

THE Servant of India

Editor: V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

Vol. 1, No. 21.]

POONA—THURSDAY, JULY 11, 1918.

[ANNUAL SUBSN.: Rs. 4

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE lull on the Western front still continues, except for some local advantages obtained by the French and the Australians. The long-talked of German offensive has not become a reality and speculation is rife as to the causes of the delays. Some people suggest the want of man power as the cause, while others are of opinion that the Germans are waiting for long range guns to bombard Paris from a distance. Later telegrams attribute the delay to political considerations. It seems the Kaiser and some of his important military commandants are conferring together and the final decision will be taken after they finish their deliberations. All this is mere guess-work and we must continue to be as completely in the dark as we have been for some time to come. The Italians are improving their position on the Piave. In the lower part of the river they have taken possession of the right bank and thus strengthened the position of Venice for defensive purposes. Higher up the enemy would still appear to be in possession of some portions of the right bank, although the Italians have succeeded in capturing some positions which were in the hands of the enemy for more than six months.

WE have received for publication the following manifesto, signed by the Hon. Sir G. M. Chitnavis, Mr. M. V. Joshi, the Hon. Sir Bipin Krishna Bose, and Messrs. M. B. Dadabhoy, V. R. Pandit, N. A. Dravid, N. G. Bose, B. D. Mehta, S. B. Mehta, Shankar Rao Chitnavis and Vinayakrao Kelkar:—
“ We have read the Constitutional Reform report. Reserving comments on the proposals regarding the Imperial Government and confining ourselves to the scheme regarding the provinces, so far as it affects our province we are of opinion that the

scheme is conceived in the right spirit and constitutes a genuine attempt to put India on the path towards the attainment of responsible government within a reasonable period. We welcome it as a substantial first instalment by way of fulfilment of the pronouncement of the 20th August last. Closer examination of details must necessarily be deferred.”

* * *

MR. LIONEL CURTIS is generally believed to have suggested to Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu the dyarchic basis of their proposals of reform. Other ideas of his are criticised in their report and rejected. The name of Mr. Curtis was, at one time, the occasion for much hostile and vehement comment. In our leading article in this issue we have referred to his influence on the report, but not with approbation. We feel it the more our duty, therefore, to acknowledge the diligence and thoroughness, with which he conducted his enquiries in India, and the unruffled thoughtfulness and steady gaze on the future which he brought to bear in framing his plans for reconstruction in India. We wish to give public testimony to the sincerity of his desire to promote the cause of Indian self-government.

* * *

THOSE who have much are given more and those who have little have even that little snatched away from them. The European medical officers whose position and prospects are much better than those of the Indian medicos, are apparently dissatisfied with their lot and quite satisfied with that of their Indian *confreres*. This interesting frame of mind is illustrated by the agitation begun by the British Medical Association to vest the entire control of the Indian Medical Services in the hands of the European medical men. To this end, the British Medical Association has formulated a series of proposals, some of them being that the cadre of the I. M. S. should be greatly increased, that Indian candidates should be compelled to undergo training in British medical schools before they are taken in the service, and so forth. We are glad to see that the Madras Medical Association has come forward to fight these pernicious proposals, none too soon. Their lot is much inferior to that of Europeans, and it is their duty, therefore, not only to safeguard their own interests and try to get their prospects improved, but also to prevent any further encroachments on the part of their European colleagues.

THE REFORM PROPOSALS.

THOSE that wish to judge fairly of the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals agree that the best way of doing so is to test them by the principles of the Congress-League scheme and see if they disclose a substantial compliance therewith. This is not an easy task. For unfortunately the proposals are somewhat complicated by reason of the principle of responsible government, which the authors have felt bound to introduce by the terms of the declaration of His Majesty's Government of last August, and the checks and safeguards which are in consequence rendered necessary. It is permissible to doubt that the declaration necessarily prescribes the introduction of responsible government at the very beginning of the constitutional march of India towards the appointed goal, or that the Congress-League scheme, which had been formulated before the date of the declaration and did not include any provision for responsible government, should for that reason be set aside. But it is useless at this stage to quarrel with Mr. Montagu's interpretation of a document, in the composition of which he must have had at least a considerable share. Nor is it possible to dislodge the almost superstitious veneration in which lovers of the English constitution hold the power of making and unmaking ministries as the highest symbol of fully developed popular government. To secure the progressive realisation in India of this power of making and unmaking ministries, the Viceroy and the Secretary of State are about to ask the sanction of the precedent-loving British nation for the inauguration of an unprecedented experiment in the history of the world, *viz.*, the schooling of a nation from stage to stage in the art of parliamentary self-rule. Mr. Lionel Curtis, to whom perhaps the origination of this idea of national schooling is due, would have brought to the task other ideas of the pedagogue as well-graduated exercises, periodical promotions, and so on. We must be thankful such obvious scholastic expedients are absent from the scheme now published, but we cannot resist the temptation of observing that Mr. Curtis's teaching is traceable in the pedantic emphasis laid on the training of electorates and in the inclusion of an irritating threat of disciplinary withdrawal of transferred subjects in case of unsatisfactory progress in any province. Let us, however, cheerfully accept the situation. The country hailed the famous declaration of August with joy, and the imagination of many eager patriots has been captured by the promise of full responsible government in explicit terms by the British Government. The actual provisions of the scheme, considering the difficulties attendant on all transitional arrangements, are carefully thought out and calculated, in the course of a generation, to take us to our destination. The authors do not forget that the success of their scheme depends on the mutual trust and co-operation of Europeans and Indians, on the exercise of

great tolerance and forbearance on both sides, on the recognition that the evolution from the present to full partnership in the Empire is a long and arduous aim, requiring the performance by us of a task which is both equally honourable and necessary, and that under conditions we know are never fully realised all high endeavour involving the fortunes of millions must be based on the expectation that such endeavours would be favoured to some extent by the Government. Appeals to good sense and common sense must be made from all quarters. They will have some effect, but we trust far more to the enlightened self-interest of all parties to make them bend their energies earnestly to the common purpose.

SUBSTANTIAL ELECTIVE MAJORITY.

According to Mr. Tilak, the principles of the Congress-League scheme are (1) a substantial majority of people's representatives in the legislative councils, (2) subordination of the executive to the legislature, (3) control of finance by the legislature. Now let us take the first principle. In the Government of India there are to be two Houses of Legislature, a Legislative Assembly and a Council of State. The Assembly is to have a two-thirds majority of elected members. This is substantial compliance with our test. But where there is a second House we are entitled to ask that, even if the first House is not wholly elective, it should be almost wholly so. One-third seems to be too large a proportion for the element of nomination. The Council of State has a liberal constitution for a second Chamber, with officials limited to one-half and the elected members coming up to 42 per cent. In the provincial Governments, the legislative council is to have a substantial elective majority. The plan of communal election being rejected, it is necessary for the protection of minorities to reserve a fraction of the seats to be filled up by nomination, and as this fraction will vary in the different provinces, it is not possible to fix it. We hope it will be kept as low as possible and would suggest that it should in no case be allowed to exceed one-fifth. It is hard to say which is more incompatible with responsible government, sectional election or Government nomination. The report argues cogently against the former, but it is possible to argue equally cogently against the latter. The important point is that the 'substantial' majority must be a really decisive majority. In regard to the Grand Committee, the nominated element is to be in a bare majority. Considering that it is the machinery devised for carrying out the wishes of the Government against the popular House, it must be acknowledged that the elective proportion is pitched as high as possible. Before coming to a judgment on this branch of the subject, it is necessary to remember that the class of Government nominees have shared in the general growth of independence and public spirit. Moreover, seeing that in the new regime even officials are to have freedom of speech and vote, except in certain cases, non-official nominees will

not be expected always to vote with Government. So then the scheme must be held on the whole to stand the first test.

SUBORDINATION OF EXECUTIVE.

Now to the second. The most conspicuous feature of the scheme is the responsibility of the executive to the legislature. It needs no saying that is the extreme sign of subordination. No doubt it is limited to the holders of certain portfolios, comprising the transferred subjects. Those in charge of the reserved subjects are also in some subordination to the legislature. One of them is an Indian. Their term of office is limited. The power of interpellation is to be enlarged. Some of the restrictions on the scope of resolutions are to be removed. The rules of business may be amended by the council itself, the power of legislation is to be absolute in the case of transferred departments, while in the case of the reserved ones it can only be overridden by the Governor certifying the bill in question and getting it passed by a Grand Committee. This process, in itself difficult, is rendered more difficult by the provision that, if the legislative council passes a resolution on the Bill in the final stage, it must be communicated to the Governor-General and the Secretary of State, whose sanction is required. Moreover, there is the Select Committee of the House of Commons, to be appointed under the scheme, who may be trusted to examine the issues involved with a fresh mind. In this connexion we should also remember that the executive will not lightly resort to the Grand Committee procedure, because every twelve years a Parliamentary Commission will come out and review the proceedings of the council and the working of the constitution. We should ask further that the councils should be allowed to choose their own Presidents, that under due safeguards members should be allowed to draw attention to and raise debates on definite matters of urgent public importance, and that the Governor should be under an obligation to summon the council at stated intervals. Upon the whole, in the sphere of provincial Government, the subordination of the executive is secured in a substantial degree. In the Government of India, however, the case is otherwise. The existence of a mainly elected first House and the necessity of the certification procedure no doubt make it difficult for the executive to set aside the decisions of the legislature, and the prospect of criticism in the House of Commons and at the hand of the Commission may act as a wholesome check on their arbitrariness. But it is always in their power to carry out their wishes. This is unsatisfactory, and we must seek to amend the scheme so as to make the wishes of the legislature prevail at least in some departments. Salt, income-tax, railways, general stamps—these, not involving imperial interests, seem to be matters which the people's representatives may be allowed to regulate. In practice, we have little doubt, this will be the case; but when a constitution

is being framed a formal recognition is necessary to invest the arrangements with reality and permanence. A strong demand to that effect must be made. The report indulges in much special pleading when it advocates the continuance of unimpaired power in the Government of India. Not only does it fail to provide for any immediate devolution of this power to the representatives of the people, but we are surprised to find that it contains no clear proposals for such devolution in future. One great merit of the scheme before us is claimed to be the guarantee that it affords of the successive stages in the development of the new polity. The claim is utterly without foundation in the most vital and important part. If this serious defect in the proposals be not rectified, the spokesmen of England cannot truthfully assert at any international conference that she has granted responsible government to India or inaugurated the arrangements which will, by regular and appointed stages, enable India to reach responsible government without doubt. Why should the process of popularising the Government of India not begin at all till the fabric of responsible Government is completed to the topmost story in all the provinces? If the people can be trusted with the bulk of provincial affairs, why should they not be trusted with some national affairs? The arguments of safety and fitness cannot be brought forward in the latter case if they have no validity in the former. Let no logical or academical reasoning as to one stage coming after another stand in the way of the proposals being so improved as to be acceptable with enthusiasm and the fulness of faith. Nature never waits for one process to be finished and done with before beginning another. Nor will India in her present condition.

FINANCIAL CONTROL.

The third principle which we have to look for in the proposals is financial control. Let us put aside at once the case of the Government of India. The remarks made under the above head apply equally here. The test breaks down utterly. It is especially to be regretted on account of the uncertainty which envelops the question of fiscal power. Both in the interests of our revenue and in those of our economic growth we cannot afford to let our tariff be regulated by Parliament any more. This is one of the matters in which even the Government of India might do justice to the people of its own accord, if freed of interference from Home, but in which, whether to redress a sore grievance or to do elementary justice in future, the control of the people's representatives must be established without delay. The report recommends separation of imperial from provincial finance, the abolition of divided heads, and the grant of taxation and borrowing powers within defined limits to local Governments. The first charge on provincial collections will be the contribution to the central Government. Then the executive Government, *i. e.*,

the Governor, members of the executive council and ministers, all sitting together, determine how much is to be allotted to the reserved services. Naturally, the members of the executive council will carry greater weight on the question of their needs. If ministers find the balance insufficient for their expanding services, as they almost surely will, they will have to propose new taxation. They would thus incur odium and might even have to resign, but this very circumstance would enable them to exert indirect pressure on the executive council not to add unreasonably to the charges under the head of reserved services, and in this they would probably receive the support of the legislative council. This council will consider all budget allotments alike and vote upon them, and their decisions will ordinarily be final. But the Governor may, in cases where he considers it necessary for the maintenance of the reserved services, certify to that effect and restore any items struck out by the council. This is a serious qualification of the financial autonomy of the legislature, but the exercise of this power would tend to become more and more infrequent. It is therefore not too much to sum up the position in the provincial Governments as the control of finance by the legislature, subject only to a limited power of interference by the Governor, which can only be rarely brought into exercise. Even this exception is rendered necessary by the division of provincial services into reserved and transferred, which in its turn is stated to be a consequence of the introduction of the principle of responsible government.

ARRANGEMENTS TRANSITIONAL.

In appreciating the facts correctly, one circumstance must not be lost sight of. The scheme contemplates a continued training in parliamentary government, and all the arrangements are transitory. The right thing therefore is to find out not only what will happen at the beginning, but how things will be at the end of the process. For instance, under the last head, our estimate of the proposals will not be fair unless we answer the question, shall we not have full financial control when all the reserved subjects are transferred? It is admitted by the authors of the scheme that the arrangements have the defects of their transitory nature. We are justified in scrutinising the initial arrangements and the interim arrangements as well as the ultimate arrangements, but we must realise the limitations of each and not feel disappointed if the first do not yield the results which only the last can. There is likewise the general diffidence that attaches to the future, and where large schemes of this kind are concerned, shrewd men are apt to discount what is to come and take only the immediate gains into account. Who will dare to say that they are altogether wrong or that they have no justification in past history? But apart from the need of viewing large political measures in a spirit of hopefulness, we must not forget that the present arrangements are not offered as a solution in themselves, but are avowedly the first steps of a

difficult and harassing journey, during which there are halting places but no permanent abodes, and which should never be undertaken unless the destination is indubitably to be reached. The necessity of judging this scheme in this larger spirit also exists in the case of the second principle which we have applied already to the scheme, *viz.* the subordination of the executive to the legislature. Five years after the scheme starts it is open to any provincial Government or to the legislative council to transfer more reserved services and make the ministry really responsible with the sanction of the Government of India, or this Government may of its own accord order this advance. Failing such action by any of these authorities, the Commission that comes at the end of the tenth year may in favourable conditions recommend to a province the grant of complete responsible government. So the advance beyond the first stage may begin after the fifth year, the advanced provinces may hope for the consummation in twelve years, and there is a reasonable prospect of most provinces doing so in twenty-five years. If the suggestion made in an earlier part of this article be adopted and the work of popularising the Government of India begin at the same time or even a little later, it may also be finished at the same time. If nothing untoward happens to destroy the operation of the scheme, it is no extravagant optimism to say that in a quarter of a century India will have achieved full responsible government.

RESERVED SERVICES TO BE FEW.

Nevertheless it is essential that the first instalment of reforms should be substantial, and so long as such a vital thing as the division of the services into reserved and transferred is not made, no estimate can really be made of the value of the initial step. Critics all over the country are uneasy as to the work of the committee that is to decide this question. We do not share their misgivings as to its composition. An impartial chairman with a European official and an Indian non-official, co-opting another European official and Indian non-official in each province—that is a fair tribunal in our opinion. But it is impossible not to sympathise with those who object to the bifurcation of the services as indicating both a doubt as to the capacity of Indian representatives and a distrust of their fairness and impartiality. One can understand and even tolerate the desire on the part of the experienced rulers to keep in their own hands during the first years the services concerned in the maintenance of law and order, but there is no real need of reserving other departments in the advanced provinces. We would therefore strongly urge that the committee appointed for the purpose of making this division should have an unequivocal direction to advise the transfer to the ministry of all services for the retention of which an overwhelming case is not made out. The authors of the report, in recommending

that the executive council in a province should have two members and suggesting that the ministry may consist of a single individual, seem to have been actuated by a timid and hesitating policy in this respect. The apprehensions of the public would not be so easily aroused if they had written both of ministers and executive councillors in the plural number.

Another improvement calculated to make the scheme more acceptable to the people is to allow local legislative councils and the Indian Legislative Assembly the power by means of resolutions of bringing to the notice of the Select Committee of the House of Commons any complaints which they may have against their wishes having been set at naught by the use of Governor's extraordinary power of certifying specific matters and withdrawing them wholly or partially from their jurisdiction.

NATIVE STATES.

The recommendations of the report as regards Native States have our general support. The ruling princes will find their more important demands conceded and their relations with superior authority placed on a basis more consistent than before with their self-respect. What directly concerns us in British India is a proposal that whenever matters of common interest such as coinage, defence and indirect taxation are under consideration, the Council of Princes and the Council of State or the representatives of each may sit jointly and confer together. Alarmists may see in such an arrangement the possibility of mutual interference; but the arrangement seems to us to be required by the canons of justice and it should not be beyond the wit of the authorities to avoid the evil results apprehended. We likewise heartily endorse the hope expressed in the report that the princes and peoples of these States will come under the liberalising influences of the new regime in British India. It would be wrong to stimulate this process by any artificial means.

CONCLUSION.

To sum up. The inadequacy of the first instalment of reform and the inconveniences of divided government are to be tolerated only as transitional. The completion of the scheme must be placed beyond the hazards of bureaucratic jealousy and interested agitation by suitable provisions embodied in the statute, which decrees the new order. This necessity is as great in the case of the Government of India as in that of the local Governments. The proposals are defective in this cardinal particular. There is no prospect of the scheme being enthusiastically accepted by any section of progressive Indian opinion, unless the liberalisation of the Government of India be fully provided for and secured in the statute. It is only fair that the strength of the Viceroy's executive council should be divided half and half between Europeans and Indians. The recommendation in the proposals that one more Indian may be appointed to that body is utterly inadequate.

The reserved services should be, in the case of the advanced provinces, no more than are absolutely required in the interests of peace and order. The ministers, having to run the expanding services and face the odium of fresh taxation, should enjoy absolute equality of status and pay with members of the executive council. All proposals savouring of favoured treatment to particular communities or casting suspicion on the impartiality of Indians in power must be scrupulously avoided. The Legislative Assembly and Councils must be freed from official leading-strings and allowed to choose their own President and Vice-President.

If improved in these respects, the scheme before the country should be accepted. People should remember that it is a rare opportunity they have. To throw it away would be madness. In Mr. Montagu we have a politician of great calibre, strength of will, and genuine passion for progress all round. He has taken uncommon interest in the question of Indian reforms, and must be enabled by our sympathetic and reasonable attitude to complete the stupendous task that he has begun. We know that he is eager to receive helpful suggestions for improving his proposals. It is particularly lucky that the Cabinet has not formed any judgment and can entertain our criticisms and suggestions without prepossession. Let us not reject the scheme with contumely. It does not deserve such treatment. What does it matter that it departs altogether from ours? It substantially embodies our basic principles at the start and will effectuate them in full at the culmination. To recognise that the authors of the scheme have been actuated by a genuine desire to promote the interests of India and help the cause of her freedom, to admit that the lines of constitutional advance laid down in it are generally sound, and that the actual proposals are calculated to give us a substantial start and set us on the high road to partnership in the British empire at no distant day, and then to point out deficiencies that vitiate the scheme and may deprive it of all value, and make a firm and strong demand for improvements that seem indispensable—this is the part of those who would use the great opportunity that Providence has given them to serve the cause of India.

OTHER CONNECTED TOPICS.

IN accordance with the terms of the August declaration the report deals with certain subjects closely connected with constitutional reforms like local self-government, the grant of commissions to Indians and the Indianisation of the services. The first two topics need not detain us here, but we are bound to point out that in respect of both of them the excellent intentions expressed in the pages of the report have been carried out in a halting and grudging spirit in recent resolutions of the Government of India. When will the Govern-

ment of India learn to deal with these long-standing problems in a spirit of boldness and confidence? Under the third head a definite proposal is made only with regard to the Indian civil service. We do not wish to be polemical, but it may well be asked whether it is a self-evident standard of fitness, an inherent principle of right, or an eternal law of nature that has prescribed 33 per cent. as the present limit of Indians into this service. Is it not rather that same process of negotiation, to which the authors of the report make a sneering reference in the chapter on the Congress-League scheme as having been, at the bottom of the proportions of Muhammadan representation in the various legislatures? The authorities have asked themselves, how little can we give? even in a matter where they should have rather asked themselves, how little ought we to keep? It seems to have been forgotten that for a recruiting proportion to bear its full effect and be reflected in the total strength it will take twenty-five to thirty years. Thirty-three per cent., to be augmented in ten years to 48 per cent., is a good deal better than the paltry 25 per cent. recommended by the Public Services Commission; but it is still far from satisfying to those whose memories are embittered by many wrongs and monopolies and who ask that in their own country, with so much first-rate talent available, they should not be obliged to take rank in any service behind others. Fifty per cent. down was demanded by non-official Indians in the Indian Legislative Council, and it is none too extravagant.

Anxiety to reconcile the services to the coming order of things, which will in some respects affect their position for the worse, seems to have combined with genuine belief in their alleged grievances to induce the authors of the report in recommending increased salaries and pensions, in one respect even going beyond the Public Services Commission. It takes one's breath away to hear the most liberally paid services in the world talk of their hardships and privations. The richest country in the world cannot afford to entertain the demands of people who feel under no obligation to relate them either to the capacity of the country that employs them or to its other needs of a genuine and crying nature. In this country the lowest ranks of the services have long been paid less than a living wage, and they are the hardest hit by a rise in prices and other adversities. Till their condition is materially improved—and it will take long years—the guardians of the public purse ought to be deaf to such recommendations as are made in the report.

The pride and self-respect of Indians, made almost morbid by the humiliation of generations, are cruelly mortified by the disabilities of one kind or another, under which they labour in their own country. When shall there be real equality between man and man? is the cry of anguish that goes up from many a wounded heart. The one

appeal that we would make to all who wield authority over India is to put an end to all privilege, whether it be due to birth or race or religion. Europeans and Anglo-Indians are in certain respects unduly favoured. Christian missionaries too, notwithstanding the religious neutrality of Government, are able to obtain advantages which they would find it hard to get in countries not politically subject to men of their own race. Where, for instance, would compulsory instruction in Christianity be tolerated in State-aided schools to Hindu and Muhammadan children? If the authors of the report had been in the least degree aware of the deep-seated soreness caused by these inequalities, they would have forborne to write the section headed 'Non-official Community' in Chapter XI. Since the talk of political reforms began the communities here treated of have, with several honourable exceptions, bitterly opposed the political movement in India on the ground amongst others that their interests would be jeopardised and their position rendered intolerable, if civil power were transferred to Indian hands. We little expected that the Viceroy and the Secretary of State would have taken their fears seriously. But they have done it. They have gone so far as to recommend that Government should have special power to intervene for the protection of these communities from the tyranny of the Indian home ruler. There is little doubt that the recommendation is inspired by a desire to disarm the opposition to these powerful classes. So far we understand the motive. But on the other side it might have struck them that great harm would be done by the profound distrust that it betrays of the Indian community. We are quite within the truth when we say that neither towards these communities nor towards others are the men of weight and leading in India likely to assume an attitude of unreasoning hostility or jealousy; persecution or any form of injustice is out of the question. All minorities deserve protection. If any class, by reason of their helplessness, deserve special consideration, it might be the untouchable and other depressed classes. Those whom the authors of the report have taken under their wing need none such. Others need it rather against them.

THE REFORMS.

WE are moving in very exciting times. Perspectives alter so quickly that what ten years ago was a cry for the moon has now come down to solid earth and what would have been gratefully accepted as a measure of liberal and even generous reform has already been put down as unacceptable by some. But one must sometimes fix one's eyes on the actual moment and take stock of the present, though always taking account of future possibilities. It is thus that we look at the new scheme of reforms conceived by Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu, and we have no hesitation in saying that it is marked by wise statesmanship,

which is not afraid to take risks but which takes account of actualities. One can easily suggest modifications with a view to making the scheme more logical; one can also put forward plausible arguments to show that the scheme is fraught with grave dangers to the commonwealth. But these extreme views on either side may, to a great extent, be said to cancel one another, and we trust that the great body of sane and moderate opinion in the country will rally round the scheme as, on the whole, a fair one in which modifications may be suggested, but not with the object of wrecking it.

Whatever one's opinion on the actual scheme may be, one cannot but admire the capacity and tact of Mr. Montagu, who has brought such a varied team as the Viceroy, the Secretary of State's Council and the Viceroy's Executive Council to pull with him on the whole. This we regard as the happiest augury for the new chapter in India's constitutional progress that is now opening. Lord Ripon may have had more grandiose schemes, but he could not reconcile his official colleagues to them and so they were in a large measure frustrated. But the advance approval of these several colleagues makes it pretty certain that if he receives a fair amount of support from the leaders of Indian opinion and is not thwarted by impatient idealists or professional oppositionists, his projected reforms are likely to find a place on the statute book substantially as they stand, sun-dried bureaucrats like Lord Sydenham notwithstanding. Our criticism of his schemes must always be conditioned by this possibility of its being wrecked under this persistent opposition. We are not in favour of agitation for agitation's sake. We do not believe in mere shibboleths and we are inclined to think that in the mouths of many the words "Congress-League scheme" form nothing but a parrot cry, for they will hardly pass a simple examination on that scheme, much less are they competent to compare any alternative scheme with it.

In the report before us, the Congress-League scheme is subjected to a good deal of trenchant criticism. They urge that to make it work even tolerably smoothly all parties must be actuated by such a spirit of compromise as it is impossible to expect ordinarily; that it will lead to continual deadlocks; that an irremovable executive is not workable without a legislature largely amenable to its influence; that the odium resulting from bringing ill-considered proposals or resolutions into operation will not be fixed upon those who are really responsible for them but will fall on the mere administrators. There is force in all these contentions; but one may also urge that for making a success of any new scheme whatever, good faith and a spirit of compromise are always essential, that one must not ride the special emergency provisions to death and that over and above the statutory and legal provisions, a great many unwritten but nonetheless necessary conventions must come into being and be accepted by all

parties. In fact the authors of the present scheme are continually referring to these conventions. But the one point where they show a real flaw in the Congress-League scheme is its inelastic character, its not keeping open a path for future gradual development having as its goal full responsible government. By various devices the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme provides fairly automatically for this continuous development, and it is therefore that we are prepared to accept this scheme as a first instalment and criticise it in a very sympathetic spirit.

On several points this scheme yields everything that Indians have been asking for so many years. The placing of the Secretary of State's salary on the British estimates, the need for a periodical inquiry into Indian administration and of a standing general committee on Indian affairs in the House of Commons have been wholeheartedly conceded. The claim for the removal of the racial bar in all services and the admission of the justness of the demand for an increased element in the Indian services and for simultaneous recruitment in India and England has been cordially allowed. Some of the racial distinctions sought to be perpetuated or newly introduced by the Royal Commission of five years ago have been already scrapped. One more Indian member is to be taken on the Viceroy's Council. The council form of Government is to be introduced into all the provinces. The legislative councils are to have substantial elected majorities. Local Self-government is to be under complete popular control and to have the largest possible independence of outside control. Education of all kinds is to be pushed rapidly forward. The Indian view of tariffs and industrial progress in India is well formulated and its cogency admitted though no formal proposals have been made regarding them. Finally, provincial autonomy and considerable fiscal independence for the provinces are to be conceded. These are large admissions and in criticising the scheme we must not lose sight of their frank nature.

As regards the constitution of the provinces, the so-called Curtis scheme is mainly followed of dividing provincial functions into reserved and transferred. The former are to be formally under the control of the Governor-in-Council as at present, while the latter are to be managed by a minister or ministers subject to the veto of the Governor. Various devices are suggested to get over tight situations in which a reference of opinion as to the proper plan of any particular proposal is in question. In the transitory stages the control of the Governor appears to be excessive, but such a deciding voice is necessary in these stages and the only alternative is the law courts. Divided heads in the provincial revenue are done away with, and fixed contributions are to be made to the central Government by each province. In the figures as they give us a great deal of unfairness is apparent and the only fair way of fixing the

provincial contribution to the imperial budget—*per capita*—is not possible for the moment. It is hoped to remedy this inequality as time goes on. The supreme Government is to have all residuary powers. We should have liked to give the supreme Government only fixed statutory powers, leaving everything else to the provinces.

The weakest part of the scheme is obviously the proposals with regard to the Government of India. True, the Legislative assembly is to have a two-thirds elected majority, but this majority can wield only influence and has no power. With it is associated a Council of State, on which the nominated and official members are to form a decided majority and which can be used to pass any legislation, budget allotment, or financial proposal which the Governor-General, acting as the mouth-piece of the Imperial Parliament, considers necessary in the interests of peace, order or good government. We hope that the periodical commissions that are to examine the working of the reforms will not consider the question of introducing responsible government in the Government of India as lying outside their domain. If these commissions find that the measure of responsibility given to the provinces has been well exercised, the claim to have the Government of India also responsible can hardly be resisted. But under the scheme the transition of the Government of India from autocracy to responsibility is bound to be sudden as no intermediate stages are arranged, as in the case of provincial Governments. In any case it will hardly be possible for any autocratic Government to resist for long any demand that is repeatedly voiced by the people even though acting in a merely advisory capacity. Even in the case of the Morley-Minto reforms, the indirect influence of the Councils on administration and legislation was considerable and weight of the proverbial sixteen votes on any question in the Imperial council was well known. Now we have an actual majority and if that majority plays its cards properly it can hardly help becoming supreme in the Councils of the country. We wish however it were possible to amend the scheme on this point to some extent at least.

The scheme takes the only reasonable view of the vexed question of communal representation. The part of it dealing with Mahomedans has been regarded as closed on account of the undertaking—of which the Viceroy and the Secretary of State hardly conceal their opinion as having been ill-advised—given to them by Lord Minto. The only extension of the principle that is allowed is with reference to the Sikhs in the Punjab. The case of communal differences should not really arise in a well-ordered country, and even though for the moment Mr. Montagu has settled it in this way we hope that when regulations come to be framed some means may be found by which the various communities will have a chance of representation on the councils. The present writer had submitted a memorandum on the application of proportional

representation to India, and in the personal interview Mr. Montagu said that, though himself convinced of the merits of the system, he could hardly propose it for adoption as Parliament had several times thrown it away in the case of the British Parliament. He recognised, however, that this was due to the vested interests of the parties there. He then appeared to hint that the rule-making power may be left to the councils themselves and that they may accept P. R. if they think proper. To this the objection was made that in the first councils themselves several communities would get representatives only by nomination and that would cause dissatisfaction. The question of P. R. has not been finally closed. The committee that is to regulate the franchise and the making up of constituencies may recommend multi-membered constituencies; and there is a reference to the other main item in P. R. in the application of the transferable vote to the election of the 'grand committee' of the legislative council for passing bills certified by the Governor as being essential for the peace or tranquillity of the province or for the discharge of his responsibility with regard to the reserved subjects. We would appeal to the various communities that have been so far crying for separate representation to cease crying in the wilderness, but to work in the only practicable direction now open. P. R. will meet all their legitimate and reasonable claims and will not produce any permanent anti-national attitude on the part of any community. We would ask their advocates to study Mr. Montagu's arguments and cease urging extraordinary claims.

It is obvious that though the main scheme appears fairly satisfactory, its final success or failure will depend upon the detailed regulations that will be made and in the spirit in which the Governor and officials on the one hand and the people's representatives on the other enter into it. The scheme has innumerable gaps which are to be filled up by regulations. The spirit of the framers may be all right, but they must keep their eyes wide open and take care that their good intentions, are not neutralised by the narrowness of the regulations. Similar things have happened in the past. The most recent illustration is that of King's commissions for Indians, in regard to which the scheme recently published has practically undone the promise of last year. We had heard Mr. Gokhale similarly expressing his dissatisfaction at the regulations which were framed to give effect to the Morley-Minto reforms. A spirit of compromise is necessary all round, and we hope it will be forthcoming in the fullest measure. The fewer the occasions on which the special emergency powers reserved to the Governors or the Governor-General come into use, the better for the progress of the country. This scheme is an honest and a statesmanlike attempt to set India going on the path to responsible self-government. Opinions may differ as to the length of the path actually traversed, but unless the direction is actually

reversed we have no doubt that the movement will soon get such a momentum that the goal will be reached earlier than looks possible just now. We must only take care that much energy is not wasted in friction and that enough lubricants in the shape of good feeling and a spirit of give-and-take are forthcoming to make the running smooth.

R. P. PARANJPYE.

THE REFORM SCHEME.

THE report of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State has been described as ranking with the historic report of Lord Durham about the constitution of Canada. That report was written on his own initiative by Lord Durham, and in that report he enunciated the principles according to which the constitutions of British colonies ought to be framed. The present report stands upon a different footing. It does not announce a new policy. It recommends only the ways and means by which a new policy already announced can be carried into effect. The announcement of August 20 that responsible government is the goal of British policy in India is, indeed, epoch-making, and as such it ranks much higher than the report of Lord Durham. He was dealing with the problems of a community, albeit hostile in some of its elements, yet not different in colour or alien in race and traditions. The problem of India was far more difficult. Even a liberal statesman of the calibre of Lord Morley not only shrank back from proposing any such solution, but even went out of his way to repudiate any idea of responsible government in reference to India. It, therefore, required a supreme effort of imagination on the part of British statesmen and all the courage which they could command to make the announcement of August 20, within ten years of Lord Morley's reforms. It constitutes a landmark in the history of human freedom and the principle of equality, and it proves to the world the sincerity of Great Britain in professing the principles in defence of which the Allies are fighting against the central Powers.

The present report is a secondary document, a sort of corollary following from the announcement of the 20th of August of last year. Its value and importance are to be judged by one test, viz., how far and by what steps it seeks to realise the ideal of responsible government. Applying this test, we are on the whole favourably impressed by the recommendations contained in the joint report. There are some elements of real advance and automatic progress in the proposals made by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. But we are afraid they are not likely, in certain quarters, to be subjected to a calm and patient scrutiny. For some months past the current of Indian thought in regard to reforms has run too exclusively through the channel of the Congress-League scheme. There have also been made sedulous attempts to condemn everything that

was *different* from the Congress-League scheme as utterly worthless. This attitude is deplorable. The proposals must be examined without any prepossession and with an open mind. This is all the more necessary because these proposals have been framed on lines essentially different from those of the Congress-League scheme, and in conformity with some to be found in the scheme of Mr. L. Curtis. We are not enamoured of that scheme, but we are not at the same time prepared to refuse to look at anything that bears a resemblance to it.

The report propounds four formulæ which give in broad outline the views of the writers. They are (1) that in local bodies complete popular control should be established as far as possible; (2) that the provinces are the domain where some measure of responsibility should be given at once, and complete responsibility as soon as conditions permit; (3) that the Government of India must remain wholly responsible to Parliament although the Indian Legislative Council should be enlarged and made more representative; (4) that in proportion as these changes take effect, the control of Parliament and the Secretary of State over the Government of India and the provincial governments must be relaxed. The substance of the Government of India resolution on local self-government, which has since been published, was before the Secretary of State and the report says, that the general principle having been laid down, its actual carrying out must be left to each provincial Government in consonance with the spirit of the scheme of reforms. The fourth formula follows as a matter of course from what precedes, and so the proposals made in regard to (2) and (3) are the only ones which have to be very carefully considered.

It must be frankly admitted that in regard to provincial Governments a sincere attempt has been made to lay the foundations of responsible government. The legislative councils are to have substantial elected majorities, they have the power of taxation within certain limits, they must also pass the budget, they will have some ministers responsible to them. In regard to supplementary questions and rules of procedure there is considerable improvement effected upon the present practice. The executive government of all provinces is to be vested in Governors-in-Council, the latter to consist of two members one of whom is to be an Indian. This is to be the arrangement for 'reserved' heads only. For what are called 'transferred' heads one or more ministers will be appointed by the Governor from among the elected members of the council. The division of the whole administration into two compartments of 'reserved' and 'transferred' heads is a new device intimately associated with the name of Mr. Curtis. We are glad some of the other proposals of Mr. Curtis, such as his toy provinces corresponding to revenue divisions, which were to be created by dividing and quartering the present provincial units, have been given the go-bye, and we should not have been sorry to see the

same fate overtake the proposed arrangements. This expedient of reserved and divided heads is without precedent in the constitutional history of the whole world. We wonder how the two British statesmen, who are responsible for the drawing up of this report and who stand up for historical continuity and constitutional orthodoxy, made up their minds to become the sponsors of this new-fangled distinction. Perhaps they were the victims of the superstitious regard for the only meaning of constitutional responsibility understood by the British people, or perhaps they wished to conciliate reactionary opinion in India by adopting a suggestion of Mr. Curtis whose very name is an anathema to a section of Indian politicians. Whatever that be with the introduction of this new principle and with the provisions making the *ministers* irremovable for five years, the criticism levelled at the Congress-League scheme in the report loses much of its force and the reader is likely to remain as unconverted as ever.

Questions of constitutions, franchises, and composition of the different legislative councils is left to be considered by a mixed committee of officials and Indian non-officials, with a chairman from England. But it is refreshing to find that on some vexed questions the report speaks in no uncertain voice. Thus, for instance, it has been laid down that the elections shall be, as far as possible, direct, and the present practice of indirect and round about elections will be discontinued. In the same manner the question of communal representation has been satisfactorily dealt with. The special representation of Mahomedans is a settled fact and it is not proposed to disturb it, at least for the present. The Sikhs, who are in a minority in the Punjab, have been put by their side. The other minorities will have their representatives nominated. We wish this had been otherwise. Multiple constituencies with reserved seats in a general electorate furnish an easy solution. But the best method is that of proportional representation. It would have been better if the Secretary of State had taken an independent line in this matter and tried this bold solution. The principle seems to have commended itself to the writers of the report as they have referred to the *transferable vote* in regard to the election of Grand Committees. We regret all the more therefore that the idea was not worked out much further.

Another committee similarly constituted is to determine what are to be considered reserved heads and what transferred heads, in each province. The duties assigned to this committee are of a delicate, and at the same time a very important nature. It can make responsible government in a province a reality or a delusion. If the work of the committee is satisfactory, the advanced provinces can have responsible government in a considerable number of departments. Besides at the end of five years, the Government of India, with the sanction of the Secretary of State, may consider recommendations from the provincial

Governments or their legislative councils to modify the lists of reserved and transferred heads, and they may also direct the salaries of ministers to be specifically voted upon by the legislative councils. The report deliberately leaves the question of the scale of salaries of ministers to be decided in future. This is likely to result in a lower scale of salaries and consequently lower status than that adopted for members of the executive councils, and if so the duality of the administration will be emphasised and the success of the whole scheme may be in danger.

The constitution of the Government of India is the weakest and the most unsound part of the proposals made by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. It is practically a continuation of the *status quo* without even the shadow of a beginning towards making the executive responsible to the legislature in any way. This may be strictly in accordance with the third formula summarised above. But these formulæ are not binding on any one except their authors, nor is this particular formula consistent with the announcement of August 20. It may very well be argued that in the sphere of the Government of India responsible government cannot be granted to the same extent as in the case of the provincial Governments. It is one thing, however, to propose a smaller measure of responsible government in the case of the Government of India and quite another to leave things as they are, or at best to slightly dilute the present bureaucratic methods. Even a two-thirds elected majority in the Legislative Assembly simply means the extension of the principle of representation. It cannot mean even the smallest beginning of responsible government according to the canon enunciated by the Secretary of State himself. Whatever additional importance the Legislative Assembly of the future may obtain by the higher proportion of the elected representatives of the people will be neutralised by the Council of the State, which reproduces important features of the present Indian Legislative Council. In fact we are inclined to consider that the Council of State is created to serve as a screen, thin though it be, to cover the continuance of the present system of government. The Privy Council is a high-sounding name, but in the Indian constitution it has hardly any room to play an important part in. It may perhaps serve to amuse the fancy or to satisfy the vanity of the class of people that is fast disappearing from the public life of the country. What Indians want in the constitutional machinery of the country is not gaudy baubles, but sound, handy useful parts that would wear well.

Even with all these drawbacks the constitution of the Government of India might have been more favourably received by the people of India, if it had fulfilled one condition, *viz.*, if the Government of India had been granted complete independence in regard to fiscal matters. We attach more im-

portance to this point than even to the constitution of the Government of India. The direction of the fiscal policy of India is the one point in which Parliamentary control is not only unnecessary and undesirable, but positively harmful and mischievous, and it is the one point on which Indian public opinion may be prepared to trust the members of the Indian Civil Service more than the philanthropists in the House of Commons. Unless, therefore, some important modifications are introduced in the constitution and powers of the Government of India and the Indian Legislative Council, public opinion here will not be conciliated and public agitation will not cease.

There are some other matters to which reference has been made in the report. A special plea has been put forward in favour of the Anglo-Indians and missionaries. It is hardly convincing, and if the same line of reasoning is followed, the claims of these special interests and communities may perhaps outweigh the collective interests of the country. There is a welcome proposal to grant commissions in the army to Indians on a larger scale. It is also proposed to remove the racial bar in regard to recruitment in the public services. In the Indian Civil Service 33% of the recruitment is immediately to be Indian with an increment of $\frac{1}{2}$ % every year for ten years. There are also to be periodical inquiries by Parliament for the purpose of ascertaining the progress made and laying down the lines of advance. This is an old demand, for which champions of India's cause like the late Sir William Wedderburn have fought hard in the past. Taken as a whole the report appears to us as a straightforward attempt to carry into effect the promise held forth in the celebrated announcement of last year. It would be idle to deny that there are serious and important drawbacks and defects in the scheme, as it has been published. It would have been surprising if it were not so, and the publication of the scheme would have served no useful purpose if it were unalterable. On the other hand, it would hardly be consistent with honesty to deny that the proposals mark a definite and a very considerable advance upon the present system, that they inaugurate a new era in the constitutional development of India, and that they contain large possibilities of growth and elements of automatic development. The statesmen of Great Britain have done their part. The statesmanship of India is on its trial.

H. G. LIMAYE.

LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

MADRAS.

A MANIFESTO.

RECENTLY a manifesto was issued by some extremist Home Rulers of Madras in which it was stated that Mr. Tilak "was the only man who could guide us now." This "stultifying sentiment" has been strongly repudiated by the *Hindu*. *New India* also has objected to it, saying that a country which

has only one man to guide its destinies at a given time is not worthy of freedom. It is amusing to see that two of the signatories to it, Mr. George Joseph of Madras and Mr. F. G. Natesan of Trichinopoly, have now written to the papers repudiating the style and statements of the manifesto. The former says that he was not aware of the lines on which the manifesto would run when he was asked to sign it and the latter totally denies all knowledge of it. He was not even asked to sign it, yet the Manifesto contains his name! These methods of the "new leaders" have been severely and justly castigated by *New India*. It is strange that after this one of the humbler signatories to the Manifesto has sought to bolster up the poor thing by publishing in the papers the "offices" which the signatories hold—including the two gentlemen who had already repudiated it *in toto*! One of the precious sentiments contained in the manifesto was that the attitude of certain leaders (not specified by name) is highly "suspicious." Enough to say that even the *Hindu* has been unable to digest this statement. Anyway, no harm has resulted as the whole thing has fallen dead flat on the public like the famous manifesto of the three Tailors of Tooley Street.

AN ULTIMATUM TO MR. TILAK.

But the three Tailors have not stopped there. They have undertaken to order everybody about his business, as *New India* says. They have now issued an order to Mr. Tilak not to go to England—to the "only man who can guide us now!" On this *New India* says that if Mr. Tilak is the only man who can manage the country's business, surely he ought to be able to manage *his own* business without waiting to be told what he should or should not do. Mr. Tilak knows things best. If after taking all things into consideration, he decides that the best thing for him is to go to England, it is not for anybody else to say that he decided unwisely—surely not for "the Salem public in meeting assembled," etc., etc. Their achievement recalls the exploit of the "Tanjore public" (Mr. N. K. Ramaswamy Iyer and his chelas presumably), who recently passed a resolution demanding from Mr. Gandhi an explanation as to why he too did not walk out of the Bombay War Conference! What are we coming to? And what next? As *New India* opines, they may shortly send an ultimatum to their Almighty God to conduct his world properly. Can't people mind their own business instead of poking their uninvited nose into everybody else's.

DR. SUBRAMANIA IYER'S ADVICE.

Dr. Subramania Iyer has written a long letter to the papers in which he exhorts the public not to waste their time over Mr. Montagu's report of reforms, "a mere report," lest in this process they should exhaust all their energy and be found wanting when finally the Cabinet scheme emerges. He advises the people to reserve all their energy till the scheme so emerges with the seal of the Cabinet's sanction, so that they can put up a strong fight to get it altered and improved according to our needs. But the duty of the Indian public now is twofold—to discuss Mr. Montagu's report and to discuss the Cabinet scheme also; nor can anyone assert positively that the strength of the public is not equal to both tasks. To say so would be a serious reflection on ourselves.

THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT.

At the meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee held on the 6th instant the question that engaged most of the time of members was whether the All-India Congress Committee had the right to select the President for the special Congress by circulation. The meeting decided by a large majority, 32 against 19, that it had the right. Then an attempt was made to recommend to the All-India Congress Committee a President for the special Congress Mr. Tilak obtained 18 votes and the Rajah of Mahammadabad 35, mainly through the exertions of Mrs. Besant, and accordingly the Rajah's name was recommended.

A resolution protesting against the Delhi order was unanimously passed.

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