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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE continued success of the Allied arms will bring conviction to the most confirmed sceptic. Indeed the events of the last few weeks have been most dramatic in their character and the most far-reaching in their results. The German offensive, launched about eight weeks ago with all the pomp and circumstance which we have learnt to associate with the military enterprise of the Central Powers, has not only completely failed of its purpose, but has itself been made the instrument of dealing to the enemy the hardest blow that he has received for many a day. All the advantages that the enemy had obtained during the three latest offensives have been wrested back from him, and he has been forced to fall back upon the positions he originally occupied. Later reports lend colour to the view that even some of these had to be surrendered by him. This is a decisive gain from a military point of view; but, what is of far greater consequence, this constitutes an immense moral advantage for the Allies. For now will come the period of marking time. Winter will soon set in and will slacken military activity all round. Then again the positions now occupied by the enemy have been prepared with great care, and it will not be easy to dislodge him from them. The progress of the Allies is, therefore, bound to be slow for some time. The present victory will help the people in the Allied countries to maintain their good spirits and to continue to make cheerfully all the sacrifices that are necessary for the successful prosecution of the war.

ON the day previous to the opening of the Congress, it was decided by the All-India Congress

Committee, on the motion of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, that the session of the Congress should be postponed by a day in order to make an attempt at compromise with the moderate party. A conference with the moderate party, however, was not possible at the eleventh hour, as their leaders in Bombay could not enter into any negotiations with the promoters of the Congress without consulting their friends in Bengal and other provinces. Even if the resolutions to be laid before the Congress, as proposed at the conference, had been entirely acceptable to the moderate leaders in Bombay, they could not as a party have given their adhesion to them on their own responsibility. Thus they felt constrained to refuse the invitation of the All-India Congress Committee to join the conference, as it was impossible in the circumstances to bring about a compromise at that time.

* * *

THIS has been harshly criticised in certain quarters as showing a cavalier treatment of Panditji's proposal on the part of the moderate leaders. They could not, however, have acted otherwise than they did. That a consultation with Babu Surendranath Banerjea, for instance, was necessary is proved by the fact that Pandit Malaviya telegraphed to him at Calcutta, requesting him to come down to Bombay to negotiate a compromise. Mr. Banerjea was at that time in Dacca and he could not possibly reach Bombay in time. There is thus no truth in the story started by some that the Congress leaders explored every avenue towards compromise and that the moderate leaders wilfully closed it. The truth is that Babu Surendranath on behalf of his party had suggested so far back as August 7 a short postponement of the Congress, urging that a settlement might be reached on the basis of an acknowledgment of good faith on the part of the framers of the scheme and of its being a substantial advance on the present conditions. But his overtures were repulsed.

* * *

ONE of the resolutions passed by the Congress, though *not* by the Moslem League, is:

"That so far as the question of determining the franchise and the constituencies and the composition of the legislative assemblies (councils ?) is concerned, this Congress is of opinion that, instead of being left to be dealt with by committees, it should be decided by the House of Commons and incorporated in the statute to be framed for the constitution of the Indian Government."

We are not clear as to the exact significance of the above resolution. It seems to be directed

against the method proposed in para. 225 about composition of the provincial legislatures. It is suggested therein that a committee should investigate into the subjects of the franchise, the constituencies and the nominated element; and the question should be determined by the Secretary of State on the recommendation of the Government of India by regulations to be laid before Parliament. Instead the Congress resolution proposes that Parliament itself should decide the question and its decision should be incorporated in a statute.

* * *

BUT why the Congress should oppose the appointment of a committee to collect the necessary material and formulate proposals it is difficult to understand. Mr. C. R. Das, who moved the resolution, says airily that all the material is to be found in blue books, and that the interposition of a committee is useless and indeed mischievous, for some of our fellow-countrymen will give away their rights while tendering evidence before it. We are not sure that Mr. Das realised the nature of the work to be entrusted to the committee. If he did, he would not speak of any one giving away his rights. A detailed electoral survey is absolutely essential before any workable plan, likely to give satisfaction to the various interests, is evolved, and this laborious task is best undertaken by a committee. The very fact that the Congress has not even considered the proposal made in the report that minorities should be represented by nominees of Government and has ignored the question of communal representation except for Muhammedans shows how this question is likely to be dealt with unless it is thoroughly investigated by a committee. The setting up of the electoral machinery, which is at the basis of the fabric of self-government, is a very intricate proceeding, and we cannot understand how any one could eliminate preliminary investigation. We are not therefore surprised to find that Mr. Malaviya opposed this resolution, or that the Moslem League did not adopt it.

* * *

IN a communication to the press, Mr. Samarth takes exception to the resolution passed by the Congress on the reform scheme, in which a demand is made for automatic realisation of full responsible government in the provinces within six years and in the whole of British India within fifteen. He points out that a periodic review by Parliamentary commissions of the results achieved during the interval is a vital feature of the scheme, postulated by the "progressive realisation of responsible government" in the declaration of last year. Again, the refusal of the Congress to acknowledge the scheme to be a substantial measure of reform, even so far as the provinces are concerned, shows in his opinion how widely different the standpoints of the two parties are. In the end he makes an earnest appeal to all who are prepared to give general support to the scheme to communicate their names

to him and make it a point to attend the all-India Conference of the moderate party to be held in Bombay under the distinguished presidency of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea.

* * *

THE Liberal and Radical papers in England have warmly welcomed the Montagu-Chelmsford report. The *Nation* thinks that the plan of reform embodied in it honestly redeems the Government's promise to prepare for "the progressive realisation of responsible government." If the Congress scheme is abandoned, the one that has been adopted in its place is, in the opinion of this journal, a much better and in reality a more generous plan, as it "will lead to Home Rule as swiftly and much more smoothly." The period of criticism will now be over and that of constructive nationalism commence. If all subjects mentioned in the list at the end of the report are transferred to popular control, the various provinces will enjoy, the *Nation* says, "almost as large a measure of Home Rule as Ireland should have had by the suspended Act;" and it adds that full autonomy may well be reached in two or three decades. Finally, it warns that any changes introduced into the scheme must not diminish its scope, and that "it shall be put into effect with the utmost despatch compatible with good workmanship."

* * *

THE London correspondent of the *Hindu* advises Indians to give support to the reform proposals. He says: "Whatever its shortcomings, the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme is bound to place more power in the hands of the people, and that power, if wisely used, will become the means of attaining greater liberties in the near future. Indian nationalism has now become irresistible; so much so that everything reasonable can be more effectually attained by peaceful methods than by running the risks of a collision. . . . Assuming that there is in any case to be a definite advance along the path of self-determination, the order of the day should be . . . constructive criticism and discriminating support."

* * *

WE had never thought that the *Hindu* would make such a damaging admission as to say that to go 'into hysterics of denunciation of the scheme' was 'to play into the hands of the Sydenhamites.' We wonder how our contemporary would characterise Mrs. Besant's or Mr. C. Vijayaraghavachari's condemnation of the scheme? The dominant note of the Congress, we are told, was 'a disposition to improve the scheme and render it a success.' If one expected a different note from the utterances of some who said that the scheme 'is so radically wrong alike in principles and in detail that in our opinion it is impossible to modify and improve it' and who pledged themselves to an abandonment of it, one's fault can only be that their influence upon the proceedings of the Congress was exaggerated. This miscalculation, however, cannot be a particularly soothing thought to the editor of the *Hindu*.

THE SPECIAL CONGRESS.

WHERE differences are vital, wrote Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Surendranath Banerjea shortly before it was decided to hold an all-India moderates' conference, a patched-up truce is of no value. The proceedings of the Special Congress bear out the truth of this remark in a striking manner. We are, no doubt, in agreement with many of the demands put forward by the Congress. It also gives us pleasure to recognise that in some respects the resolutions passed by the Congress are better than they were expected to be. The progressive character of the reform scheme is recognised, though in a halting, one might even say, in a grudging manner. The trend of events during the last few weeks made it absolutely clear that a formal rejection of the scheme was out of the question. Its rejection was loudly demanded in some quarters soon after its publication. But as this course found no favour with the country as a whole it had perforce to be abandoned, but in view of the proceedings of the various special Provincial Conferences held during the last four or five weeks it is a matter for pleasant surprise that the Special Congress should have admitted that the proposals of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy constitute an advance on existing conditions. It has so far been regarded as undiplomatic to acknowledge the good features of the scheme. Generally speaking, they were not denied. But their explicit recognition was held to involve a great risk. It was thought to be equivalent to having a consent decree passed against us. It is something, therefore, that the Congress should have followed a different course and recognised the merits of the reform proposals, no matter how inadequately.

Again, the principle of reserved and transferred departments has been conceded. Its acceptance is, no doubt, hedged round with many limitations, but we shall reserve these for examination later on. It has also been allowed that the supply for the reserved services shall be the first charge on the revenue in the Government of India. It was seen that the proposal that the expenditure on the reserved services should be fixed on the basis of the average expenditure on them during the five years preceding the war and that any increase should be subject to the sanction of the legislature virtually amounted to a negation of the principle of division of subjects on which the report is based.

But a perusal of the resolutions relating to the supreme Government will show that in spite of the above-mentioned indication of the moderation in the attitude of the Congress, the difference between the two parties in India remains substantial. Some of the moderates who joined the Congress in the honest hope of being able to influence its deliberations perhaps regard the modifications which they were able to press for successfully as victory for them and as affording a fair basis for compromise. Very probably, the points which they secured represented the maximum of concession which the

other party could be induced to make, and they may well congratulate themselves therefore on having been able to carry the Congress with them as far as they did. Having joined the Congress and persuaded it to yield in one or two matters they could scarcely walk out of the Congress. The Congress has gained to a certain extent in moderation and self-consistency by their presence, but they can hardly feel in their heart of hearts that they have improved their position by making themselves responsible for the resolutions which it passed. While the praiseworthy elements in the scheme have been acknowledged in a half-hearted manner, its condemnation is explicit and strong. A prominent Moslem politician, in speaking on the subject, is stated to have observed that in the preamble to the resolution asking for changes in the constitution of supreme and provincial Governments they seemed to have performed the impossible feat of reconciling two irreconcilable views by making different parts of the resolution point in different ways. He also declared that he and his party, if left to themselves, would have rejected the scheme. This shows the spirit pervading the preamble. The Moslem League has been more considerate in its judgment and would probably have done still better if it had had only its own wishes to consult.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS.

Let us now turn to a detailed examination of the specific recommendations made by the Special Congress. The most important recommendations relating to the provinces are as follows:—

- (i) The budget shall be controlled by the legislature, but shall be subject "*during the life-time of the reformed councils* to the allocation of a fixed sum for the reserved subjects. And should fresh taxation be necessary, it should be imposed by the provincial Governments as a whole for both transferred and reserved subjects." (*The Bombay Chronicle*, September 2.
- (ii) The departments of law, police and justice (prisons excepted,) should be left in the hands of the executive Government in all provinces for a period of six years. Executive and judicial departments must be separated at once.
- (iii) There should be no grand committees and the councils should legislate in regard to reserved subjects also, "but where the Government is not satisfied with the decision of the legislative council in respect of matters relating to law, police and justice, it shall be open to the Government to refer the matter to the Government of India. The Government of India may refer the matter to the Indian legislature, and the ordinary procedure shall follow. But if grand committee are instituted, this Congress is of opinion that not less than one-half of the strength shall be elected by the legislative assembly (council?)." (*The Bombay Chronicle*.)

The language employed in (1) is obscure; the italicised words appear to mean "during the life-time of the first reformed council." If this is so, the resolution is inconsistent with the third recommendation. The third proposal asks for the abolition of the reserved subjects after six years, but if the council is to be given power to deter-

mine the allotment for reserved subjects after the life-time of the first reformed council, it will practically acquire control over the entire range of provincial subjects after a period of three years only. Again, it is surprising that it should have been asked that fresh taxation should be imposed by the provincial Government as a whole. If the legislative council has no confidence in proposals of taxation emanating from ministers, is it likely to receive them with greater favour if they are supported by the executive council which contains one non-Indian. If the Congress imagines that without the provision which it insists on the two sections of the executive Government will not present a united front to the council, it is labouring under a misapprehension. "It is our intention," say the authors of the Report in para 221, "that the Government thus composed and with this distribution of functions shall discharge them as one Government. It is highly desirable that the executive . . . should present a united front to the outside." And they repeat in para 222 that it is their "intention that the decisions of the Government should be loyally defended by the entire Government."

Besides, as proposed in the Report, the approval of ministers is necessary to proposals of fresh taxation. Why should they weaken their position by sharing this power with any other body? It is not improbable that on some important occasions the members of the executive council may vote together against the ministers. This will place the ministers at a considerable disadvantage. Even if the votes of the members of the executive council neutralise one another, it will not improve the position of the ministers, for the situation will be no better than if the question of taxation had been decided by the Governor and the ministers, which for some reason does not commend itself to the Congress. If, however, the proposal put forward by the Congress is meant to enable the council to make its power felt in regard to the reserved subjects by allocating for them insufficient funds to start with, it is in contradiction with the principle of division of subjects which the Congress professes to accept. If it be urged that there will be certain subjects in respect of which the functions of the two portions of the executive Government will overlap, "such for instance as decisions on the budget or on any matters of administration," the contingency has been provided for in the report. "On these questions, in case of a difference of opinion between the ministers and the executive council, it will be the Governor who decides." (Para. 221.) It is difficult to understand therefore the reason which prompted the Congress to ask that the executive Government as a whole should decide questions relating to taxation inasmuch as it will diminish the power of ministers over provincial taxation.

As regards the second proposal, the Congress asks that all the provinces should be completely self-governing after six years. It takes no account

of the unequal development in the various provinces. Evidently it considers that provinces like Assam and the North-West Frontier are at the same stage of progress as, for instance, the three presidencies. This assumption it will be difficult to substantiate. Again, it has been asked that the executive and judicial departments must be separated at once. It is not clear whether this is simply one of the many recommendations made by the Congress or whether it is a condition precedent to the acceptance of the principle of divided authority in the provinces. We hope that matters will not be complicated still further by treating this condition as one the satisfaction of which is necessary if law, police and justice are to form the category of reserved subjects.

The third proposal asks that preferably the grand committee should be dropped; but at the same time demands that the legislative council should legislate even on reserved subjects. If, however, the local Government is dissatisfied with the legislation in question, it will have the power of appealing to the Government of India. It may be thought from this that the Government of India has been left with sufficient power to make its will prevail where it agrees with the provincial Government. But this is far from being the case. Instead of the Government of India being the arbiter between the provincial executive and the legislature the measure in dispute is to go before the legislative assembly, and to be decided by a majority of votes. It is doubtful whether measures relating to reserved subjects in the provinces will be treated as reserved in the Government of India. If they are so treated, then in case the legislative assembly does not pass them in the form acceptable to Government, "the Governor-General in Council may provide for the same by regulations, such regulations to be in force for one year, but not to be renewed unless 40% of the members of the assembly, present and voting, are in favour of them." Apart from the fact that this will mean inordinate delay, it is apparent that the control of the Government over the reserved services will be simply nominal. For all practical purposes the constitution of the grand committees will probably be better than that of every existing council. It is therefore difficult to appreciate the objection to the retention of the grand committee. But to ask for the abolition of the grand committee and to demand at the same time the right of passing laws about reserved subjects is to render virtually nugatory the admission that for some time certain subjects should be reserved. It is true that at the end of the third resolution the Congress concedes that the grand committee may be retained, but it is apparent that this is done with great unwillingness. The spirit of the proposals seems to be antagonistic to the principle on which the Report is based. The Congress unwillingly accepts the division of subjects and then makes suggestions which will indirectly leave hardly any power in the hands of Government.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

It has already been pointed out that the Congress proposes that the supplies for reserved services in the Government of India shall be the first charge on the imperial revenues. Some of the other important proposals concerning the Government of India are that:—

- (i) The reserved subjects shall be foreign affairs (excepting relations with the colonies and dominions), army, navy, and relations with the Indian ruling princes and, subject to the declaration of rights contained in resolution IV, the matters directly affecting public peace, tranquillity and the defence of the country, and all other subjects should be transferred subjects.
- (ii) All legislation shall be by bills introduced into the legislative assembly, provided that, if, in the case of reserved subjects, the legislative council (assembly?) does not pass such measures as the Government may deem necessary, the Governor-General in council may provide for the same by regulations, such regulations to be in force for one year but not to be renewed unless 40% of the assembly, present and voting, are in favour of them.
- (iii) There shall be no council of state, but if the council is to be constituted at least half of its total strength shall consist of elected members and that procedure by certification shall be confined to the reserved subjects.
- (iv) A statutory guarantee should be given that full responsible government should be established in the whole of British India within a period not exceeding 15 years.

The first thing that strikes one on reading these proposals is that the Congress demands that equal strides shall be taken in the imperial and provincial Governments. It asks that the extent of the advance in the imperial sphere shall be the same as in the provincial sphere. While no doubt some amount of responsibility should be conceded in the Government of India, expediency requires that greater power should be left with the imperial Government than with provincial Governments, specially as during the period of transition the former is to exercise a general control over the latter. This consideration however has had no weight with the Congress, which asks that the same step forward should be taken in respect of those two Governments. The suggestion in reference to the Council of State and legislation on reserved subjects does not require a detailed examination as we have examined the effect of substantially similar proposals in respect of the provincial Governments. The abolition of the Council of State would leave the Government of India as powerless as the abolition of the grand committee would leave the provincial Governments. And although the existence of the Council of State is unwillingly to be assented to in the last resort, the spirit underlying these proposals is the same as that which animates the suggestions made with regard to provincial Governments.

A statutory guarantee is demanded that full responsible government shall be conferred on India within 15 years. We do not know on what principle the period has been arrived at. If we are not mistaken the joint memorandum presented last November to the Secretary of State and the

Viceroy on behalf of the Congress and the Muslim League asked for the appointment of parliamentary committees to decide by what stages complete self-government was to be reached. This demand has been substantially complied with. The first commission is to meet at the end of ten years after the establishment of the reformed councils and the second commission twelve years after the appointment of the first commission. It would have been reasonable therefore to ask that the commission to come out then should be given a specific direction to inquire if complete responsible government cannot be established in the whole of India, so that, within a quarter of a century, India would be fully self-governing. The period proposed by the Congress seems to suggest that it is not in favour of inquiries by commissions. If this is really its view it would have done well to say so explicitly. This would have made its position clearer and, in conjunction with other things, made it easier for the public to appreciate the differences between the two schools of political thought.

It gives us pleasure to note that the resolutions passed by the Moslem League are in some important respects an improvement upon those of the Congress. In the first place, there is less of the condemnatory spirit in the preamble of the League in so far as it refused to adopt the opinion of the Congress that the reform proposals were "disappointing." In the next place, the detailed modifications suggested by it with a view to expand and improve the scheme are less drastic. The League does not ask for a statutory guarantee that full responsible government should be established in the whole of British India within a maximum period of fifteen years. It is in favour of the retention of the Council of State, and therefore does not suggest, as has been done by the Congress, that in case the legislative assembly does not pass necessary legislation on reserved subjects, the Governor-General in council may issue regulations which are to remain in force for one year except when 40% of the assembly vote for their renewal. Nor does not the Moslem League accord its support to the resolution passed by the Congress that "from the commencement of the first council, the principle of responsibility of the ministers to the legislature shall come into force." The League has instead passed the resolution that "the legislative council shall have the right to vote the salary of ministers five years after the first council." This has indeed been practically provided for in the report itself, for after five years the Government of India, either of their own motion or on a demand made by the legislative council which must be acceded to, can decide that the salary of ministers should be voted. Again, the Moslem League is not opposed to the grand committee. All these variations show that the Moslem League has been more considerate in its criticism of the reform proposals than the Congress, and if the Congress also had done its work in the same

spirit there would have been more common ground between the two sections of it. As it is, however, the differences that for the present separate them are of a substantial character.

THE HINDU MARRIAGE VALIDITY ACT.

I.—THE REFORMER'S VIEW-POINT.

THE Hon'ble Mr. Patel is signalling his entrance into the Imperial Legislative Council by displaying his wonted activity at the very first session which he is attending. Among other things he is raising the question of inter-caste marriages among the Hindus and the debate on the leave to introduce the bill was to have taken place yesterday. Although the report of the debate is not available to us at the moment of writing, it would not be amiss to put forward some obvious considerations on the subject once again before the public.

About six years ago the Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendranath Basu introduced a bill in the Imperial Legislative Council with the object of doing away with the necessity of abjuring one's religion before one is able to contract a valid marriage under the Special Marriage Act. That bill of course met with opposition from many orthodox Hindu circles, and as it was also opposed by Government it was not successful. Even at that time however, it was remarked that the bill met with a very considerable amount of support from some unexpected quarters, *e. g.*, the *Mahratta* in this Presidency. Many thinking men have come to realise that for the consolidation of an Indian nationality the old religious obstacles to individual action should be as far as possible removed, and therefore they have no objection to a permissive bill like Mr. Basu's. But the Government of those days opposed the bill on this very ground and did not want to give this small facility to enable enterprising members of different communities to contract legal alliances, seeing in this proposal a future political danger.

There were some Hindus who opposed Mr. Basu's bill on account of its going too far in that it proposed to validate marriages between members of different religions. They were ready, they said, to accept a bill validating marriages between different castes and sub-castes among the Hindus, between which, according to the best legal opinion of the country, there cannot be lawful marriages. We have never seen the force of this objection, for to the orthodox the marriage between a Brahman and a Shudra is as unthinkable as one between a Hindu and a Parsi. When the fight is one for a principle—in this case that of individual liberty to contract marriage—it is best not to compromise it by trying to conciliate a class of opponents who after all can never be really conciliated, and one might "as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb."

The Hon. Mr. Patel has attempted to choose this apparently easier path, and though we have not much hope of its success under a Government

which is in mortal dread of any measures of social reform we trust that his effort will meet with enough public support to allow another bill of a wider scope to pass the expanded legislative council of the future. We hope that Mr. Patel will make his position quite clear; otherwise in this case a small reform will once again prove the enemy of a large reform. Mr. Patel's bill really consists of a single clause, and we are afraid that it has not been well drawn up. The question of marriage is bound up with a host of other questions which will have to be faced by the legislator. We do not wish to raise objections for objection's sake and we do wish that Mr. Patel or some other member will bring in a comprehensive measure which will take account of all the logical consequences of the validation of inter-caste marriages. The work is absolutely necessary in the interests of the Hindu community if it is not to suffer from gradual attrition.

We shall enumerate only a few of these consequences. In the first place a marriage act involves a divorce act as an immediate corollary. Then various questions of inheritance will also immediately arise. Is a man who has married out of caste and who has consequently been excommunicated still entitled to claim his share of the ancestral house for living in it? Are his children by a wife of a different caste to claim an equal share with his children by a former wife of his own caste? Can a man marry two wives of different castes and can he enforce the restitution of conjugal rights in the case of a wife of higher caste who refuses to live with a co-wife of a lower caste? Again what is to be the caste of the children of these inter-caste marriages and what is the law of succession to which they would be subject? For although there is a general law of succession common to all Hindus, still there are several customary differences for different castes. Again a legislator ought to take care that in trying to do away with caste rigidity he does not unconsciously add to it, for there is likely to result different new castes from different combinations of two other castes. Further, there should be settled the question of *anuloma* and *pratiloma* marriages.

These and various other questions will each require separate detailed treatment, impossible in one article. Suffice it to say that we ourselves are prepared to follow up the logical consequences of the principle of individual liberty, when the similar liberty of others is not endangered. If we have mentioned several objections to Mr. Patel's bill it is only in the *role* of a friendly critic who wishes him to seek expert advice in the matter of drafting and bring out his results once again in a complete and self-contained measure.

R. P. PARANJPYE.

II.—THE LAWYER'S VIEW-POINT.

THE Hon'ble Mr. V. J. Patel, who took his seat for the first time in the Imperial Council, which com-

menced its sittings at Simla on the 4th Instant, has given notice that he would move a Bill intitled as above. It is "a Bill to provide that marriages between Hindus of different castes are valid." With this objection in view the bill provides in Section 2 that "No marriage among Hindus shall be invalid by reason that the parties thereto do not belong to the same caste, any custom or any interpretation of Hindu Law to the contrary notwithstanding." The Bill also provides that the Act will extend "to the whole of British India." This is the whole Bill. The 'Statement of Objects and Reasons,' which ordinarily is expected to throw light upon the proposed Bill, is in this case equally short and fails to satisfy the curiosity in that direction. It says that "under the Hindu Law as interpreted, marriages between Hindus of different castes are held illegal. This interpretation, besides being open to question, has caused serious hardship in individual cases and is calculated to retard the progress of the community. The Bill, therefore, seeks to provide that such marriages shall not be invalid." Leave has been given for the introduction of this bill and it will be moved during the present session at Simla.

Any measure which is calculated to facilitate the progress of Indians in any line of activity ought to secure the unanimous support of all who have at their heart the desire of seeing India thoroughly advanced in all directions. The history of this question of the law of marriage as it has been evolved in India in course of ages presents several stages of backward and forward motions. For from the very ancient times may be found traces of attempts made in this direction. Leaving aside the Vedic times, the Sutra and Smṛiti periods bear evidence of the prevalence of inter-marriages among the members of the several Varnas, and a reference to the Manu and Yajnavalkya Smṛitis will disclose an elaborate system of mixed marriages, their offspring, their rights and obligations in the families as members and as heirs. Later on, however, this part of the law was changed and a prohibition against mixed marriages was introduced as one of the things forbidden in the Kali age. The Purānas and later works on Dharma Śāstra bear full witness to this, and the prohibition thus introduced continued until the advent of the British rule in India.

After the establishment of the British rule in India, the first movement in the direction of a reform of the laws of marriage is traceable in the year 1868, which resulted in the enactment of Act III of 1872, called the Civil Marriage Act. This was the outcome of an agitation set on foot by the Brahmos of Calcutta, who represented to Government that they should be accorded the right of celebrating marriages irrespective of caste, and as a result of such representation the eminent jurist Sir Henry Sumner Maine introduced in the Viceroy's Council a bill for the purpose of legalising such marriages; but before the bill could pass through the Council, Sir Henry Sumner

Maine left office and was succeeded by Sir James Stephen, who introduced the bill as his own, which ultimately became law known as the Civil Marriage Act of 1872.

This Act recognised the validity of marriages between persons of different castes and creeds; but it requires the parties contracting the marriage to make a declaration that they "did not profess the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Mahomedan, Parsi, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain religion." Several people took advantage of this Act, especially in cases where the parties did not belong to the same caste. The fact, however, that they were compelled under the law of 1872 to make a declaration, which in simple truth was a false declaration, taxed the conscience of many people, with the result that the Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, who was then a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, introduced a bill, with a view to remove this portion from the Act of 1872. The bill which was introduced in 1868 and became law in 1872 met with considerable opposition from the Indians but it ultimately succeeded in passing to the final stage. Mr. Basu's bill, however, was not destined to reach that stage. The opposition succeeded this time, with the result that the Government declined to lend their support to a bill the opposition to which could not be called negligible.

The present appears to be an attempt on the part of the Hon'ble mover of the bill to re-agitate the same question. Any measure which is calculated to effect a change in the existing law deserves careful handling. Much more does a measure which not merely effects a change in the law, but is materially calculated to affect the interests of parties relating to their status and property. One would, therefore, expect a more detailed exposition of the bill than has been placed before the public, in particular when it has for its sponsor the stalwart legislator, who has made his mark in that department in the Presidency, from which he hails to the Simla Council.

The principal points which appear to require special consideration in this connection may be summarised briefly. The first point that arises for consideration is the legal consequences flowing from such a marriage. What would be the result of the marriage upon the rights of (1) the husband, (2) the wife, (3) the relatives of the husband, (4) the relatives of the wife, and (5) the children born of such union, and the relation of all of these five classes among each other with regard to the laws of status and property? Supposing the husband is a Vaiśya and the wife is a Śudra woman, would the marriage confer upon the wife the full status of a wife in a Vaiśya family? That is, in other words, would she be entitled to all the rights and privileges which a Vaiśya wife of a Vaiśya husband would have enjoyed? Secondly, would the issue born of such a wife inherit to collaterals of the husband in the same manner as an issue born of a wife of the same caste would? Then, again, supposing

the husband had sons by other wives of equal class, what would be the relative positions of these with those born of the Sudra wife in matters of inheritance? It may be stated here that the Smritis of Manu and Yajnavalkya make elaborate provisions for such marriages and their offspring. Does the mover of the bill intend that those provisions should be revived by removing the bar of Kali introduced by the Puranas and later works? If, so, one would expect that this point were made clear in the body of the Bill itself as well as in the Statement of Objects and Reasons. Another point which would require consideration in such a marriage is whether when this special concession is being extended to parties who want to take a step beyond the limits of law and custom prevailing among them, should they not be subject to a restriction as to marriage? In other words should the provisions of the Act of 1872 as regards monogamy not be enforced in the case of such a marriage? It would appear that if the object with which this bill is introduced, as is disclosed in the short Statement of Objects and Reasons, is to be attained a restriction as to monogamy is a necessity. Another question would be whether freedom should not be allowed to parties in the matter of divorce, which would be a necessary concomitance of the rule as to monogamy. Lastly, when such a law as this is passed or placed before the Council for being passed as a statute of the country, there should be some provision determining the caste of the offspring.

There are many more points which suggest themselves when a measure of this character is brought for consideration. As, however, the present Bill is only in the stage of introduction after which it will be submitted to a Select Committee, it is enough to indicate the above as only a few of the difficulties that would present themselves in the detailed examination and consideration of the law on this point.

It is to be earnestly hoped that the bill will so develop into an Act of the Indian legislature as will obviate the difficulties suggested above and others which will invariably arise, and supply to the Indians a means which will dispense with the declaration under Act III of 1872, which is a constant reproach upon the conscience to the right-thinking section of the people. It is to be hoped the bill will be so modified as to meet all objections that may be raised and to obviate all difficulties and fears.

J. R. GHARPURE.

AGENTS-GENERAL FOR THE COLONIES.

OF the many resolutions that have been admitted for discussion at the ensuing session of the Imperial Legislative Council, the proposal dealing with the appointment in London of an Agent-General to the Governor-General, raises an important question for our consideration. For a cor-

rect appreciation of the proposition and in order to see how far the creation of such an office is in the best interests of the country, it may be of some use to know the history of the office of the Agent-General and the position that he at present occupies in relation to the Imperial Government.

From the early days of colonial self-government, the colonies have been represented in London by officials known as Agents-General. The appointment of these representatives rests with the Governments of the colonies they represent and the expenses of their office are also borne by them. These posts are held by men of high standing, generally by persons who have filled high positions in the dominions and whose ability and talent are recognised by all, irrespective of parties. "It has not been unusual for Agents-General to be chosen from the imperial House of Commons, or else to be in a position to obtain seats in that powerful assembly. Thus an indirect representation of the colony in the British Parliament is secured, through individuals who are not mere political nominees, but who possess the confidence of all parties and who from their familiarity with the condition and resources of their colony are admirably fitted to be spokesmen of colonial interests in the national assembly." (Todd, *Parliamentary Government in the Colonies*.) The Agents-General for South Africa, Canada, the Dominion of New Zealand and the Commonwealth of Australia, are termed High Commissioners and enjoy rank and status similar to that of ambassadors. Besides these the provinces of the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia have their own representatives, sometimes known as minor agents. While those of the Australian States receive recognition from the imperial Government, the agents of the provinces of Canada, enjoy 'none of the official status.'

At first their function was, in the main, to carry on financial and commercial transactions on behalf of their Governments. It was their business to assist their Government in negotiating loans, to make known the products of their colonies and find sale for them, to attend to shipping arrangements and cable communications, and such other important financial and commercial matters in which their colonies may be concerned, wherein their knowledge and skill in business affairs would be of great avail in saving money while helping the growth of trade. In fact they were doing all that is nowadays expected of agents of large trading concerns to push on the business of their firms. Such onerous duties really demanded the choice for these offices of men who had long experience in commerce and finance.

As the colonies began to evince increasing and quickened interest in the affairs affecting the welfare and political progress of the Empire, the tendency to elevate the position of the Agent-General grew considerably. Step by step he has risen from the position merely of a commercial agent to that of an ambassador 'accredited to re-

present his colony' at the seat of the Empire. "Increasing use is made of him as a channel of intercourse between the imperial Government and the colonial ministry." So now his duties are, to quote the words of Reinsch, "to represent the varied interests, political and economic, of his colony at the capital, and especially to assist in the conclusion of financial and commercial arrangements in which his colony is interested." Such considerable influence and weight has the Agent-General acquired, even in matters affecting immigration and trade between the colonies and the mother country and the foreign nations, that it has become incumbent upon the colonial Governments to consider the diplomatic qualifications as well in the selection of their Agents-General. To the necessary personal gifts of a diplomat, they should combine within themselves knowledge of business management and of public affairs. So great care is exercised now in the choice of Agents-General.

Apart from the fact that he is an official highly respected, with very important duties attached to his office, the Agent-General has sometimes occupied a peculiar position in relation to his Government which has often rendered him incapable of doing what he ought to do in matters affecting his colonies. This is due to various circumstances, one of which is worth mentioning. One fact more than another that has greatly impaired his position is the constant change of Governments in the colonies. Therefore, he cannot be said to be in the full confidence of his Government at all times. This fact also accounts for the failure of the colonies to give their consent to make use of these Agents-General to form a council of advice for imperial purposes. The efforts of the imperial Government to encourage the use of the agents-General in connection with the Committee of Imperial Defence and the secretariat of the imperial Conference, have not received a support of the colonial Governments. "Indeed the whole history of the recent years of efforts to use High Commissioners has been one of reluctance on the part of the ministries, who are sensitive of their personal position. The representatives in London of a Dominion is always a potential rival for power at home, a fact which adds to the difficulties inherent in securing close harmony of action." (Keith, *Imperial Unity and the Dominions*.) All these essential facts explain why with a few exceptions, most of the Agents-General are not in closest touch either with their Governments or with the imperial Government. In days past, the mother country also has sometimes not even taken notice of the existence of the representatives of the colonies while settling matters with which they were intimately connected. The claims of the Agents-General to be regarded as representatives of the Dominions were not fully recognised until 1910.

Crown agents look after the financial and commercial affairs of the crown colonies. There are three representatives at present and

these are appointed by the colonial secretary. They work under the general supervision of the colonial office. These agents are usually men of ripe experience and have gradually acquired "so great a power in colonial affairs that their influence has at some times been resented even by colonies themselves." The expenses of their office are paid out of the commissions earned by them on the financial arrangements and purchases effected by these officers.

R. SURYANARAYANA RAO.

LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

MADRAS.

THE REFORM SCHEME AND SPECIAL CONFERENCES.

THE "undiscussable" scheme of Mr. Montagu is still being vigorously discussed all over this province. Almost every district has held or is holding a special conference, and several taluqs have followed suit. Even since the Madras Special Provincial Conference ended in the thorough defeat and discomfiture of these "undiscussables," they have changed their colour like that highly interesting animal, the chameleon, and strive hard to hide their real intents and purposes beneath a plethora of camouflage. Now they deign to discuss the matter, thank goodness. They forsooth do not reject it *in toto*; Mr. Montagu must be really thankful for these small mercies. They only propose such drastic modifications in the scheme as would do away with it altogether. And this is not rejection! The fact of the position is that these people avoid the word rejection and fancy that it is very politic of them. Under their baneful influence, the Special Provincial Conference proposed such changes as were practically tantamount to rejection, a thing which it would never have done but for the clamour of these implacable few. The resolutions of the Madras Special Conference have become the pattern of all subsequent Special Conferences. The most important of them was the Andhra Special Conference, which held its sittings in Guntur on the 18th, 19th inst. under the presidency of Mr. Nageswararao Pantulu, the premier Telugu journalist.

THE "DIE-HARDS."

A significant feature of this Conference was the strength of the party of rejection. It was stronger than at the Madras Special Conference. At the latter they numbered 157 as against 180. But at the Andhra Conference they numbered 76 as against 96. That is how Mr. Montagu's scheme narrowly escaped utter rejection at the Andhra Conference. But the Salem District Conference has successfully rejected it under the collective wisdom and guidance of such luminaries of political thought as Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, sister Balammal, and Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu who has given it out as his opinion that "all moderates will go to hell." It is no wonder that under such auspices the Salem Conference alone of all Special Conferences held in this Presidency or in any other part of India has unanimously passed a resolution that if the proposed modifications are not granted, passive resistance should be begun (whatever that may mean). The scheme very narrowly escaped a similar fate at the Kistna District Conference where a gentleman chivalrously declared that he would not press for rejection out of deference to the Chairman, the Hon. Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao. All this proves that hysterical politics is still in the ascendant in this presidency. But, Heaven be praised, there are already one or two signs of the returning of reason even on our political horizon.

THE SIVAGANGA TALUQ CONFERENCE.

"Moderates are nowhere," runs the slogan, but it seems that there are still some moderates left in Sivaganga. The Sivaganga Zamin Taluq Conference met on the 25th inst. The moderates urged general acceptance of the scheme, but the extremists tried to swamp them with a "patched up" majority, as a telegram says. The moderates then left the Conference in a body. So far Sivaganga is the only place in this province where such a distinct cleavage of opinion exists. But it is a good sign of the times. It shows that the species of rationalistic politicians is not as extinct as some people suppose or hope or wish and that if the scattered forces of "moderation" are marshalled and properly reorganised, sound judgment may yet come into its own in Madras politics. After all the masses of India are "moderate" and will solidly stand for ordered progress. They only lack the necessary political education.

THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY MUSLEM LEAGUE.

Another hopeful factor in the situation is the attitude of the Madras Presidency Muslim League. This League has passed a lengthy resolution on the reform scheme. After expressing their grateful appreciation of the services of Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy, they proceed to say, "The League has no hesitation in acknowledging that the proposals are on the whole a considerable advance over the present position and they are, therefore, welcome." This may be taken to be the view of the Mahammadans of Madras Presidency. It will be seen that the above resolution is in dire conflict with the resolutions passed by the Congress organisations in this province. Is, then, the unity of Congress and League a mere myth so far as Madras is concerned?

STRIKES.

Strikes seem to be the order of the day. There has been a succession of strikes in the metropolis and the mofussil in the last one month or two and at the moment of writing, there is a strike going on in the cotton mills at Madura in which 600 labourers are concerned and the streets of Madras have put on a peaceful appearance owing to the Tramway strike. A striking fact about all these strikes is that some excellent people invariably attribute them to the influence of political agitators and entirely lose sight of the economic factor. Thus, for instance, the *Madras Mail* says that the Madura Mill Strike was brought about by "emissaries of Home Rule." As a matter of fact the only man who had anything to do with the mill-hands in the beginning was Mr. J. N. Ramanathan, the most prominent propagandist worker in the cause of the non-Brahmin movement and the best known "emissary" of anti-Home Rule in this presidency. Either the *Mail* did not know these facts or it deliberately misrepresented them. But Justice cannot be excused for echoing the *Mail* in this matter, because it knows that Mr. Ramanathan is its own best champion, and that he had nothing to do with Home Rule at any rate up to this time. The causes of these strikes are purely economic. These men are overworked and underpaid. It has always been so, but in these hard times of abnormal rise in prices and monstrous cost of living, this can no longer be justified on any ground. These are entitled to living wage. It is impossible for them to continue on starvation allowances. And there must be some time for them to eat not to swallow—their food at mid-day. It is no use blinking facts. The Madura strike has already lasted for over a month and the Madras tramway strike is three days old at the moment of writing. It is to be fervently hoped that the respective authorities concerned will consider these economic grounds and deal fairly with the strikers, without going into a fit of passion. This they can afford to do easily in view of the the enormous profits they are making. Making profits may be a capital thing, but men must live. A word to the strikers themselves will not be out of place here. One cannot approve of their going on strike and then trying to organise labour unions. That is like putting the horse before the cart. The

reverse of this will be the wiser plan. They must organise the unions before organising the strikes. Since writing these lines news has come that the Madura Mill strike has ended, the manager, Mr. Powell, agreeing to an all-round increase of 25 % in the coolies' wages and that the strikers have returned to work. The tramway authorities may very well copy the example of Mr. Powell and put an end to the hardships of the Madras public.

THE PRESS DEPUTATION.

Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Editor of the Hindu, who forms one of the party of journalists invited by the Home Government to visit the War Theatre on the Western Front was entertained at a series of receptions prior to his departure from Madras. The Mahajana Sabha, Provincial Congress Committee, Madras Presidency Association and the Home Rule League presented him with a joint address at the Gokhale Hall on the 22nd inst. It is a thousand pities, though, that Mr. Iyengar should have taken that particular opportunity to read a homily on the sins of omission and commission of the "Moderate" politicians for whom he had never any great love. It was unmannerly, and ungracious, especially because a number of these "Moderates" were present on the occasion to show their regard for the veteran journalist. The Hon. Mr. Yakub Hasan, himself a moderate, pointed this out while proposing the vote of thanks. Well, Mr. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar is already enroute to England, and we all hope he will come back with a broadened and more liberal outlook.

CLOTH SCARCITY.

The cloth famine is rapidly becoming as serious in this presidency as in the presidencies of Bengal and Bombay. Some time ago a series of riots were reported from the Kistna District in which cloth-shops were attacked by hundreds of indigent people and clothes worth several thousands of rupees were looted. Now news has come to hand that an epidemic of rioting and looting has broken out in the Vizagapatam district. In one place alone 600 peoples attacked two cloth-shops and carried off clothes worth thousands of rupees. The situation is critical in other districts also. The Hon. Mr. Ramachandra Rao had a question on this important subject at the last session of the legislative council, but the Government contented themselves with that the Government of India is considering this matters. But the policy of drift is a dangerous one to pursue in such matters, and it is earnestly hoped that the Government will copy the example of the Bombay Government and appoint a Controller of prices at once before it is too late.

SELECTIONS.

AUTONOMY FOR INDIA.

COMMENTS OF THE *Nation* ON THE REFORM SCHEME.

THERE are two propositions about India upon which the average opinion of this country has been agreed for some years. One of them is that at some date, however distant, the peoples of India must eventually govern themselves. The other is that it would be rash to confer instantly and by one overwhelming gift, a complete measure of autonomy, such as the Colonies enjoy. Both propositions were sincerely used; both sprang from a sense of reality, and both, in varying degrees, influenced our public policy. The romantic school which used to write, often with much literary charm, round the motto of "the unchanging East", had learnt something at last from facts. Its vision of the East was about as true as Mr. Stephen Graham's picture of Russia. The East can no more escape the world's economic processes than the West, and with a modernized Japan and a republican China, the presumption in favour of the conservative view was gone. So long as autocracy was the rule from Petrograd to Peking, and from Con-

stantinople to Teheran, a fraternal bureaucracy might justify its refusal to abandon power, but it could not hope to stand unmodified on the edge of a continent in revolution. The conservative school had already shifted its ground, and dwelt rather on the racial confusion, the illiteracy of the peasant mass, the inexperience of the educated class in India by way of emphasizing the need for caution and delay.

The resultant of these two tendencies was a general acquiescence in the policy of the half-way house. There is little help in that metaphor towards a constructive policy. It is not easy to discover an intermediate stage between Home Rule and autocracy. The usual Crown Colony device of a consultative chamber which enjoys the right of criticism, but exercises no real responsibility or control, is not in fact a good preparation for full self-government. The political leaders of the subject race gain no experience in administration, or even in the constructive work of legislation and finance, nor is the governing bureaucracy gradually brought to face the surrender or devolution of its powers. There is already machinery enough in India for the expression of public opinion, for criticism and the formulation of demands. Lord Morley's reforms had carried this development to the furthest limits of which it is capable. Any further advance must confer real power upon the people of India, and the problem was to devise some means of doing this which would satisfy the demand for actual self-government now without endangering the whole structure of Indian Government. During the first generation of experiment and adaptation Mr. Montagu has solved this problem with ingenuity and statesmanship. He formed his model, we should guess, on the Irish Home Rule Act, which has thus given birth to offspring more lively than itself. That Act distinguished between functions which might at once be entrusted to an Irish Parliament and a responsible Irish Executive and functions which should be conferred at a later date. The root idea of Mr. Montagu's plan is that the Indian people shall, through elected assemblies and native ministers, at once attain self-government over certain regions of the national life.

So far as the concession goes it is complete. The region of self-Government may not at first be extensive, but is capable of rapid extension, and each field as the Indian Nation enters it, is its own to cultivate as it pleases. India will have from the first something that is absolutely her own, and in demanding more, she will be asking only for an inheritance already assigned to her. This is not the half-way house. It is the actual terminus. Its rooms may be taken over only one by one, and at intervals, but in each of them as the door opens the Indian people will be its own master. The unit for gradually expanding autonomy will be the province and no other could well have been chosen. Let us assume that education is (as it probably will be) the first of the "transferred" services. The whole work of drafting legislation, adjusting expenditure and administering the school of (say) Madras, will fall on the shoulders of an elected native member of the Madras Provincial Assembly, responsible to a native constituency; whole Bills and Budgets must be passed by this elected Assembly. Within this big field of education the will of the people of Madras will prevail, and they will govern their schools almost as freely and as fully as the people of England govern theirs.

We say "almost," for there are inevitable reservations. The Government of Madras will necessarily be a composite structure. Some subjects are "transferred" to popular self-government; others are "reserved" to the management of the bureaucracy. The "Cabinet" (if that word is applicable) consists therefore partly of "irresponsible" bureaucrats (including some native Indians), and partly of responsible native Ministers. There is no native Premier. It is the Governor in Council who appoints the native Ministers. His choice, however, is confined to elected members. Their constituents may reject them, or the Assembly, if it dislikes their policy, may by its opposition render a change of persons inevitable. We have here an inner and an outer government, somewhat after

the plan of the War Cabinet and its appendages. There are in this plan obvious dangers of friction and dualism, but given good-will in the Governor, and sagacity in the native parties, the scheme should yield what it promises. It will normally mean that each Province will be able to carry out its own Indian policy in education. As to how many services should at once be "transferred" to native Ministers and placed under the full control of the Provincial Assemblies, the Report does not dogmatize. It suggests, however an extensive and important list of such services—local government, provincial taxation, education, sanitation, excise, and minor public works. That is a large sphere of self-government, and when it is fully occupied, Madras or Bombay will enjoy, save for the fact that an English Governor presides over its administration, almost as large a measure of Home Rule as Ireland should have had by the suspended Act.

Mr. Montagu has adopted a somewhat original plan of his own. It is not the plan of the Indian Congress, but it is, to our thinking, a much better, and in reality a more generous plan. The Indian Reformers had devised a half-way house which would have been a constant theatre of strife. Anglo-Indian Executive, trained in the bureaucratic tradition, were to be responsible to Indian Legislatures. The result would probably have been that Indian parties would have used the power of the purse in order to bring this impossible dualism to a speedy end. Mr. Montagu's idea of making the concession of self-government complete, where it is made at all, is by far the wiser plan. It marks out at once a sphere of work and ambition for constructive Nationalist. The period of criticism, agitation, and suggestion is over, and Indian reformers, when this Report is adopted, may at once begin, as responsible leaders of recognized majorities, to shape the public life of their Native land. Nothing is finally withdrawn from them. If the first list of "transferred" services is inadequate, the Report provides for its revision at the end of five years. Still better is the suggestion that the whole fabric of Indian Government should be reviewed periodically at intervals of ten or twelve years. On this understanding it is possible to hope that the sense of embitterment, frustration, and impotence may pass from Indian Nationalism. It had worked to do and beyond this limited work a vista lies before it. Full autonomy is no longer the distant and unattainable goal. It has become with this report an end which may well be reached in two or three decades.

While the proposals for comparing what is practically responsible Parliamentary Government in the Provinces within certain field of work, are the essence of Mr. Montagu's Report, there is much else in it which deserves a welcome. Even over the "reserved" services the provincial legislatures will have some influence, though no absolute control. The setting up of full local self-government in district areas, as well as cities is an immense advance. In the Central Government also there is a big step forward towards democracy, for its lower house will be to the extent of two-thirds an elected body, and normally its assent will be required for legislation. Even the upper house will be partly (two-fifth) elected, and only half official. Thus even over the reserved services, and over questions vital to order and defence, the elected elements, through a share in this central senate, will have voice and influence, though not as yet the determining vote. It is a corollary of Indian self-government that, as it grows, the part of the Imperial Parliament must diminish. By proposing, however, to set up a standing committee for Indian affairs in the Commons, Mr. Montagu would make Parliament a far more efficient instrument of ultimate control than it has ever been since the days of the Company.

It is no disparagement to the work of his predecessors who dealt with an India less ripe for reform, to say that Mr. Montagu has produced the boldest and most statesmanlike effort in construction that the Empire has seen in our generation. Big as it is, however, we certainly do not think that it goes

too far. Our only doubt about it is indeed whether the older generation of Indian officials has elasticity of mind enough to adapt itself to the new era. Only a very exceptional man, after a life spent with autocratic powers as an administrator will have imagination enough to become the loyal colleague of Indian Ministers responsible to an Indian assembly. The scheme pre-supposes as the condition of its success the defeat and disappearance of deeply-rooted traditions of racial ascendancy. We believe in its success, for to admit the possibility of failure would be to despair of the possibility of a liberal Empire. Never indeed was a scheme of Indian Reform launched in an atmosphere so friendly. The chivalry of the Indian peoples during these years of danger has had its response at home. Mr. Montagu is able, as Lord Morley was not, to work undisturbed by the alarms and resentments of a period of agitation and sedition. India, in spite of some foolish and provocative official acts, is calm, primarily because she is expectant. We have a great debt of loyalty and service in this war to repay, and without self-flattery, we may safely say that the British people is willing and even eager to repay it. If there are obstacles to these reforms, they will not come from British public opinion, from Parliament, or from the press at home. Let us recollect, however, that, bold as the scheme is, India had warrant to expect a large generous gift. The Government promised last August nothing less than "gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible Government in India." Mr. Montagu's scheme honestly redeems that promise, and its publication with the approval of the Viceroy's Government makes it morally impossible to offer anything smaller. If the scheme is amended as it is discussed, the total effect of any changes must not be to diminish its scope or lessen its generosity. Above all if we wish to reap the moral fruits of these handsome and unforced concessions, we must act promptly. We dare not risk India in repetition of the Irish failures and delays. A critical world watches us narrowly; let us hasten to be true to our better selves.

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