that I loyally and whole-heartedly support this resolution ? We are at the parting of ways. There is little time for choice. The question is whether we are going to choose the left hand path of revolution, call it non-violence if you please, it will degenerate into violence, we know. We have seen some anarchy in action in Malabar and are in no hurry to precipitate another revolution so soon. Or, shall we choose the right hand path of peaceful negotiation ? It is the fashion nowadays to deride our elder politicians as leaders without a following. I would prefer one to be a leader without a following rather than be a leader tied to the tail of his followers, who is no leader at all. So, the path is clear before us. The time is short. All parties must unite that stand for inter-linked independence, not for isolated independence, because our enemies will be lurking everywhere. They will say : " Oh, C. P. is-

not for independence, therefore he is for dependence." We have to be careful in choosing our phrases. When people ask me whether I am for independence I say I am for inde-de-de-pendence, inde-cubed-pendence. We want inter-linked independence in comradeship with other Dominions. All of us love our land as much and are as patriotic as others, though we are not in a hurry to precipitate a revolution. So, all of us must unite, the Liberal Party, the members of the Commonwealth of India League, the members of the Justice Party, members representing the suppressed and the oppressed classes in India,—all those of us who are agreed on Dominion Status or inter-linked independence and the path of peaceful and wise negotiation. It is high time we combine forces and face the country and not merely pass resolutions and educate only the British public. We must take some steps to educate our own people here who do not understand, and prevent them from blindly following the blind. That is our path. And, we who are followers and do not claim to be leaders at all, we who see our teachers on this platform, teachers in the Law College, teachers in other departments of life, we can only say: 'Give us hard work to do.' We are on the middle age now, neither too old to go to sleep nor too young to be precipitate in our actions. We claim to be middle-aged politicians. Our heads are with you. Our hands sometimes want work to do. Give us some work. Do not leave us alone. Under your guidance ask us to go to the people and explain to them these things. Give us the necessary apparatus or mechanism with your blessing, and we will show to the world that not one party represents the country to-day, however much people may say they represent the country. We are India, they are not. We can show that the heart of India is sound. Give us a clear-cut programme, give us the necessary mechanism like the All-Parties Conference, give us marching orders, and you will not be ashamed of us.

MR. M. GOVIND SAIT

Mr. M. Govind Sait, further supporting the resolution, said: Last December, as a humble camp-follower of the National Home Rule League I attended the All-Parties Convention with very high hopes. This Convention dragged on to a close, its ranks being thinned by the lapse of days, when it was postponed *sine die*. When practically all my Liberal friends had left, I came away with a heavy heart, and as if it were the foreboding of a permanent postponement by the Congress, of the All-Parties Convention, we are here to-day on the verge of a crisis, when, sad to say, the Congress, the biggest party in the land, is leaving us—but not in the lurch. The Congress Party is going out of it. Having drafted and prepared the Nehru Report, in which were associated so many of our friends on this platform, having raised our hopes so far, to-day the Congress is going back. Our only prayer is: God be with you. But let there be no mistake, we are on the verge of a crisis. The Congress is claiming Independence, and that forcibly reminds me of the Irish parallel. The De Valera of India is in the field, the De Valera spirit is abroad. Will the Cosgraves speak and be true to the trust in their charge? Shall not the Cosgraves of the land awake in time and show to the world that the path of righteousness and the path of orderly progress shall win?

MR. GADGIL

Mr. Gadgil, further supporting the resolution, said: Mr. President and fellow-delegates, I have been asked to speak now, and I desire to make an appeal. I asked for a message to the country from our revered leader Dr. Besant. But that was not to be. What is the object of this resolution. We are going to hear from our President the appeal that is issued. I would have preferred to speak after that, but that is going to be the last part of the programme to-day. You have heard the resolution. What does it call upon all people in the country to do? We are this afternoon in a very grievous plight. We are faced with a danger that the country has never been through since the Non-co-operation days. There is being unfolded in Lahore what Pundit Malaviya declared to be a war of independence. Passing a resolution of Independence means that in his opinion, and I am sure all of you who think about these subjects in a logical way cannot come to any other conclusion. What, on the other hand, is before you? You have been, by the Viceroy's declaration, practically asked to come to London with the best of your people to discuss what shall be the form of the future constitution of India. It is open to you to suggest anything on which you are agreed in the country. It is, therefore, practically an appeal to have an Indian Round Table Conference with a view to obtain the maximum of common measure of agreement, so that we can speak with a united voice when we go to the Round Table Conference in London. The people that we want to invite to this Indian Round Table Conference, who are those? You have the position defined. They are those people who agree to the least common measure of political thought and political aspiration, people who "are prepared to secure its complete and immediate realisation." The Liberal Party is the only organised party that has been holding its sessions for the last twelve years, and it is this party that can call together such a conference. I have my friends in other parties. There are the Responsivists. Mr. Kelkar is voicing more or less the opinions of the Responsivist Party in Lahore. He does not believe that at this moment the legislatures should be boycotted. He does not think you can call students from schools and colleges or ask lawyers to boycott the courts. You have once done it and you have failed. You are trying to do it again. Is there any constructive programme in that at all. I don't, however, want to criticise what is happening in Lahore. Is there any duty on the Liberal Party now? I must confess there has been nothing dynamic in the Party's history. They are all wise men, they are practically the quintessence of statesmanship and intelligence. But they have no emotion. The difficulty is, how can you now stump the country with the necessary sinews of war to counteract the great danger of the country being swamped by the Independents? If the country, by your negligence, by your slothfulness, by your want of sacrifice, is going to be swamped by Independents, and the poor masses are sacrificed, it will be a sin that will fall on your heads. There are, as our friend Manjeri Ramier said, middle-aged people, who want guidance. They want money to take up the work in hand. We cannot let this opportunity slip. Either you fight for Independence and make a bloody deadly revolution or you go by constitutional methods and make the best of your opportunities. Which are you going to choose? If you are going to accept the constitu-

Constitutional method, you have to convince people that the Congress creed, as now changed, is scarcely the thing to have. I cannot really understand people saying: "We want Independence, but we shall sit in our houses and cry for it." No man in Maharashtra will understand that. You have got to choose willinilly to proceed in the constitutional way. Friends, though the Liberal Party may have done nothing in the past, the time has come when every one of them must act. I want you all to have the dynamic energy of Dr. Besant. With her age, with the snow of age on her head, she has the enthusiasm, the dynamic spirit, the power of persuasion and the heart of youth. I want you to take a leaf from that book. If you cannot do that, the Liberal Federation and all of us, let us bid good-bye to politics.

The President: Ladies and gentlemen, in moving this resolution, the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri informed you that a statement had been prepared. That statement necessarily forms part of the resolution, and although, as Mr. Sastri informed you, every one here present has been handed a copy, it is necessary for the record of proceedings that the statement be read to you. [The Statement is printed as Appendix B in the Report.]

Before I formally put the resolution to vote, I should like to inform you that, with the permission of the proposer and the seconder, the words 'subject to' in the last but one line have been altered into 'with.'

The resolution was then put and carried unanimously.

The President: Ladies and gentlemen, consequent upon our passing this statement, it is necessary that a committee be appointed to give effect to the recommendations made in this resolution. I have, therefore, proposed the following committee, which, I trust, you will accept:

1. Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (Chairman and Convener)
2. Dr. Annie Besant
3. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad
4. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer
5. Sir Moropant Joshi
6. Mr. C. Y. Chintamani
7. The Hon.'ble Mr. G. A. Natesan
8. Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao
9. The President.

The proposition was carried unanimously.

The Federation then adjourned till 12 noon on the following day.

The delegates were entertained to tea by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar at his residence, and, after tea, a meeting of the Subjects Committee was held there.

THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

The Federation re-assembled at 12 noon on Tuesday, the 31st December 1929, the Hon. Sir Phiroze Sethna presiding.

The Hon. Rao Bahadur G. A. Natesan read two messages received from Mrs. Sitabai, Yeotmal and Mr. S. M. Basu.

INDIAN STATES

The President: We have to begin with resolution No. 5 as you find it on the agenda paper. It will be moved from the Chair, and I do so formally. It reads as follows:

(a) This Federation notes with gratification the acceptance by prominent rulers of Indian States of the implications of the announcement of H. E. the Viceroy and recognises that, in any future constitution of India based upon Dominion Status, suitable guarantees should be provided for continuance of their rights and their obligations regarding the internal autonomy of Indian States.

(b) This Federation trusts that the rulers of Indian States will themselves reorganise the system of administration in their respective states and level up the standards of administration in the States so as to approximate to the form of Government prevailing in British India.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

INDIANS IN KENYA

The President: I now call upon Mr. S. G. Vaze to move resolution No. 6.

Mr. S. G. VAZE

Mr. S. G. Vaze: Mr. President, and gentlemen, I beg to move the following resolution:

This Federation views with grave alarm the recommendation in the Report of Sir Samuel Wilson for an increase in the proportion of the representative of the European community on the Legislative Council of Kenya to the serious detriment of the interests of the African natives as well as of the Indian community in that colony and is strongly of opinion that no constitutional advance be sanctioned in any of the East African Colonies till the natives are able to take an effective share in the representation by means of election on a common franchise in common electorates. The Federation therefore supports the recommendation of the Hilton Young Commission in favour of a substitution of common for the existing separate electorates and calls upon the Imperial Government to start inquiries with a view to establishing a common roll in the interest not only of the Indian community but of the whole Colony.

Like the question of constitutional reform in India, this question of East Africa has now become a major issue of Imperial policy and, like it again, is fast reaching a crisis. It is therefore well that this Federation passes a resolution on the subject. Let me briefly explain what the present position of the East African Indian problem is. When two years ago we met in Federation in Bombay, a Commission was appointed by the Imperial Government under the chairmanship of Sir Edward Hilton Young with the object of considering, briefly, whether a co-ordination of policy, in the economic and political spheres, was not possible in all the East African countries. This Commission has now reported and it falls to us to consider its recommendations. You will remember that the appointment of the Commission, preceded as it was by a statement of the then Colonial Secretary,

Mr. Amery, which amounted virtually to a reversal of the declaration of the Duke of Devonshire in 1923, gave rise to a great deal of apprehension in the public mind in India. The apprehension was, lest, under the cover of a common policy, which in itself we were prepared to consider on its merits, the Imperial Government should take occasion to modify the composition of the Legislative Councils in these countries to the advantage of the Europeans and to the disadvantages of the Indians and the natives. You will remember that we gave expression to this fear in the resolution that we adopted in Bombay and laid down a principle on which we would wish to see the future policy of the Imperial Government to be based in East Africa. The principle was that no political advance should take place in these countries until the natives are able to take an effective share therein, through their own representatives returned by election on a common franchise and in common electorates. This principle is implicit in the Duke of Devonshire's declaration, and we only asked the Imperial Government to adhere to it. Since then the Labour and Socialist International in its Brussels meeting has adopted a resolution which reaffirms this principle. We shall therefore be quite justified in judging of the merits of the Hilton-Young Report by applying this test.

If we do so we shall find that the apprehension which we voiced in Bombay was to a large extent justified. The Hilton-Young Commission has no doubt said that there can be no question of a responsible government in the East African territories until the natives themselves can share in the responsibility, but it has still made recommendations which, if given effect to, will increase both the number and the powers of the representatives of the European community on the Legislative Council of Kenya when the natives are, according to the Commission, unable to share in that increase. It has also recommended the abolition of the official majority. The danger lurking in this arrangement it seeks to counteract by retaining the control of the native policy in the hands of the Imperial Government, and by so distributing the representation among the three racial groups that the official members with the support of anyone of these groups can always command a majority. The recommendations of the Commission are that the elected Europeans and Indians should continue to have the present number of seats but that the officials should have four seats less than at present which should be given to Europeans to be nominated to represent native interests, it being assumed that natives are yet not capable of representing their own interests. If it were a fact that the natives cannot be represented on Legislative Council by members of their own race, it would only prove, on the principle we have laid down, that the Colony is unfit for a further constitutional advance. But it is not true to say that the natives cannot represent their own interests, and anyhow it is entirely wrong, as has been pointed out by Lord Olivier, that the native representatives should be sought from a community whose interests are largely opposed to the interests of the natives. This is a radical defect in the Report of the Hilton-Young Commission.

But if it is a defect, the Report has at least provided certain safeguards for the protection of the native interests, the principal safe-guard being that the Central Authority which is to be newly created is first to

formulate a common native policy for all East African countries and to see to it that it is properly enforced. This Report however did not commend itself to the European community, and the Imperial Government therefore sent to East Africa Sir Samuel Wilson to find out, practically, what modifications of this Report they would require. Sir Samuel Wilson's report virtually amounts to a total rejection of the Hilton-Young Report. He recommends not only a still further reduction of the official strength and an increase of European representatives without providing for natives to be represented by themselves, but he insists that the control of native policy should vest in the Local Legislature. This means that the only safe-guard which the Young Commission provided, and which might have made somewhat plausible the modifications in the composition of the Council recommended by it, is to be removed. This is really the crux of the whole problem. To the Young Commission, a co-ordination of economic services was a secondary affair to be taken in hand only after the co-ordination of native policy was effected. Sir Samuel Wilson however pronounces against co-ordination of native policy and recommends that economic federation should be immediately brought about. His recommendations, therefore, do not amount to the adoption of part of those of the Hilton-Young Commission, but to a negation of the primary contention of that body, *i.e.*, that the closer union of the three territories is only desirable if the protection of native interests is first assured. The Wilson Report, however, leaves the native policy completely in the hands of the local Council, on which the Europeans are to have preponderant representation. The adoption of this report would therefore be tantamount to a complete abandonment of the principle of native trusteeship, which, it is necessary, should be strictly carried out and to which the Imperial Government still pays lip service. It may perhaps appear to you that I am speaking too much of the natives and too little of the Indians in East Africa, but the fact is that the interests of the two communities are identical, and the Indian problem is to a large extent only part of the native problem. The protection of Indian interests can therefore be fully secured only by securing the protection of native interests, and for this reason it is of the utmost importance that in our own interests we should always be putting forward the larger case of the natives. The Wilson report is so flagrantly unjust that I have no doubt the Labour Government will turn it down; but it is not enough that this report is totally rejected; it is further necessary that the Labour Government should equally turn down the recommendation in the Hilton-Young Report for the relinquishment of the official majority. It must in fact declare itself against Mr. Amery's policy of associating immigrant communities in the rights and duties of trusteeship, and must revert to the principle enunciated by the Duke of Devonshire, which, put shortly, means that further political progress in the direction of democracy in Kenya and other East African countries can only be proportioned to the progress which the natives make in looking after their own interests.

The question of introducing common electorates, on which our fellow-countrymen in Kenya are so keen, is, compared to the above question, of secondary importance. Here fortunately we have the Report of the Hilton-Young Commission on our side, and we only ask the Imperial Government in our resolution to initiate the inquiries which it has suggested with a view

to instituting a common roll. It is notorious that Sir Samuel Wilson took no steps in this direction. There is no reason, however, why the introduction of a common roll should be made contingent upon the consent of the Europeans, as proposed by the Hilton-Young Commission. The Labour Government is satisfied that it is good in itself, from which it follows that it ought to prepare the way for its introduction irrespectively of the wishes of the European Community. Only the other day, Dr. Drummond Shiels, as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, accepted on behalf of the Labour Government a resolution in the House of Commons forbidding the introduction of communal electorates in African colonies. This is only the latest reaffirmation of the commitment which the Labour Party has made in this behalf. If the Labour Government is loyal to the principles it has proclaimed, we can have no doubt about its final decision : it must be in favour of the establishment of the common electorates and of the retention of the Official majority. To the Indians the Labour Party has definitely promised (the promise was made in 1923) that on coming into power, it would reverse the Imperial Government's decisions of that year in so far as they went against us. Our resolution is therefore nothing more than an appeal to the Party to honour the pledges it has solemnly made in the past, and, though the indications are by no means reassuring, we will hope that it will honour these pledges.

THE HON. MR. NATESAN

The Hon'ble Rao Bahadur G. A. Natesan, in seconding the resolution, said : Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen :—It is a matter of sincere gratification that this resolution has been spoken to by one who has made a special study of it, visited East Africa and may justly claim to be an expert on this question. I need hardly remind you that on this matter the Government of India see eye to eye with the people of India, and are advocating our rights and demands with the strength and warmth which most of us are happy to endorse. It is also a matter for satisfaction that since the publication of the Hilton-Young Report and in view of the reactionary suggestions contained in Sir Samuel Wilson's report, a protest has already been made by the Government of India, and Sir Muhammad Habibullah spent about three weeks in London to point out that the cause of the people of India should not be sacrificed in the interests of Europeans in Kenya. My friend Mr. Vaze pointed out that at present there is a very great danger of the interests of Indians and natives being handed over, as it were, to the Europeans in East Africa, for the very simple reason that for long years they have been exploiting and standing against the legitimate rights of our countrymen, and there is also a danger that if they are given the upper hand in this matter, not only Indians but also natives will suffer. I have every reason to believe that the Government of India, through the efforts of Sir Muhammad Habibullah, have put forward our case strongly, and if I am not misinformed, there is reason to believe that Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the present Secretary of State for India, has taken quite the Indian view of this problem, and we all look forward to a solution which will be satisfactory to India and the Empire.

We talk a good deal of Dominion Status and of our political equality here and everywhere. But as one with many other friends here who have had the opportunity and privilege of visiting other parts of the Empire, I desire

to say that though we are receiving courtesy and consideration in the other parts of the Empire, we still feel that when we go there, we feel the mark of political inferiority. This question of the status of our countrymen, and the question of occupying a position of equality with the British subjects in the other parts of the Empire is one of great importance to us, and I think that, in East Africa, if the question is not solved satisfactorily, it will seriously affect our self-respect. It is important that on an occasion like this, when all our efforts are concentrated on the achievement of Dominion Status, India should occupy a position of perfect equality with the other parts of the Empire. We should see that our countrymen are not treated in a manner inferior to others and claim to be in India what other members of the British Commonwealth are in their country and that an Indian who is a British citizen, if he went to another part of the Empire, should be treated with all the rights of British citizenship and equality about which we so often hear. This resolution is a very important one, and, believe me when I say, the case for us has been put forward very well, with great authority and knowledge, and it is hardly necessary for me to say anything further in commending it for your acceptance.

MR. C. Y. CHINTAMANI

Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, in supporting the resolution, said: Mr. President and fellow-Liberals, I gladly support the resolution which has been placed before you. After the speech made by Mr. Vaze, who is one of the best informed men in the country on this as on other subjects, I think it will be superfluous for me to relate the facts and detain you for any length of time. The essential principle that should be grasped and of which we should not let go our hold is that our countrymen settled in Kenya and other East African territories should be acknowledged in law and in fact to be equal citizens with the White settlers. The East African Colonies are being governed, not in the interests of the Africans, but in the interests of the White settlers and in obedience to their dictates. Anyone who is familiar with the sinister part that has been played by the leader of White settlers, Lord De La Mere in the affairs of Kenya and other East African territories during the last few years will not need to be convinced that I have not made an exaggerated statement of the actual position. Unfortunately, both for the Africans and the Indians, the Governor, Sir Edward Grigg, the name must be familiar to those in the Madras Presidency who are old enough to remember H. B. Grigg, Director of Public Instruction,—Sir Edward Grigg has made himself the champion advocate of the anti-Indian and the anti-native cause, by converting himself into the gramophone of the White settlers. The Kenya situation gave rise to a great deal of anxiety and agitation six years ago, and the then Government published a White Paper enunciating the blameless principle that Africa must be governed in the interests of the Africans, but also degrading the position of the Indian settlers in a manner and to an extent which compelled so responsible a statesman as the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri, to declare that if Kenya is lost, all is lost, and that Kenya is the test question of the attitude of India towards the Empire. I do not say to-day as he did then, that if Kenya is lost all is lost, because I like to believe that all can never be lost, and howsoever many temporary reverses we may sustain, it is up to us to keep up the struggle with a vigour and earnestness and determination that will compel our opponents to yield.

But I do say this, that after the question of the future constitution of the Government of India, there is none at the present moment which is more a test of the attitude of the Labour Government towards India than the Kenya question. From such information as I have been able to gather, the attitude of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Passfield, is anything but favourable and friendly to India. Lord Passfield, who is better known as Sydney Webb, is not exactly a champion of non-White races. Besides, he is an invincible believer in bureaucracy and in what is called the regimentation of humanity. The speech which His Lordship made in the House of Lords on the Viceroy's announcement must have been enough of an eye-opener to those of our countrymen who thought they could repose unlimited faith in him. But fortunately, Lord Passfield is at present assisted at the Colonial Office by one, who, during the period of his association with the India Office, showed in every possible manner that he was a sincere and ardent friend of Indian nationalism. We can trust the Under-Secretary of State, Dr. Drummond Shiels, to do all that a man in his official position can hope to do in behalf of the Indians, the Africans and the cause of Justice. A still more welcome circumstance is that at present the Secretary of State for India is not a confirmed Imperialist but a man, who, during nearly the whole of his public career, has shown that he is one of the few men who believe actively, as a working principle in public life, in Burke's thought that what is morally wrong cannot be politically right. Mr. Wedgwood Benn at the India Office has been doing his human best, not only for the cause of constitutional reform in India, but equally for the cause of Indians overseas, because of his conviction that their cause is the same as the cause of justice. The Government of India, with Sir Muhammad Habibullah in charge of the subject, the India Office presided over by Mr. Wedgwood Benn, and such assistance as is possible for a Parliamentary Under Secretary to give in the Colonial Office through Dr. Shiels—these are at our disposal in this fight. Our countrymen in Kenya have themselves been putting up a most manly, honourable fight, for which they deserve the appreciative and grateful acknowledgement of the whole of their countrymen in India. As in the earlier years in South Africa, the Indians missed no opportunity, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, to vindicate the national honour of India, so now in East Africa, Mr. Pandya and other Indians have been doing all they can to stand for the principles in which they believe. It is our duty to second their efforts and to give them such support as may be within our power. By means of this resolution, the National Liberal Federation is asked to give that support, and I am certain there is not a single member of this body who will grudge it to them. I trust, however, that Indian public men will not lose sight of the importance of this subject in the coming weeks, as the decision is expected to be taken very soon by His Majesty's Government in England and, rightly absorbed as they are in the question of constitutional reforms, at least some of them will give a little time and attention to this also till we shall get a pronouncement from His Majesty's Government. Even the principles enunciated in the White Paper of 1923 are being departed from, and it is up to us to make some unmistakable and sustained protest now as we did then in 1923. The Indians of East Africa repose more confidence in the capacity and willingness of the Indian Liberal Party, attenuated as it is in

numbers, to help them effectively in this matter than any other political party, and trust they may not be disappointed. With these few words, I accord my support to the resolution.

MR. M. D. ALTEKAR

Mr. M. D. Altekar, further supporting the resolution, said: Mr. President and friends, I have great pleasure in supporting the resolution moved by my friend, Mr. Vaze, who has made a special study of this subject. I congratulate this Federation on having taken up this resolution, though we had determined that we should concentrate our attention only on one or two important topics, which are engaging the attention of the whole country at the present moment. I congratulate the Federation for this reason that the question that is embodied in this resolution is really a part of those higher questions which we consider dearest to us. After all, what is this question of Kenya? It is this. Here is a Crown Colony directly under the British Government. There is no question of persuading any Colonial Government in the matter. We want to know whether the British Government is prepared to give a fair deal to Indians who are living in that country. If they give a fair deal to them there, then we can believe in their *bona fides* in their promises of giving a fair deal to Indians in India. If they treat us fairly wherever they have a chance of doing so, then we may put some belief in what they say about our future. Here in India we are considering the question of our future Government. Well, in Kenya the matter is simple. Indians in Kenya demand something which, I suppose, Englishmen should at once concede. What are they asking for? They are not asking for communal representation in Kenya; they are asking for a common electoral roll. And for what purpose? Recently a recommendation has been made by Sir Samuel Wilson that Europeans should have more representation for all practical purposes in Kenya, and it is taken for granted that these Europeans really represent the natives of Kenya. That is a very funny thing. In India, their complaint about Indian politicians is that the bureaucracy represents the masses of India better than either Pundit Motilal or Dr. Sapru. In the same manner, in Kenya, these Europeans are supposed to take better care of the natives than anybody else. That supposition is false in India, it is also false in Kenya. Therefore, our demand is that this idea of separate electorates in Kenya should be given up, and a common roll instituted in that Colony.

There is another small matter which I should bring to your notice. Why should there be this discrimination between Indians and Europeans in Kenya or anywhere? Recently, there has been much outcry against a certain measure of legislation that is to come before the Legislative Assembly, from European quarters, viz, that it is discriminatory legislation and that no discrimination should be made between Indians and Europeans in certain commercial matters. You must have read about that. If that be so, why should there be any discrimination in Kenya? There is absolutely no reason for that. After all, this is a matter of creating goodwill between England and India, and that goodwill depends upon how England treats Indians, whether in India or outside. The Government must give them equal treatment, and it is for the sake of the principle of equality that we are fighting in this particular resolution. And, it is very

necessary in these excited times that we should not lose sight of these seemingly small things. After all, these, taken together, make a big thing. To-day they ill-treat us in Kenya. We have known the long struggle in South Africa. Everywhere, Indians are treated as if they were not sufficiently perfect human beings like Europeans or like Englishmen. We often feel such an opinion held of us because in our own country we are not enjoying the position that we ought to. If we had been enjoying that position in our own country, there would have been no question of treating Indians unfairly in any other part of the world. For that reason, this agitation for securing equal rights for Indians in Kenya is really part and parcel of the agitation for securing the rights of citizenship and political rights for the people of India. The questions are not really separate. They may be separated by certain reasons such as geography. But it is only one question—the question as to whether Indians are treated as full political citizens of this Empire. We have been asking, and it is only yesterday that we declared from this platform that it is our intention to secure Dominion Status as an equal partner in the Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire. Very well, if we are to be equal partners in that Commonwealth, then it is absolutely necessary that we should receive equal treatment in every part of the Empire, at least those parts which are under the direct supervision of the British Government. Because, I know an autonomous Colony will do certain things which cannot be interfered with beyond a certain extent by the Imperial Government. That may be true of South Africa or Australia. But that is not the case with this Crown Colony of Kenya, where it is for the Colonial Office, for the British Government, directly to determine what to do. While we are considering high questions of constitutional policy like the future constitution of this country, we must also give some attention to this subject, so that our own people in Kenya should not feel that they are under a curse of degradation. They must feel that they too are quite all right, because Indians are going to be masters in their own home. I hope that will happen soon and that the British Government will think twice before giving effect to recommendations such as those made by Sir Samuel Wilson. With these words I beg to support the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT

The President: Before I put this resolution to vote, I have to say a few words. It was my good fortune with the Rt. Hon'ble Sastri to be in the delegation of six persons which the Government of India sent to the Government of the Union of South Africa. On that occasion, we were in East Africa, though for a brief time. But during that time we were made fully acquainted with the position of Indians there, and it is a position which ought to be greatly improved. What strikes one is that the British people and the Government seem to forget that the spade-work in Africa was done, 200 years before the British set foot there, by Indians. Indians went there when there were sailing vessels with 200 tons or so as their maximum load, and Europeans had great risk there in those days when it took months for them to reach the country. It is because of the spade-work that Indians did that European settlers came there and reaped rich reward, thanks to the efforts of those who preceded them. It is unfair for those European

settlers to deny the rights of Indians, and we trust that we shall receive justice at the hands of the Colonial Government. The Hon'ble Mr. Natesan has rightly referred to the fact that the Government of India has taken a desirable stand on this matter, and from the time of Lord Hardinge they did help us a great deal. A reference was made to the Hilton-Young Commission, and one of the majority in that Commission was a gentleman who is now occupying the position of the Finance Member of the Government of India. He has displayed an attitude for which we are really thankful, and we want that majority report to be adopted. Mr. Chintamani has referred to Dr. Drummond Shiels. I know him personally and I know how interested he was in the question of India. It is very unfortunate that owing to the mistake of the Labour Government in appointing seven Under-Secretaries instead of six, they had to find room for Dr. Drummond Shiels elsewhere. Fortunately for us, he has now gone as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, and in that capacity we trust that he will fight for us and get justice for us as we ought to. I put the motion, and trust you will all carry it unanimously.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF SECRETARIES

The President: Resolution No. 7 is to be put from the Chair, and it is as follows:

Resolved that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, K.C.I.E., and the Hon'ble Rao Bahadur G. A. Natesan be the Honorary Joint General Secretaries of the National Liberal Federation of India in the year 1930.

I know I should be voicing your view if, in the name of the Federation, I tender thanks to Mr. C. Y. Chintamani for his services to our cause.

Mr. N. Subba Rao: With regard to the retiring Secretary, I request that our appreciation of his services be placed on record formally in the form of a resolution.

The President: It will be done later on, and, in the meantime, this resolution may be put to vote, and I do so.

The resolution was accordingly put and carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL FOR 1930

Mr. C. Y. Chintamani then proposed the following names as members of the Council of the Federation for the year 1930.

(For List See Appendix C.)

Mr. Jadhav seconded the proposition.

Mr. N. Subba Rao suggested that the members of the Council be furnished with copies of the Report of the Federation and other literature.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

THANKS TO Mr. CHINTAMANI

SIR M. JOSHI

Sir Moropant Joshi: Mr. President and gentlemen, I have been asked to move for your acceptance the following resolution which requires not many words to commend it to you. It is as follows:

That the Federation places on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered by Mr. C. Y. Chintamani and Pundit Hirdayanath Kunzru as General Secretaries of the Federation.

I know that the heart of every delegate will be to support this proposition very heartily indeed. I have known Mr. Chintamani for several years. I know his best qualities. I know some of his foibles too. But I must say this: I have always found him to be a man of high character and noble soul who will do his best under the most adverse circumstances and disappointments that he must have suffered during so many years of the actual existence of the Liberal Federation. You remember, perhaps, that he was put once on a special mission to inspire the local bodies of the Federation for a greater and more vigorous effort in furtherance of the aims and objects of the Liberal Federation. He tried his very best, and I am sorry to say that he did not find a response either so encouraging or so good as was expected. This year being a very strenuous year, he has thought it fit to put himself in the background. But his abandonment of the position may be more than fully compensated by the consciousness that his fund of knowledge is still available to us, as he is known to be a walking dictionary. I have, therefore, very great pleasure in moving this proposition and asking you to accept it.

MR. D. G. DALVI

Mr. D. G. Dalvi: I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution. I think the language used by Sir Moropant Joshi was none too strong for the resolution that has been moved. It is unnecessary for me to speak in great detail on this resolution because every one knows what services Mr. Chintamani has given to the Liberal Party. In fact, it came to be known that Mr. Chintamani was the Liberal Party and the Liberal Party was Mr. Chintamani. Although we have reconciled ourselves to the position that he is not to be one of the Secretaries for the coming year, those who know his private, professional and public engagements will allow him to stand aside for some time and give the actual work to other hands. I hope the House will accept the resolution with acclamation.

The resolution was put and declared carried amidst acclamation.

THE PRESIDENT

The President: The Federation Council newly appointed to-day will meet this afternoon after lunch and consider the resolution, notice of which was given by Mr. Vinayaka Rao, and another of which notice was given by Rao Sahib Ramaswami Sivan. Yesterday at the Subjects Committee, a point of order was raised against their admissibility, and I promised to give a ruling this morning after looking into the rules. But no occasion arises for giving a ruling now, for the reason that Mr. Vinayaka Rao has withdrawn the resolution on the assurance that I shall place it before the Council with a strong recommendation that the contents of it should be given effect to. I have given the same assurance to Mr. Ramaswami Sivan. These resolutions which urge the formation of a Committee for propaganda purposes will be duly considered and given effect to by the Council.

As regards the remarks that fell from Mr. Subba Rao, who observed that members are not receiving literature and that they are not aware of the rules, I now give the assurance that the Council will give them all possible information and literature. That recommendation will also be conveyed to the Council.

THE WHITLEY COMMISSION

The President: The next resolution, No. 8, is to be put from the Chair, and it is as follows:

That this Federation invites the attention of the Government to the necessity of asking the Whitley Commission to expedite their work and to take effective action on it with a view to ameliorate the present situation.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

THE CASE FOR DOMINION STATUS

The President: Resolution No. 9 is also to be moved from the Chair and is as follows:

That this Federation appoints a committee of nine members to collect materials and prepare the case for Dominion Status and to authorise the President to meet the necessary costs from the Party funds.

NAMES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer
2. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer
3. Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar
4. Mr. C. Y. Chintamani
5. Sir Moropant Joshi
6. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad
7. Sir Sankar Rao Chitnavis
8. Dewan Bahndur M. Ramachandra Rao
9. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (Convener)

(with power to co-opt).

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

VENUE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE

MR. GADGIL

Mr. Gadgil: Gentlemen, you have accepted the very kind invitation of Mr. Jatindranath Basu to hold the next session of the Federation at Calcutta. There are here other friends who are pressing their claims on behalf of Amraoti, Bombay, etc. I, therefore, move that the question of selecting the venue of the next conference of the Federation be left to the decision of the Council of the Federation. The flag of the Liberal Federation is flying high at every quarter, and you may leave the selection of the place of the next conference to the decision of the Council.

The President: We are certainly obliged to Calcutta through Mr. Basu for its kind invitation, and we are equally obliged to Mr. Gadgil and others who are vying with one another in inviting the Federation to their places. The suggestion of Mr. Gadgil is practical under the circumstances, and I hope you will pass it.

Mr. Gadgil's proposition was put and carried unanimously.

THANKS TO THE CHAIR

Mr. N. Subba Rao Pantulu: Gentlemen, it is a pleasing function that has been assigned to me, and that is, to move a vote of thanks to the Chair. I was wondering why this function was allotted to me, for I have been more or less a political recluse and have not been taking an active part in politics for the last ten years or so. It may be that at this juncture, one, who was merely a spectator of what has been passing through the last decade would take a detached view of the situation and say a few words at this momentous juncture as to what should be done in the coming year.

We have passed through troublous times during these ten years. We parted company with the Congress when the Montford Reforms were adumbrated. We wanted to work the Reforms for what they were worth. The Congress would not look at them. Hence the split between the Liberal Federation and the Congress. Since then the Liberal Federation has been holding its sessions separately, and when the great Non-Co-operation movement was started, there was a great trial in the political affairs of the country. The triple boycott was proclaimed and the lives of promising young men have been wrecked. There was a revolt from Mr. C. R. Das, and once more our Congressmen came to the Councils and once more they tried to work the Reform Act. Liberals and Congressmen tried to work the Reforms and the Congress wanted to destroy the Councils and Ministries. The Simon Commission came, and we all stood on the same platform. We presented a bold front, but Mahatma Gandhi ordained otherwise and the flag of Independence is unfurled. And in the coming year, along with it also there is to be boycott of Councils. We are promised next year the boycott of courts, the boycott of schools and colleges and the boycott of many other things. We are entering upon a very critical time, as has been pointed out by more than one speaker. It is time for us to consolidate our forces and take advantage of the opportunities afforded to obtain Dominion Status for India. The Federation should devise means for setting up a machinery to bring all Parties together to present a united front to Great Britain. Mahatma Gandhi said yesterday, as we see from yesterday's papers, that Congressmen could not take part in the Round Table Conference. So, it is left to the other Parties who are resolved upon achieving Dominion Status to sink their differences and win Dominion Status as early as possible. This is not a small thing, and it is necessary that all the available forces in the country should be brought together and worked for this achievement. At this important juncture, we want one who can organise forces, who is more a businessman, as it were, than anything else and I am glad that at the head of a number of people who have undertaken to carry out this task is our worthy President who has carried on the deliberations of this Conference with great success. He is a businessman and I welcome him as the leader who will carry on our campaign during the next year. The burden lies on him to bring round him all those who would work together in this great cause. My heart weeps when I fear if history will repeat itself and once more non-co-operation would do its worst as it did during the past few years. It is our great duty now to warn young men not to be carried off their feet by this slogan of Independence and non-co-operation. You know perfectly well that several lawyers gave up their briefs and many young men gave up their studies and several of them after wasting their time had to go back to schools and colleges, and several of our lawyers had to resume their practice. I hope that such a lesson would not be forgotten now. It is the duty of the Federation to go to the villages and convince people that this movement of non-co-operation is very injurious to the further progress of the country, that they do not understand the realities that face them at present. After all, taking the world movements and the world conditions as well as our limitations, Dominion Status is the best that we can get, and even Dominion Status is not an easy thing to be achieved.

Even for Dominion Status there will have to be a hard fight, as hard as the fight for Independence. It is, therefore, necessary that we should all realise the great responsibility that lies on each one of us. The great thing needful for us is funds. You must understand that Congress organisations will go to the villages and preach the cult of Independence and non-co-operation. Those who wish to save the youth of the country should counteract this propaganda and save our young men from falling victims to this new-fangled cult. I believe, therefore, that a heavy task lies on our President and those associated with him. His is an honoured name in Bombay and in all commercial circles. When I see his alertness and business habits, I am surprised that one of his age should be so active. I am emboldened that under his leadership, the interests of the country are safe. With these words, I propose a hearty vote of thanks to the President.

MR. G. A. NATESAN

The Hon'ble Rao Bahadur G. A. Natesan, in seconding the resolution, said: Ladies and Gentlemen, this sitting of our Federation has been held on an occasion when the thoughts of the country have been most anxiously turned to solve the problem which is considered by all people as the most difficult of all. The Reception Committee had to encounter many difficulties. We felt that on this occasion we should have as our President one with business instincts and enthusiasm. The Hon'ble Sir Phiroze Sethna has keen business instincts and fire and enthusiasm, and, may I add, he can also talk as much as lawyers. Everyone who has heard him has been struck by his fiery eloquence. (Cheers). As I myself told him, it was somewhat unfortunate that he should have thought it necessary to print his address and read it. Let me tell you that those of us who have had the privilege of listening to him in the Council of State and elsewhere have noted that he could go on firing away a speech for half an hour or one hour, not losing a single important point and laying stress on pointed arguments for his case. I have begged him, at least in his concluding speech to follow that example and give us the pleasure of hearing him speak *ex tempore*.

I know there are many who have come here at a sacrifice. My friends Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and others have come at a sacrifice. But I would remind them that for all technical purposes, the courts are closed, and so they are not entitled to much sympathy at our hands. (Laughter). But Sir Phiroze Sethna will forgive me if I say that there is hardly a minute of his time which he does not devote to business of a character which adds, if I may say so, to the wealth of our country. Many of you perhaps are not aware that there is hardly an important business body or trust or directorate in Bombay of which he is not a member. If you would forgive me, Mr. President, you should have been given a very heavy sitting fee, because in accepting the responsibilities of this office, you have come at a sacrifice. Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to think that we have been able to drag him, as it were, to the active work of this Federation, and I have no doubt that in the years to come, and particularly in the next year when a great deal of heavy and delicate and responsible work has to be done, Sir Phiroze Sethna will be of most valuable service. (Cheers). I do not think it is proper that I should detain you much longer.

I am sure in these few days you have watched the method and manner in which Sir Phiroze Sethna has conducted himself as the President, and I am sure many of you have been struck by the exceedingly businesslike manner in which he has carried on the business of the Subjects Committee. That reminds me of the useful training and experience which commercial leaders like him get by sitting at important meetings of directorates in the country. I am confident that Sir Phiroze will bring to bear in the conduct of our work in the coming year the same enthusiasm, the same fire and the same eloquence which he has always displayed in causes dear to him. (Cheers).

RAO BAHADUR RAMASWAMI SIVAN

Mr. Ramaswami Sivan, in supporting the resolution, said : Gentlemen, our revered leader, Mr. N. Subba Rao, had a right to speak about the qualities of head and heart and the tact and cleverness of Sir Phiroze Sethna. Our friend Mr. G. A. Natesan speaks of him because he has sat with him in the Council of State and other bodies, and he knows him first-hand. But to most of us, Sir, you were on your trial when you came here. (Laughter). A President's duty, I believe, consists of reading an address as usual and seeing that the business is properly conducted. So far as your address goes, I believe you have given a proper, correct direction to the country in all possible ways. So far as your conduct of business is concerned, it was rather very easy for you. (Laughter.) There was no turbulence, no kind of noise created, and there were very few points of order which you had to decide. So far as that aspect of the work was concerned, I believe you have done just what any other President would have done. (Laughter). I wish there were more of hubbub, more points of order you had to decide, then we would have seen whether you would have done that work better. Now, so far as we know, you have done the work as President very very satisfactorily for which we are recording a vote of thanks. But it is with reference to the first duty I have mentioned that we are particularly indebted to you. You have spoken in your address straight and to the point. You have told us exactly what are the dangers ahead and how we have got to proceed. I believe I am the latest recruit to the Party. But I may tell you, Sir, that we are all very much indebted to you for the lead you have given to the country, and I am sure we will all profit by it.

My good friend, Mr. Subba Rao Pantulu, has appealed to the nation that, side by side with the Congress organisation preaching Independence, under your guidance, the Council and Committee of the Federation this year should organise the country for Dominion Status, and I am sure the country will realise that Dominion Status is of greater importance to it at this time than Independence.

MR. DAWOOD ALI

Mr. Dawood Ali, in further supporting the proposition, said :

Mr. President, Chairman of the Reception Committee, Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the younger generation, it is my privilege to thank the President for conducting the deliberations of this Conference in a successful manner. Sir, we find that India is passing through a very critical stage, especially after the chaos and disorder at Lahore and other places. We, young men, especially of Northern India, meet in conferences and declare Independence, at one time in Bombay and at another in

Bengal. We, young men, have to understand, before we resolve whether it is possible to get Independence, that to pass Independence resolutions on a scrap of paper is useless. I ask you, ladies and gentlemen : will you get us Independence? We cannot get Independence, and let me tell you that England will never give you Independence till you take it from her. Dominion Status is our goal. We have to fight it out and get it. As a matter fact, if we get Dominion Status to-morrow or in the near future, I will be the first man to go ahead of the Independence-walla and say : do give me Independence. Independence may be a goal, may be a dream, but, taking the present situation of India, let me say that Independence is a mere dream. We have to educate the masses and make them understand that Dominion Status is the only thing that will bring salvation to India. We want to be treated as equals with other nations, we want to be treated as equals with Englishmen. I am sure, Sir, under your leadership this year, we will be opening a new chapter and by the time we meet next year, we will all be Dominion-Status-wallas.

The resolution of thanks to the President was then put by the Chairman of the Reception Committee and declared carried unanimously amidst acclamations.

PRESIDENT'S CONCLUDING SPEECH

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I rise to thank you very cordially and to acknowledge with all the emphasis of which language is capable, my appreciation of the generous vote of thanks which you have just passed. The mover and the supporter have referred to me in very kind terms but the seconder has been carried away by his partiality towards me and has drawn a picture of me in which I fail to recognise myself. Any way, let me assure you that my mission to Madras, your reception of me and your cordial support throughout the session will remain with me a treasured memory for the rest of my years. Let me tell you, and that with no mock modesty that I felt considerable hesitation in accepting your invitation to preside over your deliberations, and yet if the session has been a success, the credit is all yours due to your hearty co-operation, to your good will and to your genuine and earnest desire to see the country progress on right and proper lines. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have been anxious to be absolutely fair to the British Government and to the British people in all that we have said, whilst maintaining and defending our claims and points of view. The present is the time when very great care is necessary in any resolutions we pass and in all that we say. The Federation has been inspired throughout by those high standards of thought, speech and debate which, I make bold to say, always characterise the proceedings of the Liberal party in this country.

My first duty on behalf of all delegates is to tender to the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, to the three Secretaries, the Honourable Mr. G. A. Natesan, Mr. Kolandavelu Mudaliar and Mr. Vinayaka Rao as well as to all the members of the Reception Committee our thanks for all their kindness, courtesy and attention to us since we have arrived here, and I know the same will be extended right up to the time of our going (laughter). As to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, you all know he is a host in himself. He is well known not only in Madras but

throughout the Presidency and now throughout the country. At very short notice, he accepted the office of Chairman of the Reception Committee, and not content with the excellent address he delivered which it was our good fortune to listen to, he has also been most hospitable to the delegates, and following his good example, other prominent citizens likewise extended to us their hospitality and for which we are greatly indebted to our esteemed friends, Dr. Besant, Kumararaja Muthiah Chettiyar and Mr. Abdul Hakim, the Sheriff of Madras. Whilst I thank the Reception Committee, you must allow me on behalf of the delegates to say a word or two in praise of the excellent service rendered by the band of volunteers. Theirs has been a labour of love, and they have done it very satisfactorily. They are thus preparing themselves to undertake heavier responsibility which must fall to their lot when they leave the schools or colleges to which they now belong.

May I next, on behalf of the Federation, thank every delegate, who has come from far and near to attend this Federation. It is the interest they evince in the Federation that has made them undertake this long journey and take part in these proceedings. We know that they will continue their interest. This is the time when we need most support to our cause from all quarters. I trust that the council of the Federation will not only organise Liberal Associations in large and small towns but also in villages and thus try to counteract the evil influence which the Congress is likely to create. You will agree with me that there is one amongst us to whom I may be permitted to make particular reference and that is our revered friend Dr. Besant. Dr. Besant's presence at any Conference or meeting or on any platform is bound to evoke enthusiasm and to strengthen our faith in our cause, whilst her sound judgment and constructive suggestions are to us a very valuable asset. There is not an Indian patriot who has done as much for the country as she has done (Applause) during the last half a century. She talked of Swaraj when Swaraj was a distant vision and dream. That vision is soon to become a reality, and we trust that her dream and our dreams will be realised within her own life-time (Cheers).

Mr. N. Subba Rao has told you that it is twelve years since we parted company with the Indian National Congress. We parted for the good reasons which Mr. Subba Rao explained to you. In these twelve years, we have met every year without fail at our annual sessions and we have tried to convince Government and the general public that so far as we Liberals are concerned, no matter how small our numbers, we are determined to carry on our fight for Dominion Status on no other than constitutional lines. For such advice and guidance, we are greatly indebted to President after President who have presided over our deliberations. In the eleven years before now we have had not eleven but nine Presidents. Sir Sivasawami Iyer and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had each of them the rare honour of being elected twice. Of these nine Presidents, the late lamented Sir Surendranath Bannerji is no longer with us. Dr. Paranjpye cannot be present here for he is at a distance of 6,000 miles away in London. It is most gratifying to us that every single remaining past President is personally present at this session. They are Sir Sivaswamy Iyer, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, Dewan Bahadur Govindaraghava Iyer, the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Moropant Joshi, and Sir Chiman-

lal Setalvad. Each of these gentleman is here to guide our deliberation at this critical moment of India's history. We are grateful to them all, for their leadership has been to us of great value. It is a strange coincidence that out of these nine Presidents, before now, with only one exception, namely, of Mr. Govindaraghava Iyer, all the others have, at some time or other, been closely connected with one or other Government in some capacity or other. The Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri went on behalf of Government and filled with very great distinction the office of Agent of the Government of India in South Africa. The other six have been associated either with the Central or the Provincial Government in the capacity either of a member of the Executive Council or a Minister. Each one of them therefore speaks with inside knowledge and consequently their views must command the highest respect not only with the general public but also with Government. Have Government here or in England ever paused to think why it is that these very men after having worked for years in the Government side feel it incumbent on themselves to criticise Government as they are doing? They do so because of their first-hand knowledge. They know exactly where the shoe pinches and can place their fingers on the weak spots. Government will therefore profit if they hearken to the views these leaders have expressed at our Federation and accept the resolution which we have passed principally at their instance.

I will not repeat or lay stress on our creed of Dominion Status. If England gives us Dominion Status very soon, England's moral claim to the maintenance of her connection with India will prove unassailable. National independence for India is really a wild cry and an impracticable proposition. It is no use speculating and building hopes on what may happen in the distant, very distant future. Empires have no doubt fallen in the past and they may fall in the future. But they have fallen from internal decay and degeneracy, from the growing incapacity and weakness of the ruling powers. They have not fallen so long as the ruling race has retained its vitality and its genius for Government, and above all, if and so long as it satisfies the legitimate aspirations of the people whom it has ruled. Those who think that national independence can be won by acts of violence are really rendering a disservice to the cause they have so much at heart. Independence will never come by such means. If independence comes at all at some remote date, it may come through Dominion Status should unfortunately the relations between Great Britain and the Dominions become so transformed or when the present equilibrium of the world's forces become so unstable that each Dominion thinks and feels that there is no alternative left for it but to become independent. If the advocates of national independence would think calmly and take long views, they would, in the interest of their own cause, not pursue what is and must be a chimera, as long as the present conditions exist, but agree to join forces with those, who, with superior insight and practical commonsense, would be content with the achievement of Dominion Status. Idealism is good, but it must not entirely ignore realities and sink into a barren and futile illusion. Even idealists ought to be practical and constructive, and make the best use of the opportunities as they arise.

About two years ago, you will remember we made common cause with our Swarajist friends and joined forces with them. It was as a

result of that association that we made our campaign of the boycott of Simon Commission most successful. I say so most advisedly. We now find that the proposed Round Table Conference is the direct result of the boycott of Simon Commission and we are greatly indebted to those who headed that campaign, viz., Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru in the North, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad in the West and Sir C. P. Ramsawamy Aiyer on this side. We hoped that co-operation would continue, and as Dewan Bahadur Rangachari explained to you yesterday, the Swarajists were themselves in favour of a Round Table Conference and had themselves suggested it. From the date of the announcement of 31st October by the Viceroy up to the fateful afternoon of 23rd December, we cherished hopes that we would all go to the Round Table Conference and try to obtain Dominion Status for India in far quicker time than Government would care to give it to us. At that memorable interview which the "big five" had with the Viceroy on 23rd December and at which our views were expressed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the two men who representing the Swarajists suddenly veered round. If they had done so, they would not be responsible for what they are doing now in Lahore. Swarajists might have doubted the sincerity of the promises made in the past by either the Liberal or the Conservative Government. There was good reason for that and no mistake. But the Labour Government professes different principles. There are some of us here present who know Mr. Wedgwood Benn personally and we recognise that it is his honest intention to act up to those principles. Mr. Wedgwood Benn's intention is to advance India to the fullest extent that he can possibly go to. The Swarajists have therefore thrown away this most excellent opportunity which is most deplorable from the country's point of view. What do they now propose? They are leading the country to nothing short of disaster. It will not mean disaster to those handful of men who, with vociferous voices, are at this very moment clamouring in the Congress 'mandup' for independence. It will result in disaster to poor innocents. These men who shout at the top of their voices will be in the background. They can only get independence by revolution and by anarchy. Mr. Gandhi declares himself to be a great pacifist. Non-violent non-co-operation has been his motto all his life. Does he for a moment believe with his experience, and can we with our bitter experience in the past expect that there can possibly be non-violent non-co-operation? I say non-violent non-co-operation is a pure myth and is impossible. It will simply end in bloodshed and loss of life not in hundreds but in thousands and I have no hesitation in saying that the blood of the innocents will be on the heads of those men who are mainly responsible for the attitude that the Congress is now adopting. Even the President of the National Congress has said in so many words that he expects violence, and he has not hesitated to endorse it. Very often the instance of Ireland is quoted. Are there in Ireland as many religions as we profess in this country. Even Ireland, in spite of its long and bitter struggle, has not been able to secure that undiluted independence which it cried for. The north of Ireland desired to remain and has remained connected with Great Britain. I am reminded of what Sir Chimanlal Setalvad said yesterday. He asked what is to be the financial and economical position of India if we get independence? Has Ireland advanced economically and financially ever since the establishment of the Free State? I say emphati-

cally no. India is proverbially poor. India has been exploited in the past. Even Mr. Wedgwood Benn has admitted this, and said the other day that further exploitations by Britishers must end. I am one of those who believe in co-operating with the Britisher in India for the purpose of progressing with our industries. There is not enough money in this country, and even if there is, it is not invested readily in industrial concerns. Again we have much to learn from the West and we shall be rendering a great service to our country if we work in co-operation with those who know better and who can also bring money into the country at cheaper rates of interest than we can get in India itself. We often quote the instance of Japan, then why not follow the Japanese for the purpose of attaining what success they have achieved? It is said they are ready to adapt themselves to what they find good in others, then adopt such new methods and finally become adepts. They freely availed themselves of the help of Europeans and Americans, until they were able to stand on their own legs. That is exactly what we should do, if we want to advance as fast as they have done. Financially, I repeat we are proverbially a poor country. For many of the loans we want we have to go to England. The Finance Member, Sir George Schuster, quite recently went to England for raising a new loan for India. Do you believe that Great Britain or any other country will lend one rupee to India, if, in the present state of affairs, we are an independent country? Will that mean prosperity to the country or will it not mean financial ruin? Independence is a false cry, and it is not going to help India in the slightest degree. The Congress idea reeks of Bolshevism pure and simple and will lead the country to chaos and confusion, to revolution and anarchy. At this very moment, the Congress must be discussing the Independence resolution, and I trust that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mr. Kelkar who had the courage to oppose it in the Subjects Committee will have equal courage to oppose it in open Congress, and walk out if the resolution is passed, and join our party. If they love their Motherland, it is their bounden duty to fight the Independence creed.

Whilst we feel no hesitation in condemning the Congress resolution, we must once again warn the British Government that it cannot afford to delay any longer the grant of Dominion Status. Their duty at present is to conciliate India to the fullest measure that may be possible. England is great, she is mighty, and is powerful. But let her stoop to conquer the heart of India by the immediate grant of full responsible government and Dominion Status. Such a full and whole-hearted response to the demand and wishes of India will enormously strengthen the British connection, cut the ground from under the feet of those who seek to break that connection, and in every way, improve the relation between the British and the Indian people. If ever India is a 'Lost Dominion', what Britain will deplore most will be the loss of her commercial relations with this country that is bound to follow and which have so greatly enriched her in the past and will enrich her yet more in the future if the relations between the two countries continue friendly. H. R. H. the Prince of Wales some months ago referred to the component parts of the British Commonwealth as partners in a great commercial firm. Speaking in July last at a dinner in London given by the Empire Marketing Board, I referred to this statement by the Prince and pointed out that India should

rightly be regarded as the most senior partner because she was the largest purchaser of British goods as compared to the other partners. Without India as a part of the British Commonwealth, England will not be the great power that she is. The time had gone by when Britain could dictate to India as to the quantity and quality of self-government that it could dole out. Indians do not now demand Dominion Status as a gift, they demand it as a matter of right, and England must give it as much in her own interest as in that of India and the Indians, and can no longer afford to put it off to the Greek Kalends. I only hope the British Government, in the words of the late Mr. Gokhale, does not now stand considering, hesitating, receding, debating within itself, "to grant or not to grant", while the opportunity rushes past it never to return.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you one and all for the success that has attended this Federation. In conclusion, I express the hope that there will be a better and wider appreciation of the aims, the achievements and the ideals of the Liberal Party in India and that in the year which we begin to-morrow, it will gain a large accession of numerical strength, commensurate with the greatness and the soundness of its principles, its policy and its programme.

AN ANONYMOUS DONOR

After the President's concluding speech, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, making an announcement, said: Friends, I am glad now to be able to make an announcement which will be of happy augury and which will hearten many of us in the work to which we have been called from to-morrow. It is my very pleasant duty to announce that a certain friend of ours has placed at our disposal a sum of over Rs. 13,000 for our work. (Cheers).

Three cheers to the President and another three cheers to the anonymous donor were then proposed and enthusiastically responded to.

The session then concluded.

The delegates were entertained to lunch by Mr. C. Abul Hakim Sahib, Sheriff of Madras.

APPENDIX.—A

THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION OF INDIA.

XII Session, Gokhale Hall, Madras.

29th, 30th and 31st December, 1929.

The following is the full text of the Resolutions passed at the twelfth session of the National Liberal Federation of India held at Madras on the 29th, 30th and 31st December 1929:—

MESSAGE TO H. E. THE VICEROY

1. This Federation strongly condemns the dastardly attempt to wreck His Excellency the Viceroy's train and conveys to Their Excellencies the Viceroy and Lady Irwin its congratulations on the providential escape of themselves and their party. The Federation places on record its abhorrence and detestation of the crime which is wholly repugnant to the spirit of Indian life and culture.

The Federation authorises the President to convey this resolution to His Excellency the Viceroy by telegram.

DEPARTED PATRIOTS

2. This Federation places on record its sense of the great loss sustained by the country in the passing away of Mr. Narayan Vishnu Gokhale, Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis and Mr. Justice Gokarnath Misra who were distinguished members of the Liberal Party.

THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

3. The National Liberal Federation of India cordially welcomes the Announcement made on October 31, 1929, by His Excellency the Viceroy as it authoritatively confirms the view that Dominion Status for India was what was intended by the Declaration of 1917, as it definitely recognises that British India and the Indian States should together form a Greater United India and as it concedes India's claim to a right to confer on a footing of equality with the British Cabinet on the form of the future constitution of India.

The Federation further resolves that the Liberal Party do participate in the deliberations of the Conference contemplated in the Announcement. This Federation strongly urges that the Round Table Conference should be held as early as possible in 1930 and that the progressive elements in the country should have preponderant representation therein.

DOMINION STATUS CONSTITUTION

4. This Federation urges upon all Parties in India which accept the recent Announcement of His Excellency the Viceroy whole-heartedly and are prepared to secure its complete and immediate realisation to combine together for the purpose of securing a Constitution based on Dominion Status, with such safeguards and reservations as may be necessary for the period of transition.

INDIAN STATES AND REFORMS

5. (a) This Federation notes with gratification the acceptance by prominent rulers of Indian States of the implications of the Announcement of

H. E. the Viceroy and recognises that in any future Constitution of India based upon Dominion Status, suitable guarantees should be provided for continuance of their rights and their obligations regarding the internal autonomy of Indian States.

(b) This Federation trusts that the Rulers of Indian States will themselves reorganise the system of administration in their respective States and level up the standards of administration in the States so as to approximate them to the form of Government prevailing in British India.

THE EAST AFRICAN QUESTION

6. This Federation views with grave alarm the recommendation in the Report of Sir Samuel Wilson for an increase in the proportion of the representatives of the European community on the Legislative Council of Kenya, to the serious detriment of the interests of the African Natives as well as of the Indian community in that Colony and is strongly of opinion that no constitutional advance be sanctioned in any of the East African Colonies till the Natives are able to take an effective share in the representation by means of election on a common franchise in common electorates. The Federation therefore supports the recommendation of the Hilton-Young Commission in favour of a substitution of common for the existing separate electorates and calls upon the Imperial Government to start inquiries with a view to establishing a common roll in the interest not only of the Indian community but of the whole Colony.

GENERAL SECRETARIES FOR 1930

7. Resolved that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, K.C.I.E. and the Hon'ble Rao Bahadur G. A. Natesan be the Honorary Joint General Secretaries of the National Liberal Federation of India for the year 1930.

(Mr. C. Y. Chintamani then read out the list of Members of the All-India Council for the year 1930).

APPRECIATION OF RETIRING SECRETARIES' SERVICES

8. The Federation places on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered by Mr. C. Y. Chintamani and Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru as General Secretaries of the Federation.

THE WHITLEY COMMISSION

9. That this Federation invites the attention of the Government to the necessity of asking the Whitley Commission to expedite their work and to take effective action on it with a view to ameliorate the present situation.

PROPAGANDA FOR DOMINION STATUS

10. That this Federation appoints a committee of eight members to collect materials and prepare the case for Dominion Status and to authorise the President to meet the necessary costs from the Party funds.

Names of Committee Members

1. Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer
2. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer
3. Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar
4. Mr. C. Y. Chintamani
5. Sir Moropant Joshi
6. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad
7. Sir Sankar Rao Chitnavis
8. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (Convener)

APPENDIX.—B

Dominion Status Constitution

An Appeal for Unity

As a corollary to Resolution IV (moved by the Rt. Hon. Sastri) "urging upon all Parties in India which accept the recent Announcement of H. E. the Viceroy whole-heartedly and are prepared to secure its complete and immediate realisation to combine together for the purpose of securing a Constitution based on Dominion Status", the President read the following statement of the Liberal Party and announced the appointment of a committee consisting of Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (Convener and Chairman of the Committee), Dr. Annie Besant, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Sir M. V. Joshi, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao, the Hon. Mr. G. A. Natesan and Sir Pheroze Sethna to give effect to the resolution:—

The march of events during the last two months and particularly during the last few days, makes it imperative that the Liberal Federation should make an appeal to those in the country who have hitherto pinned their faith to the achievement by India of Dominion Status as an integral member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Announcement made by His Excellency the Viceroy on the 31st October last, with the full consent and authority of His Majesty's Government, evoked a remarkable feeling of response in the country and from the Indian Princes, which led us to believe that the solution of the difficulties with which we have been confronted was at last within sight. The debates that followed in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons unfortunately gave rise to a great deal of misunderstanding with regard to the meaning and effect of the purpose and scope of British policy adumbrated by His Excellency the Viceroy. Nevertheless, those of us who realize the political conditions surrounding the Labour Government in England were disposed and are still disposed to attach far greater significance and weight to the authoritative statements made by His Majesty's Government through the Secretary of State in England and the Viceroy in India, than to their critics in Parliament or in the English Press.

As we read the situation, the essential condition of success at the Round Table Conference is that there should be the maximum amount of agreement among ourselves in India. If we can secure such agreement, our representatives at the Round Table Conference will be able to press with every hope of success for complete Dominion Status being established, subject to such safeguards and reservations including the protection of the interests and rights of minorities as may be necessary in the presents conditions of India for the period of transition. We have always been anxious that in order to produce a favourable atmosphere the Government in India should implement the new policy by action calculated to remove all causes of irritation and produce calm and good-will.

We must deplore that just at this moment when our attention should be fixed on matters affecting the future of this country, an attempt should have been made to wreck the train of His Excellency the Viceroy, who has, during the last few months, by identifying himself with the Indian cause, earned our gratitude and

admiration in a special measure. Outrages of this character, wholly inconsistent as they are with the Indian outlook on life, so far from helping our cause, are bound to create, in the minds of our opponents, prejudice against us; but we sincerely hope and trust that the situation will be dealt with on its own merits, uninfluenced by the misdeeds of those who take a perverted view of freedom and patriotism.

We firmly believe that the only rallying cry which can unite Hindus, Muhammadans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, the Europeans, the propertied classes and the labouring and depressed classes can be Dominion Status for India, not as a distant goal or ideal but as an object capable of achievement within the shortest possible limit of time. In a Constitution seeking to give India the status of a Dominion, there will be no difficulty in making ample provision for the safeguarding of her security against internal trouble and foreign aggression during the period of transition. The mutual relations of British India and Indian States can also be satisfactorily defined and provision made for their future regulation consistently, on the one hand, with the Dominion Status now contemplated, and, on the other, with the autonomy of the Indian States. Those of us who believe in the peaceful evolution of India cannot but deplore that any section of the people of this country should raise the cry of independence and involve our future in turmoil and confusion. Believing as we do that the Labour Government and Lord Irwin are in real earnest in seeking an acceptable solution of the constitutional problem, we should be guilty of utter short-sightedness and lack of statesmanship if we fail to seize the opportunity that has been extended to us. We realise that the task of those who believe in Dominion Status and who are prepared to work for it has become more difficult by reason of the attitude adopted by one leading political organization in India and that their responsibility has become all the greater. But if all the other parties who believe in Dominion Status will join hands together in pressing India's claim, there is no reason why we should not achieve it. But this makes it necessary that the internal differences which divide one community from another should be composed in a just and generous manner. Believing as we do in principles of justice and equality and fairness to all parties and communities and interests, we make an earnest appeal to all those whose objective is Dominion Status to devise a means of common deliberation. If such an attempt is made and we proceed about our business in a spirit of give and take, we are confident of a settlement amongst ourselves which will expedite and facilitate the work of the Round Table Conference in London. It is in that hope and belief that we issue this appeal. As a necessary preliminary we shall appoint a small Committee of our own Party with power to co-operate with representatives of other parties for the purpose of taking the necessary initiative.

APPENDIX.—C

The Indian National Liberal Council for 1930

Elected at the Twelfth session of the National Liberal Federation of India held at Madras on December 29, 30 and 31, 1929.

Chairman.

- ✓ 1. The Hon. Sir Phiroze Sethna, Canada Building, Hornby Road, Bombay.

Vice-Chairmen.

2. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Sudharma, Edward Elliott's Road, Mylapore, Madras.
3. Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, M.L.C., 17, Hamilton Road, Allahabad.
4. Diwan Bahadur L. A. Govindaraghava Aiyar, Mylapore, Madras.
5. The Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C., C.H., Servants of India Society, Royapettah High Road, Madras.
6. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, K.C.S.I., LL.D., 19, Albert Road, Allahabad.
7. Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, India Office, London.
8. Sir Moropant Joshi, K.C.I.E., Amraoti (Camp.)
9. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, K.C.I.E., LL.D., Malabar Hill, Bombay.

General Secretaries.

- ✓ 10. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, K.C.I.E., The Grove, Cathedral P.O., Madras.
- ✓ 11. The Hon. Rao Bahadur G. A. Natesan, Mangala Vilas, Mylapore.

Nominated by the President.

- ✓ 12. Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Junior), K.C.I.E., Malabar Hill, Bombay.
13. Sir Devaprasad Sarvadhikari, C.I.E., C.B.E., LL.D., 20, Suri Lane, Calcutta.
14. The Hon. Sir Shankar Rao Chitnavis, I.S.O., P.L.C., Civil Lines, Nagpur.
15. Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, M.L.A., 1, Katra Road, Allahabad.
16. Mr. A. P. Sen, Lucknow.

MADRAS.

17. Dr. Annie Besant, P. T. S., Adyar, Madras.
18. Mr. N. Subbarao Pantulu, Rajahmundry.
- ✓ 19. Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai, C.I.E., Gooty.
20. Raja Sir Vasudeva Raja of Kollengode, Kollengode.
21. The Hon. Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar of Chettinad, Vepery, Madras.
22. Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, C.I.E., Egmore, Madras.
23. Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao, Ellore.
24. Mr. B. Venkatapathi Raju, C.I.E., Vizagapatam.
- ✓ 25. Sir A. P. Patro, Berhampore.
- ✓ 26. Diwan Bahadur N. Pattabhirama Rao.
27. Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, C.I.E., Mylapore, Madras.
28. Rao Bahadur Dr. C. B. Rama Rao, Bangalore.
- ✓ 29. Rao Bahadur C. S. Subrahmanyam, Mayavaram.
30. Rao Bahadur S. V. Narasimha Rao, Kurnool.
31. Mr. M. G. Mukundaraja Iyengar, Devakottah.
32. Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Devakottah.
33. Mr. M. Kolandavelu Mudaliar, Sunkurama Chetty Street, Madras.
- ✓ 34. Mr. K. R. Venkatarama Iyer, B.A., B.L., Madura.

- 35. Dr. P. Rama Rao, George Town, Madras.
- 36. Mr. E. Vinayaka Rao, Advocate, Mylapore, Madras.
- 37. Mr. Ati Narayana Pantulu, Vizianagaram.
- 38. Janab C. Abdul Hakim, Sheriff of Madras, Periamet, Madras.
- 39. Mr. V. Venkata Subbaiya, Servants of India Society, Royapetta High Road, Madras.
- 40. Mr. T. V. Rangachariar, Advocate, Chittoor.
- 41. Mr. M. Subbaraya Aiyar, Advocate, Pelatope, Mylapore, Madras.

BOMBAY.

- 42. Sir Byramjee Jeejeebhoy, Alice Building, Hornby Road, Bombay.
- 43. Mr. Bhalubhai Desai, Malabar Hill, Bombay.
- 44. Rao Bahadur R. R. Kale, Satara.
- 45. Mr. G. K. Devadhar, C.I.E., Servants of India Society, Sandhurst Road, Bombay.
- 46. Mr. K. S. Jatar, C.I.E., Poona City.
- 47. Mr. N. M. Joshi, M.L.A., Servants of India Society, Sandhurst Road, Bombay.
- 48. Mr. Chunilal M. Gandhi, Surat.
- 49. Mr. D. G. Dalvi, 217, Charni Road, Bombay.
- 50. Mr. G. K. Gadgil, Gadgil House, Poona City.
- 51. Mr. H. G. Gharpurey, I.C.S. (Retired), Poona City.
- 52. J. R. Gharpure, Law College, Poona City.
- 53. Mr. L. G. Mahajani, Sadashiv Peth, Poona City.
- 54. Mr. Manu Subedar, Kodak House, Hornby Road, Bombay.
- 55. Mr. J. R. B. Jeejeebhoy, Alice Building, Hornby Road, Bombay.
- 56. Mr. Jehangir C. Vatcha, c/o Hankong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Church Gate Street, Bombay.
- 57. Mr. Faiz Tyabji, Malabar Hill, Bombay.
- 58. Mr. V. N. Chandavarkar, Malabar Hill, Bombay.
- 59. Mr. Vasantarao S. Raout, Near French Bridge, Bombay.
- 60. Mr. M. D. Altekar, Ville Parle, B.B. & C.I.RAILWAY.
- 61. Mr. N. R. Wadia, 120, Wodehouse Road, Bombay.
- 62. Mr. H. P. Chahewala, Ahmedabad.

BENGAL.

- 63. Babu Jatindra Nath Basu, 14, Balaram Ghose Street, Calcutta.
- 64. Principal Heramba Chandra Maitra, 65, Harrison Road, Calcutta.
- 65. Babu Krishna Kumar Mitra, 6, College Square, Calcutta.
- 66. Rai Ramani Mohan Das Bahadur, Karimganj, Sylhet.
- 67. Mr. D. C. Ghose, 23, Debender Ghose Road, Bhowanipur, Calcutta.
- 68. Babu Sachindra Prasad Basu, 6, College Square, Calcutta.
- 69. Mr. S. M. Bose, 3, Federation Road, Calcutta.
- 70. Babu Manmatha Nath Sen, 44, Ramananda Bose Street, Calcutta.
- 71. Khan Bahadur Moulvi Ekramul Haq, Berhampur, Bengal.
- 72. The Rev. B. A. Nag, 1/2, College Square, Calcutta.
- 73. Babu Satinath Roy, 12, Holwell's Lane, Calcutta.
- 74. Rai Fanindra Lal De Bahadur, 99, Grey Street, Calcutta.
- 75. Babu Surèsh Chandra Basu, 11, Krishnaram Bose Street, Calcutta.
- 76. Mr. C. C. Biswas, 58, Puddupuker Road, Bhowanipur, Calcutta.
- 77. Mr. H. M. Bose, Rowland Road, Ballygunge, Calcutta.

78. Babu Nibaran Chandra Roy, 29, Beadon Row, Beadon Street, P.O., Calcutta.
79. Prof. B. B. Roy, Calcutta Hotel, Mirzapur Square, Calcutta.
80. Mr. B. K. Chaudhuri, 99/1 C, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.
81. Pandit Shankarlal Chanbe, 183, Raja Devindra Street, Calcutta.
82. Mr. Prafulla Nath Tagore, 1, Durponarain Tagore Street, Calcutta.
83. Babu Manoranjan Mullick, 3, Chakraberia Lane, Calcutta.
84. Mr. Ramani Mohan Sen, Berhampore, Bengal.
85. Dr. Santiram Chatterjee, Medical Club, 62, Bow Bazaar Street, Calcutta.
86. Mr. B. K. Basu, Goaltuli Road, Calcutta.
87. Mr. Devi Prasad Khaitan, Canning Street, Calcutta.

THE UNITED PROVINCES.

88. The Hon. Munshi Narayan Prasad Asthana, Canning Road, Allahabad.
89. Rai Braj Narain Gurtu, Hamilton Road, Allahabad.
90. Rai Krishnaji, Pandepur, Benares Cantonment.
91. Pandit Iqbal Narain Gurtu, M.L.C., Santi Kunj, Kamachcha, Benares City.
92. Pandit Krishna Prasad Kaul, Aminuddowlah Park, Lucknow.
93. Rao Krishnapal Singh, M.L.C., Castle Grant, Agra.
94. Pandit Venkatesh Narayan Tivarr, M.L.C., Kydganj, Allahabad.
95. Pandit Gopinath Kunzru, Edmonstone Road, Allahabad.
96. Mr. S. P. Andrews Dube, Servants of India Society, Aminabad Park, Lucknow.
97. Rai Bahadur Thakur Hanuman Singh, M.L.C., Rehwan, Rai Bareille Dist., Oudh.
98. Mr. Surendra Nath Varma, 3, Stanley Road, Allahabad.
99. Mr. Kamala Kant Varma, Elgin Road, Allahabad.
100. Mehta Krishna Ram Esq., Leader Buildings, Allahabad.
101. Kumar Rajendra Singh M.L.C., Tikra House, 23, Cantonment Road, Lucknow.
102. Babu Vishwanath Prasad, Leader Buildings, Allahabad.
103. Rai Bahadur Lala Mathura Prasad Mehratra, M.L.C., Biswan, Sitapur Dt., Oudh.
104. Mr. P. N. Sapru, 19, Albert Road, Allahabad.
105. Babu Gauri Shankar Prasad Bulanala, Benares City.
106. Mr. Dalip Mansingh, Fatehpur, E. I. Ry.
107. Babu Bodh Raj Sahney, Sipri, Barar, Jhansi.
108. Babu Radha Mohan, Jaunpur.
109. Rai Bahadur Lala Bihari Lal, M.L.C., Ranimandi, Allahabad.
110. Khan Bahadur Munshi Muhammad Ismail, M.L.C., Gorakhpur.
111. Pandit Parmeshwar Nath Sapru, Fyzabad.
112. Rai Bahadur Pandit Badri Datt Joshi, Nainital.

THE PUNJAB.

113. Rai Bahadur Dr. Moti Sagar, Lahore.
114. Pandit Hardatta Sharma, Servants of India Society, McLeod Road, Lahore.
115. Mian Abdul Aziz, Zakki Gate, Lahore.

115. Pandit K. N. Agnihotri, C/o Devanand Brothers, Nila Gumbad,
Lahore.
117. Khan Bahadur Mian Chirag Din, Murang, Lahore.
118. Moulvi Mahbub Alum, Paise Akhbar Street, Lahore.
119. Lala Kesho Ram, Vakil, Amritsar.
120. Lala Faqir Chand, Fane Road, Lahore.
121. Lala Durgadas, Fane Road, Lahore.
122. Khan Saheb Gul Mohomed, Ferokepur.
123. Chaudhuri Ata Mohiuddin, Hoshiarpur.
124. Mr. Chunilal Mathur, Bar.-at-law, Lower Mall, Lahore.
125. Khan Bahadur Shaik Amir Ali, Mohanlal Road, Lahore.
126. Rai Bahadur Lala Dhanpal Rai, Ferokepur Road, Lahore.

BIHAR AND ORISSA

127. Babu Bhagavati Saran Singh, M.L.C., Maksudpur House, Gaya.
128. Mr. Lakshmi Narayan Sahu, Servants of India Society, Cuttack.

THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

129. Sir Sorabji Mehta, C.I.E., The Empress Mills, Nagpur.
130. Sir Bisheshar Das Gaya, Nagpur.
131. Rao Bahadur V. M. Kelkar, Craddock Town, Nagpur.
132. Rai Bahadur D. N. Chaudhuri, Raipur.
133. Rao Bahadur A. S. Bambewalla, Craddock Town, Nagpur.
134. Rai Bahadur N. G. Bose, Civil Lines, Nagpur.
135. Rao Bahadur D. Lakshmi Narayan, Kamptee.
136. Rao Bahadur M. G. Deshpande, Nagpur.
137. Pandit Sita Charan Dube, Hoshangabad.
138. Mr. M. E. R. Malak, Craddock Town, Nagpur.
139. Mr. N. A. Dravid, Craddock Town, Nagpur.
140. Mr. Sridhar Rao Gokhale, Sitabalji, Nagpur.

BERAR

141. Rao Bahadur K. G. Damle, C.I.E., Akola.
142. Rao Bahadur R. G. Mundle, Yeotmal.
143. Rao Bahadur B. R. Angal, Amraoti.
144. Rao Bahadur D. V. Bhagavat, Akola.
145. Rao Bahadur B. V. Dravid, Yeotmal.
146. Rao Bahadur K. V. Brahma, Amraoti (Camp.)
147. Rao Bahadur R. V. Mahajani, Akola.
148. Rao Bahadur Dr. W. R. Bhat, Amraoti.
149. Rao Bahadur R. M. Khare, Amraoti (Camp.)
150. Rao Bahadur Seth Ganesh Das, Amraoti (Camp.)
151. Mr. V. K. Rajwade, Akola.
152. Mr. J. Bajirao Deshmukh, Amraoti.
153. Mr. Shankar Rao Bhalchandra, Yeotmal.
154. Mr. T. R. Gadre, Akola.
155. Mr. R. K. Thambre, Akola.
156. Mr. V. T. Deshpande, Yeotmal.

APPENDIX.—D.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION OF INDIA.

(As determined by Resolutions passed by the Federation at its second, third and sixth sessions held in the years 1919, 1920, 1923, 1924, 1925 and 1927.)

1. The object of the National Liberal Federation of India and its component organizations is the attainment by constitutional means of Swaraj (Responsible Self-Government and Dominion Status for India) at the earliest possible date.

The Federation and its component organizations will aim at a higher standard of national efficiency by means of administrative reforms, the wider spread of education, the improvement of public health, economic development, the promotion of inter-communal unity and the amelioration of the condition of the backward classes of the population.

2. The Indian Association and the Bengal National Liberal League, Calcutta; the National Liberal Association of Western India, Bombay; the Madras Liberal League, Madras; the United Provinces Liberal Association, Allahabad; the Punjab Liberal League, Lahore; the National Liberal League of the Central Provinces, Nagpur; the Berar Liberal League, Akola; the Deccan Sabha, Poona, and other Liberal associations or leagues which may adopt the objects and methods of the National Liberal Federation and may be recognized in this behalf by the Indian National Liberal Council shall be component parts of the National Liberal Federation of India.

3. The work of the Federation shall be carried on between one annual session and another by a council called the Indian National Liberal Council, consisting of the office-bearers, five members nominated by the President and not more than twenty-five members from each province elected by the Federation at the annual session.

4. The office-bearers shall be the President of the last previous annual session of the Federation, who shall be the Chairman of the Council; the ex-Presidents, who shall be Vice-Chairmen, and one or more General Secretaries.

5. Every member of the Council shall pay an annual subscription of Rs. 25.

6. The members of the Associations or Leagues which are component parts of the Federation and such other persons as may be elected by their committees are eligible for membership of the annual session of the Federation. Every member who attends a session shall pay such fee as may be fixed by the reception committee.

7. The Indian National Liberal Council is authorized to set up a working committee and to delegate to it such functions as it may deem fit, and further, to constitute from time to time standing or special committees to deal with specific subjects or matters. Standing and special committees may co-opt as members Liberal as well as other persons who approve of the general policy of the Federation, but do not belong to any Liberal organization. The number of co-opted members may not exceed one-third of the total number of members of a committee.

8. Every reception committee shall remit to the general secretary or secretaries after the conclusion of the annual session the equivalent of fifty pounds sterling for financing work in England in the furtherance of India's cause.