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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE analysis of the Montagu-Chelmsford reform scheme which Mrs. Besant published in *New India* on the morning of the publication of the proposals contains some gross perversions of truth. For instance, she says that the Indian member of a provincial executive council "will be worse off than he is now, as he may be one to four," the four Europeans presumably being the Governor, the other executive member and two additional members without portfolio. As a matter of fact, it has been distinctly stated in the report that the additional members, "if present, would take their share in the discussion, but would in no case take a part in the decision." It is therefore clear that we must leave them out of reckoning, even where questions relating to reserved subjects are concerned. Taking the executive Government as a whole, the Indian element will be much stronger than at present, there being only one European in the Government, besides the Governor.

MRS. BESANT also makes out that the provincial legislative council has no control over finance, because, for one thing, "the executive council frames the budget." Here Mrs. Besant has fallen into an error, for it is expressly laid down in the report that "the provincial budget should be framed by the executive Government as a whole," including the ministers as well as the executive council. But Mrs. Besant also invokes the authority of a "distinct statement" in the report, which she has italicised in her analysis in order to lay

stress on it, that "the legislature has not the power of the purse." This "distinct statement" was possibly to be found (was it so?) in an earlier draft, on which she had written the present critique, but it is not included in the report as it is published. It is a strange caricature of the report in its present shape to describe its provisions in this regard as "no control of the purse." The fact is that this control is only subject to the qualification that the Governor can veto retrenchment made by the legislative council in an allotment on reserved services, on a certificate given by him. And let us in fairness admit that even if full power were given, no sudden or considerable retrenchments would be found practicable.

* * *

AGAIN, according to Mrs. Besant, the reforms in the Government of India "are not only inadequate; they are reactionary." The statement, we think, cannot be made good. Ordinarily, the Legislative Assembly will prevail in all matters, for if the Council of State disagrees the Bill will be referred for the final decision to a joint session, in which the elected members of both Houses will together be in a majority. Only in cases where the Governor-General in Council certifies in certain prescribed terms, will the Council of State's vote be decisive, and it may safely be presumed that non-certificated legislation will be at least some 75 per cent. of the total legislation. It should also be borne in mind that the popular element in the Council of State will not be less strong than in the present Indian Legislative Council, and so there is no going backward in any case. We agree that the changes proposed in the Government of India are most unsatisfactory, but no distortion of facts is necessary to make out a strong case for the liberalisation of the central Government. On such arguments does Mrs. Besant base her conclusion that the scheme is "undiscussable."

* * *

ASSUREDLY, the spirit of trust and sympathy, which must penetrate the officials if the introduction of the new reforms is to be attended with success, has not touched some of the provincial heads. The Punjab Government, after having passed an order against the *Observer* which led to the closing down of that paper, has now put a ban upon *New India* and coerced the editor of the *Punjab* into renouncing the profession of journalism. Is Sir Michael O'Dwyer's Government at the end of its career of autocracy?

SOME FEATURES OF THE SCHEME.

THERE are some minor points in the reform proposals to which we did not advert last week, but which merit some attention at our hands. It is proposed in the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme to constitute standing committees of legislative councils, attached to each portfolio, with the view of familiarising a fair number of elected members with the administration. It will be remembered that Lord Islington first recommended this French plan for adoption in India in his Oxford address last year. Now, the experience of such committees or commissions in France or America is by no means encouraging. All constitutional writers unite in condemning these bodies as obscuring the responsibility of ministers and thus weakening the control of the legislature over them. It is feared that in India also the interposition of standing committees between the executive Government and the legislative council will result in a dispersion of responsibility, whether of the ministers or of the members of the executive council. The association of a few members of the legislature with the actual administration of departments, in an undefined manner, will give them a factitious importance, which it is not altogether improbable that some of them will use to further private ends, in dispensing patronage and the like, without enabling them to leave a real impress of their views and wishes upon the course of administration. When these committees will be called into counsel, how their proceedings will be governed, what relationship will subsist between them and the legislature, to what extent the executive will feel bound by their decisions is not specified in the report. The committees will have no concern with details of every-day administration, but will be consulted when matters of policy are to be considered. On such questions there is likely to be a conflict between the committees and the legislative council, out of which they are formed, and this conflict will only serve to make the responsibility of the executive more remote than it would otherwise be. It is necessary, we think, to point out this danger, while agreeing that this plan will enable a large number of public men to acquire a practical knowledge of the internal work of the departments and widen the circle of those competent to criticise and in their turn to administer.

The proposed addition to the executive Government of members without portfolio is in our opinion a sheer encumbrance without any counter-vailing advantages. It is no doubt true that in England some persons of great weight and prestige are admitted to the Cabinet who, on account of old age or other reasons, cannot personally direct the government in any of the departments, but by their great reputation, popularity, or social influence, will enhance the strength of the Government of the day. In India the men that may be added to the executive Government will presum-

ably be one or two European officials, who will continue to perform the duties and draw the salary attaching to their official position. They will be admitted to a consultation only when the Governor thinks it desirable and they will take no part in the ultimate decision, having no vote. Their association is not calculated in any way to increase the confidence of the public in the Government as the addition of members without portfolio does in England. It may on the contrary have the result of overbearing in some cases the popular view put forward by the ministers or the Indian executive councillors. This feature of the recommendations has nothing in its favour, and will, we trust, be ruled out.

The institution of the Indian Privy Council which has been recommended in the report also falls into the same category. It will be a purely ornamental body, with no defined functions to discharge. The Privy Council in England dates from an ancient time and has the traditions and prestige of ages behind it. It used to be the highest tribunal in the land, and even now supplies the eminent lawyers who form the judicial committees. Here, however, no such judicial functions being assigned to it, we have no knowledge of the class of people who will be chosen to be its members. If this body again is to perform the functions and wield the power which the Elder Statesmen in Japan exercise, when a constitutional crisis or national peril arises, we must summarily reject the proposal, as involving the State in serious mischief, if allowed to take effect. Whether therefore as a body of titled persons or of unseen power, the idea of instituting a Privy Council will not commend itself to Indians.

A wide and direct franchise has at last been recognised in the present scheme. This indeed is made the arch of responsible government, and one may even feel that too much stress is laid on it, under the influence apparently of Mr. Curtis. Anyway, direct election on a broad franchise is to be warmly welcomed. Indeed, we should have had it under the Morley-Minto reforms but for the restrictive regulations drafted afterwards. In the matter of special representation of minorities, the report rejects the method of communal election, but contemplates the securing in some cases of communal representation in other ways. For, it says that where nomination is found unsuitable resort may be had to the reserving of a few seats to important minorities on the results of a mixed election with multiple membership for each constituency. This system may not be entirely satisfactory to the minorities concerned, for the representatives thus elected represent the majority on the electoral roll rather than the respective minorities for whom provision is to be made, but that mode of representation is in any case preferable to nomination, which the report recommends as a general rule. We hope therefore that, under pressure of the agitation of those who stand in need of special representation, nomination will be rejected

either in favour of the alternative system above considered or of the method of proportional representation advocated by Mr. Paranjpye and others.

The Secretary of State's salary is now to be placed on the British Estimates, thus making it possible for members of the House of Commons to raise a debate on any question of Indian administration in the Committee of Supply. This will be an invaluable lever in the hands of the British democracy to check the vagaries of the executive in India, and as such it is a great improvement, but it should be recognised that it gives no constitutional power to Indians, and thus really finds no place in the constitutional reform of India. This was among the earliest demands put forward by the National Congress, and is likely to be conceded now after 33 years.

Under the scheme Governors have the power of dissolving the legislative council. This provision has been attacked in certain quarters as curtailing the power of the legislature, but this criticism is entirely misplaced. It is a necessary power, which the Governors must possess, of appealing to the constituencies when the members are suspected to have lost the confidence of the former. No doubt in popularly governed countries this power is exercised by the King generally on the advice of the ministers, but we shall have no regular Cabinet in the full sense of the word till the scheme shall have advanced to its maturity, and the reserved services shall all have been transferred. It should, however, be frankly recognised that a provision to that effect is indispensable for the working of a constitution, and that its absence from the Congress-League scheme was the result of an oversight. In the veto, allowed to the Governors, is to be included the power to return bills with remarks about modifications. This again is a distinct improvement as calculated to ease the relations between the Governor and the legislature. It is a less drastic method than the application of the veto, and has on that account to be welcomed. In his exposition of the Congress-League scheme, Mr. Srinivasa Sastri had recommended the adoption of this expedient.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

NO normally constituted mind can approach a consideration of the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms except under a grave sense of responsibility. The subject that is treated in that volume is of sovereign importance to India and the Empire, and it must be realized by thinking men that the combination of circumstances which has made the present occasion so favourable to India does not often occur. England has staked her all on the greatest of wars for the assertion of the eternal principle that righteousness exalteth a nation. India's whole-hearted service in the furtherance of the war has impressed the imagination of the British nation. Also, educated Indians carried on an agitation for the recognition of their

rightful position which was heard by his Majesty's Government. The result was the Declaration of the 20th August, 1917, followed promptly by the visit to this country of the Secretary of State and his delegation. Mr. Montagu and his Excellency the Viceroy, assisted by the members of the Governor-General's council and the delegation, spared no pains to arrive at the truth of things. As the result of prolonged and anxious deliberation the two highest functionaries of the Government of India have produced a Report, which has only to be read with an impartial mind for critics to come to the conclusion that it represents an absolutely honest endeavour to find a solution for a problem which has many sides to it. It is not necessary to agree with every opinion that is expressed, every proposition that is enunciated, and every proposal that is made in the Report for one to acknowledge in the most handsome manner that its illustrious authors have striven earnestly to meet India's aspirations with sympathy and liberality. Absolutely for the first time during the 23 years of my acquaintance with affairs here I come across, in a State paper bearing the signatures of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, sentiments which we, the Nationalists of India, had hitherto the monopoly of uttering on the principles of Indian government. Many a passage in the Report is reminiscent of Gokhale and our other elder statesmen of the National Congress more than of the 'Looking Backwards' of Anglo-India. The actual proposals may strike one as unnecessarily cautious at places—and it will be our duty to persuade the Government of India and the Secretary of State to consent to some necessary amendments—but no one misses anywhere in the 11 chapters of the Report the note of genuine desire that India shall by all means be helped to the final stage of responsible government within a reasonable time. Great is the debt we owe to Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford and their coadjutors for their conscientious labours on our behalf, and I pray that they may be rewarded by the success they merit as they are by the abiding gratitude of all sober and thoughtful Indians.

The framework of the official scheme is different from that of the Congress-Moslem League scheme. This may be regretted, and it can be said that the latter is not so impossibly defective as is very ably sought to be made out by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. I believe I make no improper betrayal of a secret when I say that not a few of the public men who were accorded the honour of interviews with them were able to put up a no mean defence of the Congress proposals in reply to the skilful questions by which they were confronted. The strongest possible case against the Congress scheme is presented for our consideration in chapter VII of the Report. I do not pretend that it is the easiest of tasks to answer every argument and objection that has been marshalled therein with uncommon cleverness. Nor am I prepared to admit that the last word of condemnation has been uttered against the scheme in

those 19 paragraphs and eight and half pages. But I do not propose to devote any part of this article to a reply to our critics. I must reserve that task for another occasion. In common with my fellow-Congressmen I am sorry that our scheme should have failed to commend itself to persons in authority. But the fact is there, and I do not think that any member of the Congress can in fairness be accused of want of loyalty if, instead of wasting time over vain regrets for the 'might have been,' he follows the sequence of events and proceeds to business by accepting the official scheme as the only possible basis of discussion and makes suggestions for its amendment and improvement. It was an unusual proceeding for a non-official organization to draw up a detailed scheme of government. It is ordinarily understood to be the function of the responsible Government to make constructive proposals and of non-official bodies to offer criticism and advice. This process was reversed when the Congress in 1916 went before the world with its own scheme and the Government of India kept their counsel to themselves. This made the Congress the target of all criticisms. The Congress agitation, however, served its purpose most effectually, and we now have the official scheme as the result. Comparing one scheme with the other in the whole, one does not find it very easy to describe the official scheme as the inferior of the two; there are undoubtedly merits in it which are absent from the Congress scheme, just as there are in the latter advantages which one misses in the official scheme. It can be claimed for the Congress-League scheme that it has the double merit of simplicity and of building upon existing foundations. The official scheme makes a break with the system that has been developed until now, is complicated, and is not easily understood of the man in the street, but will, I am convinced, better prepare India for responsible government, as it is understood in England. On this point I must confess that I am in entire agreement with our wise and eminent ex-President, Sir Satyendra Sinha. If the fact that it is different from the Congress-League scheme constitutes, to the mind of the average Congressman, the negative drawback of the official scheme, a certain superficial resemblance which it bears to what is comprehensively described and summarily dismissed as the Curtis scheme is its positive defect which disentitles it to serious consideration. That there is as much difference between Mr. Curtis's proposals and the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme as there is between the latter and the Congress scheme, is counted for little virtue. There are the words "reserved" and "transferred" subjects, and this seems to be enough to put the official scheme out of court. Verily is the world governed by phrases. If for a moment we can bring ourselves to treat the Congress scheme not as one whole but as a series of proposals and consider how many of them find a place in the official scheme in whole or in part,

then I think there can be some hope of critics doing it better justice.

We are to have greater consideration paid to our unanswerable claim for at least a substantial share in the higher offices of the various civil public services. The details of Government's proposals are not yet forthcoming, but in the Indian Civil Service we should be started with 33 per cent. not only of the superior posts but of the whole cadre.—The proposals affecting the Indian States are likely to meet with the wishes of the most enlightened and patriotic of our ruling princes, while they do no harm to the people of British India and are worthy of our cordial support; subject to the arrangements to be made for joint deliberation and discussion between the Council of Princes and the Council of State on matters of common interest being satisfactory in the matter of the voting power of either, and with the further reservation that the Legislative Assembly of India will also have the right of entry to those joint sessions.—The establishment of a Privy Council of India will raise the status and dignity of the country.—That complete popular control is to be established in local bodies, as far as possible, is a substantial gain.—The financial decentralization that is proposed is a reform that should gladden the heart of all old public workers who have been pressing for it for so many years now.—No major province is henceforth to be under single-man rule, while the number of Indians in any provincial Government will in no event be smaller than the number of Englishmen. I would however strenuously resist the very dubious and almost unaccountable proposal that in addition to the Executive Council and Ministers there might be in the provincial Government 'an additional member or members without portfolios and to be appointed from among senior officials.'—The proposal that 'a limited number of members of the Legislative Council' may be appointed 'to a position analogous to that of parliamentary under-secretaries' is to be welcomed, but they should be selected from among non-official members if there is to be a meaning in and advantage from the measure. Not less than four-fifths of the provincial Legislative Councils should consist of elected members and not more than one-half of the remainder should be officials. I do not agree that the Governor should be president of the Legislative Council. Either he should be elected by the Council, or if he must be nominated the Council should have the right at least to elect the vice-president.—I see no objection to Government being required to give effect to resolutions carried by a two-thirds majority, nor to the Council being given power to make its own rules for the conduct of business. The reasons given for the constitution of Grand Committees are neither adequate nor convincing. Notwithstanding what is said in paragraph 248, I am persuaded that the power vested in the Government of India to legislate for the provinces meets all requirements. The

Legislative Council should have more and the Governor in Council less control over budget dispositions.—Every subject that can possibly be included in the list of transferred subjects should be taken out of the reserved group, which should comprise no more than the irreducible minimum.—We must do everything in our power to secure a third Indian member in the Governor-General's Executive Council, unless the number of ordinary members is to be reduced from six to four.—In the Council of State the number of elected members should be raised from 21 to 25 and that of nominated members reduced from 29 to 25.—The Legislative Assembly of India should be given some real power, however circumscribed it may be, both over legislation and finance, while without any risk resolutions can be made ordinarily binding on the executive if they are passed by both Houses of the legislature.—The Governor-General in Council should have no power to remove to the reserved list any transferred subject, and the Commission of Enquiry should meet at shorter intervals than 12 years. A serious attempt should be made to give some hopeful indication to the aspiring people of India that complete provincial autonomy can be attained in about a dozen years from the date of the first introduction of the reforms, and that the final stage of full responsible government in the Government of India can be reached in another 12 or 15 years. If this be done, I am not without hope that even the strongest critics of the present scheme will be somewhat mollified.

C. Y. CHINTAMANI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

THE question before the country is: are the reforms proposed by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford substantial and in the right direction? There is no uniformity of views as to what is "substantial." All are agreed that it does not mean complete Home Rule. If it means the Congress-League scheme and nothing else, then they certainly are not substantial. If it means complete self-government by only two stages within ten years, then also they are not substantial. But if it means a genuine and an important move in the right direction, then in my humble judgment the Report represents a real attempt to take a step forward towards the goal of responsible government; and I, for one, think that it would be very unwise to reject the scheme as unworthy of our serious consideration.

It is too early to offer detailed comments on the various proposals, but my conviction is that there are many satisfactory features in them. There are matters of course—and some are important—which require serious modifications, expansions, and safeguards in popular interest. Much will depend upon the recommendations of various Committees, who are to deal with several matters of grave importance. In the nervous reservations and cautious compromises of the scheme

we see Mr. Montagu struggling with, and some times yielding to, forces of reaction and distrust, but as the proposals are presented to the public for discussion and criticism and no final decision has yet been taken, let us hope serious and earnest public opinion will not fail to secure the changes we desire.

It is however fair to recognise that the reforms recommended are the most progressive yet formulated by any Secretary of State or a Governor-General. For the first time there is no conflict of aim between the Government and the people. For the first time we have an admission that "the old structure does not admit of development,... we must therefore create a new structure." This is no small gain.

Even a broad review will satisfy one that there are several proposals which mark undoubted advance upon the present condition. Appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons for Indian affairs will secure larger and steadier parliamentary interest in India and will act as some check upon the heads of the Government going against the popular will. Transfer of salary of the Secretary of State for India to the Home Estimates is a measure for which the Congress has been clamouring from the eighties. It is disappointing that in spite of Mr. Montagu's pronounced views in the matter he has not advised the abolition of his Council. Though we press and shall press for half the members of the Governor-General's executive council to be Indians, yet two instead of one is some improvement. The Governor-General takes power to appoint more members of the executive council; and if that has the effect of reducing the proportion and the extent of influence of the Indian members, this addition will be no real advance. This power is taken on the plea that the changed relations of the supreme and provincial Governments will throw a heavier burden on the shoulders of the Governor-General. It is difficult to see how greater decentralization and larger devolution of power to provincial administrations will augment the burden rather than lighten it. In the Government of India powers and initiative will still rest absolutely with the bureaucracy, and people are allowed wider opportunities not of controlling but of influencing their judgment. In the supreme Government therefore there is no real departure from the old principle. It may reasonably be admitted that under the present reorganization the Government of India may find it more difficult to override the popular vote than under the present system. But I am in favour of allowing the Indians some control and some scope for responsible training in the administration of the Government of India. To my mind there is much room for improvement with respect to proposals affecting the Government of India.

As for the provinces, substantial measures of reform have been proposed. Handing over of certain departments of Government to autonomous

administration, a substantial non-official majority in the Legislative Council, wider and more direct franchise, council government where it does not exist, at least two Indian members of the executive Government, greater though not adequate control over the budget, are some of the more substantial and far-reaching reforms that will lead us onward to provincial autonomy before very long, provided we creditably exercise our new powers and responsibilities and the Government work the scheme in a true spirit of sympathy and co-operation. I am inclined to think important matters like the franchise and the composition of the provincial Legislative Council should not have been left to be determined by regulations to be made on the advice of a committee to be formed hereafter. Our experience of the regulations framed under the Morley-Minto scheme is very disappointing. I should like to know now what is to be the extent of the substantial majority elected by the purely Indian constituencies. I should like to have a more definite notion as to the basis of broader franchise. Then, again, provisions made for the allotment of funds for the transferred subjects are not adequate, nor equitable. They are to be supplied last of all out of the residue, which is not likely to be large. Admittedly the cost of transferred services will expand continuously and no power is given to the people to retrench the expenditure on some of the extravagantly endowed reserved services, so that larger supply may be available to the transferred subjects. The result may be that the autonomous portions of the provincial administration will be driven at the very outset to taxation if it is to be conducted on approved lines. If it starts by taxation, popular government is likely to be unpopular. If it does not, the transferred subjects may run the risk of being re-transferred for want of efficiency. These are two horns of the dilemma, of which solution must be found.

Recommendations for securing us equal status in the army are vague and evasive. We ought to insist on a clearer declaration. Autonomy is meaningless, if in the army our position is not substantially improved. A national army officered by Indians and the right to possess arms on equal terms with Europeans are the essential requisites of self-government. It is a matter of regret and concern that no serious attempt is made to deal with a question of arms and the army.

By the proposal that the racial bar shall be definitely removed from all public services and that 33 per cent. of the superior posts of the Indian Civil Service should be recruited for in India, which should be increased by $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. annually, we are assured solid advantages. Promises are made of giving us complete popular control in local bodies, which, again, is a substantial gain.

It is hardly just to characterise these reforms as petty or useless. My honest belief is that there

is danger in standing aside or asking for their entire withdrawal. Accept these reforms, get them modified and press for more at your earliest opportunity. If we reject them forces against us might carry the day and wreck all reforms. This is a turning point in the history of our Nation. Let us not shrink. Let us march firmly and steadily onward and then take our stand among the free races of the world.

A. P. SEN.

THE RIGHT STANDPOINT.

'INDIA for a long time to come, as far as my imagination can reach, would be the theatre of absolute and personal government.' So said Lord Morley in 1907. Few men could pretend to his balance of judgment or keenness of vision, and it is no great reflection on his powers of foresight that before a decade was far out, a breach should have been effected in the citadel which he premised should remain solely in the control of the officials. It is well to remember this, as it will tend to bring home to us clearly the pace events have put on and the advance we have made and also remind us that 'laws go a very little way.' It is the spirit in which they are worked rather than the form of them which makes for success.

The scheme of reforms which he inaugurated in conjunction with Lord Minto was subject to the frank admission that in Lord Morley's view a parliamentary government was to be as little thought of in connection with India as a fur coat in the climate of the Deccan. It is the working out of that scheme which has paved the way for the suggestions embodied in the Report of reforms now placed before the public. That scheme gave no power to the people—as a matter of fact did not pretend to do anything so unsuited to the Asiatic atmosphere—and whatever influence the elected members of the various councils were to exercise was more by way of moral suasion, than in the assertion of a political right. This preliminary mental equipment is essential for a survey of the new reforms, lest we confine ourselves to the letter of the recommendations and ignore that concerted action even in a comparatively limited sphere brings us in sight of possibilities which may not be in view at the start.

The Report submitted to the English Cabinet by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford is to be read in the light of the announcement made on the 20th of August last. Men who have other aims for India than membership of the British Empire or who expected a sudden devolution of autonomy do not stand on the same ground with those who would accept the announcement with its limitations and analyse the scheme only to see if it keeps in view the pledge of a grant of substantial reforms. The report is on the face of it a compromise with divergent claims. In the presence of so many deputations to the Secretary

THE REFORMS.

INDIAN public men have been in a state of anxious expectancy for some months. The publication of the reforms has placed before the public in India the exact plans of Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy to give effect to the declaration of the imperial Government for the establishment of responsible government in India. It is a matter for great regret that for some time past the air has been thick with sinister suggestions that this public man or that has had either a previous knowledge of the proposals or has promised his support in advance to the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme and such a knowledge or promise, alleged with vehemence on one side and denied with equal vehemence on the other, is enough to discredit him in public estimation and detract from the value of his views on the question of reform. If Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy discussed some of their proposals with a few of the leading public men in the country, why should it be a matter for regret unless it be on the assumption that the persons so consulted pledged their word on behalf of the whole country, before the country has had time to examine the proposals? In fact there are precedents in English political history, though very rare, when the Government of the day put forward their legislative proposals some time after informally communicating them to those who are interested in the matter or who may be in opposition to them. The principal provisions of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill of 1886 were communicated to Mr. Parnell before introduction and he called for a meeting of his confidential colleagues and placed those proposals before them and he asked them whether they would take the Bill or oppose it altogether. Some objected to the absence of certain provisions. But Mr. Parnell clenched the discussion by informing them that if they declined the Bill the Government would be defeated and their chance of having Home Rule would altogether go. His colleagues at once agreed to accept the Bill *pro tanto* and to reserve for a committee the right of enforcing the provisions which appeared necessary in the Bill and the Bill was accepted by the Irish party, subject to modifications on points named as a settlement of the question. The Bill was however subsequently thrown out, not by the opposition of the Irishmen, but by the party which was known as the Liberal Unionists. We are on the eve of setting up in this country parliamentary institutions of the western type and it is better that we realise that the success of any important measure of reform depends greatly on the extent to which it is in conformity with the best thought of the country. A measure in accord with popular aspirations can be obtained under present circumstances only by the co-operation between the Government and the leading public men at all stages of the discussion. Discipline in public life and party organisation on the western model have not as yet established themselves in this country, but even then a leader is sometimes lavishly praised for his high-minded-

ness in suffering himself to be driven into his convictions by his party and on the other hand a party is sometimes extolled for its political tact in suffering itself to be forced out of its convictions by its leader. The education of leaders by followers and of followers by leaders is a mutually inter-dependant process but of late a spirit of distrust and suspicion has made its appearance in the political atmosphere and at this critical juncture is very much to be deplored.

A TOTAL REJECTION OF THE PROPOSALS.

A second preliminary observation that I wish to make is that a school of thought has declared to the country that the scheme is so radically wrong that it should be entirely put out of mind and should not even form the subject of examination or compromise by the people and their representatives. It has also been suggested that if a scheme of reforms is produced by any section of our people we should carefully examine it and anything that originates with foreigners violates the principle of self-determination, and that the Montagu-Chelmsford report falls within this category and that a strong, wholesale, spirited, prompt rejection is all that is necessary. It is also stated that the scheme is so radically wrong alike in principles and details that it is impossible to modify and improve it.

OUR PLAIN DUTY.

I wholly dissent from these views. It must be pointed out that the Congress-League scheme has been submitted by our national organisations to the Government of this country and His Majesty's Government have sent a political mission to this country to give effect to its declaration of the 20th August, 1917. His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. Montagu have carefully examined our scheme and their report fully sets out their objections to that scheme. They have now put forward an alternative scheme of reforms which, according to their lights, would start India on the road to responsible government. These proposals have the general support of the members of the Secretary of State's Council and the Government of India and men like Sir Sankaran Nair and Babu Bhupendranath Basu, old and tried Congressmen, whose political vision and political instincts cannot have suddenly grown dim, have given their general support to these proposals. Now I would ask whether in these circumstances it would be right to regard the proposals as so worthless as not even to merit an examination of them by the country. Our plain duty in our national organisations and outside is clearly to examine the circumstances of the Congress-League scheme offered by these high authorities and to modify it in the light of these circumstances, and like responsible public men we should set to this task without any further delay. After the declaration of the 20th August, 1917, it was our duty to have framed a scheme which would confer immediately a measure of responsible government in this country. We merely re-affirmed the resolution of 1916 embodying the Congress-

League scheme with the request that responsible government should be established in the country within a time limit. A second alternative is to examine the present proposals and to see how many of the essential principles of the Congress-League scheme have been adopted by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford and to suggest further modifications in the scheme now published so as to give effect to our views on the subject. A third alternative is for the national organisations to put forward an altogether new scheme embodying the present wishes of the people and taking what is good and essential in both the schemes. I am merely pointing out these alternative courses with a view to emphasise the fact that the situation is one which should not be met by an attitude of non possumus. A scheme which will satisfy the aspirations of the people of India at the present day cannot spring up uncaused and unconditioned, in vacant space. It must be evolved in direct relation to the immediate past and the duty of producing such a scheme does not lie on the Government alone but also on all responsible public men in this country. I have dwelt on this subject at some length as I feel that it is not political wisdom to refuse to consider the proposals put forward by Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy whose general desire to promote Indian political progress is apparent from a perusal of the report as a whole.

SELF-GOVERNMENT FOR INDIA.

Now, in regard to the proposals put forward I should like to add a few words. I do not at present wish to examine them in detail, but I have no doubt that taken as a whole the scheme will not excite any enthusiasm in the country unless the proposals are very materially modified in several respects. I will confine myself to the consideration of three or four broad questions. Self-government in India means two things. "In one sense," said Lord Morley in 1911, "it touches the relations of the indigenous population to the European authorities, whether central and paramount or provincial and local. In another sense, it concerns the relation between both the people and the organs of the European authorities in India on the one side and the organs of the Home Government on the other. The distinction is in the highest degree important. The popular claim under the first head, though not easy to adjust, is easy to understand; it founds itself on democratic principles borrowed from ourselves both at Home and in the self-governing Dominions. The second is different. It has not yet taken formidable shape, but it may soon. The ruling authority in India is sure to find itself fortified from pressure from the new councils in forcing the Indian interests and, what is more, the Indian view of such interests, against any tendency in England to postpone them to Home interests." We have, therefore, two problems. On the one side we have a bureaucracy in India without the control of representative institutions in the country. On the other, we have the problem of releasing the Government of India from the

control of the British democracy.

HOME GOVERNMENT.

Now in regard to the group of authorities known as the Home Government, which under Indian constitution controls the affairs of this country in England, the scheme makes no advance whatever over the existing position. This group consists of the Crown, the Secretary of State and the Council of India and their power over the Government of India has been left intact. The point is whether the Government of India should occupy the same position at present day as in 1858 in relation to the Secretary of State in Council or whether there should be a further devolution of power to the authorities in India, suited to the requirements of the present day.

The Congress-League scheme proposes the abolition of the Secretary of State's Council and the salary of the Secretary of State should be placed on the British Estimates, and that he should as far as possible occupy the same position in relation to the Government of India as the Secretary of State for the colonies in relation to the self-governing dominions.

These proposals were accompanied by others intended to place the Government of India on a popular basis for the exercise of effective popular control except in regard to matters relating to the army, navy and foreign relations. In effect, it was the intention of the scheme that the democratic control in the organ of Indian Government should be transferred to the Indian people as far as possible and not continue to be vested in the people of the United Kingdom. In this respect, the scheme practically leaves us exactly where we were in 1858. Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford however state that now that "His Majesty's Government have declared their policy of developing responsible government in India we are satisfied that Parliament must be asked to set bounds to its own responsibility for the internal administration of that country. It must, we think, be broadly laid down that in respect of all matters in which responsibility is entrusted to representative bodies in India, Parliament must be prepared to forego its own powers of control and that this process must continue *pari passu* with the development of responsible government in the provinces and eventually in the Government of India. The process should, we think, begin with the conclusions arrived at on the report of the Committee, which will consider the question of the transferred subjects." We therefore see that no proposals have been put forward in the report for divesting Parliament of any portion of its present powers in regard to the internal administration of this country, and the question of transfer of final responsibility for the Government of this country to the Indian authorities and the Indian people has not yet taken shape and is made dependent on the report of the Committee which is to decide what spheres of work should be transferred in the provinces to the control of the legislatures. The only statutory

alteration in the Government of India Act that I can foresee on the recommendations in the report is that the Secretary of State would take power to divest himself by statutory orders of his present power of control over the transferred subjects. This by itself cannot at all be regarded as a reform worthy of the present occasion. I do not attach much importance to the appointment of a Select Committee of Parliament to keep ward and watch over India affairs and to the placing of the salary of the Secretary of State on the British Estimates. Both these proposals are intended to strengthen the democratic control of the people of the United Kingdom over the Indian affairs. These proposals would have been very popular 20 years ago, among the Congress politicians and British public men in Parliament interested in this country. But with the vision of a reconstructed India on a really popular basis, which has entirely changed the angle of vision of both the Government and the people of this country, I do not regard these expedients for asserting the popular will of the British people in their country as any advance in the machinery of the government of this country towards the establishment of democratic methods here. All the same these must be taken to be transitory provisions and even as such may prove to be of doubtful value.

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

The second aspect of the problem relates to the relation between the Government of India and the subordinate Governments. The central Government in India under the scheme will be practically the same as now without any basis of popular control, though the Indian element in the Viceroy's executive council is proposed to be increased. The transfer of powers to the Government of India by statutory order, as promised in the scheme, without making any provision for popular control, may not by itself be a measure in the right direction. The Government of India will continue essentially to be a bureaucratic system and if it was necessary for the establishment of responsible government in the provinces to proceed on a system of transferred and reserved subjects I do not see what harm could result from the adoption of a similar plan in the case of the Government of India. It was the considered opinion of Indian administrators and public men that the existing scheme of check and control was the only effective check of the democratic system established under the Government of India Act. Now if the Secretary of State divests himself by statutory order of some of his powers in favour of the Government of India without the provision of a popular element in its machinery the transfer must *pro tanto* make the Government of India more autocratic than before. Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy see the illogicality of their plan, but seem to think that such a step will facilitate their scheme. They state that it is not part of their plan to make the official Governments in India

less amenable to the control of Parliament than hitherto and they have proposed that "the Secretary of State should divest himself by rules to be laid before Parliament of control of the Government of India in some specified matters, even although these continue to be the concern of the official Governments (uncontrolled by legislatures) and to empower the Government of India to do likewise in relation to provincial Governments." The official Governments will become supreme in some matters without any check from a legislature or a higher authority like the Secretary of State. They also see the illogicality of an autocratic Government of India over provinces when responsible government is established. The proposals would have been logically sounder if a system of popular control even on a limited scale in the departments under the Government of India had been provided.

THE PROVINCES.

In regard to provincial administration and legislatures it is satisfactory that Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford have taken the view that the widest independence from superior control in legislative, administrative and financial matters should be conferred. Many of the proposals made to attain this are of a debatable character, and I shall reserve my comments on these to a later occasion. The scheme for a complete separation of the Indian and provincial heads of revenue is entirely sound as also the scheme for provincial contributions to the Government of India. The powers of provincial Governments in regard to taxation and borrowing have also been conceded and budget control by the legislative council is a very satisfactory reform which has come none too soon, though many of the checks proposed in the scheme are on the side of too much caution. Then there is the large question of the constitution of provincial executive in two parts and the scheme of reserved and transferred subjects. On this matter the country will have to express a decided and considered opinion. For the present even on the assumption that the scheme of diarchy is workable, sound public opinion on this part of the scheme can only be formed after the conclusions of the committees on the reserved and transferred subjects are known. If responsible government is conceded in homeopathic doses the whole scheme is bound to fail. I am convinced that unless the list of transferred subjects covers a fairly large field of provincial administration the present proposals will not excite any enthusiasm in the country. So much is made dependant on the committees hereafter to be appointed that it is no good to make further comments on this part of the subject just now.

In conclusion, I must say there are many aspects of the scheme which are open to serious criticisms, to which I shall direct attention later on. I must also acknowledge that in my opinion the report breathes a spirit of genuine sympathy with the aspirations of the people and their standpoint has been stated with fairness and generally as fully and

frankly as possible though the actual recommendations are unnecessarily over-cautious and err even on the side of timidity. Many points which have formed the subject of continued agitation have been conceded and the line of action taken is sound. The recommendations in regard to the recruitment of the Indian Civil Service are satisfactory. I must once again ask my countrymen not to throw away the present opportunity for reform in a spirit of huff, but to subject the proposals to a thorough and critical examination, suggest improvements and modifications in either of the two schemes before the country and press the modified scheme with insistence till it is conceded. A great deal of laborious work lies before us and I trust it will be approached in the right spirit. All of us who are individually and collectively responsible for a sound public opinion in this country ought to put our shoulders to the wheel to produce united and organised and sustained efforts in the cause of Indian Reform.

M. RAMACHANDRA RAO.

THE REFORM SCHEME.

THE Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of reforms is a step towards self-government. I must confess, however, that it falls short of our expectations, and will fail to evoke much enthusiasm. The merit of the scheme is that, while it seeks to largely extend the influence of popular opinion on Indian administration, both central and provincial, it proposes to transfer some real power in the provinces from the hands of the bureaucracy to those of popular representatives. Another satisfactory feature of the reform proposals is that they go a considerable way towards Indianising the higher services and remove, in theory at least, all racial bars.

The main points, in respect of which the scheme appears to me to be defective, are the following:—

1. There is no time-limit fixed in the scheme within which full responsible government will be realised in India.
2. The intervening periods between the successive stages, *viz.*, ten or twelve years, are too long.
3. The constitution of the periodic Commissions is not indicated: their character will be unsatisfactory unless they contain an adequate Indian element.
4. The legislative and financial powers of the Indian Legislative Assembly are unduly limited; and the term "good government" used with reference to the 'certificate' procedure is too vague.
5. The legislative and financial powers of the provincial Legislative Councils are hedged in by limitations and restrictions for which there is absolutely no necessity.
6. The range of subjects proposed to be transferred to the control of popular ministers is not sufficiently wide.

As to the questions incidentally dealt with in the report, my views are:—

7. In the matter of admitting Indians to the commissioned ranks in the army, while it is proposed to remove the racial bar, no definite measures have been suggested for carrying the principle into effect.

8. No definite proposals have been made for furthering the economic and commercial development of the country in the interests of the India people.

If these defects are removed, the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme will constitute a substantial advance towards the goal of a strong and self-governing India and will mark the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the country. The proposals as they stand, though they are not mere shams or shows, do not go far enough to satisfy Indian public opinion to the full extent. I trust, however, that the Reform Scheme will be amended in the light of the criticisms that are offered, and I think it would be unwise on the part of our public men to show an attitude of hostility towards it, which is bound to have the effect of strengthening the hands of those reactionaries who do not want any reforms in the Indian constitution and who would only be too glad to wreck the scheme.

PRAMATHANATH BANERJEA.

A GENUINE ATTEMPT.

THE proposals are a bold and genuine attempt to realize the promise made on the memorable 20th of August. They concede the main principles of the Congress-League scheme. Reasons are shewn why the Congress-League scheme cannot be accepted in its entirety and even if they fail to convince some, will certainly appeal to fair-minded persons as a forceful view of the difficulties likely to be caused by a deadlock between the legislature and the executive. The proposals go to put real power in the hands of people and though so many departments are omitted from the transferred subjects list it will be only a matter of time and proof of efficiency for the people to have power and responsibility as regards the departments omitted. The appointment of one Indian as member of Executive Council, of a Minister or Ministers for the transferred subjects from out of the elected members, Parliamentary Under-Secretaries also from the elected members, and standing committees are features which go to show how completely the association of the people is to be made in the actual conduct of government. The scheme is so framed as to allay apprehensions of the Anglo-Indians and of Parliamentary objectors. There is room for improvement in the suggestions regarding the Government of India, but that can be a matter of further discussion. On the whole, the proposals deserve our welcome as a fair instalment of responsible government, which is the final goal.

M. V. JOSHI.

or State and the Viceroy—many of them directly challenging the soundness and even the good faith of their opponents—it was impossible to go the whole length with any of them. Nor could any one group offer to speak for another when that other was loud in its repudiation of the former's representative character. To criticise the Report on the ground that it pleases no one is to indulge in a platitude. It will even displease a good many. The feature of the Report is its obvious attempt not to alienate entirely the sympathy of any section of public opinion. It would be difficult to say which would ensure a safe career, the acceptance of the more advanced and popular creed with a solid opposition of all those who did not subscribe to it, or a partial concession all round, allaying the apprehension of those who were not with the majority, coupled with a pronounced broadening of the basis of government. That the Report does alter the nature of the government machine and lets in the voice of the people's representatives to a very marked extent so far as the provinces are concerned, no one would be able to deny. That the extent to which it lets in that voice is fairly substantial will also have to be admitted. The Report for the first time in the history of our agitation endorses the legitimacy and the desirability of our aims and furnishes us with a frank recognition of the good work the educated community have been doing for the upliftment of their country. It is a document singularly free from that tone of ungenerous criticism to which we have been accustomed from our Anglo-Indian friends or that affectation of disappointment to which we have been treated by our official monitors. There is not a suggestion of ill-feeling, and it is a fair bid for a departure from the existing order of things, with good-will behind us and practically a promise of whatever we want to be given us at the next stage when we stop for a review of our work.

The scheme of reforms shadowed forth in the Report proceeds very much on the lines made familiar to us by Mr. Curtis. The present scheme is an improvement on the latter in that it preserves the unitary character of the Government and gives the council some voice even in the determination of matters falling within the scope of powers reserved for the executive Government. It is also different in this that the minister in charge of the transferred powers is not removable by the vote of the council. Mr. Curtis's scheme was more scientifically responsible in its character, but in the absence of any existing party groups and when voting will have to be on purely personal lines or with reference to isolated measures, it is just as well that the minister's tenure of office should not determine with an expression of want of confidence by the assembly. An adverse vote under these circumstances need not be a censure on the policy of the Government generally and the removal of ministers on questions of temporary and secondary importance could not fail to throw the

entire machinery into confusion. A number of changes following in quick succession would do more than this—they would discredit the scheme and put on it the stamp of impracticability. The other scheme, that of the Congress and the League, put before the Secretary of State and the Viceroy, had features which, if I may say so with diffidence, impaired not a little the soundness of its provisions, the most obvious being the unfairness of giving the control of policy to the council and leaving the responsibility of the government to the Parliament of England unrelieved. The independence of the minister to a vote of censure for the first five years, while it does little harm, may have the advantage of giving the council time to familiarise themselves with the weapon—and its vagaries—before it is finally entrusted to them to use as they will. The Congress-League scheme made too great a demand on the good relations between the officials and the representatives of the people, without in any way minimising the chances of friction which unfortunately would abound in a polity like ours, where neither party had faith in the assurances or the intentions of the other to safeguard and foster the interests which it held dear. Deadlocks under these circumstances—though looked forward to in certain quarters—when suspicion would have credited one with designs for the preservation of their privileges and the other with those of sinister disaffection—would have forced events along channels not always familiar to constitutionalism. The principle of the present scheme—and it is before us as a skeleton to be clothed according to the recommendations of the committees to be shortly appointed—has the merit of greater practicality than either of the other two. It is open to the criticism that some of the departments reserved for the Governor and his council might well have been transferred to the ministers chosen from the assembly. Education in its higher stage does not appear in the group of transferred powers. Nothing has been so near the heart of Indian reformers as the control of education and the shaping of the youth of the country along lines more acceptable to themselves. The reasons given for its exclusion from popular control are hardly of a nature to carry conviction, and it is to be hoped that when the scheme receives its final shape, education in all its stages will figure in the list of transferred powers.

It would have been a great recommendation of the scheme if it had proceeded, in matters falling within the purview of imperial administration, also in the same spirit of trust and given the council something more than a mere right to criticise and to influence the decisions of the Government. The constitution of the Council of State transgresses the entire spirit of the Report and strikes a very jarring note. A nominated non-official is generally a very thinly disguised variant of the official. In the provincial councils we know that he has lent himself to uses which make voting on any measure little short of

gerrymandering. There undoubtedly have been exceptions, and heads of Government have occasionally been very fair in the distribution of non-official seats which were under their patronage, but the nominated non-official, generally speaking, does not make for the elevation of the assembly to which he is summoned. The provision for his presence reads very much as if it were an attempt to neutralise the concession of an elective principle without assuming the responsibility of saying so. The veto of the Viceroy sounds the same, whatever name it may assume, and its frequent use would disfigure any constitution even though it may present itself to our eye clothed in the garb of a certificate. The Council of State, with its predominance of official colour and the right of the Viceroy to give a certificate that a measure was necessary in the interests of peace and order and good government—to say nothing of the right to pass a measure in the Council of State without the Legislative Assembly having more to do with it than be informed of its passage—should certainly have assured the framers of the scheme that no further precautions were necessary. It is a matter for regret that even with these safeguards for keeping up the present tone of the imperial Government only one more Indian member should have been added to the executive council. Three Indian members would still be in a minority in a council of eight, but they would help to bring the Government more in touch with the people of the country and would give their voice a more effective representation. Surely the experience of the past ten years should have sufficed to remove the apprehension that the inclusion of an Indian militates in any way against that harmony of action which is essential for a smooth working of the machine. The help which Indian members would render in the elucidation of popular wishes and in preserving the confidence of the people in a Government so formidably and needlessly protected against popular attacks, would be incalculable. It will need the earnest consideration of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford if it is not highly desirable to add one more Indian member to the executive council—with or without a portfolio—when they come to revise and weigh the provisions of their scheme in the light of criticism offered by the public. I may say that it will be our due that they do so, if they are to make amends for the suspicion implied and the injustice done us in putting up the fortifications they have erected round the Government of India. This is subject to the maintenance of the present strength of the council. If the number is reduced to four as it might be, then two Indian members on the council would keep up the proportion conceded with regard to the provincial Governments.

I said above that the Report was an obvious compromise between divergent claims. It would seem that it is also a compromise between the various coadjutors of the scheme. Possibly, Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy had to take other and

less liberal colleagues with them, and the restrictions placed on the popular representatives in the imperial Government are the price they had to pay for a freer hand in shaping the Government of the provinces. It is an additional factor to influence our judgment in weighing the reforms. It is also to be remembered that we cannot have by constitutional agitation and discussion the radical changes for which only an upheaval can clear the way. We have necessarily to build on existing foundations and it is sheer petulance which chafes at the limitations that environment places on our activity. Besides I am not sure that a sudden severance from tradition involving a break in the continuity of things would not leave us at the mercy of squalls which would be the more pitiless as we would have lost our bearings. A desire to proceed along lines which moor us to our activities in the past is the surest pledge against revolution. Power in men, not familiar with its exercise and not broken to its responsibilities, is apt to be impatient even of defects inherent in the nature of things.

We speak in forms of speech moulded by considerations other than material and political when we talk of there being only one right way of doing a thing. It may be that in weighing matters not susceptible of any practical test an absolute criterion is necessary. But for purposes of life and growth there are always reforms and remedies almost as good as the best. If a scheme is to bring us complete autonomy in a decade and another with less friction and more co-operation takes a shade longer, it is nothing but a defect of judgment to stick to the first. There is one line which measures the shortest distance between two points, but it is not essential that we insist on taking the shortest route. A slightly longer way without the inconveniences attendant on the former would take us just as well to the point in view. So long as we get there, a decade or so in the life of a country is too insignificant a space of time to justify an insistence on what our self-esteem may designate as the only right way. In accepting the scheme I will again advert to what I said above that 'laws reach a very little way.' It is the spirit in which they are worked and the possibilities which they unfold that matter and really make for success. The constitution as it stands may leave powers in the hands of the executive which we deem exorbitant, but convention may prescribe limits without which the Government is not to go. The working of the Morely-Minto scheme, with its frank denial of the right of the council to bind the executive, slowly gave rise to a tacit acceptance that so far as possible the wishes of the council supported by a majority should be given effect to. It is not to be questioned that the present scheme with its admitted liberalism of tone would give rise to conventions similar in character and more difficult to disregard. Conventions of the constitution with their elasticity are a much more satisfactory guarantee than laws

with their rigid and unbending application. The spirit of the report and the appreciation by the coadjutors of the problem they had to deal with is an earnest that the considered wishes of the majority of the people's representatives would not be lightly dealt with even in the Council of the State, that last sanctuary of official prestige.

The Report marks a substantial step forward in the outlook of our rulers. It is a sincere and genuine endeavour to deal with the problems which came up for the consideration of its signatories. That they had not a free hand to do as they pleased is clear. That they attempted to go as far as they could take their colleagues and their opponents in this country and in England, is equally clear. That the report might have been better is not to be denied, but it is an honest measure giving us fair opportunities of qualifying ourselves for the task we have set before us and which we are safe in assuming will form the next instalment of reforms, at least so far as the provinces are concerned. It is a longer step from the Morley-Minto scheme to the present recommendations, than from these to a completely responsible government in the provinces. If the Morley-Minto scheme led to this in ten years, it is no strain on imagination to expect a self-governing legislature for the provinces after a similar lapse of time.

But the condition is a concerted attempt to make the scheme a success—to bear with the discipline and effort involved in giving it a fair and and dispassionate trial. Nothing is so essential as a balanced judgment and a clear outlook—in other words, a sense of proportion and of perspective.

SHAMNATH MUSHRAN.

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

LONDON, MAY 31.

PROSPECTS OF REFORM.

MR. MONTAGU and his party have returned, but so far we know nothing of the nature of the proposals that are now before the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet. It is very unfortunate that the Secretary of State's return has synchronised with the Irish troubles and the revival of the offensive on the Western front. Everyone's interest and energy are absorbed in one or other of these matters, and there is no reserve of either left for the apparently extraneous affairs of India. The people of this country are not very imaginative, and they cannot attend to more than one important problem at a time. The result is that, when Mr. Montagu went to wait upon the Prime Minister, he found that Mr. Lloyd George had anticipated his visit to Scotland by a few hours, and so the extraordinary event happened that a Secretary of State, coming back from an important and historic mission, was obliged to await the return of his political chief. In the House of Commons,

last Tuesday, he told Commander Wedgwood, ever watchful, that he had nothing to state—for the moment. The proposals were before the Prime Minister, and until they had been considered by the War Cabinet, he could make no useful statement. So we are pretty much where we were before. But it is not quite so bad as that. I believe that the proposals, if an attempt is not made in official circles on your side to "queer" them, will not be unfavourably received by their august mightinesses, the members of the War Cabinet. I do not suppose that the Prime Minister himself has any special views thereon, and it is very likely that, according to the new practice, the proposals have been passed on to a particular member of the War Cabinet to report thereon. I need not do more than remind your readers that there are two members of the Cabinet who claim to speak with some special authority upon Indian matters. Doubtless they will have a good deal to say about these proposals. But their later record has not been altogether unfavourable, as witness Lord Curzon's faithful dealing with Lord Sydenham last year, and Mr. Chamberlain's handling of the reform despatch of the Government of India, which will almost certainly never see the light. There are also, doubtless, members of the Secretary of State's Council—I do not here refer to the Indian members—who may be expected to regard the proposals with no very unfriendly eye. And the Indian members themselves ought to be a tower of strength. It is hoped that the proposals may be laid on the Table within the next fortnight, though there is no absolute guarantee that this will happen. No-one can prophesy safely to-day, when all things are in a state of flux. But after the publication, which may be done without a statement, it is likely that an opportunity may be sought to raise a debate, and then Mr. Montagu may be expected to make a very interesting pronouncement on the actualities of the situation in India as seen through the eyes of a public man of high standing. That publication will be unduly delayed I do not think, for it is being increasingly recognised that delay means trouble, and of that the country has had more than enough in Ireland. It is being more and more understood here that the Eastern front is becoming perilously exposed to enemy attack, and people are inclined to look to India for aid in that direction. Naturally, they also recognise that this aid cannot be hoped for from a country that is dissatisfied and whose aspirations are ignored. The general feeling is that India is entitled to a great deal, according to her ability to bear the responsibilities that are implied by responsible government, and they will be prepared to support the official proposals, provided that these are neither dangerously liberal nor unduly conservative.

THE DUTY OF INDIAN LEADERS.

It is generally believed that the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals, being in the nature of a compromise upon many points of great import-

ance, will nevertheless be acceptable as a basis of political and administrative reconstruction in India, provided, again, that they contain the necessary guarantees for continued and practically automatic progress and development. Any wholesale condemnation of them on your side will undoubtedly jeopardise the entire prospects of reform for some time to come. People here who count look for a display of statesmanship from the Indian leaders. They do not expect these to swallow unquestioningly any nostrums that politicians on this side may be disposed to administer to them, but it is felt that a beginning ought to be made and that the difficulties should be recognised by those on your side. There is no doubt that the Indo-British Association is doing its utmost to poison public opinion here against the grant of reforms. The Congress-League scheme is spoken of as a "revolutionary" one, the Indian leaders are figured as a sinister minority of dangerous self-seekers and imposters, ravenous for the spoil that will fall to them by the disappearance of the British character of the Government in India and the handing over of the non-British elements of the population to them. Moreover, the Behar riots have been fully exploited, and as no authoritative statement or explanation of the circumstances has reached this country, it is not always easy to meet some at least of the charges brought against the character of the political agitation in India. In addition to this, when people are told that the number of untouchables in your country is greater than the total population of the United Kingdom, it is not easy to make them understand the democratic nature of the political movement, in spite of all that is said to show that the leaders are all against the continuance of the present undesirable condition of affairs. If one had the time and the opportunity of putting things in their right perspective, something might be done. As it is, however, the mischief is effected long before it is possible to produce the remedy. And this poison is being instilled into the public mind on every and any occasion. There are always the missionaries to explain things from their point of view. These assemblies are select as a rule, and it is impossible to give the antidote simultaneously. And there is to be faced British national vanity and hypocrisy, which prevent Britons from realising that they have many a beam in their own eyes, and that all the evil is not on one side, otherwise the present disastrous conditions in Europe could not have arisen.

The Indian members of Council have produced a very good impression. Their work has been honest, sincere, and earnest. They have shown an amount of independence that, I believe, is greatly appreciated by the Secretary of State, and thus something of an equipoise is created in the Council. Naturally, it is impossible to go into details. The public cannot be admitted into the holy of holies of Council meetings. The Indian members' work is necessarily unknown outside,

and it is sometimes thought that they are mere nonentities, whose advice is listened to but ignored. I have the best reasons for believing that this is quite a wrong estimate of the position, and that they are entitled to the confidence of their countrymen.

REVIEWS.

SOURCES OF INDIAN HISTORY.

THE EXPANSION OF BRITISH INDIA, 1818-58, by Prof. G. Anderson and Prof. M. Subedar. G. Bell and Sons.

THIS is the first of a series of three source-books on the history of British India. The second will deal with the Foundation of Indian Policy and the third with the Economic Policy of the East India Company. To break up the subject in this manner into a number of books has its drawbacks, but the gain on the whole is far greater, as all cognate matters are brought together in one view and all important aspects of the history obtain adequate treatment. We hope the later volumes will be quite upto the high level of this one. Half the space available has been here given to the mutiny and we do not know of any other book equally accessible from which so fair and full a general view of that catastrophe could be obtained. The earlier chapters deal with the Afghan, Sindh Punjab, and Burma wars and the annexations of Lord Dalhousie. Here one is rather surprised to find excerpts from Sir Alfred Lyall, in a compilation professing to give us "original sources," and, we fancy, the only explanation is that the editors were glad to include some cuttings from the writings of a man whom his contemporaries rated so highly. Sir Alfred Lyall's, however, appears to be one of those cases in which the man is greater by far than his writings. The editors observe in their preface that in their introductory comments they have avoided "showing any particular bias one way or the other," and have left "the students to form their own conclusions." Thus in the Mutiny chapters we have excerpts both from Sir John Lawrence and Sir Henry Lawrence. But to say, as the editors do in their opening paragraphs of Ch. V, that—"It is still a question whether the great insurrection in its early stages was merely a mutiny of the soldiers or a general revolt of the people, and how far it was a case of the soldiers terrorising the people, or the people working on the minds of an ignorant and suspicious soldiery"—is surely to carry editorial non-committal quite beyond the bounds of showing to each party and each view a fair field and no favour. Do the editors themselves really hold that, as they say, "it is still a question"? Another point we should like to suggest is that in a second edition the actual dates of excerpts Nos. 8 (i), 34 (i), 50 (v), which are herein given without any, should be supplied, as far as possible. In conclusion we heartily congratulate Prof. Anderson and Prof. Subedar on the excellent volume they have put together, and hope that in this presidency at any rate, where they are so well-known, the book will soon find its way into every school and college library.

B. K. T.

A PLEA FOR GENERAL SUPPORT.

The situation in short amounts to this. The Montagu-Chelmsford scheme is accepted by the British people as representing an immense advance, so immense that they are turning upon India a searching gaze to see whether this advance can possibly be justified. Unless Indian opinion rallies to the support of the scheme promptly, solidly and soberly, the British people will be driven to entertain grave doubts of the political sagacity of Indian leaders and, as a consequence, of the readiness

of India for a real advance. The British people have other things to think of besides India just now, and if they regard India's attitude as unreasonable, they will turn from her with impatience to the war in the West. It rests with the politically minded classes to convince opinion in England that the full measure of advance is entirely justified by identifying themselves with the great principles upon which the scheme is based and by responding whole-heartedly to the generous appeal now made to them. They must clearly realise that there are two courses of action which would at this juncture be serious political blunders. Should they procrastinate, sit on the fence, and fail to give prompt support to the main outlines of the scheme, they will be prejudicing their case before the British people by showing clearly that they do not grasp the magnitude of the opportunity which is now offered to them. Further, if they should be led—by overmuch attention to the counsels of impatient visionaries and bitter fanatics to disguise a real satisfaction with the scheme under an ill-timed and disingenuous policy of huckstering—to denounce the projected reforms as inadequate and to demand impracticable concessions, they will play straight into the hands of the ultra-Tory press and drive the whole weight of responsible opinion in Great Britain to the view that the stock practical political wisdom available among Indian leaders is not sufficient to justify the magnitude of the advance proposed by the Montagu-Chelmsford report. British opinion is looking to the politically-minded classes of this country to justify by their attitude the substantial instalment of responsibility which is now projected. The issue is clear. The decision of the Indian leaders must be taken not rashly or in a spirit of mere opportunism but with a full realisation of the practical political aspects of the present situation.—*The Times of India.*

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE lull on the Western front is developing ominous proportions. The Allies themselves would appear to be at a loss to understand its causes. It may be, that the enemy is husbanding his munitions and not wasting them in long range bombardments, which after all serve no better purpose than mere demonstration. Or it may be that adverse conditions prevail, which render it necessary for the enemy to lessen his activities.—In the meanwhile the advance of the Allies in Albania should be taken as a sign of distinct improvement in the conditions of the war in the Balkans. The Allies have been very unfortunate in their operations in the South East of Europe. The ill-fated Dardanelles expedition of Mr. Churchill will always remain a standing warning to thoughtless military enthusiasts against ill-considered military adventures. The army in Salonika only keeps the Allies in evidence in that theatre of the war. But the Allies have so far failed to produce any impression there. The Balkans is the land of surprises, and it would add immensely to its reputation and also materially affect the fortunes of the war if the present advance brought about a change in the relative positions of the belligerents.

* * *

COUNT HERTLING'S speech in Reichstag on the 11th instant sounds a new note altogether. Never has a clear statement been made by any responsible German spokesman that Germany did not intend to keep Belgium. The retention of

Belgium by Germany would not only mean eternal disgrace and dishonour to the Allies, but, what is of more practical interest, it would be like a loaded revolver pointed at the head of Great Britain. This declaration will therefore fulfil the negative condition for the opening of the preliminaries of peace. On the other hand, what Count Hertling says in regard to Russia is not likely to reassure the Allies. Perhaps it may create in their minds a shrewd suspicion that the generosity (?) of Germany in regard to Belgium was caused by the vast possibilities that were opened to her in the East by the complete collapse and wholesale disintegration of Russia. Untrustworthy as are most of the accounts received from that country, the condition of Russia must be the cause of the deepest anxiety to the Allies and when the time comes for peace, the solution of the Russian problem will tax to its very utmost the skill of the Allied diplomatists.

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