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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Allies have been making satisfactory progress on the Western front. Further advantages are reported in the region between Soissons and Rheims, although it would appear that the enemy is making a great effort to hold a part of the Vesle. The continued retirement of the enemy during the last few weeks leads us to hope that this resistance will be only for the purpose of covering his retirement still further. In the region of the Somme again important advantages have been gained. Montdidier has fallen and so has Chaules and Roye. The occupation of Roye is especially significant. It is an important railway centre and its capture by the Allies will facilitate their transport and communications as much as it will disconcert the plans of the enemy in these matters. Here again the position has not been stabilised, but the Allies are continuing their advance. It will thus be seen that on the whole of the Western front there has been an immense improvement of the situation in favour of the Allies except in the extreme north-east near the coast. To the British this is a point of vital importance and no effort, it would appear, is likely to be made to dislodge the enemy from his positions unless the chances of success are positive and decided. Failure cannot be risked here, nor even thought of as a possibility.

FROM the reciprocity resolution passed by the Imperial War Conference this year, it would appear that no agreement has yet been reached on the important question of the treatment of Indians already resident in the British colonies. It will be remembered that Mr. Chamberlain, in advocating India's cause in the Conference last year, said:

"We would ask that a kindly and sympathetic consideration should be given to those Indians who have already been permitted to settle in the dominions." And General Smuts, on behalf of South Africa where the question has assumed the most acute character, assured the Conference that now the white community were rid of the fear that they were going to be flooded by unlimited immigration from India, "the door is open now for a peaceful and statesmanlike solution of all the minor administrative troubles which occurred and will occur from time to time." But the sympathetic consideration then asked and promised is not in evidence yet, and it is much to be regretted that this year's Conference did not deal with this part of the question. In the matter of emigration reciprocal treatment between India and the dominions has been agreed upon, generally as recommended in the memorandum submitted to the Conference last year.

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THE *Leader*, in its comments on the financial proposals in the reform scheme, takes strong exception to the arrangement by which the amount to be contributed by provincial Governments to the Government of India is determined. It says: "The equitable arrangement will be the division of the estimated imperial deficit of Rs. 13,63,00,000 among the provinces on the basis of their respective revenues. If this be done the share of the United Provinces will be found to be not Rs. 3,27,00,000 but Rs. 2,28,00,000, leaving for the province not Rs. 48 lakhs but Rs. 147 lakhs. In other words, Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford propose to take from our province 99 lakhs, say a crore of rupees more every year than they ought to. This cannot be easily approved. We can imagine their argument to be that no province should be started with a deficit. If this be so, need any province be started with a surplus at the expense of neighbouring provinces? On the basis of the calculation suggested by us, the figures will be as follows:—

	Contribution in lakhs of rupees.	Net provin- cial deficit or surplus in lakhs of rupees.
Madras ...	266	+ 225
Bombay ...	200	- 99
Bengal ...	150	- 71
United Provinces ...	228	+ 147

Punjab	... 172	+ 78
Burma	... 154	+ 7
Bihar and Orissa	... 81	- 36
Central Provinces	... 82	- 41
Assam	... 34	- 13

* * *

"It will be seen from these figures that the Viceroy and the Secretary of State propose that Madras, the United Provinces, the Punjab and Burma should pay for Bombay, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces and Assam. Not only is a sum of Rs. 260 lakhs to be found by them to meet the deficits of the latter five provinces, but they are to find an additional Rs. 37 lakhs in order to start them with small surpluses. Equity requires that the deficit provinces should tax themselves rather than live upon the bounty of the four other provinces. Among the latter the gross surplus shown against the United Provinces has only been rendered possible by the expenditure of very inadequate amounts on beneficial services. Bombay and Bengal, in particular, are so wealthy as compared with Madras and our provinces that they should hesitate to allow the latter to be mulcted for their benefit. If this is not to be, if the surplus provinces must be fleeced, then at least it should be decided now that as soon as and to the extent that the imperial deficit will fall below the figure now assumed, relief will be given to the surplus provinces. Not a year should be lost in this reparation being made. On this condition alone will it at all be possible for the latter to reconcile themselves even temporarily to the proposed arrangement."

* * *

IN defining the position of the 'moderate' party in the reform controversy, we remarked in our last week's issue that they as a body would acknowledge the good faith that underlay the report and admit that it marked a distinct step in advance. The *Mahratta* thinks that we have done the 'nationalists' 'cruel injustice' in hinting indirectly that their position is any other than this. An effective reply to the criticism in the *Mahratta* is supplied by the fact that such eminent Congressmen as Messrs. Mudholkar and M. V. Joshi exerted themselves in the Berar special conference to bring about an understanding between the two parties, the basis of agreement being sought exactly on the lines mentioned by us. They framed a resolution which, while acknowledging the sincerity and earnestness of the authors of the scheme and the advance it makes on the existing conditions, suggested the necessary improvements, in order to make the proposals adequate. But such a resolution was entirely unacceptable to the other party, and finding that their overtures for compromise were repulsed and that there was no common ground on which to proceed, Messrs. Mudholkar and Joshi and others dissociated themselves from the proceedings of the conference and withdrew from the meeting in protest.

THE experience at other provincial conferences has been uniformly the same. The Bengal conference adopted a short, sharp resolution to the effect that the scheme did not present any step towards the realisation of responsible government. To this resolution two modest amendments were moved by leading Congressmen of the 'moderate' party. The one proposed by Mr. J. Chaudhuri ran: "This conference regards certain recommendations made in the report of constitutional reforms in India . . . as a distinct and definite step in advance towards the realisation of responsible government, while the other recommendations therein are unsatisfactory." It failed to commend itself to the conference. The other was proposed by Dr. Pramathanath Banarjia, and it was as follows: "That this conference, while expressing its thankfulness to the Secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford for the earnestness and care with which they have framed the reform scheme, and according its cordial support to its main principle, *viz.*, the establishment of responsible government in India at an early date, desires to record its deliberate opinion that the present proposals do not go far enough to meet the requirements of the country and to satisfy public opinion." This amendment also did not meet with approval, and the resolution finally passed was, as said above, that the scheme did not present any step towards responsible government, which resolution was again adopted, word for word, by the provincial Congress committee.

* * *

IN the subjects committee of the Punjab conference Dr. Manohar Lal moved and the Hon'ble Mr. Fazl-i-Hussain seconded an amendment 'welcoming the reform proposals as a step in advance and suggesting certain modifications in order to make them fully acceptable.' The amendment was rejected. In the Bihar conference an effort made by prominent Congressmen to amend a condemnatory resolution in a similar sense met with the same fate. There the Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Dwaraka Nath proposed and Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha seconded an amendment which, while acknowledging that 'the proposals constituted a step in advance,' declared that 'unless they are modified to a considerable extent, they will not be acceptable to the people.' None of these amendments, be it noted, proposed at any of these conferences, expressed complete satisfaction with the reform proposals in their existing form; on the contrary, all of them insisted that the scheme needed expansion and improvement in several important respects. Their only purpose was to acknowledge that the proposals were a genuine attempt on the part of the authors to solve the Indian question and constituted a distinct advance on the present conditions. But the amendments at each of the conferences were thrown out by a large majority, and in the light of these facts the discrimination made by us will, we think, be allowed to be amply justified.

* * *

REFORMS IN PARLIAMENT.

MR. MONTAGU'S speech in the House of Commons on the Indian budget day, which was allotted this year after five years' continuous break, as well as his speech to the Cambridge Liberal Association a week before, was informed with a spirit of genuine sympathy with Indian aspirations and an earnest desire to advance India's cause. After a recital, on both occasions, of India's stupendous war effort in men, money and material, he plunged at once into the subject of constitutional reforms. He handled very firmly the Tchinovniks in England who opposed all reform in India or pleaded that the present time was not suitable for it. "Let us have it out once for all," he said, "what was to be the principle of our Government in India. Was it to be domination, subordination to the iron hand? Were we to have one principle of government for India and another principle for the rest of the Empire? How had we built up South Africa, Australia, Canada and New Zealand? Was not the principle of the British Empire the principle of a commonwealth of free nations? Were we not to extend it to India? Was the ideal of our Empire geographical, not moral? What if we said that to our American Allies? What if when we talked of the British ideal being one of self-governing institutions we drew the line somewhere in the Indian Ocean and said, thus far and no farther? That sort of theory was utterly impossible, utterly out of harmony with British ideas." No discussion on the reform scheme was possible with those who questioned the principle of progressive realisation of responsible government as embodied in the declaration of British policy made in Parliament last year, for the British Government, Mr. Montagu declared, was committed to that principle. It was being maintained by some critics here that the Parliamentary pronouncement of last year represented views of no one but Mr. Montagu individually. That notion receives a complete and categorical repudiation in Mr. Montagu's speech. While it was open to Parliament to throw out the reform proposals, he said, "it could not, without perpetrating the grossest breach of faith in the history of the world, depart from the announcement of the 20th August." This statement should afford to Indian politicians a clear indication as to the limits within which the British Cabinet will move. If responsible government is to be introduced in the provinces at the very start and gradually extended, the bifurcation of services must be acquiesced in in the transitional stage. It does not follow, however, that the departments to be retained in official hands need be at all many, and a demand must be pressed that all departments which it was not absolutely necessary to reserve should be made over to the people.

Another matter made clear in Mr. Montagu's speech is that the scheme in its present shape is a draft susceptible of improvement in its important

features, and from the favourable reception it met with in both Houses of Parliament one may confidently expect that the alterations that it will receive will be generally for the better, if the uncompromising hostility shown to it in India in certain quarters does not so strengthen the hands of the reactionaries as to produce a contrary result. A suggestion was made in the Commons that the whole report should be referred to a Committee, which proposal, if accepted, was likely to defer the question of reforms unduly. It was well that Mr. Montagu discountenanced the idea. It would not be possible, he said, to convince Indians that the British Government were in earnest if the suggestion, associated with Lord Sydenham, were adopted. It is to be hoped that opposition in India, which is sure to be exploited by our opponents in England to the fullest possible extent, will not have the result of the proposal being accepted. In order to complete the scheme it is proposed to appoint committees on electoral franchises and a division of subjects almost immediately, and a bill embodying the final conclusions of Government is expected to be presented to Parliament in the early part of next year. It is only after the bill is submitted that a final opinion on it can be expressed, but in the meanwhile we trust that both the committees will be acceptable in their personnel to the Indian people and that their inquiries will be conducted in a generous spirit. A caution is particularly needed as to the work of the committee on the division of services, for if they make illiberal suggestions and do not try to transfer to popular control as many departments as possible, the scheme will be deprived of much of its merit, and the first favourable impression produced upon the country will soon vanish. It should be remembered that the general support the scheme has received is provisional and that if the scheme, as a result of the labours of the committees, emerges in an unsatisfactory shape the position will have to be reconsidered. As we have already suggested, the committee on a bifurcation of subjects should also have it within their scope to suggest a similar division of services in the Government of India, for the declaration of British policy in this country made last year requires the introduction of responsible government in the central Government no less than in the provincial Governments.

THE WIND AND THE WHIRLWIND.

(BY AN INDIAN.)

THE reports published in the papers about the extremely stormy nature of the proceedings of the Bengal and Madras special provincial conferences are of a kind that makes one "furiously to think." In the case of the latter conference the published reports deal only with the open session and one is left to guess what happened when the conference was sitting in secret session as a subjects committee from the slight indications in Mrs. Besant's remarks in

New India. In the Bengal conference such respected leaders as Mr. J. Chaudhuri were not allowed even a hearing. At Madras Mrs. Besant, the chairman of the Reception Committee, could not dare to address the conference and had to leave her proper work to be done by somebody else. A 'moderate' may perhaps be justified in feeling a kind of wicked exultation at seeing this treatment received in a public conference by one who has been none too careful in the choice of words used to raise the enthusiasm of her younger admirers and to show off the alleged failings of the "yesterdays." She proudly called herself one of the "tomorrows," but unfortunately failed to realise that there is a day after tomorrow also, and when others came forward to claim to be the "day-after-tomorrows," her proud claim became *ipso facto* a condemnation, according to her own line of argument. "As you sow, so shall you reap."

But we are too patriotic and chivalrous to indulge in this kind of exultation and are only saddened by the thought of the future. What is going to be the political future of this country? After all, this political future is only partially dependent on the sections in a Parliamentary enactment. It is more vitally dependent on the attitude of the whole public towards political questions and towards political opponents. Politics is after all a question of compromise, and compromise cannot be effected without a fairly calm atmosphere where every side is given a chance to put forward its views and where personalities are as far as possible kept in the background. But it is not too much to say that since the agitation on the Age of Consent Bill politics in India has become a question of personalities alone. In Bengal it appears to have been a long-standing duel between Babu Surendranath and Babu Motilal; in our part of the country one of the protagonists has always been Mr. Tilak with his henchmen Messrs. Paranjpe, Khadilkar, and latterly Khaparde, ready to stand sponsors for an extra-virulent bout of abuse, while his opponents have been legion, the most important among them having been—to name only the departed—Agarkar, Ranade, Mehta, Gokhale. We do not say that there was no underlying difference of principle between these contestants. But the contest almost invariably took a personal colour. Now one of these sides having apparently opinions which can rouse unreasoning enthusiasm without awakening a sense of responsibility could easily appear very popular and the opponents could be soon shown off as unpatriotic traitors without self-respect. Thus such great men as Babu Surendranath, Agarkar, Ranade, Mehta, Gokhale have never attained to such a pitch of popularity with the half-educated masses, though their abilities and transparent patriotism have always sooner or latter commanded the respect of the reasonable section of their opponents.

Extremism has a habit of requiring more and more virulence of expression to keep itself a going concern. But some of the more reputable of the creed

find that a limit is reached sooner or later. Really speaking, those who indulged in the violent wordy warfare at the time of the Surat Congress and encouraged their followers to act the unfortunate scene at Surat have no right to complain of the treatment that Mrs. Besant received at Madras. We fully agree with the following words from the *Mahratta*, only wishing that the same spirit had moved it and its *confreres* for the last thirty years.

"And what is her reward for this disinterested service? Abuse, slander, insults and humiliation! What a nice reflection on the moral calibre of our men? Do these rowdies expect to seek co-operation in this way? They must know that in India and England our leaders will have to work hand in hand with many Indians and Labour leaders who cannot see eye to eye with them. Compromises will have to be resorted to to win them over, and, if they do so, are we to charge them with treachery and selling the country to her enemies? If that be the idea of these raw politicians, then good-bye to all common sense and mutual toleration. They must know that such tactics will plunge their country in chaos and land it in disaster, and India will have to say: God, save me from such friends."

Some others have been saying this long before the *Mahratta* thought of it. We hope that the lesson will be lasting.

For Mrs. Besant the pill has indeed been much too bitter. She "thought it better not to force her distasteful personality on the minority." It seems to her "a pity that the fashion on the part of the minority to hoot down every opinion with which they disagree should be the present custom in Madras." She did not "venture to perform my functions as chairman of the reception committee at the end of the conference. It did not seem wise to excite the already excited meeting, merely to be shouted down." In such circumstances one can well sympathise with her pathetic appeal: "My young Tamil brethren, what have I done to you that you hate me so bitterly? I do not want to force myself on your meetings. I can work without talking, except when invited by friendly Indians. I intend to resign the presidency of the Home Rule League at the next annual meeting. I am doing my best as I see it. I will not win your applause by agreeing with you where you are wrong. I do not pretend that you do not give me pain by your hatred. Love repulsed ever turns to pain." Shall we also add that honest work always misconstrued has been one of the daily bitter experiences of the opponents of Mr. Tilak and Mr. Motilal Ghosh? They have borne that with undaunted courage, aware that their countrymen will ere long come to appreciate it or, even if they did not, that they have been doing their duty.

We have still hopes that this evil of intolerance of opposition is not yet past remedy. But our leaders who have been at least indirectly responsible for it must take a firm line and follow it consistently. It always does one good to occasionally advocate unpopular opinions. An able man cannot always have opinions which are those of the majority. He must have some reforms to

advocate which are against the predilections of his followers. In such cases it is bad from the point of view of public opinion and of his own character to say that he will keep them in the background and not detract from his usefulness by becoming unpopular. It is always very useful to let the large mass of half-educated people see that they have not got to the summit of all knowledge and wisdom. Even at the present juncture if the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme had not been put down on the first day as unacceptable, undiscussable, unimprovable, and other hard words calculated to go down with the mass of people, Mrs. Besant would not have had to face a party of rejection who would try to outdo everybody at the game of running down the scheme. We hope that the lesson has now been well learnt and that in future a sane and sedate atmosphere would hold the field.

THE SITUATION AS BETWEEN PARTIES.

Now Mrs. Besant has definitely ranged herself against the party of rejection, it is supposed by many that the differences between the different schools of politicians have been reduced to a vanishing point. At any rate, such differences as persevere are, it is believed, those of degree and not of kind. One would wish it were so, but on a close examination of the standpoints of the different sections of Congressmen, one has to admit that they are as wide apart as ever. Before proceeding to consider what warrant there is for assuming that the gulf has now been bridged because Mrs. Besant thinks total rejection of the scheme inadvisable and imprudent, it would be well to recall that the party which advocates wholesale rejection of the scheme is not so small as is commonly imagined. Mrs. Besant has said that a third of the delegates who attended the Madras Conference were in favour of the policy of complete rejection as opposed to that of acceptance *plus* modifications, but it is clearly an under-estimate, for, as voting went at the subjects committee, 157 were for wholesale rejection, and 184 voted for suggesting improvements, and this proportion is nearer one-half than one-third. The rejectionist party has a clear-cut formula, which everyone will understand, if not appreciate. On the very day the reform proposals were made public, this party declared a hammer and tongs opposition to them. They said :

"The scheme . . . is so radically wrong alike in principles and in detail that in our opinion it is impossible to modify and improve it. Nor do we think it possible to devise any system of safeguards against the mischievous working of the whole complex scheme. It cannot consequently form the basis of discussion or compromise by the people or their representatives."

And they called in express words for a complete abandonment of the whole scheme. Their position is perfectly intelligible. If the scheme is not only unsatisfactory, but incapable from its fundamental weakness of giving satisfaction without radically altering its main structure and laying out anew the lines on which it should be conceived

it is clearly futile to discuss the present proposals or suggest modifications in them. They will not serve even as a basis for consideration and improvement, and it only remains for the country to incontinently reject them. It is no use arguing to those who hold this view that rejection of the scheme is attended with perilous consequences; for they see no good in the scheme and so they cannot agree that any risk is involved in a policy which, to their thinking, their national self-respect and the future of the country imperatively demand. Whether or not, after the present scheme is abandoned, a better one will be substituted for it is, again, a question that does not arise with them. Many of them believe that continuous agitation, of a sterner kind perhaps than now, and, if circumstances require it, a resort to passive resistance will ere long bring them to the promised land, but even if there were no chance of that, still their clear duty at this day would be to decline to discuss the scheme. It makes no matter if this scheme is not followed by another and the future is blank, for the abandonment of the scheme is of itself a good worth striving for, and if they are successful in only one part of their struggle and unsuccessful in the other, even then they count it a gain. If the future is not made secure by their effort, in no event will it be prejudiced.

Mrs. Besant dissents from the view above set forth, but at what point in this reasoning, close and irrefragable, be it admitted, if the starting point in it is conceded, she separates from the rejectionists is not at all made clear. She has quoted in her paper, with evident approval, Mr. Polak's opinion that rejection of the official scheme is fraught with grave peril, but a concurrence in that opinion, necessarily implies that the scheme is held to contain some good elements which must be put beyond the hazard of being wrecked. To this opinion, however, Mrs. Besant is extremely loth to subscribe. She has nowhere stated that the scheme marks a substantial advance on the present position and contains in it a fair promise of further progress being completed within a reasonable space of time, and unless the scheme is viewed in that light, nothing is really jeopardised by the scheme being rejected. Mrs. Besant has condemned the scheme in unmeasured terms; to her it is not even discussable, and this she said not in the first flush of anger, but she gave it as her considered opinion arrived at after mature deliberation some weeks before the scheme was published. While on its positive side the scheme contains so little of merit, negatively, it is reactionary in several of its important features, and balancing the progress with the retrograde motion, the scheme on the whole carries us so little forward that no one really need be anxious to stave off its rejection. If we do not stand to gain much by the scheme being brought into operation, we do not stand to lose much by its being rejected. It is difficult to understand therefore why Mrs. Besant, holding as she does that the scheme is utterly

worthless, is yet opposed to the policy of rejection. It must be either that she shrinks from the logical consequence of her position or that her estimate of the reform proposals is not altogether so unfavourable as one is led to suppose from her published writings or utterances. As it is, her attitude towards the scheme is illogical in the extreme, and it is no wonder if it failed to carry conviction to many at the Madras Conference. No one, who does not think that the scheme in its present shape makes considerable improvement on the present state of things and is susceptible of important modification consistently with a preservation of its essential framework, can logically counsel against rejection, and let it be clearly understood by those who show themselves anxious to disown and prevent rejection demonstrate in that very act by implication that the scheme constitutes a distinct advance, which they would not imperil by rejection here leading to its abandonment in England. At this point, it may be well to examine the argument put forward by Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachari in his presidential address. This gentleman and two or three others, who led the rejection party in the conference, betrayed towards the close of it a wakening of attitude which has deservedly brought on them an amount of opprobrium in their camp. Mr. Achariar's contention is that because the provisions in the scheme in regard to the Government in England, the public services and local self-government are good, he would not reject the whole of it, but the reasoning is by no means cogent. The question of public services really falls outside the scope of constitutional reforms, and whether the solution proposed is satisfactory or otherwise, the scheme of reforms has no organic connection with it and must be considered on its own merits. So also the question of local self-government. The provincial councils having the power to determine the constitution of local bodies, the consideration of reforms need not really be cumbered with this question. Nor are the provisions relating to these two side-issues, or the third question, so completely satisfactory as can make a scheme, otherwise rejectable, unworthy of being rejected. Mr. Achariar's contention is therefore only intended to afford him an escape from what must have proved an embarrassing position, but, tested by logic, it does not hold water.

To come back to Mrs. Besant. To the illogicality of holding the scheme very unsubstantial and still opposing rejection she adds another—that of holding the scheme unrejectable and yet unacceptable, even with modifications of her own choosing. We need not consider here what modifications they are, but even if all that she suggests, calculated to make the official scheme more thorough-going than that proposed by the Congress and the Muslim League are introduced, still, Mrs. Besant insists, the country must not accept the scheme. It is a very amusing position which Mrs. Besant invites the country to take up. In its present shape, the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme is of course

unacceptable, but still unworthy of rejection. With all the structural modifications that we can suggest, it still remains unacceptable, and, again, of course unworthy of rejection. One may well ask, why will the British Parliament or Cabinet trouble itself about modifications which, if made, will not render the scheme acceptable to us? In no event, will the scheme be rejected, if Mrs. Besant's advice is followed; in no event will it be accepted either, whatever improvements it undergoes. This is not the best way, one would think, to induce the British authorities to consent to drastic changes. We should either hold out a threat to reject the scheme, if unmodified, or a promise to accept it, if sufficiently amended. To do neither argues as much lack of common sense as of logic. According to Mrs. Besant, the difference between acceptance subject to certain modifications and non-acceptance with modifications (or, rather modifications subject to non-acceptance) is not verbal or superficial but substantial and vital. Acceptance of the scheme, she seems to think, implies a surrender of the residuary rights of self-government and equal partnership in the British Empire, which is our goal, and therefore forbids all future agitation. In matter of fact, it will not imply surrender on our part or stop agitation any more than did our acceptance of the Morley-Minto reforms mean an estopping of the rights which we now demand. Nor will partial recognition of our rights, as a first step, entitle Great Britain to claim in the Peace Conference as if she had satisfied all our aspirations. For, surely, if we accept the scheme, after expansion in the desired direction, we accept it only as adequate to the requirements of the present hour; we do not sign away our right to full self-government. Nor is more expected of us. Mrs. Besant insists that we must decline to be responsible for the scheme even when changed out of recognition as she desires; our part must be passive; 'we cannot prevent the British Parliament passing any measure it pleases.' Here the rejectionist will answer: "But, for a certainty, you can prevent the passage of the measure if you give up your passivity and offer to the scheme active opposition by rejecting it wholesale with a united voice." The finesse and refinement, therefore, of Mrs. Besant's devising, *viz.*, non-acceptance with proposals of improvement, is meaningless and serves no purpose, neither that of rejection nor of acceptance. It will not afford the needed strength to our friends in England, who are engaged in fighting the forces of reaction; nor will it so effectually cause the scheme to be withdrawn, if that is desired, as avowed and unequivocal rejection will. Improvements in the scheme it will assuredly *not* secure if, after the scheme is so improved, it is to meet with non-acceptance no less than if it were left unimproved.

The fact is that Mrs. Besant's policy little differs from that of rejection except in the name, and it follows as a consequence that the difference between the Liberal and Radical politicians, to

adopt the phraseology suggested by the *Indian Social Reformer*, remains undiminished. The difference is one of entire outlook and estimate of the scheme. While the one school thinks that, even as it is, the scheme is calculated to effect substantial improvement on the existing conditions and to place India on the high road to dominion autonomy, the other holds that it is radically defective and makes no or little advance. That both require modifications does not signify an identity or a substantial conformity of views, and affords little ground for concerted action, as you cannot proceed to suggest modifications unless you agree that the scheme is worth modifying and is capable of being improved. The suggested modifications, again, must and do differ, according to your view-point. The Liberals accept the announcement of last year and the interpretation which the authors themselves have put upon it, as postulating the introduction, *ab initio*, of the principle of responsible government and extending it in stages. The division of services in the provincial Governments, which is thus necessitated, whatever theoretical objections may be urged against it, has, as a practical measure, to be acquiesced in and its evils sought to be minimised by a transfer of as many subjects as possible to popular control. The acceptance of the declaration does not however bind us to the deductions which have been drawn from it in the report, and it is open to us to challenge the third formula, which adjourns the popularisation of the central Governments till local Governments have been fully popularised. The Liberals consent to leave the essential structure of the scheme, as required by the declaration of last year, intact, and suggest modifications which are in conformity with that declaration. Thus both the spirit and the substance of the modifications are so utterly different that it is wrong to say that, because some people think it prudent to avoid the word 'rejection,' an agreement has been reached among Indian politicians. I do not speak here of the advisability or otherwise on the part of the Liberals of holding aloof from the special Congress which is dominated by the opposite section, but in the face of facts which there is no mistaking, no one must take up the the amiable notion that there are no differences of a fundamental character to separate the two parties.

S. G. V.

INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS.—III.

COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATURE.

IN order to afford members of the legislative council opportunities of becoming conversant with the administrative affairs and keeping in touch with the executive, the report proposes the establishment of standing committees elected by the council, in connection with each department or group of departments. It is certainly necessary to have a finance committee which will scrutinise

expenditure and enable the council to exercise full control over the management of the provincial revenues. Further, it is useful to associate committees with reserved departments in order that the course of their administration may be influenced by the opinions and the sentiments of the representatives of the people. But, it is permissible to doubt the expediency or utility of attaching a standing committee to every department or group of departments. If these committees are to work satisfactorily we must have a pretty large number of men able and willing to devote a considerable portion of their time to public affairs. The proportion of members which the leisured classes will furnish to the council is bound to be small, and then, wealth and ability do not always go together. Thus the number of efficient men, who will not be under a compulsion to work for their livelihood, will be very limited, and the committees which do not include them will scarcely show any activity. But apart from this, there does not appear to be any cogent reason in favour of interposing a committee between the council and the ministers, who are to become fully accountable to the council within six years.

The committee system is in vogue in America and France. But the experience of these countries does not encourage us to follow in their footsteps. Committees are necessary in America because the Ministers are not members of the House of Representatives. There being no persons in the House whose official position entails on them the responsibility of guiding it, it is compelled to divide itself into small bodies in order to examine the numerous measures that are brought in every year. The circumstances under which the legislature works have made the system inevitable, but, says Bryce, "it cramps debate" and has shifted the centre of gravity from the House to the committees. Committees exist in France because of the instability of the ministries. They have acquired great power, and the budget committee in particular has become a rival to the ministry of the day. "It regards itself," says Bodley, "as an independent council, invested with powers which encroach on the prerogatives of the Chamber, whereof it is merely a delegation, and on the rights of the executive without increasing any responsibility." It would of course be absurd to suppose that as soon as standing committees are created in India they will become as powerful as similar committees are in America and France, but what has happened in these countries ought to make us alive to the dangers of the committee system and to refrain from extending its operation unnecessarily. Its development appears to be incompatible with responsible government.

OTHER MATTERS.

The rules which should govern the conduct of business in the council should be determined by the council itself. As Lord Dalhousie said in 1854, the proceedings of the council "should be controlled by an authority emanating from the

council itself." Whether it is desired that the existing rules should be allowed to continue or that they should be changed, in either case they should be submitted to the council for its acceptance. Members should be able to ask questions and more resolutions with as much freedom as is allowed to members of Parliament. The executive should not be in a position to disallow a question or resolution, although it should be entitled to refuse to answer a question on the ground that it would not be in the public interest to do so. The report considers that the right of putting supplementary questions should not be confined to the member asking the original question. Members should also be allowed, under proper safeguards, to move the adjournment of the council in order to discuss definite matters of urgent public importance and the Government should be bound to summon a meeting of the council on a requisition by a certain proportion of them. The Governor should not preside at the meeting of the council. Both the president and the vice-president should be non-officials elected by the non-official members.

PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE.

I have already discussed the undesirability of appointing officials to be additional members of the Government. The executive Government should consist only of members of the executive council and the ministers.

The status and emoluments of the ministers should be exactly the same as those of the members of the executive council. In order that judges of the High Court may not be tempted to seek for preferment at the hands of the executive, a member of the executive council should not receive higher pay than a judge of the High Court. If the salary drawn by the latter is enough to enable him to maintain his dignity, it should also prove enough for the former.

POSITION OF MINISTERS.

As a general rule the Government will deliberate as a whole, but the Governor will have the power to discuss a subject only with that part of the executive Government which is directly responsible for it. In any case the actual decision will be taken by that half within whose sphere the subject under discussion lies. But in regard to transferred subjects it is not contemplated "that from the outset the Governor should occupy the position of a purely constitutional Governor who is bound to accept the decisions of his ministers." It is to be hoped that the power to confine a discussion to a particular part of the Government will not be abused and that the occasions on which it will be exercised will be rare. For if it is frequently called into play it will destroy that cohesion between the two sections of the Government which the authors of the report are so anxious to secure. As for the transferred subjects, there is no reason why the Governor should stand in different relations to the ministry and the executive council. At a meeting of the executive

council the views of the majority will prevail. If the councillors cast their votes on the same side the Governor will have to accept their decision, even though he may be in disagreement with him, unless he exercises his veto which has become almost obsolete. His position with regard to the ministry ought to be the same. The power of refusing assent to the proposals of the ministry should be held in reserve only to be used in an emergency. In the self-governing colonies, the representative of the Crown does not attend the meeting of the cabinet. Its decisions are simply communicated to him by the Prime Ministers. Till India secures full responsible government, the Governor must continue to take part in the deliberations of the executive council and the ministry in order to preserve the unity of the Government, but, exceptional occasions apart, he ought not to override the wishes of the ministry. The principle ought to be specially observed in regard to the dissolution of the council. The question of dissolving it should be decided at a meeting of the ministry by a majority of votes. As a rule, the need for dissolving it will make itself felt only when it rejects proposals concerning transferred subjects. It is only fair, therefore, that the Governor should be guided by the opinions of the ministers.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

As India has no experience of appointing and dismissing ministries, the report proposes that during the first two terms of the council the ministers should not be bound to resign on an adverse vote of the legislature. During this period they should be responsible only to their constituents. In itself the proposal is not unreasonable, nor does it imply any distrust of Indian capacity, but it has been unfavourably received in many quarters. It has been regarded as an indirect means of preserving the control of the bureaucracy over the council. This criticism will lose all its force if the ministry has a voice in determining whether the council should be dissolved or not. Nevertheless the council may be allowed to vote the salaries of the ministers at the end of its first term.

In pursuance of parliamentary practice it has been proposed that some members of legislative council may be appointed under-secretaries to assist the members of the executive in their departmental duties and to represent them in the council in their absence. As one of the objects with which this suggestion has been made is to provide a training ground for non-officials the under-secretaries should be selected from the elected members of the council. At any rate they should all be non-officials.

H. N. KUNZRU.

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A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

LONDON, JUNE 15.

THE WAR CABINET AND CONFERENCE.

THE representatives of the Government of India at the Imperial War Cabinet and Conference have now arrived in England, though the sessions of both bodies had already commenced before their arrival here. In their absence, India was represented by the Secretary of State for India, who, however, must be glad to have his colleagues at his side, now that the deliberations of the Cabinet and Conference are to deal with the more serious matters, "after compliments." It is, perhaps, not generally recognised in India that the two bodies have very different functions. The War Cabinet is an executive body, and, as is ever the case, when prompt decisions have to be taken, the fewer the number of persons having to reach them, the better. On the other hand, the Imperial Conference has no executive authority. All the Dominion Ministers and Indian representatives attend it as a matter of course. Its functions are purely consultative and advisory. Its decisions are not binding, but are merely recommendations. Accordingly, although the Maharaja of Patiala, who, by the way, has been raised a step in military rank, attended a session of the Imperial War Cabinet, it is not likely that he will take any prominent part in it, the work being taken up by Sir S. P. Sinha, on behalf of the Government of India, with Mr. Montagu. At the War Conference, on the contrary, it is likely that His Highness will speak effectively, for only recently, in South Africa, a decision was sought by the Union Government in the Supreme Court, raising the whole question of the status within the Empire of the subjects of the Indian States. Outside the Empire, they are, of course, entitled to the same protection as British subjects. Indeed, the Foreign Office regards them in much the same light, feeling that the Imperial obligation of protection applies equally. But in at least one of the Dominions, the status of Indians from Indian States is inferior to that not alone of British subjects, but of aliens belonging to independent countries. Such a differentiation is intolerable, and steps are urgently necessary for its early removal.

RECIPROCITY.

Considerable difficulties are bound to arise this year in regard to the application and enforcement of the Reciprocity Resolution passed by the Imperial Conference last year. It is not known how far the resolution has been accepted by the various Dominions to whom its acceptance was recommended. On the other hand, the Government of India have taken no steps to apply the underlying principles of the Resolution. Accordingly, it is probable that the question may be definitely raised this year, especially having regard to the fact that a whole series of attempts have been made in South Africa, whether by the Union Government or local authorities it matters not, to

diminish the rights of the resident Indian community, and that the Canadian Government were obliged to refrain from enforcing conscription against the Indian residents of Canada, because the latter did not enjoy the privileges of citizenship. But the war situation complicates everything. In ordinary times it might be possible to exercise something more effective than moral suasion. To-day, that is the only available lever. But it is possible to lay down certain principles, to be put into operation wherever and whenever the opportunity offers. To introduce the full scheme of legislation into Imperial Legislative Council, that would be required to give effect to the Reciprocity Resolution in all its bearings, would be difficult, if not impossible, at the present moment. But that something effective in that direction will have to be done soon is evident from the weekly sequence of acts of scarcely veiled hostility recorded by the Indian newspapers in South Africa. So far, however, as the Conference is concerned, its deliberations are strictly private, and nothing may be publicly stated regarding them until the official report of the proceedings is published in due course. It is to be hoped, then everless, that opportunity will be sought to impress upon the representatives from the Dominions that India is unanimously opposed to the exportation of cheap labour. It is the only way to enlist the sympathies of Australia and Canada, so as to bring the pressure of Imperial public opinion to bear upon the recalcitrant Union of South Africa.

A BIG STEP IN ADVANCE.

We are told by Mr. Montagu that the report of his mission, embodying the reform proposals put forward by himself and the Viceroy, may be expected about the end of the present month, there being simultaneous publication in India and here. Owing to war emergencies, the War Cabinet has not been able to deal with the recommendations authoritatively, but, in order that there should be no unnecessary delay, publication has been ordered, so as to enable public opinion to be expressed. I have reason to believe that the proposals will be found to be of such a character as to indicate clearly a genuine attempt to face the problems and meet the general demand for a big step in the direction of self-government. People here will understand that Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford have tried to reconcile apparently conflicting interests. It is impossible yet to say how far the Congress-League scheme or the Curtis plan has influenced the framers of the report, whose appearance is being eagerly awaited. But it is certain that, whilst the bulk of people here will support the Government in whatever proposals they may bring forward, the reactionaries are already on the war-path. The Indo-British Association, having effected an alliance with British firms doing business with India, on the basis of the lowest self-interest, is manipulating the Chambers of Commerce and the Press for all it is worth, and that, thanks to the generous subscriptions that

have flowed into its coffers, is not a small amount. It has been circulating leaflets showing "Why India does not want Home Rule," quoting insignificant zemindars, obscurantists of the anti-Moslem League type, and the puppets set dancing by the versatile Dr. Nair. It has just issued to members of Parliament a booklet containing selections from some of the anti-Congress addresses presented to Mr. Montagu, quite forgetting that there are watchdogs here able to bark a warning. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, for example, has been holding the Association and its supporters in India up to ridicule to Labour people, by showing that the illiterate masses, whose interests it pretends to represent, and who are, according to its prophets, wholly uninterested in constitutional reforms, are really very well-educated and able to look after themselves without difficulty, judged by the literary quality of the representations that they made to the Secretary of State, who probably had no illusions whatever of the nature and origin of the political "eye-wash" to which he was treated.

ANGLO-INDIAN AGITATION.

Besides all this, Anglo-Indian experts of the approved type have been contributing articles to the papers to show why it would be disastrous to fulfil the pledges made last August within any conceivable historic period. The war has taught them nothing. Even Sir Valentine Chirol, who started quite well in the "Times," has wound up on the old familiar note. These good people really imagine that they do not live in glass houses. They cannot conceive that under the magnifying glasses provided by the daily incidents of the war, their every action is being narrowly scrutinised by myriads of people who are wondering whether the fine principles of brotherhood that are to be applied to the furtherance of mutual understanding and tolerance in the West are of equal application in the East. The alliance between retired bureaucrats and British mercantile houses is as significant as it is unsavoury. What can India hope for and expect from merchants and manufacturers who have during the last few weeks done their utmost, if not to destroy, to delay the Education Bill that is now being patiently piloted through Parliament by Mr. Fisher, because they are far more interested in preserving for themselves a supply of economic slaves, half-educated and at the mercy of any capitalist exploiter, than they are in seeing that the children of the soil, their own compatriots, have the means provided for them whereby they may grow to be fine, upstanding, healthy, independent, imaginative, and original men and women? The terrible battle that is now being waged upon the Western front is as nothing to the great spiritual fight in which we are all now engaged against the forces of "Prussianism" within the Empire itself. It matters very little if we win on the Continent of Europe, if we have not conquered in our own souls. The war after the war is going to be the real test of European civilisation. Has the spirit of brotherhood really been developed as a result of

all that has gone by, all the sacrifices, all the misery, the torture, the losses, the destruction? Have men really learned the law of cause and effect? Have they yet realised that, not only must they reap what they have sown, but that they are to-day doing so? Most people seem to imagine that they are unrecognised saints. They cannot bring themselves to believe that they lie open to any criticism, and they regard it as sheer treachery to the Allied cause—meaning, of course, their own outraged vanity—if any one should be so ill-advised or audacious as to point out to them that they have, in emphasising their neighbour's defective vision, failed to observe the impediment in their own.

NEED FOR SELF-RESTRAINT.

To conclude, however, Mr. Garvin, in the "Observer," evidently under Mr. Curtis's inspiration, declares roundly that it would be disastrous not to implement the pledges made last August, and there is reason to believe that, though there will be a tough fight, the reactionaries will be defeated, if your own more ardent spirits can be made to realise how much depends upon their self-restraint and practical patriotism.

REVIEWS.

THE TREASURE OF THE MAGI.

I.—THE ZOROASTRIAN VIEW.

THE TREASURE OF THE MAGI; by J. H. Moulton. Oxford University Press, 1917.

THE term "Magi" comes from the Persian origin and through the Greek Magi, plural form of Magus, and means, according to Webster, "a priestly caste or order of ancient Media and Persia, probably of Magian origin, but holding sacerdotal supremacy throughout the era of Persian rule. Their religion was very similar to that of Zoroaster, who may himself have been a Magus, and included belief in the advent of a Saviour, which may be the ground for the allusion in Matthew ii. 1. (the word 'Magi' being used in the Vulgate, where "wise men" is given in the Authorised and Revised versions). In later times the Magi were in disrepute in the western world for their practice of sorcery and necromancy." In this connection the word "magic" is quite significant as of Magian origin.

According to Moulton, the Magi were "an indigenous tribe or priests or shamans, the leaders of the non-Aryan population of India, who after failing to gain political supremacy in the revolt of Gaumata the Magian, secured in two or three generations a religious ascendancy which compensated for any failure."

This is indeed a very fantastic theory of Dr. Moulton and on this subject he devotes two long parts in his "Hibbert Lectures," published in 1913. This remains for him a sort of base from which he takes a perspective view of Zoroastrianism. After years of patient study he came to the conclusion that what the Parsees possess to-day as their sacred lore is not Zoroaster's Zoroastrianism, but that there are incrustations, pollutions, and also some "silly rubbish," mixed with the nascent Zoroastrianism that came direct from Zarathushtra himself. Hence, instead of naming his precious posthumous work 'Modern Zoroastrianism,' he entitles it "The Treasure of the Magi."

One of the earliest references to the Magi is found in Ezekiel (viii, 17), in which they are depicted as a sacred tribe found about the year 591 B. C. at Jerusalem, "worshipping the sun and holding in their hands a branch which is the predecessor of the later barsom."

The six chief Magian characteristics which never found their way into Zoroaster's system and which as so many chains kept them down for ages are: (1) consanguinous marriages, (2) magic, (3) oneiromancy, (4) astrology, and (5) malignity of planets and (6) of mountains. But Dr. Moulton has attempted to show that there are other traits, purely Magian but foreign to the creed of Zoroaster, which did run like Magian veins into Zoroastrianism. They are: (1) nature worship, especially Fire-worship, (2) disposal of the dead to vultures, (3) ritualism, (4) manthraic charms and (5) dualism.

The Magi were cunning enough to place their dogmas side by side with the tenets of Zoroastrianism, and while Fire might, as a rare symbol of the Divine, be allowed in Zoroastrian temples, the Magi introduced other gods as well into the system, which Magian veins can be easily detected in the age-old Zoroastrian formation. In the scholar's words, "the work of the Magi was to build on Zarathushtra's foundation; a superstructure which was not in all respects after Zarathushtra's style." They claimed Zarathushtra to be also their own prophet, preserved the Gathas intact and composed the ritualistic portions of the later Avesta, especially the Vendidad, in which there are found many verse-quotations from the original texts. The Magi again were neither Aryan nor Semitic, but a tribe of aborigines with their own peculiar civilization. Although they coined for themselves and for their Zoroastrian 'cousins' a good many good rules of conduct, it was too much for them to add to the ethics of the Gathas, the Hymns of Zoroaster. On the other hand, the Magi did much that helped to spoil the high monotheistic ideal of the great Iranian Prophet.

Therefore, what the Greek and Latin writers knew about Zoroastrianism was really speaking Magism. It is evident from even a cursory glance at the records of Darius the Great on the living rock of Behistun that the Magi failed to usurp the throne of Persia and so they tried the second method of insinuation, of minimising the differences between the beliefs of the two tribes and claiming Zoroaster to be their own prophet. Thus we see that the Magian substratum commenced its growth from the later Achaemenian period.

Placing the Magian and the Zoroastrian doctrines side by side, comparing and contrasting them both, Dr. Moulton has slowly attempted to eliminate the Magian factors. (1) Sun and Fire worship.—But Zarathushtra has retained the element of Fire in his religion, as a sort of concession to the Aryan nation, as merely an emblem of the Deity, a means to an end and not an end in itself. (2) Astrology.—But there is little in the Avesta proper that goes to form star-lore. (3) Dualism.—But there is a marked difference between the views expressed on "Dualism," theologically so called, and the Gathic interpretation of it philosophically. (4) Disposal of the dead.—But Moulton would read in passages Ys. 30, 7. and Ys. 48, 6 a reference to the burial of corpses, and the Vendidad injunction of the Dokhma to be a fraud of the Magi. (5) Magic.—But magic is quite alien to the Zoroastrian spirit. (6) Astrology.—But there is never a suggestion in the Avesta that "the destiny of an individual or a nation can be read in the sky." (7) Ritualism.—But Zarathushtra "resembled the

world's great prophets in his indifference to anything of the kind."

There is a last characteristic which is generally believed to be Magian, and which the Reverend Doctor would very much like to be Zoroastrian and very suitable for his purpose, viz., the belief in Jesus Christ to be the Saviour (the Saoshyant of the later Avesta), to do homage to whom the Magi went with gold and frankincense and myrrh to Bethlehem, some 1900 years ago!

We all are ready to suppose that there may have been incrustations formed round the crystalline name of Zarathushtra during these 3000 and more years that he left this mundane world to reside in his glorious and lighted 'House of Song.' But there can be so sufficient grounds to prove conclusively that such and such a belief is alien to him and therefore unZoroastrian. Whom shall we blame for this but the Parsees themselves? for, in spite of so much Parsee genius displayed in other spheres of life, they have failed to produce a good and reliable historian from among themselves.

While we thus deplore this defect in the community and while we can realise the poor condition of the Zoroastrian literature, ancient and modern, the Parsees cannot but be grateful to the sincere missionary who fell a victim to the Daevayanism of the Huns in the waters of the Mediterranean last year for helping them, through the *Treasure of the Magi*, to see in the crystalline Zoroastrianism, that the religion of the Prophet Zoroaster is full of grandeur and of beauty, that the Gathas glow as powerfully as the Fire of the Atashbeheram, that Truth is great and will prevail, that as long as this Truth prevails in the universe so long will the spirit of Zarathushtra shine from his heavenly abode, that his revelation is pure and sublime, that the essence of his religious system is Good Thought, and that man must be reformed from within. While we appreciate the scholar's efforts so far, we cannot but say that Dr. Moulton is dogmatic. What is, according to Moulton, the crown of Zoroastrianism? Jesus Christ has been for him the light of his seeing and Christianity alone remains for him the most splendid view-point. But religions are man's most earnest expositions of the lore of the Infinite. Man is after all a finite being, and to say anything dogmatically is the most disastrous policy one can propose in this age of reason. Dr. Moulton himself has shewn the beauty of Zoroastrianism clearly and impartially and then he cannot get out of it. At the most he might say Christ is the second best. But like a good engine-driver he would ask the people of the various religions to embark on an uphill journey in a railway train, putting the Christians in the 1st Class, the Zoroastrians in the 2nd Class, the Mahomedans in the Inter and the Hindus of all denominations in the 3rd Class compartment. Arriving at a certain stage, he would make a brief halt and reaching the Reversing on the ghats of Heaven, he would ask for detaching from his engine all the carriages other than the 1st Class, leaving the rest of the passengers struggling behind or asking them to renounce their own class distinction and paying a higher price to step into the 1st!

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